



Agenda for Housing Review Board Thursday, 23rd January, 2020, 2.30 pm

Members of Housing Review Board

Councillors: T McCollum (Chairman), P Sullivan, C Drew, P Gore, C Summers, I Hall, D Ledger, H Parr, K Bloxham, C Collier and C Morrison

Venue: Council Chamber, Exmouth Town Hall, Exmouth EX8 1AW

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(or group number 01395 517546)

Tuesday, 14 January 2020

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1 Public speaking

Information on [public speaking](#) is available online

2 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 3 - 10)

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 are no items which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.

7 Housing Review Board forward plan (Pages 11 - 12)

8 Housing Service Plan 2020/21 (Pages 13 - 41)

9 Housing Revenue and Capital Budgets 2020/21 (Pages 42 - 50)

10 Housing Revenue Account budget update 2019/20 (Pages 51 - 60)

11 Future Right to Buy spend (Pages 61 - 65)

12 Integrated asset management contract update (Pages 66 - 70)

- 13 Homes standard (Pages 71 - 80)
- 14 Review of fire safety policy (Pages 81 - 93)
- 15 Grenfell Tower inquiry phase 1 report October 2019 (Pages 94 - 100)
- 16 Extension to gas servicing contract (Pages 101 - 102)
- 17 Extension to asbestos surveying contract (Pages 103 - 104)
- 18 Performance monitoring report - quarter 2 (Pages 105 - 121)
- 19 Poverty - a local picture (Pages 122 - 159)

To note the report that was presented to Overview Committee on 14 November 2019.

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, any members of the public are now allowed to take photographs, film and audio record the proceedings and report on all public meetings (including on social media). No prior notification is needed but it would be helpful if you could let the democratic services team know you plan to film or record so that any necessary arrangements can be made to provide reasonable facilities for you to report on meetings. This permission does not extend to private meetings or parts of meetings which are not open to the public. You should take all recording and photography equipment with you if a public meeting moves into a session which is not open to the public.

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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 Council Chamber, Exmouth Town Hall, Exmouth EX8 1AW on 19 September 2019****Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 2.30 pm and ended at 5.00 pm

29 Public speaking

Peter Sullivan, Vice Chairman informed members of the sad news that Victor Kemp who was formerly a member of the Board for many years had recently passed away. The funeral had been held last Friday at which both Board members and Officers had attended. All present wished to thank Victor for his work for the Board and members sat quietly in remembrance.

Councillor Ian Hall wished to talk to Board members on the Right to Buy scheme and the subsidy given to Housing Associations by the Government. The Board needed to look forward on both issues, particularly as he considered that the service provided by EDDC as a Housing Authority to its tenants was of a higher standard than that provided by Housing Associations. Cllr Hall outlined the need for options to be explored that involve EDDC looking at ways its own stock can be further increased as well as what additional funding could be available from central government to do this. Linked to the issue of the Right to Buy. The Acting Housing Service Lead highlighted the desire of the Portfolio Holder to create a working group that could look specifically at how right to buy receipts can be spent over the coming years as we see the need to accelerate spending as opposed to having to pay receipts back. Members were invited to contact the Acting Housing Service Lead directly if they wish to be part of this work.

He reported that there were particular anti-social behaviour problems in the east of the district and it was accepted that there was the need to provide extra resources to help our communities.

30 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Housing Review Board meeting held on 14 August 2019 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

31 Declarations of interest

Councillor Ian Hall: Personal interest – mother was a housing tenant and used Home Safeguard. Chairman of the Millwey Rise Action Group. Member of Devon County Council.

Councillor Dan Ledger: Personal interest – employed by a third party contractor for the current repairs and maintenance service.

Peter Sullivan: Personal interest – housing tenant.

Cat Summers: Personal interest – housing tenant.

Pat Gore: Personal interest – housing tenant

Alek Williams: Personal interest – housing tenant

32 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency raised at the meeting.

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

There were no confidential or exempt items.

34 **Housing Review Board Forward Plan**

Amy Gilbert Jeans, 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 items to the next forward plan by informing either herself or the Democratic Services Officer. It was noted that the Brexit report had been removed from the forward plan as it would be considered by Cabinet.

A poverty report was being prepared in conjunction with Libby Jarrett, Service Lead Revenues and Benefits and would be presented to Overview Committee in November and would also be considered by the November meeting of the Board.

In response to concerns raised by Cllr Ian Hall, Amy Gilbert-Jeans suggested an information report on financial structures and set-ups of Housing Associations and the differences between us as a Local Authority in order to ensure the Boards understanding of both and where any opportunities could arise.

Amy Gilbert-Jeans referred back to the Right to Buy working group and suggested Members may want to focus part of the work the group do on lobbying Central Government in relation to the Right to Buy scheme around the perceived unfairness and risk to the organisation that a depletion of stock creates.

Members were encouraged to read the Consumer Regulation Review 2018-19 that had been provided as an information report and suggested a report is brought back to the November meeting detailing our position in relation to the Regulatory Code.

RESOLVED: that the forward plan be noted and updated.

35 **Producing a Carbon footprint for Housing**

Members noted that John Golding, Strategic Lead - Housing, Health & Environment had been championing Climate Change on behalf on the whole of the Council. There was the need to reduce the Council's carbon footprint where possible.

The report took forward our commitment given as part of the Devon Climate Change Declaration, to produce an accurate carbon footprint for the Councils activities. This is a complex piece of work and is vital that we perform accurately as this will create a baseline against which we will be measuring our journey towards carbon neutrality.

The expertise that can be found at the University of Exeter was engaged to assist us with this piece of work. This will also provide an independent and auditable assessment of our carbon baseline.

As members of SWEEG (South West Energy & Environment Group) we receive favourable rates when commissioning the University to provide advice and investigations in relation to environmental matters.

The Housing Service has a carbon footprint and calculating this will form an important part of the Council's overall footprint and therefore a key element of our ambition to become carbon neutral as a Council.

A Board member reported that the Council's website needed a more up to date statement as the link present on climate change referred to 2017.

- RESOLVED**
1. to produce a carbon footprint for our Housing Service, identifying and quantifying the carbon emissions from our activities and assets. This includes our contractors work on our behalf and the homes and buildings in our ownership and control.
 2. that the Council's communications team be requested to update the link on climate change on the website to include more up to date information.
 3. that paper copies of the agenda be only sent to members of the Board on request.

36 **Draft of the Annual Report to Tenants 2018-19**

Members were requested to comment on and approve the attached draft of the Annual Report to tenants. The draft is in word text format only and will be graphically designed once the wording has been finalised. The reason was to meet with good practice and provide performance information to tenants.

Peter Sullivan, Vice Chairman, reported that this report had been considered yesterday at the Tenants Forum and they were happy with the new format. It was accepted that a footnote should be added explaining regarding changes to the way statistic are captured.

RESOLVED that the Board approve the content of the annual report to tenants, subject to the information being graphically designed for reproduction in the December Housing Matters magazine

37 **HMO Update and Expenditure**

Members were requested to approve works to a recently acquired property that exceed initial budget estimates under powers delegated to the Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment – Housing 25 - authority to enter into contracts, including the appointment, liaison and monitoring of contractors and consultants working on Council homes.

The reason behind the report was to ensure that the refurbishment of the property meet regulatory compliance requirements and is suitable for occupation by our tenants, this also involved the entire refurbishment of the kitchen area that had not previously been considered. It was noted that the winning tender was £128,522 compared to the original estimate of £25,000. Members expressed their disappointment at the increase in costs and noted that the officer responsible had now left the Council and a new highly skilled Property and Asset Manager had been appointed to oversee this area going forward.

- RECOMMENDED**
1. that the update provided be noted.
 2. that further expenditure is approved to ensure that the property recently acquired in Morton Road, Exmouth, is fit for purpose, using available budgets, by the Strategic Lead for Housing, Health and Environment.

3. that the further expenditure be approved, subject to available budgets by the Service Lead for Housing, Health and Environment

38 **Community Development Update**

The Chairman welcomed Aaron Clark and Alex Gibson, Community Development Workers to the meeting. They gave an update on the activities on their work, including actual case studies and how it fitted within the wider context of the Housing Service Plan 2019/20. Members noted that Aaron Clark was involved with producing Mental Health strategies on behalf of the Council, the first draft of which would be available in December.

The report ensured the Housing Review Board were fully apprised of why Community Development Workers were employed and how their work can be central to achieving the wider objectives of the authority. This provided an asset based community approach that allowed residents to become more actively involved in supporting their communities. Members emphasised the need for a sustainable funding stream to continue this excellent work.

RESOLVED that Members note the work that is underway that focuses on building our communities to be more resilient.

39 **Update on Integrated Management contract**

John Taylor, Property and Asset Manager reported that the new Integrated Asset Management Contract commenced on the 1 July 2019.

This report updated Members on progress as we approached the end of the first 3 months of our new contracting arrangement with Ian Williams Ltd. The purpose of the report was to ensure Members were up to date with new contracting arrangements covering the maintenance of our housing stock.

Members noted that the Contractors were currently working on 10 voids a week compared to an average of 5. Tenants had responded well to the new repairs contract and the KPIs were monitored on a regular basis. The importance of getting the right staff in place was emphasised and there were currently 5-6 office based staff and 22 operatives working on jobs.

John Taylor took Members through the detail of each KPI with a summary of current performance in each area.

In response to a question, it was reported that the Handyperson Scheme was still available, although there was only one member of staff available at the moment as one had left for another job, but he would be replaced in due course.

RESOLVED that the Board be aware of the commencement of the Integrated Asset Management Contract and early progress be noted.

40 **Update on Your Home, Your Well Being Research Project**

Natalie Brown, Information & Analysis Officer provided the Board with an update on the progress of the three year research project being undertaken in partnership with LiveWest and the University of Birmingham.

The results of the study provided information on the relationship between housing and wellbeing and landlord satisfaction.

The report attempted to raise the profile of the project and to recognise the contribution the project is now making to national debates. It was hoped that the next stage of results could be reported to the November meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED that the ongoing progress of year 2 of the project including the wider contribution of the study to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee enquiry into the long term delivery of social and affordable rented housing be noted.

41 **Residents Involvement Strategy 2019-2022**

The Chairman welcomed Sue Saunders and Sue Dawson who read out the following statement giving their view of the new Residents Involvement Strategy.

“I became an involved Tenant in 2006 the year the Tenant & Leaseholder Customer Panel was formed, a fully constituted committee, with elected members. Formal meetings were held under the leadership of a Chair and Vice-chair. Debates were minuted and votes recorded.

The Tenant Representative Group replaced it, its constitution also gave it minutes and recorded votes. The TRG took a closer look at Housing management, unfortunately, some members thought the work too onerous, as Chairs of the Service Review Groups were required to write reports.

Then came the TIF, no constitution no minutes and no voting. The only record of matters discussed, an Action Plan. Now the TIF is to be scrapped, leaving in its place The Scrutiny Panel, the Complaints Group, and two SRGs. The Strategy’s answer to this depletion is Focus Groups, Forums and on-line chats.

With this new strategy we will have no meetings where we can come together and discuss the work of each group, just impotent, isolated little groups with no written records and no way to communicate with other tenants in order to gauge their views BEFORE decisions are made.

There is a force growing with-in the Housing Department for meetings to be held via the internet. This new Involvement Strategy is designed to bring that goal nearer. Is this also the way the Council and the Housing Review Board are moving, will full Council meetings be held on Twitter or on-line? No of course not because you know there is no substitute for formalised face to face debate.

I recall a time when tenants were fully involved at all levels. I personally was part of the team responsible for preparations for the Audit Commission investigation. I was on the team that set up the tenant Scrutiny Group and another which set up this Board, of which I was proud to be a founder member. I worked alongside tenants such Ted Brown, Ann Bickham and Victor Kemp, who sad to relate died recently, these people understood the responsibility needed to be a tenant representative. It’s obvious the officers don’t share that view.

Version 3 of the new strategy given to tenants to consult upon is, in Sue’s opinion, an insult to our intelligence. Some wording has obviously been cut and pasted, as

evidenced when the text contains the word City when describing East Devon. As far as she is aware there are no cities within the East Devon boundary. This is just an example of the level of importance officers are placing on Tenant Involvement.

The new Residents Involvement Strategy is being described as an EVOLUTION, incidentally, a word I suggested before I became aware of the true nature of the strategy being proposed I would now describe it as a Mutation.

Evolution suggests an improvement, a moving forward. In my opinion this strategy is a giant step backwards.”

Members considered the contents of the refreshed Resident Involvement Strategy and adopting it as fit for purpose for the period 2019/22. The purpose of the report was to ensure our Resident Involvement Strategy is agreed at the highest level and recorded for all to see. It was the result of 18 months of consultation with tenants.

It was noted that the movement to a more internet based approach was designed to improve the involvement of a younger resident demographic and those less physically able and was essential if the Resident Involvement Strategy was to be fit for the future.

Peter Sullivan, Vice Chairman reported that tenants had been consulted on this issue for 18 months. The younger age and disabled tenants were really struggling to be involved and the new strategy presented a number of opportunities for this to be enhanced. These days there were other ways to communicate other than face to face meetings and we must all work harder at making this happen. The Council needs to modernise and use technology. The new Resident Involvement Strategy would help make tenants more involved.

RESOLVED that the Resident Involvement Strategy 2019/22 be adopted.

42 **Public Health Strategic Plan**

The Chairman welcomed Helen Wharam, Public Health Project Officer who gave a presentation on the East Devon Public Health Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

Councillor Ian Hall reported that the east of the district was being cut off and that the East Devon Public Health Strategic Plan 2019-2023 needed to ensure it was district wide, which meant including the east of the district. He considered that the plan contained nothing at all about issues around drugs and county lines.

Helen Wharam reported that the priorities in the Plan were based on statistical evidence from Devon County and are intended to help focus resources. We will work across the district, with a focus on those areas of most need. She advised that EDDC has an Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Safety Coordinator.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

43 **Consumer Regulation Review 2018-19**

Members of the Board received details of the Consumer Regulation Review 2018-19. This provided a summary of the Regulator's consumer regulation work for the year 2018-
page 8

19. It included case studies to demonstrate the approach to consumer regulation, as well as key lessons the Regulator of Social Housing wished to share with the housing sector and explained its current role and mandate as set by Parliament.

Amy Gilbert-Jeans reminded Members that as set out in the Forward Plan, a position statement on our performance in relation to this report will be brought back to the November meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted

44 **Housing Revenue Account update to end of August 2019**

Members receive a report from Rob Ward, Accountant which provided the Housing Review Board with the current position to August 2019 and details of the year end forecast of the draft Housing Revenue Account for 2019/20. This account shows the main areas of anticipated income and expenditure on landlord activities for the year ahead. 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.

Rob apologised that the report had been a late addition to the agenda.

The report also provides the position of the HRA capital programme for both affordable housing and other capital items outside of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. Members requested that they receive a copy of the presentation.

RESOLVED that the Housing Revenue Account update to August 2019 be approved and it be recommended Cabinet.

Attendance List

Board members present:

Councillor Tony McCollum (Chairman)
Peter Sullivan, Tenant (Vice-Chairman)
Christine Drew, Independent Community Representative
Pat Gore, Tenant
Alek Williams, Tenant
Councillor Ian Hall
Councillor Dan Ledger
Councillor Helen Parr

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

Megan Armstrong
Paul Millar

Officers in attendance:

Sue Bewes, Landlord Services Manager
Natalie Brown, Information and Analysis Officer (Housing)
Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Service Lead Housing
Christopher Lane
Paul Lowe, Housing Enabling and Allocations Manager
Andrew Mitchell, Housing Needs and Strategy Manager
Giles Salter, Solicitor

John Taylor, Property and Asset Manager
Rob Ward, Accountant
Helen Wharam, Public Health Project Officer

Councillor apologies:
Cat Summers, Tenant
Councillor Kim Bloxham

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 Service Plan 2020/21	January 2020	Strategic Lead – Housing, Health & Environment
Draft Housing Revenue and Capital Budgets 2020/21	January 2020	Housing Accountant
Housing Revenue Account Update to end of December 2019	January 2020	Housing Accountant
Future Right to Buy spend	January 2020	Housing Needs and Strategy Manager
Homes Standard	January 2020	Housing Service Lead
Review of Fire Safety Policy	January 2020	Senior Technical Officer (Asset Management and Compliance)
Extension to gas servicing contract	January 2020	Senior Technical Officer (Asset Management and Compliance)
Extension to Asbestos servicing contract	January 2020	Senior Technical Officer (Asset Management and Compliance)
Poverty- A Local Picture	January 2020	Housing Service Lead
Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report October 2019	January 2020	Compliance Surveyor
Disrepair	March 2020	Property and Asset Manager
Stock Condition Survey	March 2020	Property and Asset Manager
Quarterly performance reports and regular reports		
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	Landlord 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
Formal Complaints	Annual report	Landlord Services Manager

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: 23 January 2020

Public Document: Yes

Exemption: None

Review date for release None

Subject: **Draft Housing Service Plan 2020-2021**

Purpose of report: This report presents the draft Service Plan for the Housing Service covering the period 2020-2021.

The Service Plan is a document 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 are identified through a number of SMART objectives.

The Plan also considers service challenges and pressures over the next three years, as well as climate change implications.

The Service Plan is presented in draft form for the Housing Review Board's consideration.

Recommendation: **To consider, comment on and approve the Housing Service Plan for 2020-2021.**

Reason for recommendation: To enable the Housing Review Board to influence the production of the Service Plan.

Officer: John Golding Strategic Lead – Housing, Health & Environment.

Financial implications: No specific financial implications at this stage. Finance will have continual input into the revision of the business plan and will advise on all financial elements of the service plan going forward.

Legal implications: There are no legal implications requiring comment.

Equalities impact: Medium Impact

There is an equalities section in the Service Plan, and our housing policies and practices have regard to equality and protected characteristics to ensure equality of access and service quality to all service users.

Climate change: High Impact
The Service Plan contains a section on climate change and a number of proposals for reducing the climate impact of our housing stock.

Risk: **Comments**

Low Risk

Links to background information: • .

Link to Council Plan: Outstanding Homes and Communities

1 Housing Service Plan 2019/2020

- 1.1 For some time now all the Council's services have organised an annual service planning exercise and produced a service plan, which sets out details of what the service does, achievements and future challenges and targets.
- 1.2 The Service Plan is produced using a corporate template and it shows how the service improvements link with the Council Plan. The plan identifies the key service objectives, challenges ahead and outlines areas of performance that we should measure. It also considers efficiencies, key risks, training needs, equalities, opportunities to do things differently and workforce planning.
- 1.3 The Service Plan links closely with our Housing Strategy and is designed to complement a number of other housing plans and policies as part of how we manage our own housing stock and the services we deliver in the private sector. There is also a strong link with the Council's Public Health Strategic Plan to ensure we help more people be and stay healthy, enhance self-care and community resilience and integrate and improve support for people in their own homes.
- 1.4 The Service Plan is intended as a working document and the service managers will cascade the contents of the plan at their team meetings. It is a good discipline to complete an annual statement of what the Service expects to achieve, set out in a structured way using a template and involving staff, service users and members in the process.
- 1.5 The Plan presented contains some ambitious objectives that are built upon challenges faced through current service delivery. The objectives are split between the four areas of the housing service (landlord Services, property and asset, housing needs and strategy and private sector housing) however a number of the objectives sit across teams, an example being the creation of a mental health strategy for housing, an area that is currently impacting on all of our services.
- 1.6 The headlines for the Service Plan include:
 - 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.
 - The need to raise our profile in the private sector around the work of the private sector housing team
 - 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.

1.7 The Housing Leadership team have enjoyed being able to refresh the Service Plan as a way of setting out how we plan to get through what looks to be another challenging year ahead with a number of uncertainties in relation to national housing policy as well as a fragile financial position.

1.8 The Service Planning Day involved powerful input from our frontline staff on the day to day challenges of the job, ideas for service improvement, and the needs of our customers.

1.9 The Service Plan (**Annex 1**) will be presented to the tenant groups over the next few months and cascaded to Housing staff through tea meetings and Service briefings.

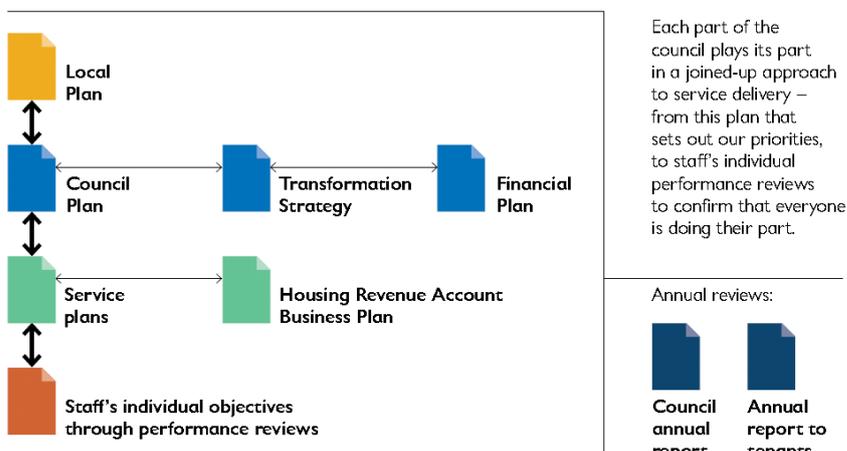
I welcome the Housing Review Board's input into the Service Plan before it is finalised and reported to Cabinet.

Service Planning 2020-21

Housing Service

Version 4.0

April 2020 – March 2021



Strategic Lead: John Golding

Service Lead: Amy Gilbert-Jeans

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Megan Armstrong

Housing Review Board Chair: Cllr Tony McCollum

Service Plan Template 2020-21: Contents Page

Section 1	Brief description of service and purpose(s)
Section 2	Key achievements in 2019-20
Section 3	Looking forward: what we will do in 2020-21
Section 3a	Looking forward: any Service challenges or pressures for next 3 years
Section 3b	Looking forward: options for doing things differently
Section 3c	Looking forward: what we will measure, how often and for whom
Section 4	Resources and workforce planning
Section 5	Training and development
Section 6	Service risks: current and new/emerging
Section 7	System Thinking
Section 8	Equalities and safeguarding
Section 9	Climate change

Notes for Strategic Leads and Service Leads:

*Certain parts of this form will be pre-populated. This will include your turnover, full time equivalent/headcount and absence rates.

Shaded areas are for guidance.

When you have completed your Service Plan:

- ✓ Save to O:\Service Plans. Final versions will be placed on the intranet/internet
- ✓ Communicate it to your staff
- ✓ Keep it under review – make it a live document which adds value!
- ✓ Use it to formulate individual objectives

Section 1 – Brief description of service and purpose(s)

What we do and who we deliver to

Our over-riding Service vision is to deliver a **decent home for all** residents of East Devon.

Our Housing Strategy sets out four key objectives:

- 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.

We have adopted the following purpose(s) where we have undertaken Systems Thinking reviews in Housing:

- To match the right people with the right home (voids & allocations).
- Do the right repair at the right time, get it right first time, and stay fixed (responsive repairs).
- Do the right service/repair at the right time, and leave safe (gas servicing).
- To collect the right amount of rent at the right time (rent management).
- Deal with customer emergencies promptly (Home Safeguard).
- Better housing, better health (private sector housing).

Our services are delivered consistent with the Council's Public Health Strategic Plan to ensure we help more people be and stay healthy, enhance self-care and community resilience, and integrate and improve support for people in their own homes.

Our approach to managing and tackling homelessness has been recently refreshed through our revised Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019- 2023. The strategy is based upon the results of a review of homelessness in our area and has resulted in establishing the following four priorities:

- Maximise prevention activities and outcomes;
- Increase accommodation options;
- Minimise rough sleeping;
- Improve health and wellbeing.

<p>How we deliver and ensure equal access</p>	<p>Our Housing Services are delivered through a combination of direct service delivery from our housing teams as well as a number of partnerships and contracting arrangements.</p> <p>All of the housing policies are subject to the completion of an equality impact assessment to ensure our services are fully accessible and we work in compliance with the council’s corporate equalities policy.</p> <p>We are regulated by the Social Housing Regulator and operate in compliance with the regulatory standards framework.</p> <p>We actively involve tenants in all aspects of our service to ensure wide consultation and the opportunity for tenants to influence the services we deliver.</p> <p>In our private sector housing team we deliver our services reactively and proactively and ensure enforcement action is taken in line with relevant legislation.</p> <p>We provide several methods of communication for customers to access our services and ensure our web pages are kept up to date.</p> <p>We promote the work of the Housing Service using a variety of methods, including the use of social media.</p>
<p>How we compare</p>	<p>We use HouseMark for periodic benchmarking of our services and report the results to our Housing Review Board.</p> <p>We encourage tenants to complete customer satisfaction surveys to give us feedback on our services.</p> <p>We are two years into a three year longitudinal study in partnership with a local housing association and Birmingham University to look closely at the impact of our services on current tenants as well as those trying to access our services.</p> <p>We are members of The Devon and Cornwall Housing Options Partnership (DCHOP). The group aims to improve the consistency of housing options and homelessness services across Devon and Cornwall Local Authorities by developing shared policies, practices and service standards to ensure equality of services.</p> <p>In Private Sector Housing we compare our services within Devon through the Devon Practitioners Group.</p> <p>We monitor our service delivery reporting annually to national and local bodies. We deliver some of our Disabled Facilities Grant adaptations through Framework agreements with contractors.</p>

	We have carried out significant amounts of reporting to Devon County Council for the Better Care Fund, which included comparing our statistics with the other Devon Local Authorities.
Statutory elements of the service	<p>Management of our Council housing stock (Landlord Services)</p> <p>Right to Buy Council homes</p> <p>Homelessness/Housing Advice (Homelessness Reduction Act 2017)</p> <p>Management of the housing register and operation of an allocations team to ensure our housing stock is allocated appropriately.</p> <p>Creation of a tenancy strategy</p> <p>Safeguarding responsibilities- Children’s Act 2004 and Care Act 2014</p> <p>Health and Safety legislation in relation to asset management including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management and control of asbestos regulations 2012 • Gas safety (installation and use) Regulations 1998 • Regulatory Reform (fire safety) Order 2005. <p>Private Sector Housing enforcement including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empty Homes • Houses in multiple occupation and housing standards in the private sector. • Private water supply assessment and enforcement • Caravan site licensing • Provision of Disabled Facilities Grant <p>Environmental pollution associated with rural drainage and statutory nuisance, public health and wellbeing.</p>
Current net budget (excludes Internal support charges and capital budget)	Housing Revenue Account annual turnover £18 million. General Fund budgets for Homelessness; Home Safeguard and Private Sector Housing.

Section 2 – Key achievements in 2019-20		
	<i>Briefly describe key achievements and what outcomes were created. This will inform Annual Report at year end.</i>	<i>Strategic link to Council Plan priorities</i>
1	<p><u>Housing Needs and Strategy</u></p> <p>Following the unfortunate fire that happened in Seaton when a block of privately rented flats caught alight following an arson attack, the Housing Options team provided continuous support and assistance to all those affected which included the re-housing of several households, many of whom were deemed vulnerable. The</p>	Encouraging communities to be outstanding

	<p>team worked over and above to ensure the residents needs could be met with appropriate offers of accommodation being made on both an emergency short term basis as well as longer term as many of the flats were subsequently classed as uninhabitable.</p> <p>As part of the recognition that many people who approach our housing options team have limited access to resources such as furniture and household items, the team have been looking for opportunities to re-use and recycle items as well as encouraging donations that can be gifted to residents who are struggling to fund household items. The team have recognised that often providing a 'shell' of a property without essential household items can disadvantage people significantly and can be a barrier in the ability of the household/individual to sustain a tenancy.</p> <p>Production and publication of the new Homelessness Strategy, including an ongoing action plan and a working review party which is meeting quarterly to monitor progress. The working party includes former service users who are helping us to track progress being made and assisting us in ensuring the strategy is fit for purpose as well as considering directly the needs and expectations of those who approach our service.</p> <p>Evolution of the Housing Options team to adapt to the considerable additional demand on the homelessness service, including the additional responsibilities of the Homelessness Reduction Act. As an example of the changes, the introduction of specialised posts aimed at specifically addressing a particular area of need within the service.</p> <p>Securing a total of £93,000 of additional funding from central government in order to tackle homelessness and in particular rough sleeping, including setting up the Housing First project within the district</p> <p>Completion of the second year of the 'Your Home, Your Wellbeing' study, a longitudinal study that is continuing to monitor factors that are impacting on the wellbeing of our tenants as well as people who are on our waiting list for Council housing. Our Information and Analysis Officer has attended a number of National events that has promoted the research and raised the importance of the links between housing and wellbeing.</p> <p>Purchase of a block of 12 flats in the centre of Exmouth, directly addressing the type of housing that is in the highest need in the most desired town in the District.</p>	
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2	<p><u>Property and Asset</u></p> <p>Mobilisation of the Integrated Asset Management Contract and demobilisation of the previous contracting arrangements. This has been an intense period of change where almost every process and procedure has had to be reviewed. Officers have undergone intensive training to ensure they can adapt to the new ways of working and have supported each other closely in order to maintain business as usual whilst these changes are embedded.</p> <p>A particularly challenging part of the project was ensuring a streamlined IT system interface, which involved close co-ordination of with the new contractor as well as Strata. This was entirely successful as on day 1 we immediately were able to apply all new elements of the system.</p> <p>Tenants are benefiting from an improved appointment system meaning appointments are arranged at first point of contact in order to ensure efficiencies and excellent communication for customers.</p> <p>We have reviewed actions that have arisen as a result of the most recent round of fire risk assessments for blocks of flats and have worked on a programme to escalate spend (through sign off by the Housing Review Board) to ensure we are prioritising fire safety maintenance works. Maintaining 100% compliance is a significant achievement, albeit a requirement to keep tenants safe in their homes.</p> <p>We have run a successful kitchen and bathroom modernisation programme that has received high levels of tenant satisfaction.</p>	Encouraging communities to be outstanding
3	<p><u>Landlord Services</u></p> <p>We have published a new Resident Involvement Strategy that sets out a new approach we will take to ensuring customer input is always considered in the delivery of our services. We consulted widely on the creation of the strategy with a number of stakeholders to ensure a wide range of views were considered.</p> <p>We have continued our focus on ensuring a robust approach is taken to fire safety inspections, these are undertaken routinely across the district ensuring the safety of residents living in communal blocks of flats at all times. We have maintained close links with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service and have recently received</p>	Encouraging communities to be outstanding

	<p>recognition for the excellent pro-active work we are undertaking to ensure this work remains a high priority.</p> <p>We have responded to rising levels of demand for our Estate Management services with a noticeable rise in dealing with more complex situations centred on a rise in tenants displaying more chaotic behaviour.</p> <p>We have invested in training our Estate Management Officers to a higher standard to deal with more complex cases, training has included investigative interviewing, prosecution interviewing, witness statements and adhering to national standards. This more professional approach is being taken which in many cases is leading to better efficiency meaning cases are being dealt with quicker.</p> <p>Rent collection has remained consistently over 99% of rent due despite an increase in more difficult, complex cases that have been hard to resolve requiring more intense support.</p> <p>Home Safeguard are meeting demand from a high volume of callers and increasingly customers with complex needs, providing a vital support service.</p>	
4	<p><u>Private Sector Housing</u></p> <p>16 Empty Homes have been brought back into use across the District through direct intervention from the team.</p> <p>Interrogation and utilisation of new data bases which is beginning to help identify and focus our private sector housing work, specifically energy efficiency, HMO's and EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) Regulation properties.</p> <p>Launched a Private Sector Housing social media campaign to pro-actively raise the profile of the work of the team.</p> <p>Research and implementation of the amendments to the Private Water Supply Regulations which includes more comprehensive sampling regime which affects 80% of the samples we take. The number of enforceable parameters has increased from 19 to 29.</p> <p>Maintained our Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) programme and introduced the Devon Wide Housing Assistance Policy. Offering more variety of grant assistance. An increase in ECO Flex top ups and Loan applications.</p>	Encouraging communities to be outstanding

Section 3 – Looking forward : what we will do in 2020-21 (service objectives)				
Key Service Objectives (please include consultation or procurement activity required) <i>Please highlight any projects so that they may be recorded and monitored in SPAR. See project guidance document for the definition of a project.</i>	Financial/ corporate resource	Lead Officers	Start date	End date
1) Outstanding place and environment				
Implement Phase 2 of the #inhoniton project by working with tenants in Honiton to identify areas we can leave wild or re-wild. Explore the potential for Nature Recovery Networks and wildlife improvement corridors on Housing land. 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 Review Account funding for Countryside resource	Landlord Services Manager	April 2020	April 2021
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. 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.	Housing Revenue Account	Housing Service Lead and Property and Asset Manager	Continue work started in 19/20	Ongoing
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.	Housing Revenue Account	Property & Asset Manager	April 2020	Ongoing

Invest in the improvement of the communal areas on housing estates, including tree planting and encouraging a greater diversity of wildlife.	Housing Revenue Account	Landlord Services Manager	April 2020	Ongoing
2) Outstanding homes and communities				
Produce a new Housing Strategy focusing on how we will deliver our services and how we will increase our supply of housing stock from 2020-2024.	Housing Revenue Account and General fund	Housing Service Lead	September 2020	December 2020
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.	Housing Revenue Account	Housing Service Lead	April 2020	September 2020
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.	General Fund	Housing Needs & Strategy Manager	April 2020	Ongoing
Undertake a feasibility study to explore a re-use and recycling furniture programme to assist residents with setting up their home, recognising the increasing amount of people arriving in our services destitute. The study will explore options for running this service as part of the day to day work we undertake and will encourage a more pro-active approach to setting up people to succeed and tackling furniture poverty.	Housing Revenue Account	Housing Needs & Strategy Manager	May 2020	Ongoing

Develop our existing tenancy support and sustainability service who are tasked with pro-actively supporting tenants to maintain tenancies, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Revenue Account	Landlord Services Manager	September 2020	Ongoing
Refresh and clearly define our offer of sheltered accommodation ensuring clarity and a commitment to the levels of support that can be offered.	Housing Revenue Account	Landlord Services Manager	December 2020	March 2021
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'.	Housing Revenue Account	Property & Asset Manager	April 2020	August 2020
Develop and consult tenants on an EDDC Home Standard that exceeds the Decent Homes Standard and that can be applied to all homes.	Housing Revenue Account	Housing Service Lead	December 2020	March 2021
Ensure that the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Integrated Asset Management Contract are closely monitored and standards set are met or exceeded.	Housing Revenue Account	Property & Asset Manager	April 2020	Ongoing
Ensure that all of our major building components are loaded onto our asset database, and the database maintained as items get replaced and upgraded.	Housing Revenue Account	Property & Asset Manager	June 2020	Ongoing
Publish a five year planned maintenance and cyclical decoration programme to provide tenants with visibility of planned works.	Housing Revenue Account	Property & Asset Manager	September 2020	Ongoing
Maintain up to date Fire Risk Assessments and publish documents and renewal dates.	Housing Revenue Account	Property & Asset Manager	September 2020	Ongoing

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'.	General Fund	Housing Needs & Strategy Manager	June 2020	September 2020
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. Introduce a Programme of Property MOTs.	Housing Revenue Account	Property & Asset Manager	July 2020	October 2020
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.	Housing Revenue Account	Property & Asset Manager	April 2020	Ongoing
Complete and publicise Phase 2 of the Your Home - Your Wellbeing Project.	Housing Revenue Account	Housing Needs & Strategy Manager	July 2020	March 2021
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 Revenue Account	Landlord Services Manager	April 2020	Ongoing
Identify areas of Housing land that are being used by residents without permission and ensure the appropriate signage is posted at all	Housing Revenue Account	Landlord Services Manager	September 2020	March 2021

entrances and exits to prevent future claims of easements over our land.				
3) Outstanding economic growth, productivity and prosperity				
Deliver the recommendations from the poverty report presented to Overview Committee in November 2019.	Housing Revenue Account & General Fund	Housing Service Lead	April 2020	Ongoing
Work towards a ratio of 70/30 spend on Planned to Responsive repair works.	Housing Revenue Account	Property & Asset Manager	September 2020	Ongoing
Provide and enable budgeting advice for tenants through our own staff and partner organisations (HomeMaker and CAB) to reduce the incidence of poverty.	Housing Revenue Account	Landlord Services Manager	April 2020	Ongoing
Create a comprehensive KPI dashboard of performance information to provide greater visibility of Service health and compliance assurance.	Housing Revenue Account	Housing Needs & Strategy Manager	December 2020	Ongoing
4) Outstanding council and council services				
Review multi-agency and key stakeholder relationships to ensure understanding of processes and information sharing is effective and GDPR compliant.	Housing Revenue Account	Housing Service Lead	September 2020	March 2021
Review the Service against the Social Housing Regulators Standards and ensure that we are fully compliant.	Housing Revenue Account	Housing Service Lead	October 2020	January 2021
Review compliance procedures by an external body to drive continuous improvement.	Housing Revenue Account	Property & Asset Manager	August 2020	October 2020
Increase the use of enforcement powers in the private rented sector to improve housing conditions and tenant safety. Pro-actively raise our profile with local landlords by attending local landlord forums	General Fund	Private Sector Housing Manager	April 2020	Ongoing

and directly engaging with managing agents to encourage standards to be raised which in turn will improve the living conditions of people residing in the private sector. Develop a property agents/landlords rating scheme.				
Deliver an increased range of home improvements and adaptations using the resources through the Better Care Fund.	General Fund	Private Sector Housing Manager	April 2020	Ongoing
Ensure that all Houses in Multiple Occupation are licenced and meet appropriate standards of fire and tenant safety.	General Fund	Private Sector Housing Manager	September 2020	Ongoing
Develop and introduce mobile/floating support service to assist vulnerable tenants, particularly those with mental health issues, sustain their tenancies.	Housing Revenue Account	Landlord Services Manager	April 2020	Ongoing
Improve our approach to safeguarding by implementing the protocol developed for Registered Providers.	Housing Revenue Account & General Fund	Housing Service Lead	April 2020	Ongoing
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 Revenue Account	Housing Needs and Strategy Manager	September 2020	Ongoing
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.	Housing Revenue Account & General Fund	Housing Service Lead	April 2020	Ongoing

**Section 3 a – Looking forward: any Service challenges or pressures for the next three years?
(Revenue/Capital)**

<p>1. Operating the Housing Revenue Account under the self-financing regime and managing high levels of debt whilst continuously improving services, tenants' homes, and delivering our development and climate change aspirations.</p>
<p>2. Managing the impact of Universal Credit and other potential changes under future welfare reforms, which could lead to a loss of income for the housing revenue account, as well as place more residents in financial hardship leading to increasing numbers of residents in the district living in poverty.</p>
<p>3. Continuing to manage the impact of Right to Buy sales as part of the government's drive towards home ownership, which continues to result in an overall depletion of the stock.</p>
<p>4. Maintaining 100% compliance at all times to ensure that tenants' homes are safe whilst continuously improving and implementing best practice in the sector.</p>
<p>5. Embedding the Integrated Asset Management contract and ensuring delivery of a high quality service, confirmed by tenant satisfaction responses and KPI measures. The social value elements of the contract need to be delivered.</p>
<p>6. Growing numbers of homelessness households approaching our housing options service for assistance as required under the Homelessness Reduction Act. This is leading to increasing usage of temporary accommodation. Addressing the increasing level of rough sleeping and customers presenting with a wide range of support needs.</p> <p>Continue to contribute towards the resettlement of refugees and asylum seekers as required through central government policy.</p>
<p>7. Continuing to enforce housing standards in the private sector and ensuring we are responding as appropriate in line with future changes to legislation.</p>
<p>8. Continuing to manage and meet housing needs and deliver a supply of new affordable homes.</p>
<p>9. Continuing to support our ageing population to stay in their own homes, manage the continuing rising demand for property adaptations across all tenures.</p>
<p>10. Overcoming the problem of insufficient subsidy/grant/opportunities to provide new affordable homes and the ongoing challenges of spending RTB receipts.</p>
<p>11. Providing value for money support services, integrating with social care and ensuring that the Better Care Fund is targeted to East Devon clients.</p>
<p>12. Implementing and combining the work of the Housing Service with the health and wellbeing priorities as set out in our Public Health Strategy.</p>
<p>13. Meeting the needs of the rising numbers of people suffering from mental health issues means we must respond appropriately and effectively in order to support people and limit consequences such as failure to sustain tenancies. This affects a number of front line teams and impacts staff and</p>

customers in different ways. There is the need for us to strengthen our links with the local mental health trust as well as specialist mental health support agencies.
14. Improving the energy efficiency of homes and reducing carbon emissions across the district to meet our aspiration of carbon neutrality and minimum levels of energy usage. Ensuring we are in line with central government aspirations for Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) ratings of dwellings and respond to changes accordingly.
15. Improving the lives of families presenting to us under the Early Help scheme.
16. Recruiting and training of professional/technical staff to have the right staff in the right job. Promoting housing as a career of choice in order to attract ambitious, forward thinking individuals who can continue to drive the housing service forward.
17. Creating and sustaining a positive, 'can do' culture in the Service with high staff morale and a Happy, Healthy, Here approach to the work environment.
18. Ensuring that our approach to compliance issues in relation to management of our stock and continuing to ensure this is core business with robust policies and procedures in place. Monitor closely outcomes from the Grenfell enquiry ensuring that all new legislation is implemented.
19. Investing in wider housing assets such as community centres; play areas; mobility scooter stores, green open spaces etc.
20. Using up to date stock condition data information, review and refresh the home improvement programme in relation to the delivery of new kitchens, bathrooms, electrical wiring, and heating systems.
21. Preparing the service for the 2021 digital switchover and manage the impact on the Home Safeguard operating equipment ensuring no disruption to customers of the service. Ensuring service resilience and business continuity during staffing absence, increased demand, severe weather etc.
22. Continuing to respond to and manage the increasing number of disrepair claims and ensuring the service is ready for Homes- Fitness for Human Habitation Act.
23. Implementing the actions from the Climate Change Action Plan to reduce carbon emissions and work towards becoming a carbon neutral Council.

Section 3 b– Looking forward: options for doing things differently – this section is vital due to the funding gap we face over the next few years.

Please outline any opportunities to do things differently using the following key strategic themes:

Commercialisation

Fit for purpose

Careful choices

1. Commercialisation-

- Extend the existing Handyperson scheme in the private sector and make a chargeable service
- Home Safeguard review- potential growth/future position.
- Housing Company – East Devon Homes Ltd.
- Disposal of poor performing stock/sites
- Garage site review
- Spending RTB receipts
- Review Service Charges
- Explore rent convergence opportunities
- Landlord Rating Scheme in the private sector- charging for the service.

2. Fit for Purpose-

- Structure of the Housing Service- ensuring the structure is right to meet demand with the right people in the right job.
- External compliance review
- Tenant Portal- digital agenda
- Stock Condition Survey
- Review of sheltered housing stock
- Review of skill set of Property and Asset team
- Review risks and business continuity of the Home Safeguard service

3. Careful Choices

- Rising demand in homelessness, impact on other services
- Home Safeguard
- Suitability and cost of support services

4. Generic opportunities to deliver services differently and better

5. There is the need to keep the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan under constant review to ensure we are managing debt appropriately, and due to the borrowing cap being lifted, looking for potential opportunities to deliver more affordable housing. We need to ensure we are maintaining strong links with potential partners and key stakeholders as there may also be opportunities to jointly deliver more affordable housing.

6. Continue to implement the OpenHousing management system with a drive towards tenant self- service portals being rolled out. This potentially will cut down on demand for services in the current format and will lead to a review of resources to make any necessary changes to service delivery. Open Housing should also be driving efficiencies with how we deliver services, ensuring that up to date data in relation to tenants and properties is stored appropriately to ensure ease of access to information.

7. Explore and review the 'housing hub' or 'customer and business improvement' concept as part of a focus on more generic working and a way of delivering more customer focused housing services.
8. Manage the new Integrated Asset Management contract and work in close partnership with our new contractors to provide a focus on asset management principles as opposed to reactive response works. The new contract will transform current service delivery and will bring a number of benefits in terms of a more customer focused approach to services. The contract will also set out to deliver some ambitious social value objectives that will benefit our tenants in a number of ways.
9. There is the need to undertake a complete review of the Home Safeguard service as a cost/benefit exercise to determine the best way forward for the service. We need to review the options for attracting more business at the same time as realistically assessing staffing requirements to ensure we can deliver a robust, reliable service given the critical nature of the service delivered. We need to carefully consider commercial opportunities as well as ensuring our business continuity plans are fully costed and fit for purpose.
10. Ensure a greater enforcement presence in the private sector to drive up standards and set examples of what can happen as a consequence of housing not being managed accordingly.
11. Respond to the findings of the longitudinal survey and the Viewpoint Survey and ensure we use the information to influence our service delivery.
12. Consider a proactive approach to adapting sheltered housing units to ensure that they are 'fit for purpose' rather than being reactive to needs as they arise.
13. Expand the use of social media to communicate with our customers to raise the profile of the work of the housing service.
14. Continue to work with Environmental Health, StreetScene and Countryside on shared goals and aspirations as set out in the Council plan.
15. Expand and maximise our membership of Advantage South West (ASW) to assist us in relation to resolving procurement challenges as well as other ASW housing driven projects.

Section 3 c – Looking forward: Changes to measures and performance indicators - what we will measure, how often and for whom					
Measure/indicator	How often – monthly, quarterly, bi-annually, annually	For whom? Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny	Link to Corporate Priorities (listed on page 3 1,2,3 or 4)	Responsible Officer for production of management information	Retain this measure (yes/no) or new

1. Rent collected against rent due	Monthly	Housing Review Board	Encouraging communities to be outstanding	Strategic Lead- Housing/ Housing Service Lead	Yes
2. Void period- end to end times	Monthly	Housing Review Board	Encouraging communities to be outstanding	Strategic Lead- Housing/ Housing Service Lead	Yes
3. Integrated Asset Management contract suite of KPIs	Monthly	Housing Review Board	Encouraging communities to be outstanding	Housing Service Lead	Yes
4. Number of new affordable homes delivered/ number of homes lost through RTB	Monthly	Housing Review Board	Encouraging communities to be outstanding	Strategic Lead- Housing/Housing Service Lead	Yes
5. Housing Strategy	Annually	Scrutiny Committee and Housing Review Board	Encouraging communities to be outstanding	Strategic Lead- Housing/ Housing Service Lead	Yes
6. Housing Revenue Account Business Plan	Quarterly	Housing Review Board	Encouraging communities to be outstanding	Strategic Lead- Housing/ Housing Service Lead	Yes
7. Housing Revenue Account budget	Quarterly	Housing Review Board	Encouraging communities to be outstanding	Strategic Lead- Housing/ Housing Service Lead	Yes
8. Private Sector Renewal Plan & Home Energy Conservation Act & Empty Homes Plans	Annually	Scrutiny Committee	Encouraging communities to be outstanding	Private Sector Housing Manager	Yes
9. Risk assessments of private water supplies	Quarterly	Scrutiny Committee	Encouraging communities	Private Sector Housing Manager	Yes

			to be outstanding		
10. Number of Council tenants downsizing	Monthly	To be captured in quarterly KPI monitoring report	Encouraging communities to be outstanding	Housing Needs and Strategy Manager	New
11. Number of licensed houses in multiple occupation	Monthly	Scrutiny Committee	Encouraging communities to be outstanding	Private Sector Housing Manager	New
12. End to end time for a receipt of a statement of need to granting approval	Quarterly	Scrutiny Committee	Encouraging communities to be outstanding	Private Sector Housing Manager	New
13. Number of Safeguarding referrals made (children's/adults)	Quarterly	Housing Review Board	Encouraging communities to be outstanding	Landlord Services Manager	New

Section 4 – Resources and workforce planning

Full time equivalents/Headcount as at 01/04/2019	FTE = 99.69 Headcount = 112
Turnover (April 2018 to March 2019)	Voluntary Turnover = 11.6% Voluntary & Non Voluntary Turnover = 11.6%
Absence (April 2018 to March 2019)	Days lost per person: 11.8 days

Section 5 – Training and development

Team based skills/development required – please identify training required that is not currently available	Who for	Expected outcome	When

1. All managers to ensure completion of mandatory management training modules	Managers	Awareness of all management policies to ensure implementation.	Ongoing
2. Following a review of health and safety training, all staff must ensure completion of all mandatory health and safety training requirements as set out in the H&S training matrix	All staff	Competent staff that can manage health and safety risks accordingly, ensuring safe systems of work.	Ongoing in line with refresher training requirements.
3. Customer Service and dealing with difficult customers	All staff	Improved customer service and complaint handling	During 2020/2021
4. Equalities	All staff	Awareness of our responsibilities	During 2020/2021
5. Safeguarding Children and Adults	All staff	Awareness of Council's policy and reporting procedures	During 2020/2021
6. Prevent (radicalisation) and Countylines	All front line staff	Awareness of how to report concerns	During 2020/2021
7. Data protection and information security	All staff	Awareness of the Council's policy and housing specific requirements	During 2020/2021
8. Social media policy and use	Selected staff	Appropriate and positive use of social media	During 2020/2021
9. Systems Thinking	Managers	Take forward the next series of reviews	During 2020/2021
10. Continuing professional development/ professional training as appropriate	Selected staff	Maintaining high standards of professional knowledge and conduct	Ongoing
11. Open Housing document and mobile device training	All staff	All users able to benefit from the housing management system	Ongoing
12. Mental Health awareness training	Selected staff	To ensure staff are competent and aware of our legal position in relation to dealing with	Ongoing

		tenants with mental health issues.	
13. Compliance training as required; to include but not limited to asbestos awareness/ fire safety/legionella and electrical safety.	Selected staff	To ensure staff are competent and aware of legal expectations in relation to the management of our buildings.	Ongoing

Section 6 – Risks			
New/emerging risks description – See attached Risk Register for current service risks	Impact [minor, significant, serious, major]	Likelihood [remote, unlikely, likely, very likely]	How managed/controlled What action will you take to reduce/minimise risk
1. Failure to protect against tenancy fraud	Serious	Very likely	Occupancy checks on tenants in temporary and general accommodation, Social housing fraud initiative, Tenancy 'sign up' checks, Tenancy Fraud Strategy.
2. Fraud in respect of Rent Collection, allocations and Right to Buy purchases	Significant	Unlikely	Internal procedures, Systems Thinking review, OpenHousing. Manual controls. Working in partnership with the fraud team to share information.
3. Loss of rental income	Serious	Very likely	New tenancy 'sign up', Systems Thinking Regime, Procedures for income management, Rent payment methods. Monitoring closely the impact of universal credit
4. Right to Buy (sales differ from Business Plan expectations) and spend not in line with DCLG agreement	Significant	Unlikely	Cancel agreement, Costs could be reduced, Loans could be increased.
5. Safeguarding adults and children	Serious	Very likely	Safeguarding Policy. Risk Assessments, Mobile Support Officer's Procedure Manual, Devon County 'Pathways'. Regular team meeting agenda item. Contractor toolbox talks

6. Sheltered housing improvements ensuring the stock is 'fit for purpose'	Significant	Unlikely	Funding availability, Tenant involvement. Liaising with Occupational Therapists to design sheltered housing appropriately at void stage.
7. A major homelessness incident	Major	Unlikely	Training for an emergency, Out of hours contact, Emergency and Rest Centre Plan, Devon County Council joint working.
8. Failure to achieve Housing Strategy targets	Major	Likely	Monitoring performance, Assign actions to lead managers, SPAR.net monitoring.
9. Failure to provide accurate or helpful housing/homelessness advice	Serious	Very likely	Staff training, Staff supervision, Scrutinise decisions, Procedures in place.
10. Failure to maintain a Housing Register	Serious	Very likely	Staff training, Policy and procedures, Devon Home Choice.
11. New-Build Council Homes/acquisition scheme failure	Major	Very likely	Robust development proposals, Development expertise, Homes England bids and grants, Joining Partnership South West development consortium.
12. Failure of Responsive Repairs contractor and failure to mobilise new contracting arrangements.	Serious	Very likely	Contract performance monitoring, Contract conditions.
13. A compliance failure on gas/solid fuel safety; fire safety; asbestos; health & safety; legionella	Major	Likely	Policies and procedures in place to ensure robust approaches taken to compliance. Priority given to this work. Competent contractors. Auditing and checking processes. Contract monitoring meetings
14. Loans taken out for self-financing	Serious	Unlikely	Set aside provision for repayment, Tracking Welfare Reform.
15. Unforeseen expenditure on council homes	Serious	Likely	Stock survey information required urgently, Insurance, Improvement programmes, HRA Business Plan refresh required.
16. Housing staff lone working	Major	Very likely	Policies in place to mitigate the risk, Home Safeguard monitoring, Health and Safety training, bespoke Lone Working arrangements.
17. Failure of private water supply	Serious	Likely	Water supply sampling, Risk assessments, Advice.
18. Fraud in respect of housing grants	Serious	Very likely	Capital expenditure monitoring, Monitoring of grant approvals.

19. Home Safeguard system failure/interruption to service. Failures due to digital switchover	Major	Very likely	Disaster recovery arrangements, maintenance contract, UPS system, staff trained on system failure. Joint agreement with Exeter City Council. Liaison with Telecare Services Authority to ensure position on digital switchover
20. Social Housing Regulator intervention due to a service failure	Major	Unlikely	Awareness of the standards expected by the Regulator with policies and procedures in place to achieve compliance. Housing Review Board, tenant involvement processes, customer complaint process

Section 7 – System thinking		
Which services have been reviewed	Responsive repairs and works to voids Allocations Rents Tenancy sign up process Aspects of private sector housing Mobile Support Services Estate Management	
Future systems to be reviewed	Service	Date of review
	New contracting arrangements will be closely supervised in order to incorporate Systems Thinking principles from the start. Private Sector Housing enforcement Tenancy condition enforcement Home Safeguard installations Disabled Facilities Grants LGSR Gas safety checks	During 2020 as part of mobilisation During 2020

Section 8 - Equalities and safeguarding		
New / emerging equalities risks	Impact Level [High, Medium, Low]	How managed/controlled

1. Housing Strategy	Medium	Equalities Analysis undertaken on the plan.
2. HRA Business Plan	Medium	Equalities Analysis undertaken on the plan.
3. Homelessness Strategy	High	Equalities Analysis refreshed with new strategy.
4. Private Sector Renewal Plan	Medium	Equalities Analysis refreshed with new strategy.
5. Devon Home Choice	High	Equalities Analysis undertaken on the Allocations policy.
6. Tenant Involvement Strategy	Medium	Equalities Analysis undertaken on the strategy.
7. Failure to raise a safeguarding concern	High	Equalities Analysis undertaken on the Safeguarding policy.
8. Poverty	High	Equalities Analysis undertaken as part of the research into the causes of poverty.

Section 9 – Climate change

There will be a corporate action plan around climate change but please note here any particular climate change initiatives which will be implemented within your service.

Council homes represent a significant element of the Council's carbon footprint meaning a high level of investment will be required to reduce carbon emissions.

As part of the climate change response we need to raise awareness of the climate emergency and assist tenants reduce their carbon footprint.

Outline of Climate Change initiative:

1. Team training on how to talk about the climate crisis and how to respond to likely question and enquiries.
2. Call tenant to explain that EDDC has declared a climate emergency and part of our response is to support communities to design and implement locally appropriate responses. We are calling 1 in 10 tenants randomly to try and gauge how tenants feel about the climate crisis and how interested they'd be in workshops in their area.
3. Have a conversation that elicits tenants' view of the crisis.
4. Talk about the sorts of workshops we could run and whether tenants would be interested.
5. Workshops could be:
 - a. A film to learn more about the climate and ecological emergency followed by a discussion
 - b. Workshops to co-plan local community responses such as
 - i. 1. rewilding estates and personal gardens
 - ii. 2. Community energy e.g. funding for solar panels (*Partners could include Ian Williams and Devon Community Energy Network*)
 - iii. 3. Food sustainability – e.g. accessing or growing local planet-positive food
 - c. Workshops to calculate about your own Carbon Footprint

<p>At least three workshops in each of Honiton, Axminster or Exmouth.</p> <p>Rewilding estates in collaboration with local tenants, as part of commitment to create Nature Recovery Corridors.</p> <p>Social media posts which promote and explain local actions, including videos of relatable tenants or residents who care a lot about actions and / or find a direct benefit from them.</p>
<p>The Stock Condition Survey will present a more accurate picture of the energy efficiency of our properties to give more accurate calculation of carbon footprint and influence Planned Works initiatives to increase the energy efficiency of our properties.</p>
<p>Review the energy performance of 102 St Andrews Road and use as part of our learning.</p>
<p>Measure the carbon footprint of Ian Williams's activities undertaken on behalf of the Council and tenants and include in our plans to become a carbon neutral council.</p>
<p>Train and upskill staff and tenants on climate change impacts and mitigation/adaptations.</p>
<p>Carry out a cost benefit analysis of Rodney Close Air source Heat pump system.</p> <p>Investigate the benefits of installing Ground Source heat pump systems.</p> <p>Review staff transport arrangements to identify 'green' methods of travelling – e.g. car share, e-car pool – meeting co-ordination etc.</p> <p>Review use of community centres and district offices.</p> <p>Ensure that climate change measures are included in all procurement activity (e.g. fuel/energy efficient vehicles and materials).</p> <p>Adopt an overarching action to consider the environmental impact of all activity at work (e.g. paper use – do we need to print, skype meetings over physical meetings where travel is required).</p> <p>Increase awareness of climate change and carbon use with our tenants through community development activities etc.</p>
<p>Support the Cosy Devon Partnership, the Local Energy Advice Partnership, and similar to enable networking, project collaboration and the testing of new solutions between local authorities, community energy organisations, installers and other interested parties to deliver domestic energy retrofit measures by seizing opportunities for grant funding and market offers.</p>
<p>Use enforcement and education powers to improve the energy efficiency of private sector homes encouraging landlords, tenants and owners to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.</p>



Report to: **Housing Review Board**

Date of Meeting: 23rd January 2020

Public Document: Yes

Exemption: None

Review date for release None

Subject: **Draft Housing Revenue and Capital Budgets 2020/21**

Purpose of report:

This report presents the draft HRA revenue and capital budgets for 2020/21. The draft budget has been adopted by Cabinet and are now for consideration by meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Housing Review Board.

Recommendations from these meetings will be presented back to the Cabinet on 5th February 2020 when members will finalise budget proposals to be recommended to Council.

Recommendation:

That the HRA draft revenue and capital estimates are approved and forwarded back to Cabinet.

That the future considerations are noted.

Reason for recommendation:
Officer:

There is a requirement to set balanced budgets for 2020/21

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Financial implications:

Financial details are contained within the report

Legal implications:

No legal observations are required

Equalities impact:

Low Impact

An analysis of budget changes has not highlighted areas that give rise to any equality issues that need highlighting.

Climate change:

High Impact

The budget approval gives the Council the resources necessary to undertake its business which will significantly contribute to the carbon footprint of the Council.

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: 2020/21 Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Book

Link to Council Plan: Outstanding Homes and Communities
Outstanding Council and Council Services

1. Process

- 1.1 The Constitution requires Cabinet to approve the draft revenue and capital budget prior to consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Housing Review Board undertakes the same function in relation to the Housing Revenue Account budgets.
- 1.2 Recommendations from these two meetings will be reported back to Cabinet at its meeting on 5th February, along with any comments from the business community. At this meeting members will be required to recommend to Council a budget and the Council Tax requirement for 2020/21.
- 1.3 At the same time as preparing the draft budget, draft service plans have been prepared for member consideration. Service plans and budgets are aligned and link back to the Council Plan.

2 Housing Revenue Account Budget

The Overall Financial Picture

- 2.1 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is underpinned and influenced by the business plan, this plan needs to be refreshed to consider:
 - The implication of a new maintenance contractor,
 - to reflect additional work on asset management planning and to further develop management information from the Housing IT system,
 - the end of rent reductions,
 - implication of Universal Credit,
 - a need to reconsider the debt level and use of Right to Buy Receipts linked to future development ambitions, and
 - now the implications of the climate change action plan.

This work is now planned for 2020/21 to be included in 2021/22 budget, the picture for the draft 2020/21 budget is very much stand still in that; it provides an acceptable surplus which will need to be prioritised between contributing to the purchase programme to counteract the impact of continuing Right to Buy (RTB) sales and ensures capital receipts are spent and not returned to government against the ambitions in the Council Plan on climate change. The budget also continues to invest in our existing properties at a similar level.

- 2.2 The Governments Rent Reduction Policy came to end in 2019/20 and the draft budget assumes an increase in Council House rents of 2.7% (September CPI + 1%) with a factor included for a reduction in stock numbers giving £17.6m, an increase of £0.460m. This results in an average weekly rent for 2020/21 of £81.23. No increase is proposed on garage rents with the current average weekly rent being of £12.50.
- 2.3 The HRA currently has 4,190 dwellings and 738 garages.

Draft Revenue Budget 2020/21

- 2.4 The budget book details the draft estimates for 2020/21.
- 2.5 The budget has been prepared to maintain council homes to a high standard with a comprehensive planned programme of expenditure, adaptations and routine repairs. The 2020/21 draft budget maintains significant sums for:
- Major repairs totalling £4.4m covering capital component related items such as kitchens and bathrooms including separately categorised change of tenancy expenditure for works on void properties.
 - Day to day repairs, programme maintenance and one off works totalling £4m.

HRA BUDGET SUMMARY 2020 BY SERVICE LINE			2019 Budget £	2020 Budget £	Variance £
1 INCOME	1 Gross Property Rent inc Garages	1 Gross Property Rents	-17,107,710	-17,567,740	-460,030
		2 Garage Rents	-425,530	-425,530	0
	2 Other Income	1 Other Income	-542,120	-542,120	0
1 INCOME Total			-18,075,360	-18,535,390	-460,030
2 EXPENDITURE	1 Repairs And Maintenance - General	1 Responsive Maintenance	1,754,170	1,925,840	171,670
		2 Annual Programmed Maintenance	947,000	1,123,300	176,300
	2 Repairs And Maintenance - Special	1 Repairs And Maintenance - Special	1,298,350	1,396,150	97,800
	3 Supervision And Management	1 Supervision And Mgt General	4,032,725	4,307,820	275,095
		2 Supervision And Mgt Special	1,727,490	1,698,700	-28,790
	4 Other Expenditure	1 Other Exp non Sewerage	226,120	227,900	1,780
		2 Sewerage	54,120	54,230	110
5 Capital Charges & Bad Debt	Adjustment to Bad Debt Provision	0	0	0	
2 EXPENDITURE Total			13,270,515	11,684,360	-1,586,155
3 FINANCING	1 Interest on Balances	(blank)	-49,730	-39,000	10,730
	2 Loan Principal & Interest repayments	(blank)	2,523,970	2,503,900	-20,070
	3 Other	(blank)	-1,159,940	-1,159,940	0
	4 MIRS	(blank)	-2,070,610	209,510	2,280,120
3 FINANCING Total			-756,310	1,514,470	2,270,780
4 CAPITAL	3 MIRS for MJRREP	(blank)	4,406,690	4,410,000	3,310
4 CAPITAL Total			4,406,690	4,410,000	3,310
Surplus/Defecit			-1,154,465	-926,560	227,905

- 2.6 The HRA draft budget currently shows a surplus of **£0.927m**; this level of surplus in the past has been directed to replacement housing to match the Right to Buy receipts. It is proposed that this sum is held for the purpose of replacement housing and/or climate change measurers as detailed below. Reports on priority and proposed actions to be considered will be presented to the Housing Review Board with recommendations to Cabinet to approve budget spend within 2020/21 and are discussed within section 4 of this report.

- 2.7 The Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2040 includes a number of items relevant for the HRA. A financial assessment of the costs involved are difficult to determine and a number of areas are unknown at this stage. It is clear that there are significant financial implications for the HRA and the initial assessment will be refined over time.
- 2.8 The estimated **revenue costs are £252k** (not all ongoing) but there will be additional costs when contractors are engaged and implications are factored into future tenders and contracts. The approximate **capital cost is £42m**.
- 2.9 The HRA Balance is maintained within the adopted range of £2.1m and £3.1m, being projected to be retained £3.1m level at the end of 2020/21. There is an additional £1.6m being held in the HRA debt Volatility Fund which remains unchanged.

3 H.R.A. Capital Programme & Affordable Housing Investment

- 3.1 As mentioned earlier the current business plan and previous budgets have utilised any surplus to fund the affordable housing investment programme. This assumption has been challenged in the last couple of years with the required reserves for investment in Fire Risk Assessment works in 2018/19 and with the focus on climate change this year and going forward.
- 3.2 The 2020/21 budget keeps the current capital programme funded through other capital receipts at the 19/20 level and maintains the assumption that Affordable Housing will be purchased or developed at the levels which ensure the council retains all Right to Buy capital receipts. In order to maintain this approach in 2020/21 the 70% funding of the £5.8m required expenditure will be achieved through borrowing.
- 3.3 Initial modelling at the Public Works Loan Board rate of 3.15% on a loan of £6m, including the councils 20basis point certainty rate reduction, will add an additional revenue interest requirement to the HRA of £190k. The point at which the loan is required during 2020/21 is a Treasury Management decision but all future budgets will consider the increased interest requirement.

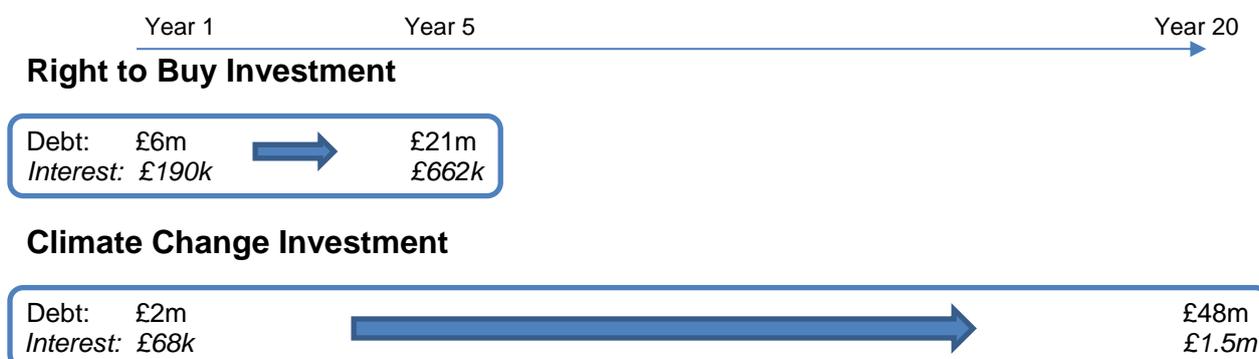
HRA CAPITAL BUDGET SUMMARY 2020			2019 Budget	2020 Budget	Variance
			£	£	£
4 CAPITAL	1 Capital Programme	1 Social Service Adaptations	250,000	250,000	0
		2 Remodelling of Sheltered Accom.	100,000	100,000	0
		3 Major improvements & Other	150,000	150,000	0
	2 Affordable Housing	1 Q1 Required Expenditure	0	1,126,367	1,126,367
		2 Q1 Required Expenditure	414,856	1,232,194	817,338
		3 Q3 Required Expenditure	532,678	1,093,736	561,058
		4 Q4 Required Expenditure	1,759,399	2,432,475	673,077

4 Future Considerations

- 4.1 In 2020/21, along with the revision of the business plan for the aforementioned reasons, the impact of a potential change in the capital investment agenda must also be considered with its impact on the council's debt levels, treasury management strategy and revenue interest requirements considered.
- 4.2 The below table sets out the affordable housing investment requirements to prevent the repayment of right to buy receipts using actual data where available and prior year historical averages of RTB sales where not. If borrowing were taken out to fund each of the below years, additional interest charges would rise from £190k after year 1 to £662k after year 5.

Year	Quarter 1 £	Quarter 2 £	Quarter 3 £	Quarter 4 £	TOTAL
2020.21	1,126,367	1,232,194	1,093,736	2,432,475	5,884,772
2021.22	234,751	1,072,804	1,050,465	2,204,577	4,562,596
2022.23	597,358	111,917	843,022	1,389,202	2,941,499
2023.24	743,885	722,308	843,022	1,389,202	3,698,417
2024.25	743,885	722,308	843,022	1,389,202	3,698,417

- 4.3 The estimated capital investment required in the current housing stock to become climate neutral by 2040 currently stands at £42m and equates to £10k per property. If we assume a linear 5% of properties per year are upgraded and consider a marginally reducing stock and inflate the expenditure requirements at current CPI levels, this equates to a 20 year annual investment of from £2.1m in year 1 to £2.7m in year 20.



- 4.4 Simplistic Modelling of including both of the above Capital Investment Requirements on the current inputs into the 40 year business plan model dramatically alters the debt profile of the HRA over time. The current business plan has the HRA debt free by 2056 whereas adding in the above additional debt has the potential to delay this by 25 years or more. An annotated graph of the simplistic modelling can be found in Annex 2.
- 4.5 A significant amount of additional scenario analysis, stress testing of variables such as interest and inflationary rates combined with differing asset management plans is required when the business plan is refreshed to ensure all of the councils HRA objectives can be met.

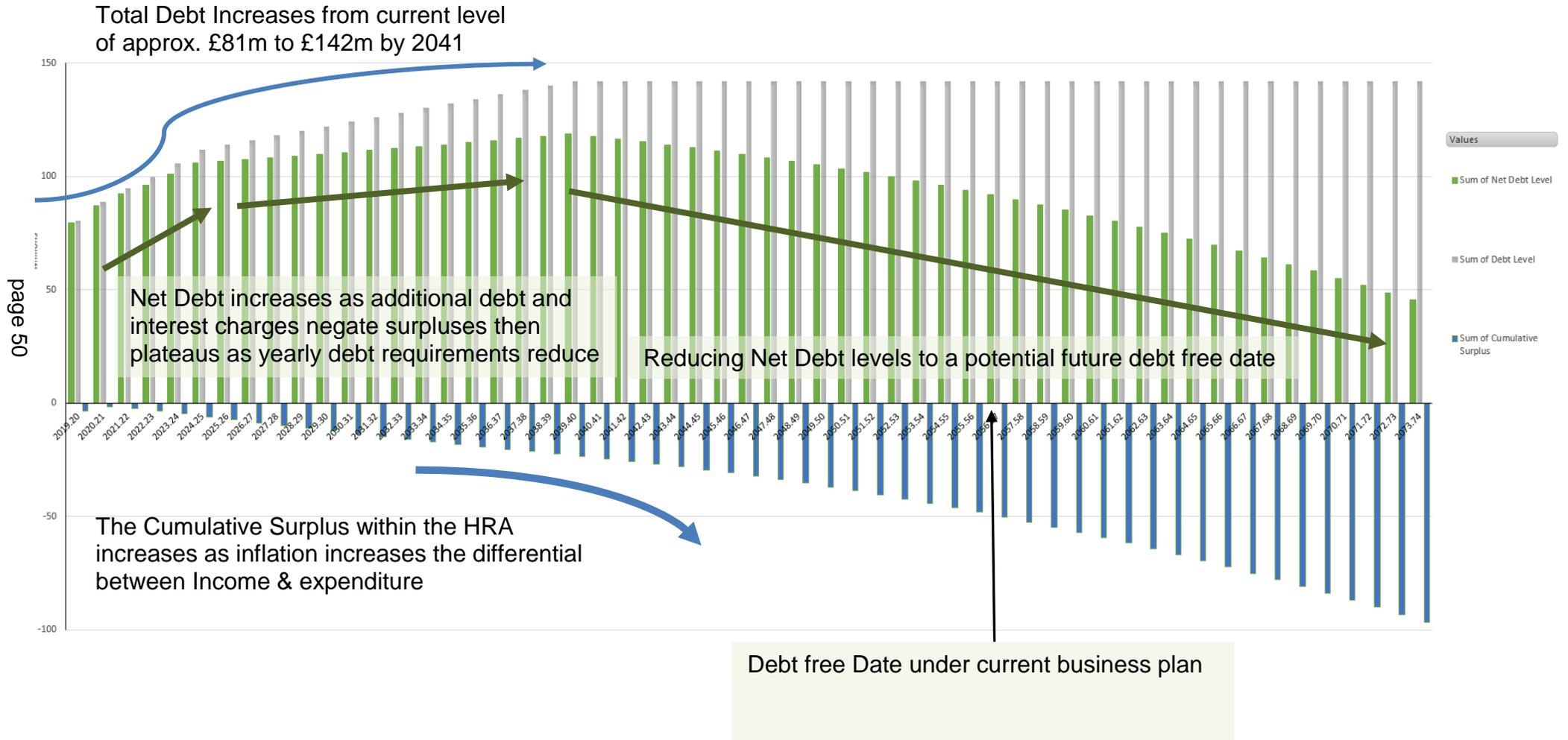
Appendix 1: HRA Budget Book

HRA BUDGET SUMMARY 2020 BY SUBJECTIVE SUMMARY			2019 Budget £	2020 Budget £	Variance £
1 INCOME	1 Gross Property Rent inc Garages	Contributions Only -Not Grants	0	0	0
		Customer Receipts	-17,533,240	-17,993,270	-460,030
		Premises Costs	0	0	0
	2 Other Income	Contributions Only -Not Grants	-9,000	-9,000	0
		Customer Receipts	-533,120	-533,120	0
		Government And Ola Grants	0	0	0
	Supplies & Services	0	0	0	
1 INCOME Total			-18,075,360	-18,535,390	-460,030
2 EXPENDITURE	1 Repairs And Maintenance - General	Contributions Only -Not Grants	0	0	0
		Customer Receipts	0	0	0
		Employment Costs	0	20,100	20,100
		Internal Frontline Recharg Exp	270	280	10
		Premises Costs	2,700,900	3,028,760	327,860
		Supplies & Services	0	0	0
		Transport Costs	0	0	0
	2 Repairs And Maintenance - Special	Customer Receipts	0	0	0
		Employment Costs	0	0	0
		Internal Corporate Recharg Exp	0	0	0
		Premises Costs	1,286,180	1,383,980	97,800
		Supplies & Services	12,050	12,050	0
		Transport Costs	120	120	0
	3 Supervision And Management	Contributions Only -Not Grants	-5,330	-5,410	-80
		Customer Receipts	-22,460	-21,550	910
		Employment Costs	3,382,110	3,240,830	-141,280
		Internal Corporate Recharg Exp	1,200,870	1,406,410	205,540
		Internal Frontline Recharg Exp	579,110	590,690	11,580
		Internal Rechg Income	-432,030	-206,580	225,450
		Other Income	-480	-480	0
		Premises Costs	505,900	466,630	-39,270
		Supplies & Services	379,975	379,230	-745
		Third Party Payment	0	0	0
		Transport Costs	172,550	156,750	-15,800
	4 Other Expenditure	Contributions Only -Not Grants	0	0	0
		Customer Receipts	-1,000	-1,020	-20
		Employment Costs	10,540	9,970	-570
Government And Ola Grants		0	0	0	
Internal Corporate Recharg Exp		0	0	0	
Internal Frontline Recharg Exp		35,120	35,820	700	
Premises Costs		104,470	105,120	650	
Supplies & Services		118,940	120,040	1,100	
Transport Costs		12,170	12,200	30	
5 Capital Charges & Bad Debt	Capital Chg	3,230,540	950,420	-2,280,120	
	Supplies & Services	0	0	0	
2 EXPENDITURE Total			13,270,515	11,684,360	-1,586,155
3 FINANCING	1 Interest on Balances	Contributions Only -Not Grants	0	0	0
		Interest Paid	5,000	5,000	0
		Interest Received	-54,730	-44,000	10,730
	2 Loan Principal & Interest repayments	Capital Chg	0	0	0
		Interest Paid	2,523,970	2,503,900	-20,070
	3 Other	Capital Chg	-1,159,930	-1,159,930	0
		Interest Received	-10	-10	0
		Other Income	0	0	0
	4 MIRS	Capital Chg	-2,070,610	209,510	2,280,120
		Employment Costs	0	0	0
		Mirs Transfer To Bs Reserves	0	0	0
		Other Income	0	0	0
		Repayment Of Principal	0	0	0
3 FINANCING Total			-756,310	1,514,470	2,270,780
4 CAPITAL	3 MIRS for MJRREP	Mirs Transfer To Bs Reserves	4,406,690	4,410,000	3,310
		Other Income	0	0	0
4 CAPITAL Total			4,406,690	4,410,000	3,310
Surplus/Defecit			-1,154,465	-926,560	227,905

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET DETAIL 2020				2019	2020				
Cost Centre				Budget	Budget	Variance			
				£	£	£			
=1 INCOME	=1 Gross Property Rent inc Garages	=1 Gross Property Rents	Rent Dwellings	-17,107,710	-17,567,740	-460,030			
		=2 Garage Rents	Rent From Garages	-425,530	-425,530	0			
	=2 Other Income	=1 Other Income	Hra Other Income	-496,250	-496,250	0			
			Sold Prop Recvy Of Costs	-45,870	-45,870	0			
1 INCOME Total				-18,075,360	-18,535,390	-460,030			
=2 EXPENDITURE	=1 Repairs And Maintenance - General	=1 Responsive Maintenance	Blocked Drains	270	280	10			
			Cavity Fill Problems	60,000	14,800	-45,200			
			Day To Day Repairs	933,600	39,060	-894,540			
			Drain Clearance	110,300	35,300	-75,000			
			Drain Repair	50,000	50,000	0			
			Electrical Heating	100,000	102,000	2,000			
			Electrical Repairs	290,000	45,800	-244,200			
			External Light	0	0	0			
			Fire 15 Bonners Causeway Pr049	0	0	0			
			Fire 17 Furzehill Pr038	0	0	0			
			Fire Northfield Pr071	0	0	0			
			Garage Repairs	30,000	150,000	120,000			
			Gas Repairs	0	0	0			
			New Boilers - Reactive	70,000	71,400	1,400			
			Pvcu Wndw Repairs	110,000	37,200	-72,800			
			Rechargeable Works (Hsg)	0	0	0			
			Responsive Door Replacement	0	0	0			
			Storm Damage Ins Claim	0	0	0			
			Water Serv Renewal	0	0	0			
			Wndw Renewal	0	0	0			
			Ppp Repairs	0	1,380,000	1,380,000			
			Ppp Repairs Exclusions	0	0	0			
			Non Ppp Properties Repairs	0	0	0			
			lw Out Of Hours	0	0	0			
			Decent Homes Std Improves	0	0	0			
			=2 Repairs And Maintenance - Special	=1 Repairs And Maintenance - Special	=2 Annual Programmed Maintenance	Automated Door Servicing	0	0	0
						Clos-O-Mat Servicing	1,000	1,000	0
						Communal Areas Mtce	37,000	37,740	740
						Electrical Inspections	100,000	100,000	0
						Emergency Light Testing	0	0	0
						External Painting	25,000	200,000	175,000
						Fire Alarms Test & Repair	20,000	20,000	0
						Fire Extinguisher Testing	0	0	0
						Gas Boilers Servicing	450,000	450,000	0
						Interior Decoration	20,000	20,400	400
	Legionella Testing - Hra Props	20,000				20,000	0		
	Lift Maintenance	85,000				85,000	0		
	Pat Testing	1,000				1,000	0		
	Service Rainwater Harvest Sys	8,000				8,160	160		
	Smoke & Co Alarms	0				0	0		
	Solid Fuel Servicing	180,000	180,000	0					
	=2 Repairs And Maintenance - Special	=1 Repairs And Maintenance - Special		Asbestos Surveys	270,000	270,000	0		
				Asbestos Works	150,000	150,000	0		
				Chimney Repairs	30,000	30,000	0		
				Community Initiative Fund	25,000	25,000	0		
				Condensation	0	0	0		
				Dampness Eradication	30,000	30,000	0		
				Energy Perf Certificates	20,000	20,000	0		
				Fence Prog	30,000	30,600	600		
				Flat Roof Repairs	10,000	10,200	200		
Fra Surveys				0	0	0			
Fuel Efficiency Measures				120,000	120,000	0			
Gutter Repair/Improvement				85,000	85,000	0			
Handyperson Scheme				100,300	100,300	0			
Improvement Voucher Schm				10,000	10,000	0			
Loft Insulation				10,000	100,000	90,000			
Minor Schemes	10,000	10,000	0						
Path Repairs	10,000	10,000	0						
Sanctuary Schm	8,000	8,000	0						
Social Services Adaptations	100,000	102,000	2,000						
Subsidence	30,000	30,000	0						
Fire Equip Servicing And Repair	0	0	0						
Fire Related Building Works	250,000	255,000	5,000						
Fra Building Works - Old Cc	50	50	0						

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET DETAIL 2020				2019	2020	Variance		
			Cost Centre	Budget	Budget			
				£	£	£		
= 3 Supervision And Management	= 1 Supervision And Mgt General		Council House Sales	31,690	32,220	530		
			Housing Needs & Strategy	849,735	908,430	58,695		
			Hra Repairs And Mtce	26,940	27,480	540		
			Hra Supervision And Management	757,220	936,630	179,410		
			Hsg Asset & Property Team	1,094,420	1,124,160	29,740		
			Hsg Landlord Services	1,208,990	1,207,340	-1,650		
			Service Lead Housing	72,210	0	-72,210		
			Strat Lead Hsg Health & Env	-8,480	71,580	80,060		
			Tv Lic	0	-20	-20		
			= 2 Supervision And Mgt Special		Anti Social Behaviour	13,000	13,000	0
					Asw Procurement	15,000	15,000	0
					Business Plan Review	5,000	5,000	0
					Caretaking And Wndw Cleaning	410	410	0
					Choice Based Lettings	10,000	10,000	0
				Commnl Areas Cleaning	146,560	153,030	6,470	
				Communal Areas Heating	26,600	18,430	-8,170	
				Communal Areas Lighting	35,720	33,530	-2,190	
				District Offices (Housing)	9,540	11,290	1,750	
				Estate Management	25,050	25,050	0	
				Housing Tenants Survey	5,000	5,000	0	
				Hsg Comm Centres	38,010	16,960	-21,050	
				Maintenance Of Grounds	321,000	327,420	6,420	
			Mobile Support Officers	842,040	828,670	-13,370		
			Mutual Exchanges	5,000	5,100	100		
			New Build Feasibility	15,000	15,000	0		
			Play Areas - Housing	35,520	36,240	720		
			Recommissioning Costs	5,000	5,000	0		
			Sewage Trmnt Works	4,750	4,850	100		
			Shared House St Andrews Rd Exm	6,000	6,430	430		
			Sheltered Schemes Equip Maint	85,000	85,000	0		
			Stock Condition Survey	75,000	75,000	0		
			Targeted Families Programme	0	0	0		
			Tenants Conference	3,290	3,290	0		
			Rental Officer Management	0	0	0		
		= 4 Other Expenditure	= 1 Other Exp non Sewerage	38 St Pauls Rd, Heathpark	5,170	5,170	70	
					Best Value Housemark	15,000	15,000	0
					Community Development Work	20,000	19,990	-10
					Eviction Expenses	8,120	8,120	0
					Gully Cleaning	10,000	10,000	0
					Honiton Together	0	0	0
					Housing Matters	0	0	0
					Landscaping	5,000	5,100	100
					Minor Management Schm	2,000	2,000	0
					Pest Control Expenses	3,050	3,050	0
					Removal Exp Downsizing	50,000	51,000	1,000
					Road Repairs	7,620	7,770	150
					Rubbish Removal/House Clear	23,270	23,640	370
			Signs On Estates	1,020	1,020	0		
			Storage	2,030	2,030	0		
			Tenant Participation	36,160	35,590	-570		
			Tenant Scrutiny	5,250	5,270	20		
			Tree Felling And Planting	32,500	33,150	650		
	= 2 Sewerage			All St Porch Cottages Small	290	470	180	
				All St Socks Smallridge 1	140	370	230	
				Broadhembury Brookside 10	210	220	10	
				Chardstock 1 And 2 The Parade	160	150	-10	
				Chardstock 3 And 4 The Parade	210	220	10	
			Chardstock Cuckholds Pit 22	150	410	260		
			Coombeypyne Rousdon 1 To 4 Peek	180	180	0		
			Farringdon Glebe Cottages 2	130	130	0		
			Hawkchurch Hawkmoor 31	190	660	470		
			Hawkchurch Red Pit 30	220	240	20		
		Hawkmoor Bore Hole	0	0	0			
		Kilmington Whitford Rd 35	290	290	0			
		Luppitt Fortfield Wick 15	200	200	0			
		Rewe Latchmore Green 41	200	200	0			
		Septic Tank Emptying	0	0	0			
		Sewerage Repairs And Mtce	51,080	50,000	-1,080			
		Yarcombe Marsh Cottages 21	470	490	20			
	= 5 Capital Charges & Bad Debt	= Adjustment to Bad Debt Provision	Prov For Bad Debts Increase	0	0	0		
			= Depreciation	Hra Depreciation Impairment	3,230,540	950,420	-2,280,120	
2 EXPENDITURE Total				13,270,515	11,684,360	-1,586,155		
= 3 FINANCING	= 1 Interest on Balances	= (blank)	Interest On Balance	-49,730	-39,000	10,730		
			Loan Repayments	2,523,970	2,503,900	-20,070		
	= 2 Loan Principal & Interest repayments	= (blank)		Hra Gain On Disposals	-3,161,910	-3,161,910	0	
				Hra Loss On Disposals	2,001,980	2,001,980	0	
				Int On Pension Scheme Liabilit	0	0	0	
	= 3 Other	= (blank)		Interest Sale Of Cncl House	-10	-10	0	
				Hra Acumulative Absences Mirs	0	0	0	
	= 4 MIRS	= (blank)		Hra Mirs Gain To Cap Rcts	3,161,910	3,161,910	0	
				Hra Mirs Loss W/Out Asset Cos	-2,001,980	-2,001,980	0	
				Hra Mirs Reverse Depn Imp	-3,230,540	-950,420	2,280,120	
				Hra Tfer To Hra Earmarked Res	0	0	0	
				las 19 Pension Adj Hra	0	0	0	
				Mirs Mrprov Hra To Caa	0	0	0	
				Tfr To From Hra Balance	0	0	0	
				Hra Reval Ppe Reval Res Oci&E	0	0	0	
			Hra Rev Oci&E Reval Ppe	0	0	0		
3 FINANCING Total				-756,310	1,514,470	2,270,780		
= 4 CAPITAL	= 3 MIRS for MJRREP	= (blank)	Tfr To Major Repairs Acc	4,406,690	4,410,000	3,310		
4 CAPITAL Total				4,406,690	4,410,000	3,310		
Surplus/Defecit				-1,154,465	-926,560	227,905		

Appendix 2: Right to Buy & Climate Change Investment Debt Profile Impact





Report to: **Housing Review Board**

Date of Meeting: 23 January 2020

Public Document: Yes

Exemption: None

Review date for release None

Subject: **Housing Revenue Account update to end of December 2019**

Purpose of report:

This report provides the Housing Review Board with the current position to December 2019 and details of the year end forecast of the draft Housing Revenue Account for 2019/20. This account shows the main areas of anticipated income and expenditure on landlord activities for the year ahead. 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.

The report also provides the position of the HRA capital programme for both affordable housing and other capital items outside of the Housing Revenue Account.

Recommendation:

The Housing Review Board is invited to approve the report on the Housing Revenue Account update to December 2019 and recommend it to Cabinet

Reason for recommendation:

To give the Housing Review Board an involvement opportunity to contribute towards the housing service, accounts, spending, budget management and influence areas of future expenditure.

Officer:

Rob Ward – Finance

rob.ward@eastdevon.gov.uk

01404 515616 ext 2357

Financial implications:

Financial details are contained within the report

Legal implications:

No legal observations are required

Equalities impact:

Low Impact

An analysis of budget changes has not highlighted areas that give rise to any equality issues that need highlighting.

Climate change:

High Impact

The budget approval gives the Council the resources necessary to undertake its business which will significantly contribute to the carbon footprint of the Council.

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:

2019/20 Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Book

Link to Council Plan:

Outstanding Homes and Communities
Outstanding Council and Council Services

1 Housing Revenue Account Reserves Opening Balances

- 1.1 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is underpinned and influenced by the HRA Business Plan. The budget process utilises the principles contained within it, notably, to maintain an acceptable surplus whilst at the same time maintaining stock levels through the purchase programme to counteract the impact of continuing right to buy sales.
- 1.2 The year to date and forecast position of the HRA to the end of August 2019 was presented at the last HRB.
- 1.3 The following tables provide an update on the position of the HRA to the end of December 2019. The implementation in the year of the new maintenance contract, the interim contract provided by Ian Williams to cover the shortfall of the previous contractors combined with the clean-up of the residual invoices relating to the old contract has caused significant pressures on responsive maintenance spend versus budgets. These impacts are expected to in part be mitigated by underspends and savings made elsewhere across the HRA.

2 Housing Revenue Account – current position to December 2019 & Year End Forecast Position

- 2.1 The table below shows a summary of the HRA position compared to the phased budget for this period as well as the forecast position for the year end compared to the revenue budget set for the year. A review of required accrued expenditure to be taken from the current year's revenue is under way.

Year to Dec 2020				2019/20 Forecast		
Actuals	Budget	Variance		Forecast	Budget	Variance
(13,803,767)	(13,556,520)	(247,247)	TOTAL INCOME	(17,940,916)	(18,075,360)	134,444
10,521,417	15,341,660	(4,820,243)	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	17,843,286	17,676,515	166,771
1,260,190	(1,137,210)	2,397,400	COST OF FINANCING	(712,377)	(756,310)	43,933
			HRA (Surplus)/Deficit	(810,007)	(1,155,155)	345,148

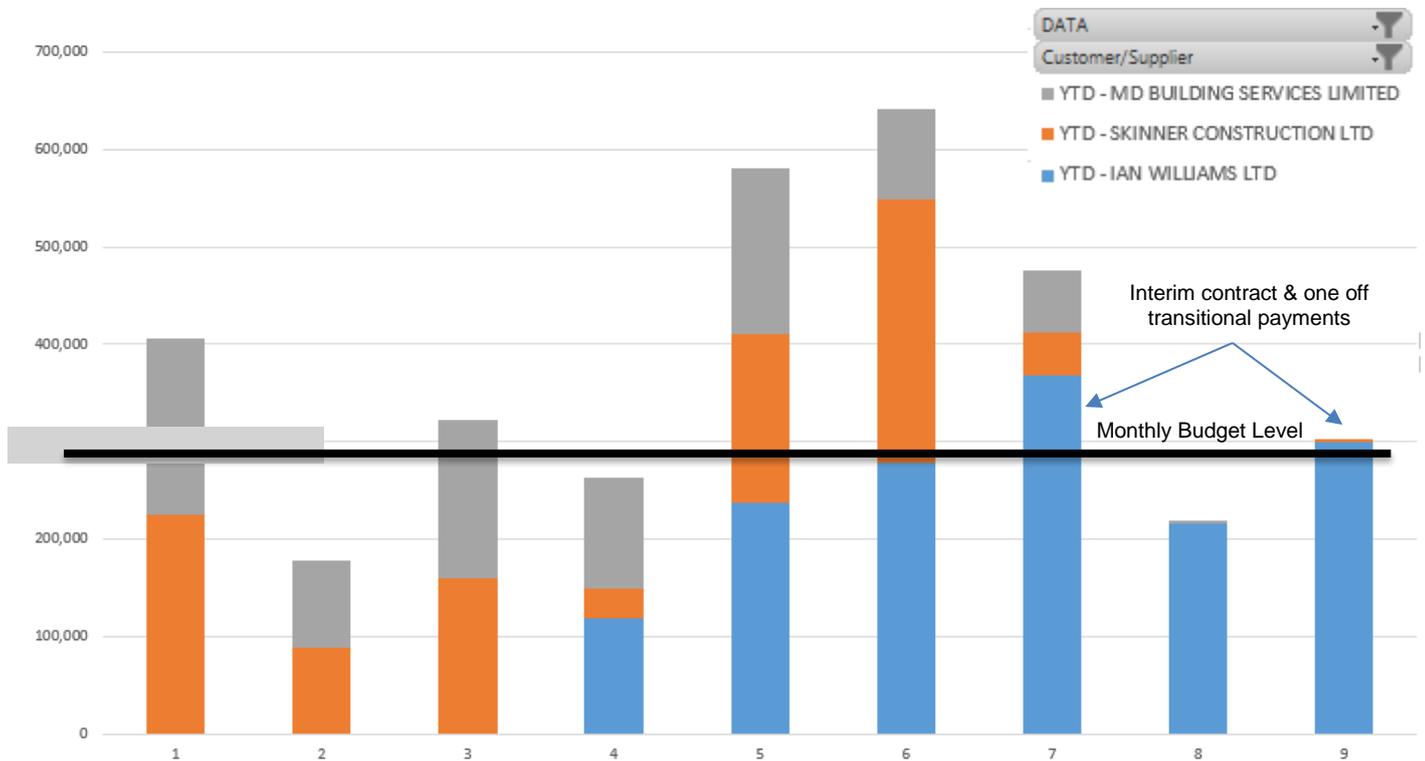
- 2.2 Income is expected to be marginally lower than expected primarily driven by an increase in lost rent resulting from voids. The expenditure in the year is broken down further in the table below.

Year to Dec 2020			TOTAL EXPENDITURE	2019/20 Forecast			
Actuals	Budget	Variance		Forecast	Budget	Variance	%
2,158,975	1,315,710	843,265	Responsive Maintenance	2,692,555	1,754,170	938,385	53%
492,140	710,190	-218,050	Programmed Maintenance	816,488	947,000	-130,512	-14%
418,595	1,033,620	-615,025	Special Works	1,113,245	1,358,350	-245,105	-18%
4,546,780	4,723,180	-176,400	Supervision & Management	5,524,493	5,760,215	-235,722	-4%
179,154	220,040	-40,886	Other Expenditure	211,336	280,240	-68,904	-25%
2,725,773	4,346,000	-1,620,227	Major Repairs	4,254,630	4,346,000	-91,370	-2%
			TOTAL	14,612,746	14,445,975	166,771	

2.3 Contract Transition Further Analysis

As forecast at the previous HRB responsive repairs is significantly overspent due to the transition from the old cost plus contract to the new price per contracts (previous forecast £840k, current forecast £938k). The below graph shows the monthly expenditure per contractor (old & new) for the year and highlights the issues that the previous contract caused in terms of the erratic nature of invoicing.

The new contract provides more stability and timely invoicing through data sharing.



2.4 Other Notable Variances

- Annual Programmed Maintenance is forecast to save £130k on current spend patterns (reductions in solid fuel servicing £80k saving the most significant)
- Special Repairs & Maintenance is forecast to save £245k (reduced requirement for expenditure on Asbestos due to prior years investment contributing £115k of savings versus budget)
- Supervision & management savings, employee related charges down £230k versus budget

2.5 Additional Information

The appendices now contain numerous additional graphical and tabular pages which show;

- Year to Date and Forecast Income & expenditure split by type versus budget
- Year to Date and Forecast employee expenditure by month
- Summary & Detailed HRA tables

2.6 Reserves Position

Using the above forecasting the revenue reserves position at year end is expected to stay at the adopted levels and still include the volatility reserve with the surplus being used to fund new homes in future years.

Area	Reserve Description	2018	Movement	2019
Revenue	Housing Revenue Account Balance	-3,100	0	-3,100
Revenue	HRA Business Plan Volatility Reserve	-1,600	0	-1,600
TOTAL REVENUE RESERVES		-4,700	0	-4,700

3 Housing Capital: Affordable Housing

- 3.1 The current business plan includes a programme of expenditure to replace properties lost through RTB sales and ensure that RTB receipts are invested and not returned to central government.
- 3.2 The following table shows the forecasted spend for the year funded through RTB receipts and the Future Housing development fund through the prescribed 30:70 ratio in order to prevent the return of any receipts to Central Government. It also shows the impact upon the associated reserve accounts and provides their forecast balances at the year-end.
- 3.3 The updated forecasted surplus will either require additional funds to cover the forecasted future expenditure taken through capital receipts or if no expenditure options are available the £40.5k RTB receipts will be returned to government.

CHRAFF - Affordable Housing Financing	2019/20		
	Year to Date		
	Total	RTB Receipts	New Homes Dev Fund
	£	£	£
Opening Bal (YE 2018)	(4,925,718)	(3,945,429)	(980,289)
Addition of Q1 & Q2 RTB Receipts	(212,783)	(212,783)	
Current Balance before Exp	(5,138,501)	(4,158,212)	(980,289)
Year to Date Expenditure	2,575,392	772,618	1,802,775
Current Balance	(2,563,109)	(3,385,594)	822,485
Forecast Future Expenditure	135,000	40,500	94,500
TFR of 2019 Forecast Surplus			(810,007)
Forecast Balance 2019 YE	(2,428,109)	(3,345,094)	106,978

4 Capital – Housing Capital Programme

- 4.1 The following Earmarked reserves were set up at the year end and are a combination of capital receipts and revenue contributions along with forecasted expenditure during the year. The capital receipts will be utilised prior to the revenue contributions.
- 4.2 Spend to date allocated against these reserves is currently £342k with an additional £198k committed to the Fire Safety Work at Summersby Close & Powell Close in Seaton, totalling £540k.

Reserve Description	Revenue	Capital	Total
Fire Risk Assessment Reserve	-1,988,369	-1,011,631	-3,000,000
Replacement Lifts Reserve	0	-550,000	-550,000
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES	-1,988,369	-1,561,631	-3,550,000

- 4.3 The residual capital receipts will be used to fund the capital program, the prior years balance brought forward plus the year to date RTB receipts equate to enough to cover the budgeted spend for the year. No revenue contribution to capital from the HRA will be required within the year.

Housing Capital Programme	2019/20		
	Year to Date		
	Total	Capital Receipts	Revenue Cont
	£	£	£
Opening Bal (YE 2018)	(338,854)	(338,854)	0
Addition of Q1+Q2 RTB Receipts	(238,572)	(238,572)	0
Current Balance before Exp	(577,426)	(577,426)	0
Year to Date Expenditure	357,405	357,405	0
Current Balance	(220,021)	(220,021)	0
Forecast Future Expenditure	142,595	142,595	0
Forecast Balance 2019 YE	(77,426)	(77,426)	0

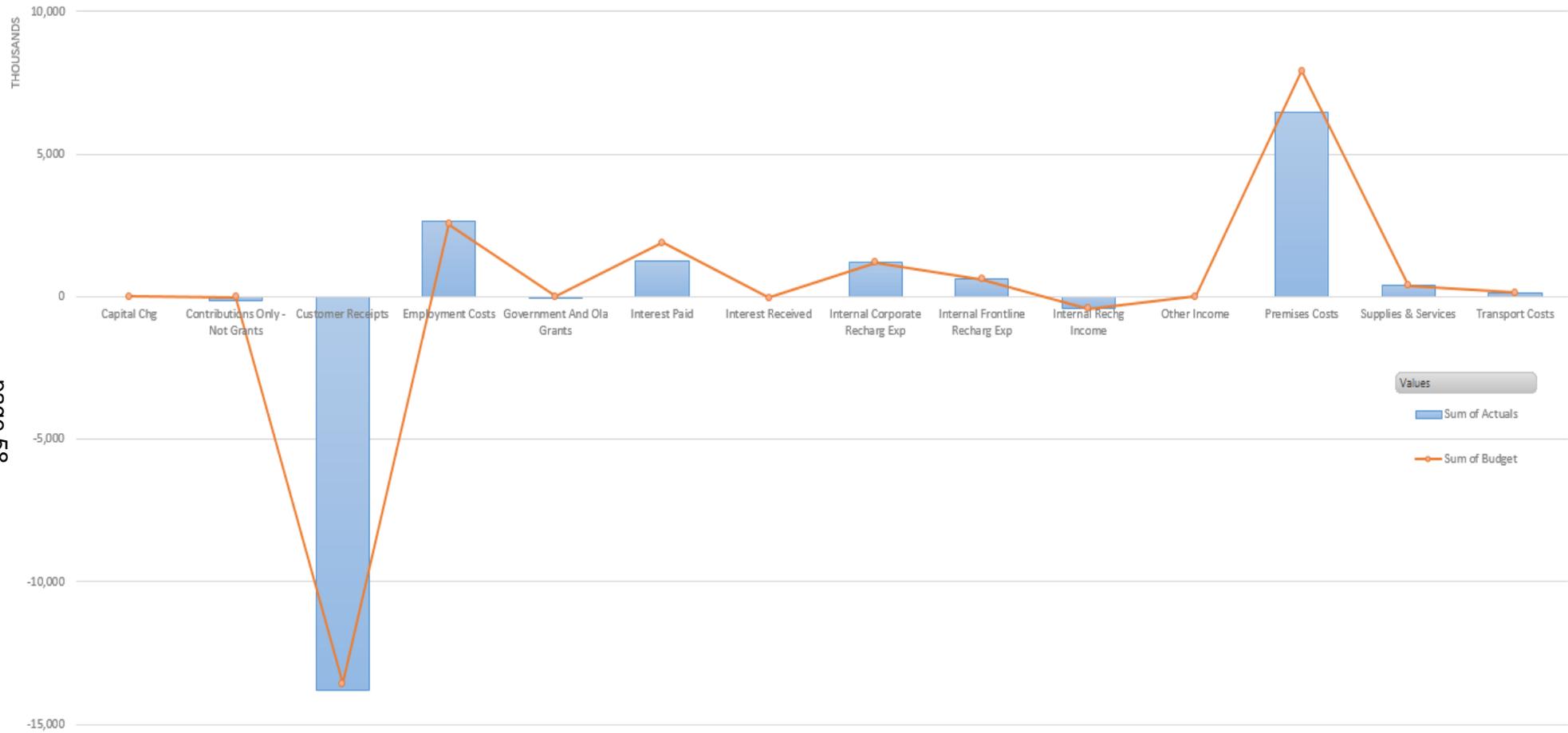
APPENDICES

Housing Revenue Account Summary

				DATA Values								
Rep Cat 1	Rep Cat 2	Rep Cat 3	Rep Cat 4	Prior year			YTD			4CAST		
				Sum of Actuals	Sum of Budget	Sum of Diff	Sum of Actuals	Sum of Budget	Sum of Diff	Sum of Actuals	Sum of Budget	Sum of Diff
1 INCOME	1 Gross Property Rent inc Garages	1 Gross Property Rents		-17,266,783	-17,259,560	-7,223	-13,011,601	-12,830,760	-180,841	-16,913,326	-17,107,710	194,384
		2 Garage Rents		-424,241	-463,130	38,889	-342,806	-319,140	-23,666	-456,313	-425,530	-30,783
	2 Other Income	1 Other Income		-554,496	-544,930	-9,566	-449,360	-406,620	-42,740	-571,277	-542,120	-29,157
1 INCOME Total				-18,245,519	-18,267,620	22,101	-13,803,767	-13,556,520	-247,247	-17,940,916	-18,075,360	134,444
2 EXPENDITURE	1 Repairs And Maintenance - General	1 Responsive Maintenance		2,204,197	1,754,440	449,757	2,158,975	1,315,710	843,265	2,692,555	1,754,170	938,385
		2 Annual Programmed Maintenance		1,066,596	947,000	119,596	492,140	710,190	-218,050	816,488	947,000	-130,512
	2 Repairs And Maintenance - Special	1 Repairs And Maintenance - Special		1,390,344	1,302,400	87,944	418,595	1,033,620	-615,025	1,113,245	1,358,350	-245,105
		1 Supervision And Management		4,153,689	4,030,340	123,349	3,262,547	3,289,800	-27,253	3,990,130	4,032,725	-42,595
	4 Other Expenditure	2 Supervision And Mgt Special		1,566,673	1,597,110	-30,437	1,284,233	1,433,380	-149,147	1,534,363	1,727,490	-193,127
		1 Other Exp non Sewerage		219,235	235,960	-16,725	174,936	178,750	-3,814	205,178	226,120	-20,942
	5 Capital Charges & Bad Debt	2 Sewerage		14,464	54,070	-39,606	4,217	41,290	-37,073	6,158	54,120	-47,962
		Adjustment to Bad Debt Provision		7,760	0	7,760						
Depreciation			-239,707	1,312,250	-1,551,957	0	2,992,920	-2,992,920	3,230,540	3,230,540	0	
		Major Repairs Expenditure		4,151,537	4,406,000	-254,463	2,725,773	4,346,000	-1,620,227	4,254,630	4,346,000	-91,370
EXPENDITURE Total				14,534,788	15,639,570	-1,104,782	10,521,417	15,341,660	-4,820,243	17,843,286	17,676,515	166,771
3 FINANCING	1 Interest on Balances	(blank)		-38,870	-20,170	-18,700	0	-37,260	37,260	-5,807	-49,730	43,923
	2 Loan Principal & Interest repayments	(blank)		2,511,317	2,562,960	-51,643	1,260,189	1,892,970	-632,781	2,523,970	2,523,970	0
	3 Other	(blank)		5,179,336	-10	5,179,346	0	-869,940	869,940	-1,092,491	-1,159,940	67,449
	4 MIRS	(blank)		-3,941,605	0	-3,941,605	0	-2,122,980	2,122,980	-2,138,049	-2,070,610	-67,439
3 FINANCING Total				3,710,178	2,542,780	1,167,398	1,260,190	-1,137,210	2,397,400	-712,377	-756,310	43,933
Grand Total				-553	-85,270	84,717	-2,022,160	647,930	-2,670,090	-810,007	-1,155,155	345,148

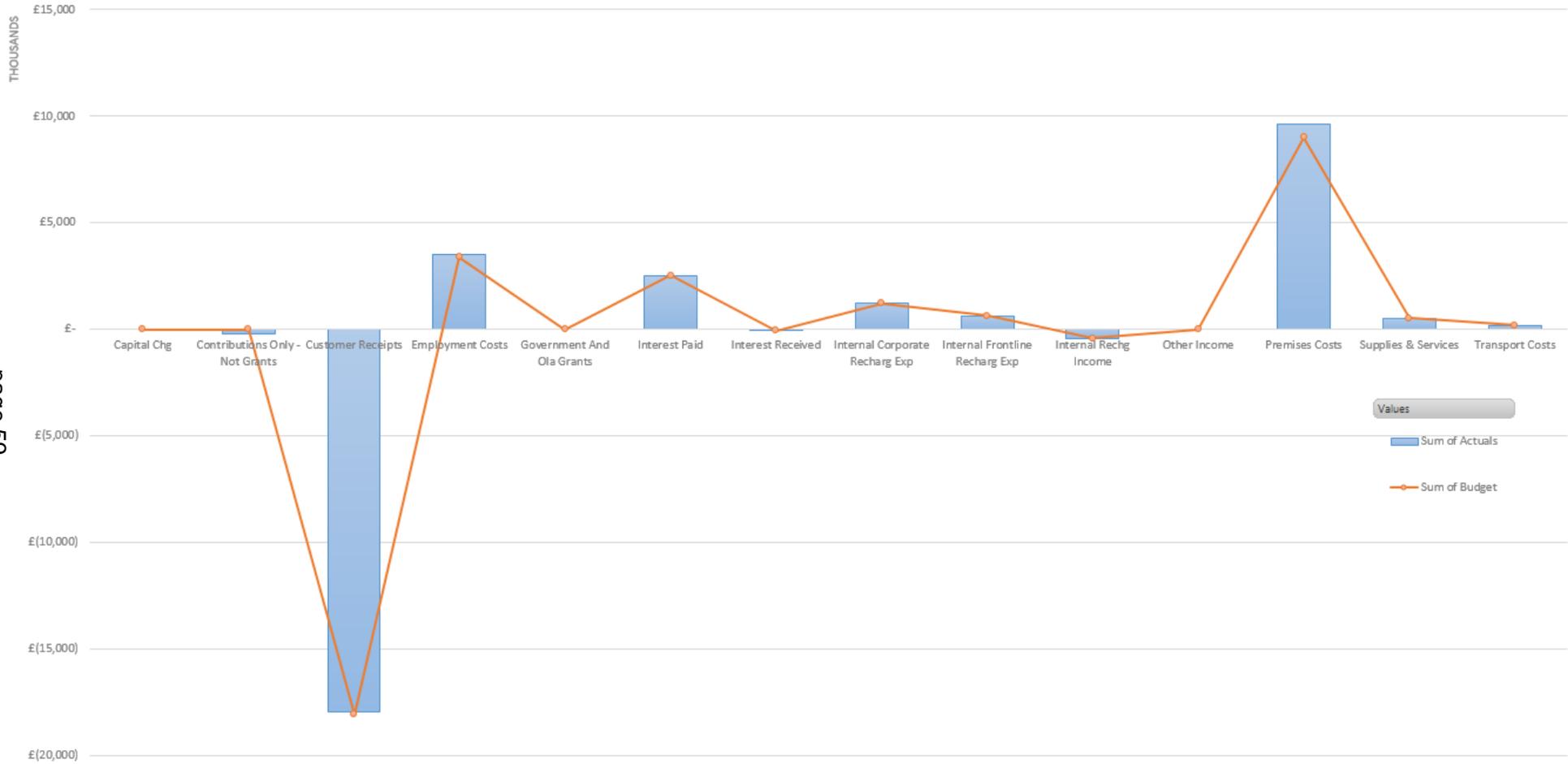
Housing Revenue Account: Year to Date Income & Expenditure by Type

Year to Date Income & Expenditure Split by Type versus Budget

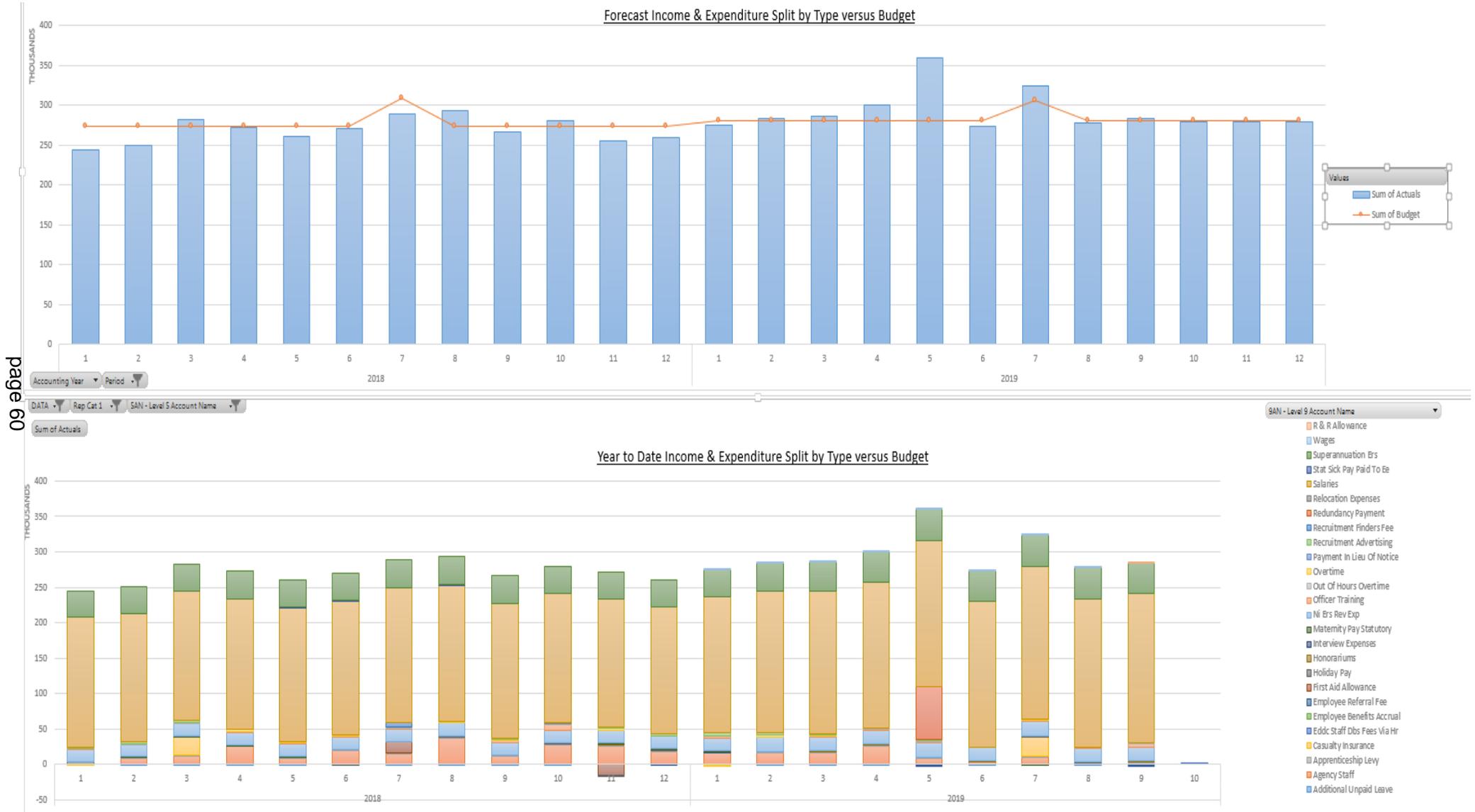


Housing Revenue Account: Forecast Income & Expenditure by Type

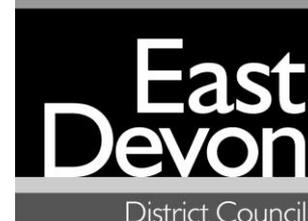
Forecast Income & Expenditure Split by Type versus Budget



Housing Revenue Account: Employee Costs by Month & Type



Total Debt Increases from current level of approx. €81m to €142m by 2041



Report to: **Housing Review Board**

Date of Meeting: 23 January 2020

Public Document: Yes

Exemption: None

Review date for release None

Subject: **Spending Right to Buy receipts 2020/2021 financial year**

Purpose of report: This report seeks delegated authority to continue the programme of property acquisitions in 2020/2021 using Right to Buy receipts and borrowing from public works loans board (PWLB). This report also considers the option for spending the receipts going forward and considers a number of options.

Recommendation:

1. **To give delegated authority to the Strategic Lead – Housing, Health & Environment, Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes & Communities and Chair of Housing Review Board to approve purchases to meet the 2020/2021 spending requirements using Right to Buy receipts and borrowing from public works loans board together with any commuted sums that may become available.**
2. **To consider the options put forward for spending right to buy receipts going forward and to pursue option 5, a combination of purchasing stock and to look at developing new build.**
3. **To make note that paying back some right to buy receipts may be a possibility.**

Reason for recommendation: To ensure RTB receipts are spent on time and not returned to Government with interest. To meet the rising housing need in the district for affordable housing.

Officer: Melissa Wall, Housing Enabling Officer mwall@eastdevon.gov.uk Tel: 01395 519982

Financial implications: The new homes development fund will be at 0 by the end of this financial year therefore the HRA will borrow the 70% contribution required to fund this expenditure. Historically this has been done through the Public Works Loan Board who are currently offering an interest rate of 3.15% inclusive of EDDCs certainty rate deduction.

This equates to an additional £190k per annum interest charge for a deferred principal repayment loan.

Please see the future considerations section of the 20/21 budget report for additional information.

Legal implications: Legal advice in line with all previous use and spending of RTB receipts. No specific legal implications within this report. Proposed delegations are in line with EDDC Governance arrangements.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

Climate change: Low Impact

Risk: Medium Risk

If the Right To Buy receipts are not spent in the time set out in our agreement with HM Government the Council will have to return them to Government with interest.

Links to background information:

Link to Council Plan: Outstanding Homes and Communities
Outstanding Council and Council Services

1.0 Background

Strategic Management Team agreed on the 27th January 2016 to support a number of options that help ensure RTB receipts are spent in accordance with various deadlines imposed by Government. Taking this support forward we entered into an agreement with HM Government and a report was presented to the Housing Review Board on the 12th January 2017, Cabinet and Council (8th & 22nd February respectively) which gave approval to purchase property from the open market using RTB receipts. This approval was then extended in a report taken to Housing Review Board on 15th June 2017 and again on 12th August 2019 which covered the 2019/2020 financial year. These reports, supported by Finance, set a budget from the HRA to be used for match funding RTB receipts to purchase property from the open market for a period of three years. This 3 year period will expire at the end of this financial year and further authority is sought for the next financial year 2020/2021.

Over the last two and a half years we have successfully managed to spend the Right to Buy monies without paying any receipts back to Government. This has added further properties into Council owned stock to sustain the Housing Revenue Account, which is being eroded by the sale of properties under the Right to Buy. In 2017/18 we bought 28 properties, in 2018/19 16 properties were acquired and to date in 2019/20 we have acquired 17 properties (including 12 flats at Sailors rest).

2.0 2020/2021 spending of Right to Buy receipts

The table below details the amount of receipts that need to be spent in the 2020/2021 financial year:

	RTB amount 30%	Contribution from PWLB 70%	Total Spend
Quarter 1	337,910	788,457	1,126,367
Quarter 2	369,658	862,536	1,232,194
Quarter3	328,121	765,615	1,093,736
Quarter 4	729,743	1,702,733	2,432,475
		Total	5,884,772

The level of spend significantly increases in the next financial year compared to the previous two years.

3.0 Options for spending right to buy receipts

Option 1: Buying from the open market

Over the last few years we have managed to spend all the receipts through buying suitable properties from the open market or in bulk from developers. However this is dependent upon the housing market.

Our concerns going forward are:

- Reduction compared to previous years on houses listed with estate agents (supply is down).
- Brexit – this is causing uncertainty in the market.
- Risk of chains – normally we only agree to purchase properties which are chain free. With a lack of properties to buy this increases the risk of chains.
- New build properties tend to have a premium and are expensive.
- We are competing with registered providers who are using Homes England funding to do the same.
- Buying from developers is dependent upon levels of building in the district. Most of the new sites are located on the edge of Exeter in strategic growth areas. Demand in these areas from East Devon residents is low and prices are expensive meaning rents will be higher.

Option 2: Building Council housing

One option is to consider building our own houses. Ideally we should do this on land that we currently own. However our land holdings in areas where more housing is needed is limited. We have numerous garage sites which we can consider. This has been done in the past, although little thought went into the need for housing in those locations. The garage sites will be difficult to develop mainly due to services running under the land, access arrangements, planning constraints with overlooking and parking requirements and the irregular site shapes. The only large land holding we own is in Axminster and demand here is very low. This is a large site and will require a joint venture approach. There are also other 'wants' with this site.

This option will be complex and the timing of delivery can be uncertain, which is not ideal given that these receipts have to be spent within strict deadlines. If the deadlines are not met, the receipts must be repaid to the government with interest.

Delivering new build affordable housing is complex. There are a range of issues that can affect the pace of delivery. These include:

- Negotiating with third parties over rights of access.
- Rehousing of tenants on sites where it is proposed that existing homes will be replaced with new
- Undertaking relevant approval processes such as Planning, along with the necessary tendering processes all need to be built into the timeframe.
- Contractor delays (labour and supplies following Brexit)

The rate at which Right to Buy Receipts are received, as well as the amount received over any given period is unpredictable. This adds to the complexity in timing their use in accordance with the projected delivery of new build. The result is additional uncertainty over whether the receipts will be spent within the required timeframe. There may some lenience with this if sums are committed to be spent but overruns slightly.

To secure planning permission on sites and to develop out sites will have funding and staffing implications.

Option 3: Use the receipts as grant to give to registered providers (RPs)

This option would involve giving the receipts as grant to registered providers for them to use to provide additional affordable housing. We explored this option in 2016/2017 and there was very little appetite from the registered provider's active in East Devon at that time. Since then a number of RPs have received large grant allocations from Homes England and are under pressure to spend this money. Therefore it is unlikely that this option would help to spend the required amounts in the timing required. The disadvantage with this option is that we would not increase our own housing stock.

Option 4: Return the receipts

Given the amount of receipts that need to be spent there is a real risk that we will have to return some/all of the receipts in some quarters.

The housing market is changing, and it's becoming increasingly hard to find suitable property to purchase.

Option 5: A blend of the above

The last option is to do a mixture of all of the above. We could continue to purchase suitable properties from the open market either individually or in bulk and also look to develop a few of our own sites. This option will ensure some of the receipt could be spent however it is likely it will still result in receipts having to be paid back. This option will also be dependent upon having the staffing to do the job and a budget for professional services to enable sites to be progressed from initial conception to securing planning permission, tendering and build.

Some reasons for continuing to replace stock are:

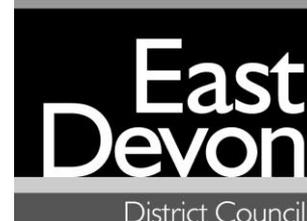
	Advantages	Disadvantages
Maintain income stream for HRA	Sustains HRA allowing us to meet our borrowing and make improvements to our stock	Tenants can still exercise their right to buy (although see note below*)
Affordable rents can be charged	Improves income to HRA	Higher rents for tenants. Often does not help those most in need.
Opportunity to acquire/build new houses	Reduces repairing obligation More energy efficient Better build standards	New build tend to have a premium when buying
Opportunity to replace stock in areas of need	Meets our housing need	Excludes rural areas

* Within the first 15 years after acquisition tenants would have to pay what the Council paid for acquiring the property including all costs. We can also keep all the receipts rather than pool them in the normal way.

4.0 Recommendation

- To give delegated authority to the Strategic Lead – Housing, Health & Environment, Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes & Communities and Chair of Housing Review Board to approve purchases to meet the 2020/2021 spending requirements using Right to Buy receipts and borrowing from public works loans board together with any commuted sums that may become available.
- To consider the options put forward for spending right to buy receipts going forward and to pursue option 5, a combination of purchasing stock and to look at developing new build.
- To make note that paying back some right to buy receipts may be a possibility in 2020/2021.

Report to:	Housing Review Board
Date of Meeting:	23 January 2020
Public Document:	Yes
Exemption:	None
Review date for release	None



Subject:	Update on Integrated Asset Management Contract
Purpose of report:	Our new Integrated Asset Management Contract commenced on the 1 July 2019. This report will update Members on progress as we enter the 7th month of our new contracting arrangement with Ian Williams Ltd.
Recommendation:	For information only
Reason for recommendation:	To ensure Members are up to date with new contracting arrangements covering the maintenance of our housing stock
Officer:	Victoria Farrow, Property and Asset Manager
Financial implications:	As mentioned within the body of the report, consistent and quality monitoring of the contract is required to ensure the financial benefits that are expected from the PPP and PPV contracts are achieved.
Legal implications:	There are no issues raised in the report on which Legal Services need to comment at this time.
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: <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2742359/combined-hrb-agenda-240119.pdf> (Item 10)

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2602364/combined-hrb-agenda-200918.pdf> (Item 11)

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2532954/combined-hrb-agenda-210618.pdf> (Item 13)

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2317941/combined-hrb-agenda-110118.pdf> (item 11)

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1973368/combined-hrb-agenda-120117.pdf> (item 14 and 15)

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2022994/combined-hrb-agenda-090317.pdf> (item 11)

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2140883/combined-hrb-agenda-150617.pdf> (item 9)

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2197069/combined-hrb-agenda-070917.pdf>(item 10)

[p://eastdevon.gov.uk/](http://eastdevon.gov.uk/)

<https://democracy.eastdevon.gov.uk//ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=152&MId=162&Ver=4> HRB March 2019

<https://democracy.eastdevon.gov.uk/documents/g288/Public%20reports%20pack%2020Jun-2019%2014.30%20Housing%20Review%20Board.pdf?T=10> (item 11)

Link to Council Plan: Outstanding Homes and Communities
Outstanding Council and Council Services

1. Background

- 1.1 At the meeting of the June 2019 Housing Review Board, The Acting Housing Lead gave a detailed presentation of the work that has been undertaken to renew our repairs and maintenance contract since 2016. This has been an extensive project where the Board have played an important role in setting the direction and overseeing governance matters as we have moved towards putting in place our new contracting arrangements.
- 1.2 An intense mobilisation process ended on June 30th which enabled us to commence our new contracting arrangements from the 1st July 2019. In order to deal with the transfer smoothly we set up an interim contracting arrangement just prior to the switchover, the aim of this was to predominately help with the management of void properties.

- 1.3 Mobilisation presented many challenges, particularly with setting up interfaces between our systems and those of Ian Williams in order to ensure the flow of information in the most efficient ways. Work in this area has not finished and as part of early monitoring the Housing Systems Manager remains focused on this area working closely with Ian Williams.
- 1.4 We have continued to experience challenges with staffing in the Property and Asset Team, at the end of November we saw the departure of the Property and Asset Manager who we have immediately replaced. We have also now recruited temporarily into the position of Senior Technical Officer- Responsive Repairs and Voids. We have some additional staffing challenges within our team of Maintenance Surveyors, with one case of medium term sickness currently under review and another position that has recently become vacant. Recruitment in this area is being prioritised in order to continue to take steps to stabilise the team.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 As set out in the September (2019) update report, we cited early concerns over the management of void properties that were leading to longer void times. This was for two reasons, firstly a higher number of voids than have been experienced over previous years and secondly properties coming back to us in a considerable state of disrepair therefore requiring increased works to be able to re-let the property. We have seen limited progress in this area and although properties are coming back, we are still experiencing longer than expected void times. It should also be noted that there have been a number of issues with the quality of voids coming back that upon inspection has meant our Officers have not signed off works and the contractor has had to be recalled. Although some of these issues have been relatively minor, in some cases this has still led to additional delays in tenants being able to move into properties.

We have also experienced cases where EDDC staff have signed off properties which were not up to standard leading to complaints and damage to our reputation. Initial investigations into this shows high work levels due to staff sickness and understaffing had reduced the quality of work. This is being addressed as a priority. Reactive Repairs and Void management roles and responsibilities are currently under review and changes are being implemented which should strengthen the team and improve performance.

- 2.2 Following the escalation of concerns, Ian Williams made the following commitments in order to improve performance;
- Operatives working overtime including during the holiday shut-down period
 - 3 additional operatives seconded from Bristol division to work on voids only
 - Additional support from sub-contractors to assist in dealing with the back-log
 - Additional Voids Contracts Manager being recruited on fixed term contract due to consistent increase in void volume
 - Managing TUPE staff to embed new and improved ways of working

These measures will improve performance however this will take time to show results.

- 2.3 We are continuing to monitor daily the success of these additional measures to improve void management with some success. We had 72 voids before Christmas which has been reduced to the low fifties with all now having return dates. This is being monitored closely and all possible support is being given. EDDC staff will be attending toolbox talks with IW void operatives to ensure a thorough understanding of our standards and expectations. Two experienced Planned Surveyors are due shortly to be seconded to the Reactive team to concentrate solely on voids until the end of March. This should provide the extra drive and forward motion that is required.

2.4 Over the last 3 months we have seen an increase in complaints that relate to the repairs and maintenance service. Some of these complaints have had significant reputational damage due to use of social media. As always, each complaint has been fully investigated and the general themes have centred around the following;

- Condition of property at signup – not meeting our void standard
- Items not identified at void – poor surveying
- Repairs/investment promised but not delivered
- Contractor not attending appointments or not following up when further work needed
- Poor communication throughout the process

Actions are being taken to improve our Repairs Service in all areas and embed the new contract. The changes have produced a 'shiver' in our service delivery however there is a clear direction of travel to improvement and a willingness from both parties to achieve these improvements.

Dialog is good and close working relationships are starting to show improvements, particularly in Voids where the Temporary Senior Technical Officer has taken control and is providing clear and consistent direction.

We have also received a number of compliments from residents who have had positive experiences of our delivery and who have taken time to feed that back to us. Analysis has shown that of the 1022 repair jobs raised in December, only 0.04% of jobs required a call back.

2.5 Out of Hours performance has been good, however there have been a few failings where miscommunication has resulted in a service to residents below that which we expect. We have investigated and learnt from these as a team and improvements are being implemented where necessary. Christmas and New Year provided another obstacle which was managed well and no escalation was required to EDDC staff. A total of 384 out of hours emergency jobs were raised to Ian Williams and 21 emergency jobs to Liberty Gas during the bank holidays.

2.6 KPI monitoring is currently being aligned. EDDC and IW produce separate KPI reports however we are now working on streamlining and joining up the data for future publication and scrutiny. This is now being done as a matter of urgency and will again help to manage future performance.

3. Key Performance Indicators

3.1 A summary and up to date review of KPIs for month 1-7 will be provided at the meeting.

Further monitoring will be provided to the Repairs Service Review Group for KPI performance and monitoring.

4. Resident engagement

4.1 An update was given to the Repairs Service Review Group which was also attended by the Scrutiny Panel. An outline of current performance and difficulties encountered on both sides was given and discussions were held regarding improving performance. Ian Williams also attended this meeting and gave their support and assurance to future improvements.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 After a good mobilisation phase where energy and focus is normally high, performance has struggled to be consistently high. It has been clear that establishing a working norm on both sides has been more challenging. Three areas are now being targeted to improve performance, namely Voids process and delivery, Reactive repairs processes and KPI/Contract management. It must also be recognised that much higher than anticipated numbers of reactive repair requests, voids and lack of investment has also impacted smooth delivery.



Report to: **Housing Review Board**

Date of Meeting: 23 January 2020

Public Document: Yes

Exemption: None

Review date for release None

Subject: **Consumer Regulation Review 2018-2019**

Purpose of report:

To undertake a self-assessment of current service delivery against the Social Housing Regulators Home standard.
 This report is the first of a series of reports that will focus on each of the Regulators Consumer Standards in order to ensure the housing service is meeting all regulatory conditions.
 The Home Standard sets out minimal requirements for what must be achieved to ensure tenants remain safe in their homes and specifically incorporates all compliance legislation across a range of areas including fire safety, gas safety, electrical safety, lifts and legionella.

Recommendation:

To note the contents of the self-assessment document as set out as [Appendix 1](#).

To allow a budget of approximately £20,000 to fund an external consultant to undertake a health check/audit of all areas of statutory compliance.

The Property and Asset Manager to consider options for accumulating the final two years of electrical inspections (due to finish 2021/2022) into the coming year 2020/2021 in order to finish the programme one year early.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure the housing service is meeting all regulatory requirements as set out within the Regulator of Social Housing's Home Standard.
 The Housing Review Board are responsible for ensuring compliance of the Social Housing Regulators Standards in the absence of any current pro-active mandatory performance monitoring from the Regulator.

Officer:

Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Housing Service Lead

Financial implications:

There are no specific financial implications at this stage.

Legal implications:

The Regulator reiterates that compliance with the Consumer Standards can only take place where there is effective governance and risk management arrangements in place. It is stated that where the Regulator has found that there has been a failure to comply with a Consumer Standard and the serious detriment test has been met there has been a corresponding governance failure.

To ensure good governance, LAs need to ensure that they are assessing their compliance with the Consumer Standards and that they understand

what assurance they have that risks are being identified, managed and monitored - with escalation mechanisms where appropriate.

The Regulator will also take into account communication with the Regulator and early transparency is essential. As the Regulator clearly puts it “our reactive approach does not lessen the obligation on registered providers to comply and communicate with us in a timely manner in relation to a potential breach [of the Consumer Regulations].” The Regulator notes that referrals and information about potential breaches of the Consumer Standards come from a range of different sources including tenants, statutory referrals or information obtained during the course of economic regulation work - and from LAs themselves.

Equalities impact: Medium Impact

Ensuring compliance with the Regulators Consumer standards ensures the decency and safety of our tenant’s homes which impacts on all of our vulnerable groups.

Climate change: Low Impact

Comments

Risk: High Risk

There are high risks associated with not meeting the Regulator’s Standards with the Regulator having powers under the Localism Act 2011. This has meant that since April 2012, the Regulators role is to investigate only when there are reasonable grounds to suspect there is actual or serious detriment to tenants as a result of a failure to meet one or more of the consumer standards. Powers can be used if there is evidence that a consumer standard has been breached and, as a result, there are reasonable grounds to suspect that;

- The failure has resulted in a serious detriment to tenants; or
- There is a significant risk that, if no action is taken by the regulator, the failure will result in a serious detriment to the providers tenants.

The legislation specifies that the Regulator must exercise its functions in a way that minimises interference and is proportionate, consistent, transparent and accountable.

Links to background information: • [Link to Paper on September Agenda \(AGENDA ITEM 16\)](#)

Link to Council Plan: Outstanding Homes and Communities

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At the September (2019) meeting of the Housing Review Board the *Consumer Regulation Review Paper 2018-2019* [Appendix 1](#) was presented. Board Members were encouraged to read the document in detail in order to understand better the role of the Regulator of Social Housing.

- 1.2 The review paper set out a summary of the Regulators consumer regulation work for the year 2018/2019. It explains the role and mandate of the Regulator, the approach taken to consumer regulation and how they apply the serious detriment tests as well as key themes and lessons arising from cases they have dealt with during the year.
- 1.3 The report is designed to ensure transparency in the work undertaken by the Regulator and details are given on the six regulatory notices that were issued by the Regulator due to providers failing to meet a consumer standard that had risked or caused serious detriment to tenants. The report also includes a number of anonymised case studies where breaches were not found however the cases highlight what factors are considered when the Regulator makes decisions and therefore provides us with a valuable insight into areas of our service delivery that need to be closely considered. Members will note the arising themes for the period 2018/2019 that are centred around health and safety compliance and as part of our self-assessment set out in **Appendix 2** we have focused on these areas.
- 1.4 As set out in the Legislation, the Regulator has both an economic objective and a consumer regulation objective. As a local Authority, only the consumer regulation applies. The consumer regulation objective is intended to:
- Support the provision of well-managed and appropriate quality housing
 - Ensure tenants are given an appropriate degree of choice and protection
 - Ensure tenants have the opportunity to be involved in the management of their homes and to hold landlords to account
 - Encourage registered providers to contribute to the well-being of the areas in which their homes are situated.
- 1.5 To achieve the objective, the Regulator sets consumer standards. There are four consumer standards:
- Home
 - Neighbourhood and Community
 - Tenancy
 - Tenant Involvement and Empowerment

This report has only reviewed our position in relation to the Home Standard and the Statutory Requirements that provide for the health and safety of tenants homes.

2. The Review

- 2.1 **Appendix 2** sets out a document that links to each area of Statutory Requirement, detailing the current position, the evidence base and also a series of actions to support work that is ongoing.
- 2.2 As referenced in the report, the importance of accurate data capturing is critical and our Open Housing Systems team continue to prioritise this in relation to ensuring our systems are as efficient as possible. The majority of areas of compliance are benefiting from dashboard reporting that enables us to have instant visibility of performance, work is still underway to improve this in some areas and this has been highlighted in the Action Plan where appropriate.
- 2.3 Members will note encouraging progress is being made although Electrical Safety should be highlighted as an area of concern due to limited progress prior to 2017/2018 of an electrical inspection programme that covered all of the stock. With just two years now left of

the five year programme, there is the option to complete everything left within a shorter period of time and options for this route forward should now be considered.

- 2.4 Considerable work has been undertaken in relation to Fire Safety across the stock, Members will be aware of an increase in resources in order to drive this work and as set out in the report, this work is ongoing. Members will note the revised Fire Policy that is also being presented today for approval.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The self-assessment exercise set out as **Appendix 2** has provided a good level of reassurance, however it is now proposed that we commission an external specialist to test and review these critical areas of compliance in order to provide us with further reassurance that our policies and systems are fit for purpose.
- 3.2 We intend to undertake further self-assessments for each of the Regulators Consumer Standards and these will form separate reports that will be presented to the Housing Review Board over the coming months.
- 3.3 It is our intention to ensure the Board is continually kept up to date with work of the Regulator of Social Housing and good practice would suggest some external specialist training options are considered that can form part of mandatory training requirements for Board Members in order to inform a better understanding of the legislation we are governed by.

Property & Asset Home Standard Review

Compliance	Current Position	Evidence	Action Plan
<p>Gas Safety</p>	<p>Liberty currently undertake all of our gas servicing work in the form of a nationally recognised three star service model: This includes the annual landlords gas safety check and all reactive repairs as required. The current gas safety check cycle is 11 months.</p> <p>There are currently 3136 properties which have gas installations of these properties we are 100% compliant with servicing.</p> <p>There are also 4 sites with a communal boiler installations of these properties we are 100% compliant with servicing.</p>	<p>Following Liberty carrying out the landlords gas safety check the operative on site captures the service on their PDA and one completed the operatives asks the tenant to sign the PDA. This is then uploaded to Liberty’s central IT system to be audited before being issued the following morning to EDDC. The copies of the certificate of service are sent to EDDC via an automated email in the early hours of the following morning. The service however is updated on the contractors portal in real time and a CSV file is sent to EDDC each day in order for our asset database to be updated. Once the upload has taken place we are able to monitor compliance via the insight dashboard.</p> <p>The Programmed Works Officer (Services) reviews daily the insight dashboard to ensure that the gas servicing is carried out in the set time scales as defined in Property & Assets Gas Safety Policy: if access becomes an issue the legal forced entry process is implemented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor gas safety on a daily basis to ensure 100% compliance • Explore the implementation of MOT style gas servicing • Move the gas servicing module onto the new compliance module on Open Assets • Implement a process to upload all certification onto the data management systems
<p>Electrical Safety</p>	<p>Prior to 2017/2018 financial year, Property & Asset had no accurate records of electrical inspections carried out on all properties.</p> <p>The decision was taken to implement a five yearly cyclical electrical safety inspection of all their tenanted properties on a rolling five year</p>	<p>Upon completing the electrical safety check the operative on site asks the tenant to sign the electrical safety certificate. The ECIR is reviewed by the contractor before being issued to EDDC via email.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete year 3 electrical testing • Implement years 4 & 5 • Continue with the testing regime for communal areas & PAT testing

	<p>programme which equates to approximately 900 properties per annum e.g. Year 1 will be re-inspected in Year 6 and so forth.</p> <p>In addition annual electrical safety inspections of communal areas, community centres, district offices and guest bedrooms was also implemented. Portal Appliance Testing (PAT) was implemented at the same time for all of our community centres, district offices, guest bedrooms, HMO's & other housing schemes.</p> <p>Currently we are reaching the end of Year 3 of the 5 year programme therefore leaving 2 remaining years/areas outstanding. Completion will be the end of the financial year 2021/2022.</p>	<p>As part of the safety inspection any Cat 1's identified are remedied as part of the safety inspection ensuring that the installation is left safe and compliant.</p> <p>On receipt of the electrical safety certificates these are reviewed by the Programmed Works Officer, any repairs identified are collated and put into a repairs programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towards the end of the 5 year programme procure the testing for the next 5 years • Implement a process to automatically manage the electrical safety programmes • Implement a process to upload all certification onto the data management systems (Civica) • Implement a no access process • Implement an electrical safety policy • Implement a process for electronically recording the testing and certification (this is likely to be the compliance module on Open Housing)
<p>Legionella</p>	<p>All High Risk properties such as Community Centres, District Offices and Guest Bedrooms have a Legionella Risk Assessment in place and control measures have been implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly testing is being carried out by a competent contractor • Weekly flushing where required is being carried out by Landlord Services Team • Any non-conformity issues are reported to property and Asset and are addressed. <p>During this financial year we mobilised a contract to carry out risk assessments on all our blocks of flats to identify shared water tanks and any other areas of concern/risk. All risk assessments are due to be received by the end of January 2020 where upon</p>	<p>Community Centres, District Offices and Guest Bedrooms;</p> <p>Barcodes are on all components that require testing; all testing is recorded on the Contractors PDA device, the information is relayed in real time to the specialist Contractors Portal, Client is provided with access to the Portal to evidence that all testing is carried out.</p> <p>As part of the testing regime areas of non-compliance/disrepair are also recorded; the Contractor has a self authorisation level of £250.00 enabling them carry out all repairs that fall under this cost without the need to refer. Repairs that exceed £250.00</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with monthly testing by the competent contractor • Continue with weekly flushing by landlord services • Continue to address non-conformity issues as they arise • Implement a process for electronically recording the testing and certification (this is likely to be the compliance module on Open Housing) • Continue to carry out legionella risk assessments on void properties to achieve the recommended percentage of

	<p>they will be reviewed and a contract will be raised to address all areas of concern/risk.</p> <p>The recommended number of low risk properties are captured by carrying out a legionella risk assessment on all properties that become void.</p>	<p>in cost are referred to the Client for instruction; the Portal records the status of all areas of non-compliance/disrepair, particularly once they are complete.</p> <p>On all void properties a copy of the legionella risk assessment is provided to EDDC via the contractor's sharepoint. The Housing Maintenance Surveyor ensures the risk assessment has been carried out and that all remedial work is complete before the void is signed off.</p>	<p>low risk properties and take the opportunity to carry out remedial works as necessary (i.e. remove dead legs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to publicise legionella awareness in Housing Matters, through our website and leaflets provided to tenants at sign up stage
Lifts	<p>All passenger lifts are serviced by a competent contractor on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>All stair lifts are serviced by a competent contractor on a six monthly basis.</p> <p>Any non-conformity issues raised from a service are reported to Property and Asset and are addressed accordingly.</p>	<p>Stannah send a certificate after each service and repair that is carried out.</p> <p>Stannah send a CSV file into EDDC every Friday, the file records the service dates, this in turn is passed to the Housing Systems Admin' team who upload the data onto our data management system, Open Housing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with the Testing of passenger lifts and stair lifts at the required intervals. • Procure a new Lift Servicing Contract; the current Contract being carried out by Stannah expires on 30th April 2020. • Implement a process for electronically recording the testing and certification (this is likely to be the compliance module on Open Housing)
Fire Safety	<p>Fire Risk Assessments have been carried out by an external accredited specialist, FCS Live for all blocks of flats; the areas specifically covered by the FRA's include the communal areas, roof spaces and the external access/areas; a percentage of flats are also inspected.</p> <p>All items identified as 'urgent' are addressed on receipt of the FRA.</p>	<p>FCS Live have a portal to access, view and update the Fire Risk Assessments; as items identified on the FRA's are addressed they are updated/signed off on the Portal; at the same time specific items are updated on the Portal the Action Plan is also updated to record that work is complete at individual sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the Fire Policy (for sign off by HRB) • Monitor the Action Plan for the fire safety works identified in the FRA's at all blocks of flats. • Update the FCS Live Portal as specific items highlighted are addressed.

	<p>Items highlighted in the FRA generally fall into two categories, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those relating to the fabric/service installations of the building which are dealt with by Property & Asset. • Those relating to the management of the buildings which are dealt with by Landlord Services. <p>Notwithstanding the 'urgent' items and after consultation with the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service a phased approach has been adopted by Property & Asset to address the fabric/service installations; works in various locations are at various stages, some are complete, some are on site/in progress, some are in the Tender stage, some are in the procurement stage and some have still to be commenced, refer separate Action Plan.</p> <p>In addition to planned building/remedial work there is a programme of Cyclical servicing that is carried out by specialist competent Contractors on the following installations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire alarm systems – monthly. • Emergency light installations – monthly flip test; annual 3 hour test • Automatic opening vent testing – annual • Smoke/heat/CO detector testing – annual • Dry riser testing – annual • Fire extinguishers – annual <p>Any non-conformity issues raised from a service are reported to Property and Asset and are addressed accordingly.</p>	<p>Test Certificates are submitted on a regular basis, reviewed and stored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire alarm systems • Emergency light installations • Automatic opening vent testing • Smoke/heat/CO detector testing • Dry riser testing • Fire extinguishers <p>Emergency lighting tests and fire alarm tests are recorded and captured in a log which is also kept on site in the red fire boxes.</p> <p>Fire stopping documentation is provided by the contractor to EDDC upon completing such works.</p> <p>Monthly management inspections carried out by Landlord Services are collated and recorded on our Housing Management system (Open Housing)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve issues relating to fire detection in sheltered properties (currently managed by Home Safeguard). • Continue all servicing/testing regimes for the numerous systems highlighted. • Continue to all fire management checks and ensure these are recorded • Implement an official regime for the inspection of fire doors (external contractor to be procured) • Continue with fire stopping works where compartmentation has been breached in flats where void/upgrade work is carried out
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	<p>On all void properties and planned works (kitchen/bathroom) upgrades we carry out fire stopping within flats where there has been breach identified in the compartmentation.</p> <p>As part of a Fire Policy/Safety review EDDC have adopted a zero tolerance Policy for loose items of furniture, Tenant possessions and rubbish being left/dumped in Communal Areas; monthly inspections are carried out by Landlord Services to police this element of Fire Management</p>		
<p>Asbestos</p>	<p>Asbestos surveying contract currently in place with Asbestos Consultants Europe Ltd (ACE) who carry out all our asbestos surveys together with air test and analysing if required.</p> <p>We hold asbestos management surveys for all our communal areas in blocks of flats, district offices and community centres. Any asbestos present in these properties/locations are annually re-inspected by ACE.</p> <p>We hold over 90% of management surveys for the remainder of our housing stock and are working on the no-accesses.</p> <p>We provide our contractors with refurbishment or demolition surveys prior to carrying out any refurbishment work in our properties.</p> <p>Our asbestos register is held on Open Housing and is updated regularly.</p> <p>Monthly asbestos updates are sent to our main contractors.</p> <p>Ian Williams have direct access to our asbestos surveys.</p>	<p>Bi-monthly contract meetings are held with ACE to monitor their progress.</p> <p>ACE have an on-line portal which clearly shows the different work streams, this is matched against our Open Housing extracts/orders.</p> <p>Our Asset Technician reconciles the surveys against orders raised and updates our Open Housing system & Civica. All surveys are distributed to the appropriate project officers for review prior to issuing to the contractor.</p> <p>Once asbestos has been removed we receive documentation to confirm this.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the asbestos surveying contract for a further year • Continue to carry out the annual re-inspections of communal areas of blocks of flats, district offices and community centres • Gain access to those properties that have not allowed us access to carry out a management survey • Continue to remove asbestos on voids and planned works • Continue with annual asbestos awareness training • Upskill members of the team to P405 qualified (Management of Asbestos) • Ensure once asbestos is removed the asbestos register is updated

	All Property & Asset staff receive yearly asbestos awareness training.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to provide our contractors asbestos surveys prior to carrying out works
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Report to:	Housing Review Board
Date of Meeting:	23 January 2020
Public Document:	Yes
Exemption:	None
Review date for release	None
Subject:	Review of Fire Safety Policy
Purpose of report:	Members to note the amendments to the Fire Safety Policy.
Recommendation:	To agree the review of the Fire Safety Policy.
Reason for recommendation:	To ensure we are meeting our statutory requirements in relation to fire safety. To ensure the safety of our residents.
Officer:	Graham Baker – Senior Technical Officer (Asset Management & Compliance) gbaker@eastdevon.gov.uk
Financial implications:	No specific financial implications.
Legal implications:	The legal implications for Fire safety are contained within the policy document and require no further comment.
Equalities impact:	Low Impact .
Climate change:	Low Impact
Risk:	Comments High Risk There are high risk consequences of failing to comply with Statutory Regulations/Legislation in relation to compliance from a safety financial and reputational perspective.
Links to background information:	• .
Link to Council Plan:	Outstanding Homes and Communities Outstanding Council and Council Services

Report in full

Introduction:

1. This policy details the system for the management of fire safety risks in properties owned and/or managed by East Devon District Council.
2. East Devon District Council (EDDC) will make every effort to minimise the risk to our tenants and their visitors in council owned housing stock by complying with all relevant legislation and subsequent guidance. These include The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) and The Housing Act 2004.

Policy:

3. See attached

Recommendation:

4. That the Housing Review Board note and accept the proposed amendment to Housing's Fire Safety Policy.

HOUSING FIRE SAFETY POLICY

Introduction

This document details the system for the management of fire safety risks in properties owned and/or managed by East Devon District Council.

East Devon District Council (EDDC) will make every effort to minimise the risk to our tenants and their visitors in council owned housing stock by complying with all relevant legislation and subsequent guidance. These include The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) and The Housing Act 2004.

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1) Policy statement

East Devon District Council will take all reasonable steps to prevent and control the risk from fire in all of the properties that it owns or manages.

EDDC will maintain a fire safety policy and will work with tenants, residents, leaseholders, staff, contractors and the statutory enforcement bodies to agree and deliver legally compliant solutions to fire safety issues. In this regard we will:

- Implement our fire safety policy by empowering nominated staff with specific responsibilities and duties.
- Ensure that all nominated staff receive the appropriate training and resources required to fulfil their statutory responsibilities/duties under fire safety legislation.
- Ensure that prompt remedial action shall be taken to safeguard persons in properties where there is a serious risk from fire.

The Housing Service aims to provide a safe environment in which our residents are assured that the risk of injury or damage to their homes caused by fires is minimised.

We will foster and maintain good working relationships with partners and contractors to help ensure the ongoing safety of our residents; this includes Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (D&SFRS).

In aiming to deliver this safe environment we will seek to identify, assess and reduce risks to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

In discharging our obligations to fire safety we will:

- Carry out our Fire Risk Assessments (FRA's) in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Carry out monthly fire safety risk checks of communal areas of all blocks of flats

We provide tenants and leaseholders with advice and information about fire safety in newsletters; leaflets; posters in blocks and community centres; on our website; social media; the Tenant Handbook and at tenancy visits.

2) Policy development

This policy has been developed to allow East Devon District Council to comply with the:

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- The Housing Act 2004
- The Building Regulations 2019
- Equality's Act 2010
- The Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health & Safety at Work (Amendment) Regulations 2006
- The Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO)

The main provisions of the FSO are to:

- Carry out periodic fire risk assessments identifying any possible dangers and risks and create a work plan to address all recommendations arising from them.
- Eliminate or reduce the risk from fire as far as is reasonably possible and provide general fire precautions to deal with any remaining potential risks
- Create a plan to deal with fire emergency and record any major findings and action taken
- Review fire risk assessments regularly and make changes where necessary.

The FSO applies to:

- The common parts of buildings containing flats and maisonettes
- The common parts of sheltered accommodation
- Offices, shops and factories
- Community halls and other community premises

The FSO does **not** apply to purely domestic premises occupied by a single-family group including individual flats, maisonettes, bedsits, or residential units themselves.

The Fire and Rescue Authority, have a statutory duty to enforce the requirements of the Order. This can be by means of notification of deficiencies, formal enforcement notices, prohibition notices and/or ultimately by means of prosecution.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) introduced under the Housing Act 2004,

The main provisions of the HHSRS are that:

- Any residential premises should provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor and;
- To satisfy this principal, a dwelling should be designed, constructed and maintained with non-hazardous materials and should be free from both unnecessary and avoidable hazards;
- In relation to fire safety, the HHSRS applies to those matters which can properly be considered the responsibility of the owner (or landlord).

In relation to fire safety, the HHSRS does not apply to those elements of a dwelling for which responsibility lies with the user (the occupier) including fixtures and fittings (unless supplied by the landlord as a part of a furnished tenancy or where shared rooms are provided).

The Local Authority has a duty to act where category 1 or 2 hazards are found. They have a duty to enforce the requirements of the Act. This can be by means of informal notice to improve, formal enforcement notices, prohibition notices and/or ultimately by means of prosecution.

3) Scope of the policy

This policy is applicable to all buildings owned or managed by East Devon District Council as part of its Housing stock.

Individual Dwelling- EDDC as a residential landlord has a duty to provide a “decent home” fit for the occupant/s to live in and ensure that it doesn't endanger their health. This includes ensuring there are no Category 1 or 2 fire hazards in the property as determined by the HHSRS under the Housing Act 2004. The requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 do not apply to this type of property.

Blocks of flats - EDDC has a duty under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to ensure that a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment has been undertaken to evaluate the risks to the occupants and all other relevant persons who would be regarded as lawfully on the premises.

The risk assessment is limited to the communal areas of the building up to and including the front door of the flat/maisonette. These common areas must have adequate protected escape routes (including fire related signage and lighting), adequate means for the testing and maintenance of all fire systems, and adequate fire safety training of staff, and information to tenants/leaseholders to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Additionally the individual flat/maisonette should comply with the duty mentioned above for an “individual dwelling” under the Housing Act 2004.

The tenant/resident – EDDC will endeavour through its resources and working with partner agencies e.g. Mental health services, DSFR fire safety team and other statutory and non-statutory agencies to identify and assist vulnerable tenants/leaseholders who may be a threat to both themselves and to others in the event of a fire, whilst being mindful of its statutory obligations the Equalities Act and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 regarding the disabled, elderly and young persons.

Leaseholder – EDDC will keep leaseholders informed of their responsibilities/duties to ensure that as “responsible persons” they comply with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

4) Responsibilities of the Organisation

The Strategic Lead – Housing, Health & Environment & The Service Lead – Housing are the Responsible Persons, as defined in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and has a duty to ensure that East Devon District Council has a clearly defined and effective management system incorporating, planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventative and protective measures.

To fulfil the obligations and duties under the Order the Responsible Person must, appoint one or more competent persons to assist in undertaking the preventive and protective measures.

The responsible person must ensure that the person/s appointed have adequate time and the means at their disposal for them to fulfil their duties under the Order.

A person is to be regarded as competent for the purposes of the Order where they have sufficient training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to enable them to undertake their duties.

EDDC have delegated/appointed the following roles as “nominated competent persons” for the purposes of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and this policy.

Property & Asset Manager - senior level management of fire safety within EDDC and reporting directly to the Housing Review Board. Responsibility for ensuring compliance with the legislation for the following areas:

- EDDC fire related policies and procedures.
- Staff training.
- Coordinating information awareness to tenants.
- Fire risk assessments are undertaken by competent persons, on all properties requiring one and a review process is in place.
- Statutory maintenance contracts on fire systems.
- External contractors and in-house works standards.
- To monitor that the statutory annual maintenance to all fixed and portable fire systems have been procured and completed at the appropriate times and records kept for those buildings which we have control.
- To ensure that where repairs are undertaken on any structure or fire system that the repair does not compromise the existing level of fire safety compliance.
- That we monitor that the statutory annual maintenance to all fixed and portable fire systems have been procured and completed at the appropriate times and records kept (as it applies to the housing stock and corporate buildings under their control).

Landlord Services Manager - has management responsibility for ensuring that:

- All estate and office staff have received the appropriate fire safety training on induction and periodically thereafter in line with the training statement below.
- Estate Management Officers and the Sheltered Mobile Support Officers, that a system is in place to receive and act upon all fire risk assessments and action plans relevant to their areas of control, that they are checked and actions to rectify deficiencies' are undertaken and recorded on the FRA action plans.
- Ensure that staff are undertaking monthly fire safety risk checks in communal areas and that these are recorded and action taken as required.

Housing Needs & Strategy Manager – has management responsibility for ensuring that:

- A process is in place to ensure that allocation officers are assessing the suitability of housing tenants above ground floor
- Allocations officers are able to provide re-housing advice to tenants who live in properties above ground floor who can no longer self-evacuate in the event of a fire and wish to move to ground floor accommodation

Senior Technical Officer (Asset Management & Compliance) - has overall management responsibility for ensuring fire risk assessments and reviews are conducted in accordance with the arrangements set out below. In particular:

- Ensuring that all staff have received the appropriate fire safety training on induction and periodically thereafter in line with the training statement below.

- To monitor that the statutory annual maintenance to all fixed and portable fire systems have been procured and completed at the appropriate times and records kept for those buildings which he has control.
- To ensure that where works are undertaken on any structure or fire system that the works do not compromise the existing level of fire safety compliance.
- To provide an annual statement of asset management compliance/risk to the Housing Review Board.

Senior Technical Officer (Day to Day Repairs & Voids)

The role of the post holder includes:

- Ensuring that all staff have received the appropriate fire safety training on induction and periodically thereafter in line with the training statement below.
- To ensure that all contractors follow the principles as detailed below (Contractors).
- Ensure that fire stopping is carried out as part of void works within flats in an approved complaint manner.

The Compliance Surveyor & Programme Works Officer

The role of the post holder includes:

- Ensuring planned maintenance and annual certifiable testing of all fixed fire systems in accordance with relevant British Standards (fire alarms, escape lighting, and firefighting equipment).
- Ensuring that all annual certificates are recorded on a central data base and that copies are also held on those sites where a fire log book is located.
- Ensuring that all domestic fire alarm systems are annually tested (and recorded) as part of the annual gas safety check, solid fuel service or through another contract of each dwelling.
- Co-ordination of the fire risk assessment and review process.
- To undertake the FRA reviews in accordance with the time schedule below.
- Undertake random quality control audits.
- To provide operational guidance and support to area based staff. To ensure that a system to monitor that the statutory annual maintenance to all fixed and portable fire systems have been procured and completed at the appropriate times and records kept.

Estate Management Officers and Mobile Support Officers

Responsibilities are:

- Ensuring good local community relations with the local Fire Service including invitations to local resident events and meetings.
- Ensure that bulky waste materials are collected, safely stored and disposed of.
- Ensure that any repairs identified via monthly fire safety risk checks in particular defects to any fire safety equipment, fire doors, emergency lighting, fire related signage etc. are communicated to the repairs section immediately.

- Organise recharges for the removal of possessions or damage against tenants breaching fire safety policy.
- Identify breaches of tenancy where tenants fail to comply with fire safety policy such as where fire doors are propped open or possessions stored in the means of escape.
- Identify vulnerable tenants during Tenancy Audits and site visits and offer fire safety visits from DSFR if required. Any tenants who reside in a block of flats and would be unable to evacuate without assistance in the event of a fire must be identified in the 'Fire Service Information' sheet which is to be kept in the applicable red fire boxes.

Housing Allocations Officers & Devon Home Choice Officer

- Ensure that when allocating properties above ground floor all members of the household are able to self-evacuate in the event of a fire
- Provide re-housing advice to tenants who live in properties above ground floor who can no longer self-evacuate and wish to move to ground floor accommodation

Every employee must, while at work in area offices or on site:

- Ensure they are familiar with the emergency plan for their workplace and co-operate by participating in fire evacuation/drill.
- Co-operate with, their managers and supervisors to ensure that a safe and healthy workplace is maintained.
- Report to their manager or supervisor any concerns about fire safety.
- Be familiar with all escape routes.
- Not wedge fire doors open, nor block or obstruct them.
- Be aware of the action to be taken on discovering a fire, hearing a fire alarm, for raising the alarm (including the location of fire alarm call points) and calling the fire and rescue service.
- Promptly evacuate the premises, in accordance with the emergency plan, to a place of safety without putting themselves and others at risk, and NOT attempt to extinguish a fire unless they have been specifically trained.

5) Staff training and information

EDDC is committed to ensuring that all work activities performed within the organisation are performed by persons competent to carry out the activities.

It is the responsibility of senior managers to ensure that all members of staff for whom they are responsible receive training as required for them to discharge their tasks and duties in a competent manner. Conversely it is also the duty of each staff member to ensure that they are 'in date' on any time related training course.

Training records - Managers must ensure that a written record is kept of local fire safety training. The record should include the type of training, local information and instruction provided, date and names of those attending. These records must be made available by the Service to the EDDC Property & Asset Manager and for inspection by the enforcing authority.

6) Fire Safety Information

Information to staff

This document is not intended to provide detailed technical guidance on fire safety issues. Any questions or concerns in relation to fire safety should be directed to the Property & Asset Manager, The Landlord Services Manager or The Housing Needs & Strategy Manager.

The Compliance Surveyor and/or Programme Works Officer shall ensure that an up-to-date copy of all fire risk assessments is available in within the “Fire Safety Information “folder on the “S” drive. In addition the folder will contain information on the relevant fire legislation and all relevant guidance documents, the EDDC Fire management policy and all fire related policies.

Information to tenants

Information on the Fire Risk Assessments for all buildings where the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is applicable will be made available to tenants upon request.

The Landlord Services Manager shall ensure that residents with specific needs are identified and given appropriate information about the action to be taken in event of fire. In cases where the Landlord Services Manager has a concern about the safety of a tenant either due to their age or infirmity then contact should be made with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service to initiate a home safety check, provided that the tenant is happy for them to attend.

Tenant fire safety awareness

This will generally take the form of:

- Fire Routine Notice (*to all buildings except single dwellings not forming part of any form of flat arrangement*)
- Leaflet information (*on new tenancy and occasional leaflet drops*)
- Fire home safety checks where requested, delivered by Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service
- Newsletters and social media
- As required by EDDC staff undertaking maintenance /general visits to individual tenants
- Estate visits/fire safety risk checks.

7) Evacuation plans

EDDC have adopted site specific evacuation plans for all purpose built blocks of flats. Where there is appropriate fire compartmentation between dwellings and escape routes a ‘stay put’ approach may be appropriate.

For all other premises the evacuation plan has been designed to allow for “full” evacuation immediately on notification of a fire alert unless otherwise stated. All residents and staff must refer to the appropriate Fire Action Notice on site. EDDC regularly remind residents to ensure they refer to the appropriate Fire Action Notice so they are aware of what to do in the event of discovering a fire.

8) Fire Fighting Equipment (provision and use)

Use of fire extinguishers - As a general principle it is the expectation that all tenants or staff will upon finding a fire to raise the alarm and to assist in the evacuation of the building. In normal circumstances it is not expected for non-trained staff, tenants and members of the public to tackle a fire using a fire extinguisher.

The only people who should tackle a fire would be those “nominated” members of staff who have received additional practical training on the selection and use of fire extinguishers. It will be for their judgement to actually determine if the fire is safe to tackle or not.

Residential accommodation- It is not considered appropriate to provide fire extinguishers within the individual dwellings or the communal areas (corridors and staircases) of blocks of flats.

Peripatetic trades staff – (gas fitters, plumbers, electricians, joiners etc.) Due to the nature of the processes carried out and the potential that as a result of the works being undertaken that a fire could be started. Contractors are expected to provide suitably trained staff with appropriate equipment for a safe system of work.

9) Fire risk assessments and reviews

Fire risk assessment (FRA)

The Responsible Person is required to carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to relevant persons from fire, and that the significant findings of this assessment are to be written down and where deficiencies are noted they are to be acted upon in a planned and organized manner.

There is a need for the significant findings of the assessment to be fully accessible by the Responsible Person and the relevant persons as applicable.

The Fire Risk Assessment will be re-done/reviewed in accordance with this policy and where there has been significant changes to the building in terms of either, its construction, processes used, or occupancy.

All FRA's and reviews will be commissioned by the Senior Technical Officer and when completed copies will be made available to the relevant area/office managers for distribution to the officers responsible for the respective units.

The RRO 2005 identifies EDDC as the responsible person and as such we have a duty to carry out a FRA in relevant premises and take reasonable steps to remove or reduce any risks that have been identified and act upon significant findings.

We will regularly review FRA's as follows:

- medium rise blocks – every year or after a fire or following any significant changes
- Sheltered schemes – every year or after a fire or following any significant changes
- Low and medium blocks and converted properties i.e. houses converted into flats every year, after a fire or following any significant changes.

Fire Risk Assessor

The Fire Risk Assessor's role will be carried out by a competent person who shall:

- Carry out FRA's
- Provide technical and expert advice
- Ensure compliance with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Are accredited to the BAFE SP205 scheme (Fire Risk Assessment Provider)

Review of fire risk assessment

Where no change has taken place, the original assessment should be reviewed in accordance with the policy to ensure that the building, management procedures and that testing /maintenance and training of staff remain adequate and compliant with all relevant fire safety legislation. This review is to be organised by the Compliance Surveyor or Programme Works Officer.

After a "Fire" reviews

A fire safety review/investigation of the building and in particular the dwelling will be conducted by senior managers with the support of the Compliance Surveyor in particular after a significant fire. This will include any fire which has resulted in a fatality, serious injury or where the fire has spread from the room of origin.

The purpose of the review should be to determine any corporate failings, things that could be done better and what works are required to ensure compliance for the rest of the building.

Fire Risk assessment records

Fire Risk Assessments will be available to tenants on request.

For internal use electronic copies will be retained within the Fire Safety Information folder on the S/drive and eventually on the OpenHousing/Civica system.

Our fire preventative measures are designed to protect people, property and assets against the loss of life, injury and damage caused by fire.

Wherever possible we will undertake measures to prevent the risk of fire, this will include:

- Ensuring that our common ways and storage areas are kept clear and by carrying out enforcement where breaches occur.
- That staff are trained in order to identify and report any potential risks.
- That we provide good information and advice to existing and new tenants and leaseholders about how to reduce the risk of fires with the help of D&SFRS.
- That we provide leaflets and posters to highlight the risks of fires and how to help prevent them.
- Ensuring we identify and work with our more vulnerable tenants who may be at greater risk should there be a fire.

Fire Protection

Evacuation routes and fire exits

To ensure safe evacuation, routes will have adequate signage and be kept free of sources of ignition, flammable and combustible material and obstructions at all times. We will enforce this with tenants and residents where necessary by implementing the fire safety and clearance of common ways/means of escape. In blocks of flats FRA's will be carried out to identify and deal with such issues alongside those identified during cleaning and estate inspections.

Fire exits will not be left open to ensure that security of the building is maintained. In blocks of flats and in sheltered schemes inspections will be carried out to identify and deal with such issues.

Fire Doors – common areas and tenant/leaseholder doors

Fire doors are provided to help prevent the spread of smoke and fire and must be kept closed or fitted with door holders which are designed to release when the fire alarm is activated. Fire doors in common areas are checked regularly during FRA's and by staff to ensure they are operating correctly and are not damaged.

Fire doors, including entrance doors to tenants'/leaseholders' flats, provide a minimum of 30 minutes fire resistance. Doors should not be propped open, tampered with or compromised in any way, i.e. materials affixed to frame/door to prevent banging noises and/or cat flaps.

Flat entrance fire doors are checked by staff during visits to ensure they are operating correctly, the self-closure if working and the door is not damaged.

Signage

Appropriate fire safety signage is displayed throughout communal areas indicating the fire exit/s. Fire action notices are also present in all communal areas. Fire doors are marked to keep shut and no smoking signs are affixed inside the block.

Smoke alarms

Hard wired smoke alarms are fitted when properties are empty or re-wired. All homes should have a smoke alarm fitted and Carbon Monoxide detectors in homes with gas or solid fuel appliances.

10) Maintenance

EDDC shall ensure that all fire related systems are regularly serviced in accordance with the relevant British Standards where appropriate:

- Fire detectors, fire alarms,
- Emergency lighting systems,
- Fire extinguishers
- Automatic smoke control systems.
- Dry rising fire mains and pumps.

- PAT testing
- Access/egress controls

- That all domestic fire alarms within EDDC property will be annually inspected and tested. (This to be done as part of the annual gas safety, electrical check & Home Safeguard alarm tests).
- All works carried out by contractors, are inspected at the start, periodically during the works and upon completion to ensure that the works do not compromise any of the fire measures incorporated within the building or the ability of the occupants to evacuate safely in the event of a fire.
- Make sure that all gas supplies are maintained in a good order and that a gas safety check is carried out every year by a competent person.
- Have a current electrical supply test certificate every 5 years.

Certificates are to be held on site (where appropriate) within the site fire box. Copies of these certificates will be held within EDDC compliance software to populate the Asset Register and advise the Compliance Surveyor of servicing requirements.

11) Testing of fire systems and the site log book

Checks of active (fire alarms, escape lighting, firefighting equipment) systems are to be conducted at agreed appropriate times during normal hours and comply with relevant British or European Standards.

A fire safety log book will be kept to record the details of all tests on passive and active preventative and protective measures, as well as inspections.

12) Contractors

EDDC accepts that under the aforementioned legislation, our contractors have a responsibility towards fire safety.

For all contracts of a substantial nature, the agreement or contract between the two parties will specify the legislation and fire safety standards to which the contractor will be expected to comply with.

Where the contractor employs five or more persons they should be asked for a copy of their own fire safety policy.

All contractors will also be asked to supply their fire risk assessment, and method statement/s with respect to planned operations involving significant risks.

Under CDM 'dangerous works' should be identified in the construction Health & Safety Plan. An assessment needs to be made in order to remove the risk.

EDDC will inform all contractors of any risks to their fire safety that may result from the activities of EDDC.

During works on site – The site is to be supervised by both the contractor and the nominated EDDC Surveyor to ensure that the fire safety standards expected under the contract fire risk assessment and the relevant guidance are being complied with.

Any questionable practices should in the first instance be brought to the person in charge on site. If the works being undertaken are judged to be "dangerous" then the works should be stopped immediately, until the dangerous practice has been eliminated. The Property & Asset Manager should be notified by e-mail of the incident and the remedial actions undertaken.

Leaving the site- (Both at the end of the day and end of contract)

The site should be left by the contractor ensuring that the fire protection to the building has not been reduced. For example any breaches in fire walls, etc., are to be made good before they leave site. Any signs removed have been replaced, all waste is to be removed, all slip and trip

hazards eliminated. Any secondary damage caused by the works undertaken should be identified and made good to the required standards.

13) Audit and review

The following Key Performance Indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the Fire Safety policy:

- Number of fires recorded annually / number of fire related incidents.
- Cost of major fires (rebuild/repairs) to EDDC.
- Number and nature of enforcement, alterations or prohibition notices from statutory authorities.
- Number of FRA, s undertaken and FRA Reviews undertaken within date.
- Percentage of staff up to date for with their relevant fire safety training.

All persons are to ensure that proper records are maintained and available on demand for inspection.

14) Enforcing authorities inspections, audits general familiarisation

Where arrangements have been made for audits to specific buildings by either of the enforcing authorities with a responsibility for fire i.e. the Fire Service or our Auditors, the Property & Asset Manager should be immediately e-mailed with details of the planned audit.

Copies of all correspondence between either of the enforcing authorities received by EDDC should be copied immediately to the Property & Asset Manager.

15) Equality and diversity

EDDC will apply this policy consistently and fairly, and will not discriminate against anyone on grounds of their racial or ethnic origin, disability, gender, religious belief, sexual identity, or any other relevant characteristic.

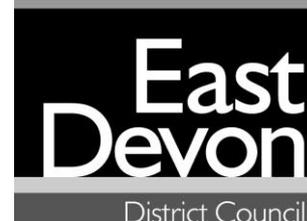
EDDC will make this policy available in other languages and formats on request.

We will carry out an equality impact assessment on this policy, in line with our corporate procedure.

16) Monitoring and review

We will monitor this policy to ensure it meets good practice and current legislation and will review it in accordance with our review timetable for all policies. The policy should be revised by August 2022

AG-J/January2019 V4



Report to: **Housing Review Board**

Date of Meeting: 23 January 2020

Public Document: Yes

Exemption: None

Review date for release None

Subject: **Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report October 2019**

Purpose of report: To brief management team on the outcome/findings of the report, our current position and recommendations.

Recommendation: **For information only**

Reason for recommendation: N/A

Officer: Michelle Davidson – Compliance Surveyor

Financial implications: Budget required for compliance related servicing/improvement works

Legal implications: The Grenfell Tower Inquiry report, referred to in this report, has not been separately reviewed by Legal Services. Therefore, Legal Services are unable to comment further on this report. However, should any aspects of the Inquiry report need clarification, then Legal Services would be happy to advise Housing Services.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

Climate change: Low Impact

Risk: Comments
Medium Risk

East Devon District Council (Housing) has no high rise blocks within its housing portfolio nor does any of the blocks have external ACM cladding. Future changes in Legislation will however need to be implemented and programmes devised to meet such requirements. Failing to comply with these changes in relation to compliance or safety would pose a risk to the Council and could pose a risk to tenant's safety.

Links to background information:

- [Grenfell Tower Inquiry – Phase 1. Chairman: The Rt Hon Sir Martin Moore-Bick October 2019](#)

Link to Council Plan:

Outstanding Homes and Communities
Outstanding Council and Council Services

Report in full:

1. Background

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry is an independent public inquiry, set up to examine the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower on 14th June 2017 where 70 people failed to escape the building and lost their lives. A child was later stillborn as a result of the trauma suffered by his Mother in the course of her escape and another resident, Maria del Pilar Burton, who had escaped the burning building, died some months later in hospital.

On 15th June 2017 The Prime Minister announced that a public inquiry into the fire would be set up and Sir Martin Moore-Bick was appointed as the Chairman of the inquiry.

The inquiry is investigating a list of issues that has been separated into two phases. Phase 1 focuses on the factual narrative of the events of the night of 14th June 2017. Hearings for Phase 1 began on 21 May 2018 and concluded on 12th December 2018. Phase 2 of the inquiry is focusing on the remainder of the list of issues and will examine the circumstances and causes of the disaster. Hearings for Phase 2 are expected to begin in early 2020, following which the final report will be written and subsequently published.

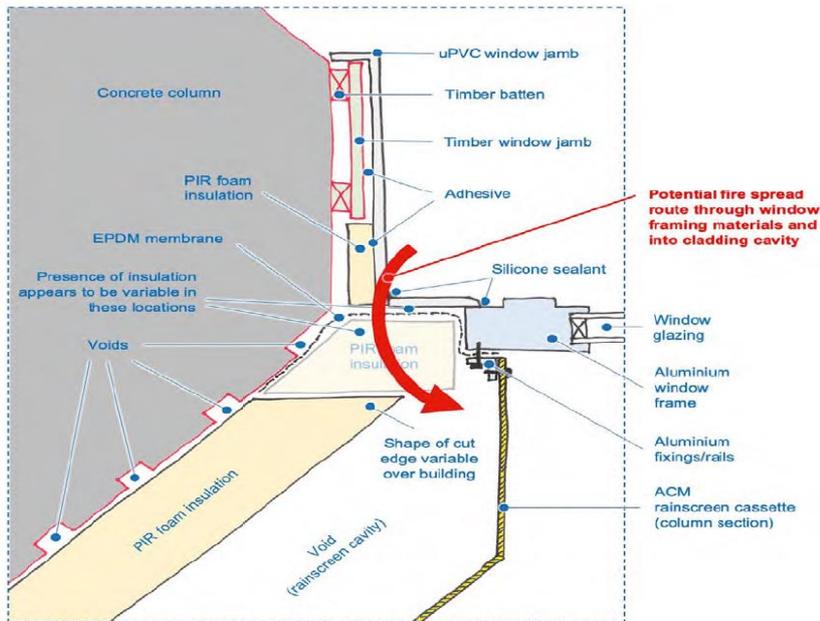
2. Report

Following the latest report on Grenfell Tower Inquiry it states that it is clear that the fire started in the kitchen area of Flat 16. Further investigations will be on-going regarding how a fire started however the report concludes that following a review of all the evidence it is clear that the fire originated in the large fridge freezer.

The report looks at evidence of how/why the fire spread in the building. The Building Research Establishment (BRE) reached the following conclusion: -

'It appears from the reconstruction most likely that fire spread to the cladding via the extractor fan and infill panel into which it was mounted, and the ignition of the exposed edge of the polyethylene core of the Aluminium Composite Material (ACM).

The second most likely route evidenced by the reconstruction, and one which could have occurred if the polyethylene had not been the cladding component first ignited, is the route via the construction around the window (through the uPVC, insulation and gap between the window frame and column).



The Rt Hon Sir Martin Moore-Bick concludes that following reviewing the video evidence itself and the expert evidence, none of which was challenged he is satisfied that whilst many factors played a part, the principal reason why the flames spread so rapidly up the building was the presence of the ACM panels with polyethylene cores, which had high calorific value, melted and acted as source of fuel for the growing fire. He also thinks it is likely that the presence of Polyisocyanurate (PIR) and phenolic foam insulation boards behind the ACM panels (and perhaps the Ethylene Propylene Diene Monomer/EPDM membrane and the Aluglaze window infill panels) contributed to the rate and extent of vertical flame spread, but it is not possible at this stage to quantify the extent of their respective contributions. Further investigation in Phase 2 will look into these matters further.

The report states that the early spread of smoke through the tower was most likely to have been a consequence of flat doors having been left open rather than having failed while closed due to exposure to heat or flame. This said there were deficiencies in the performance of flat doors following testing conducted by the BRE after the fire where some doors only resisted the fire for 15 minutes before succumbing to flames. Further, the report suggests that if self-closing devices had been missing on doors of flats or had not been working properly, open doors would have provided a means by which large quantities of smoke could have moved through the building at an early stage.

The report states that many factors played a part in the spread of smoke in the tower, such as movement of occupants, leakage through smoke control shafts and vents and other open channels however it is unclear to what extent if at all they contributed to the outcome. The report further states that the building suffered a total failure in compartmentation, which Phase 2 will investigate further.

Compartmentation is likely to remain at the heart of fire safety strategy and will probably continue to provide a safe basis for responding to the vast majority of fires in high rise buildings. However at Grenfell Tower the report acknowledges that mass evacuation of the block would have posed serious risks to the lives of residents and fire fighters but in the face of a rapidly spreading fire it would have resulted in the saving of many more lives. The report recommends that fire and rescue services and building owners provide a greater range of responses, including full or partial evacuation and appropriate steps be taken to enable alternative evacuation strategies to be implemented effectively (in high rise buildings).

As part of the inquiry it was highlighted that London Fire Brigade (LFB) had lack of information on Grenfell Tower regarding, information on the building - occupancy and use profile, floor layouts and building construction, flat numbers by floor, potential communication problems (alternative languages), fire engineered solutions within the building design. In Phase 2 of the report it will investigate the lack of communication between LFB and the Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) and the Local Authority (LA).

Generally there is a criticism that all parties involved from the control room to those on the floor were working in isolation and did not communicate well, further the TMO's emergency plan was not up to date (15 years) and the employees were unable to gain access to it.

Currently in England and Wales high rise have been conventionally defined for the purposes of fire safety as buildings over 18 meters in height however Scotland have recently changed their regulations so that the requirements relating to high rise buildings apply to buildings over 11 meters in height, it may be a consideration that this is changed and will be examined in phase 2

In phase 2 it will examine the improvements to regulations relating to fire safety and the requirements for testing and certification of materials, which should be capable of mitigating that risk in future. Effective compartmentation is likely to remain at the heart of a fire strategy (stay put) and will probably continue to provide a safe basis for responding to the vast majority of fires in blocks of flats.

Concluding the inquiry states it is clear that the external wall of Grenfell Tower principally in the form of the ACM cladding but also the combustible insulations was the reason the fire spread so quickly to the whole building.

3. Inquiry Recommendations

As part of the inquiry The Rt Hon Sir Martin Moore-Bick makes a number of recommendations, some of these are summarised below –

- All owners of high rise flats are required by law to provide their local Fire Service with information on the design of external walls with details of the materials of which they are constructed and to update them if any changes
- All fire service staff understand the risk of a fire taking hold in the external wall of high rise blocks and how to recognise it when it occurs
- All fire services to inspect high rise buildings
- That all owners or managers of residential buildings be require by Law to provide their local Fire Service with up to date plans in both paper and electronic form of every floor of the building identifying the location of key fire safety systems
- To ensure that the building contains a premises information box and the contents of which must include up to date floor plans and information about the nature of any lift intended for use by the Fire Service
- All fire services be equipped to receive and store electronic plans and make them available to incident commanders and control room managers
- That the owner of blocks be required to by Law to carry out regular inspections of any lifts designed to be used by fire fighters in an emergency and to report the results to their local fire service at monthly intervals. Further to carry out tests of the mechanism which allows fire fighters to take control of the lifts at monthly intervals and report this back to them

- Recommendations regarding communication between commanders and control room fire service
- Training for call handlers, refresher training for Fire Services, all Fire Services develop policies for handling large number of calls, policy developed for managing a transition from stay put to get out, deployment of a use of resources (policy)
- The Government develop national guidelines or carrying out partial or total evacuations of high-rise building, such guidelines to include the means of protecting fire exit routes and procedures for evacuating persons who are unable to use the stairs in an emergency, or who may require assistance (such as disabled people, older people & young children)
- The Fire & Rescue Services develop policies for partial and total evacuation of high-rise residential buildings and training to support them
- That the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by Law to draw up and keep under regular review evacuation plans, copies of which are to be provided in electronic and paper form to their local fire and rescue service and placed in an information box on the premises.
- That all high rise residential buildings (both existing and new build) be equipped with facilities for use by the fire and rescue services enabling them to send an evacuation signal to the whole or a selected part of the building by means of sounders of similar devices.
- That the owner and manager of every high rise residential buildings be required by Law to prepare personal emergency evacuations plans (PEEPs) for all residents whose ability to self-evacuate may be comprised
- That the owner and manager of every high rise residential buildings be required by Law to include up to date information about persons with reduced mobility and their associated PEPPs in the premises information box
- That all fire and rescue services be equipped with smoke hoods to assist in the evacuation of occupants through smoke-filled exit routes.
- All high rise buildings floor numbers by clearly marked on each landing within the stairways
- That the owner and manager of every residential building containing separate dwellings (whether or not high rise buildings) be required by Law to provide safety instructions (including instructions for evacuation) in a form that the occupants of the building can reasonably be expected to understand.
- That the owner and manager of every residential building containing separate dwellings (whether or not high rise buildings) carry out an urgent inspection of all fire doors to ensure that they comply with applicable legislative standards
- That the owner and manager of every residential building containing separate dwellings (whether or not high rise buildings) be required by Law to carry out checks not less than three-monthly intervals to ensure that all fire doors are fitted with effective self-closing devices in working order
- That all those who have responsibility in whatever capacity for the condition of the entrance doors to individual flats in high risk residential buildings, whose external walls incorporate unsafe cladding, be required by law to ensure that such doors comply with current standards.

4. Phase 2

In Phase 2 of the inquiry it will examine the improvements to regulations relating to fire safety and the requirements for testing and certification of materials, which should be capable of mitigating that risk in future. Effective compartmentation is likely to remain at the heart of a fire strategy (stay put) and will probably continue to provide a safe basis for responding to the vast majority of fires in blocks of flats however it will be necessary for building owners and Fire Services to provide a greater range of responses including full or partial evacuation

and therefore appropriate steps must be taken to enable alternative evacuation strategies to be implemented effectively.

The Inquiry will investigate in more detail the following –

- Testing and certification of materials
- Design and choice of materials
- Fire doors
- Window arrangements
- Lifts
- Smoke extraction
- The warning of the local community and the authorities response to the disaster

5. East Devon District Council (Council Housing's) position

Within our Council Housing Stock we do not own any high rise residential blocks, with the tallest being 5 stories high (approximately 15 meters), the majority of our blocks are 3 stories.

East Devon District Council (Council Housing) do not have any block of flats that have any external ACM cladding.

In December 2018 Property & Asset retendered the Fire Risk Assessments contract. After strict due diligence checks FCS Live Ltd were appointed to carry out the Fire Risk Assessments on our behalf.

Property and Asset are currently working on a programme of works to ensure the actions raised from the fire risk assessments are completed.

All individual flats have a thirty minute fire resisting composite door installed. Post Grenfell Tower Property & Asset have embarked on a programme of checking the installation of these fire doors to ensure the fire integrity is present. Further, Landlord Services carry out monthly fire audit checks in all our blocks of flats to ensure that the communal areas are sterile and no items are stored. As part of these checks Landlord Services carry out a visual check of all fire doors.

As part of National Fire Door Awareness week in September 2019 Steve Billingsley (Programmed Works Officer) and Julia Aylott from Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue gave a presentation to Housing staff to raise their awareness of the importance of fire doors. It was reiterated that when staff are entering tenant's flats that they should be checking that the self-closing device fitted on the fire door is in proper working order and closes the door completely into the recess. This campaign was also highlighted to tenants which were encouraged to report any defects with their fire door.

East Devon District Council have a good partnership working relationship with Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue who use us as a flag ship to other Local Authorities. We have regular contact with the Fire Service and meet regularly with them regarding our position and progress.

In all of our blocks of flats we have already installed red fire boxes which the Fire Service are aware of. These boxes already contain information on floor plans, floor numbering, fire safety equipment locations, fire testing and vulnerable tenant information (which highlights to the Fire Service any issues with self-evacuating in the event of a fire) which is GDPR compliant.

The Dodd Group were appointed to carry out a rolling programme of 5 year electrical testing in all of our properties to ensure the electrical installation meets current standard. We are now in year 3 of the 5 year programme with approximately 2500 properties having been tested to date. Dodd's also ensure all portal appliances which have been provided in communal areas are safe to use and are tested yearly (Portal Appliance Test – PAT).

Further each year an inspection of electrical installations in communal areas are carried out to ensure these are safe.

6. Going Forward

Compliance and the safety of our tenant's has been, and will continue to be, at the heart of the Property & Asset & Landlord Services team. We will continue to work together to ensure our tenant's properties are safe and that our tenants are well informed. We will ensure that our close working relationships with our partner agencies such as The Fire Service grow further. We will continue to raise awareness of all compliance related issues through various means.

There has been no guidance issued from the Government as of yet with regards to how they propose Registered Providers meet the above recommendations however we will ensure that we are being proactive in our approach. In 2020 Property & Asset will procure a regime for a competent contractor to carry out fire door checks (including door closures) to all of our fire doors.

We will continue to update the Housing Review Board with progress.



Report to: **Housing Review Board**

Date of Meeting: 23 January 2020

Public Document: Yes

Exemption: None

Review date for release None

Subject: **Housing – Extension of gas servicing Contract**

Purpose of report: Members to note the option to extend the existing gas servicing Contract by a further year.

Recommendation: **To take up the option to extend the existing gas servicing Contract by a further year.**

Reason for recommendation: To maintain properties to a good standard and compliant whilst achieving good value for money.

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

To assist in achieving statutory 100% compliance in relation gas servicing across all our stock with gas components all in line with our Gas Policy-Housing.

To assist in continuing to attend to all gas related breakdowns including carrying out all required remedial work.

Officer: Graham Baker – Senior Technical Officer (Asset Management & Compliance)

gbaker@eastdevon.gov.uk

Financial implications: Gas Servicing expenditure is expected and has been budgeted for in the coming year.

Legal implications: The extension period is in line with that set out within the contract and allowed within the procurement process of the contract.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

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Climate change: Low Impact

Risk: Comments
High Risk

There are high risk consequences of failing to comply with Statutory Regulations/Legislation in relation to compliance from a safety financial and reputational perspective.

Links to background information: • [HRB Minutes of meeting 16 June 2016](#)

Link to Council Plan: Outstanding Homes and Communities

Report in full

Introduction:

1. As the Landlord East Devon District Council has a duty of care to all Tenants to ensure that it complies with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 in as much as all properties with gas appliances/components are serviced, installed, maintained, repaired and used in strict accordance with the aforementioned Statutory Regulations and set out in the Gas Policy - Housing, this responsibility lies across the whole of Housing.

Background:

2. In 2016 East Devon District Council carried out a joint procurement with Mid Devon District Council for their gas servicing and repair Contracts. The procurement was tendered on a nationally recognised 3 star service and repair basis with the added facility for some new installation work for a 4 year period with the option to extend for a further two years on an annual basis and by agreement of both Client and Contractor.
3. On completion of the tender review and all due diligence checks 3 star gas servicing and repairs Contract was awarded to Liberty Gas later re-branded at the Liberty Group.
4. The Contract commenced for the initial 3 period on 1st October 2016 and is due to expire on 30th September 2020.

Performance:

5. Since being awarded the Contract Liberty have generally carried out both the gas servicing and the repair work in a professional manner and have given little cause to question their ability to carry out their work. Apart from some very exceptional circumstances we have maintained 100% compliance for the duration of the Contract to date.
6. Under the terms of the Contract we need to advise the Liberty Group that we would like to take up the option to extend the initial 4 year Contract for a further 1 year 6 months prior to the expiration of the Contract.

Recommendation:

7. It is recommended that the existing gas servicing and repair Contract is extended for a further 1 year.



Report to: **Housing Review Board**

Date of Meeting: 23 January 2020

Public Document: Yes

Exemption: None

Review date for release None

Subject: **Housing – Extension of the asbestos surveying Contract**

Purpose of report: Members to note the option to extend the existing asbestos surveying Contract by a further year.

Recommendation: **To take up the option to extend the existing asbestos surveying Contract by a further year.**

Reason for recommendation: To maintain properties to a good standard and compliant whilst achieving good value for money.

To assist in achieving continuity of asbestos surveying and Survey Reports across the Property & Asset service.

Officer: Graham Baker – Senior Technical Officer (Asset Management & Compliance)

gbaker@eastdevon.gov.uk

Financial implications: Asbestos survey expenditure is expected and has been budgeted for in the coming year.

Legal implications: There are no legal implications requiring comment. The Contract allows for the further extension by 1 year.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

Climate change: Low Impact

Risk: Comments
High Risk

There are high risk consequences of failing to comply with Statutory Regulations/Legislation in relation to compliance from a safety, financial and reputational perspective.

Links to background information:

- .

Link to Council Plan: Outstanding Homes and Communities

Outstanding Council and Council Services

Report in full

Introduction:

1. As the Landlord East Devon District Council has a duty of care to all tenants to ensure that it complies with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (CAR) in as much as asbestos in all properties is managed in strict accordance with the aforementioned Statutory Regulations and as set out in the Asbestos Policy & Management Plan for housing, this responsibility lies across the whole of Housing.

Background:

2. In 2016 East Devon District Council accessed the Advantage South West Framework for asbestos surveying to run a 'mini competition' to procure a Contract to carry out their asbestos surveying work. The procurement was tendered for all asbestos surveying work (management and refurbishment and/or demolition surveys) for a 3 year period with the option to extend for a further two years on an annual basis and by agreement of both Client and Contractor.
3. On completion of the tender review and all due diligence checks the asbestos surveying Contract was awarded to Asbestos Consultants Europe Ltd (ACE).
4. The Contract commenced for the initial 3 year period on 6th March 2017 and is due to expire on 5th March 2020.

Performance:

5. Since being awarded the Contract ACE have generally carried out their surveying in a professional timely manner and have given little cause to question their ability to carry out their work. Apart from some very exceptional circumstances, generally surrounding no access issues they have achieved their Contract KPI's. In addition ACE have also provided valuable advice in relation to asbestos and carried out re-assurance air testing where required.
6. Under the terms of the Contract we need to advise ACE that we would like to take up the option to extend the initial 3 year Contract for a further 1 year prior to the expiration of the Contract.

Recommendation:

7. It is recommended that the existing asbestos surveying Contract is extended for a further 1 year.



Report to: **Housing Review Board**

Date of Meeting: 23 January 2020

Public Document: Yes

Exemption: None

Review date for release None

Subject: **Q2 (July 1 to September 2019) Performance Monitoring Report**

Purpose of report: The Housing Performance Indicator Report for Quarter 2 2019/20 details selected indicators measuring performance across the Housing Service.

Recommendation: **The Housing Review Board is invited to consider and comment on the performance of the housing service.**

Reason for recommendation: For the Board to see the performance of the housing service for Q2.

Officer: Natalie Brown
Nabrown@eastdevon.gov.uk

Financial implications: No specific financial implications.

Legal implications: Here are no legal implications.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

Climate change: Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk

Links to background information: .

Link to Council Plan: Outstanding Homes and Communities
Outstanding Council and Council Services

Housing Service

Quarterly Performance Indicator Report

Quarter 2 2019/20 Financial Year

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Background Information

Performance against 2018/19 quarter has been included to provide some context to the statistics.

	Performance is worse than 2018/19 quarter figure by over 5%
	Performance is within 5% of 2018/19 quarter figure
	Performance is better than 2018/19 performance figure

0.0 Summary

Description	2018/19	2019/20					Progress against 2018/19 quarter 2
	Cumulative Total	Apr- Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Cumulative Total	
Total supply of social rent housing and intermediate housing	237	65	75			140	
Total New ASB Cases	95	43	61			104	
No. of new stage 1 complaints	37	7	9			16	
Calls answered under 1 minute (%)	97.8	98.2	97.4			97.8	
The average re-let time in days General Needs	25.2	*	*			*	

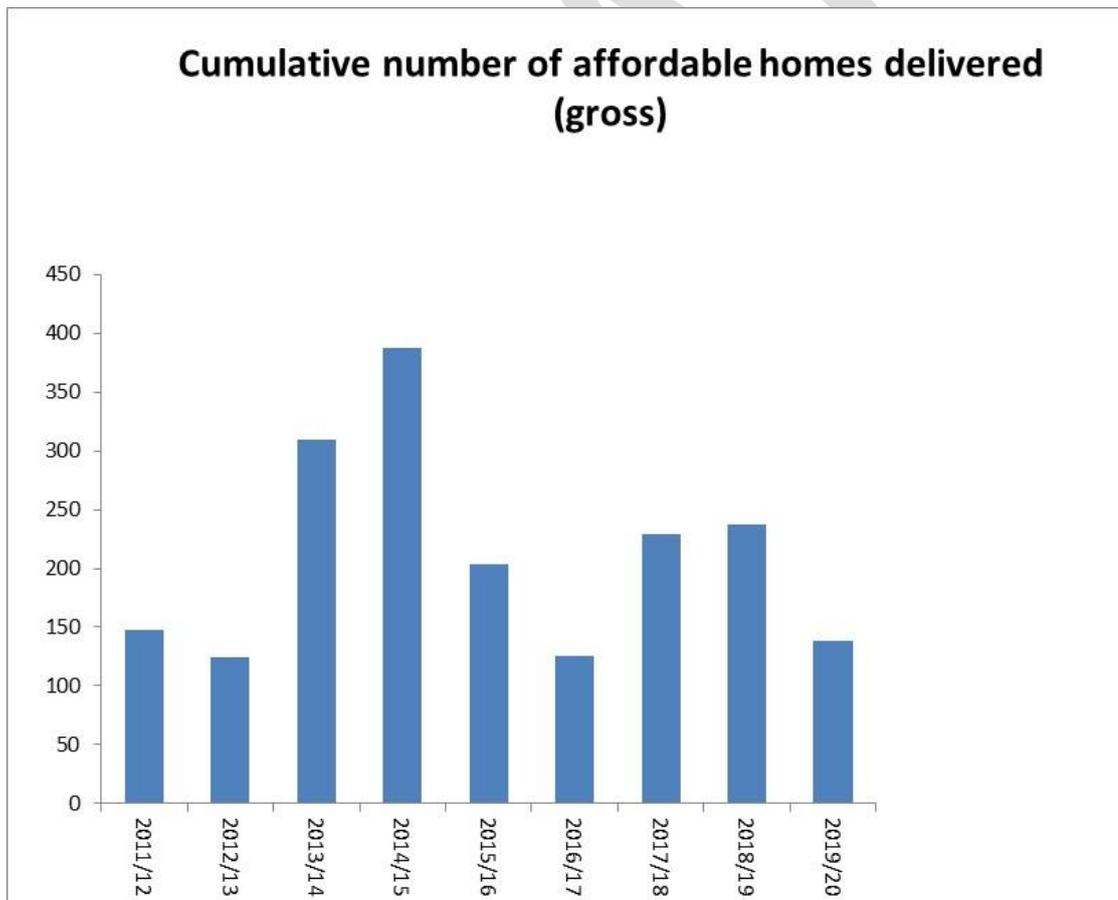
Description	2018/19	2019/20					Progress against 2018/19 quarter 2
	Cumulative Total	Apr- Jun	Apr-Sep	Apr - Dec	Apr- Mar	Cumulative Total	
% of rent due collected from current & former tenants (property (incl garage) is occupied & not including all arrears brought forward & prepaids) - Year to date	99.5%	99.6%	97.6%			99.6%	
Percentage of routine repairs completed within target time	91.5%	*	92.7%			92.7%	

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1.0 Affordable Housing Completions

Performance Indicator	2018/19	2019/20						Performance against 2018/19 quarter 2
	Cumulative Total	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Cumulative Total	Target	
Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (LAA)	237	65	73			138	100	
EDDC Acquisitions	16	0	2			2	#	

Source: SPAR.net



2.0 Anti-social behaviour

Performance Indicator	2018/19	2019/20				Cumulative Total	Performance against 2018/19 quarter 2
	Cumulative Total	April-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar		
No. of new ASB cases							
Alcohol related (H)	1		1			1	
Child behaviour*	0		2			2	
Communal Fire*	1					0	
Communal Garden*	0					0	
Communal Internal*	2	1				1	
Communal Open Space*	5		3			3	
Condition of Garden*	1	2	3			5	
Condition of Property*	10	6	12			18	
Criminal Behaviour (O)	6	1	1			2	
Dangerous Animal	3	1	2			3	
Domestic Abuse (I)	6	1	4			5	
Drugs, substance misuse, dealing (G)	14	7	3			10	
Garden Nuisance (L)	4	2	6			8	
Harrasment*	5	5	2			7	
Hate Related (C)	4					0	
Illegal Occupation, Squatter*	2		7			7	
Litter, Rubbish, Fly Tipping (K)	0					0	
Misuse of Communal Areas (M)	0					0	
Noise (A)	11	7	7			14	
Nuisance from Vehicles (F)	0					0	
Parking Dispute*	1	1				1	
Pets & Animal Nuisance (E)	0					0	
Physical Violence (J)	11	3	2			5	
Prostitution, Sex Acts (N)	0					0	
Untaxed Vehicle*	0					0	
Vandalism & Damage to Property (D)	0	1	1			2	
Vehicle Nuisance*	3					0	
Verbal Abuse (B)	5	5	5			10	
Total New ASB Cases	95	43	61			104	

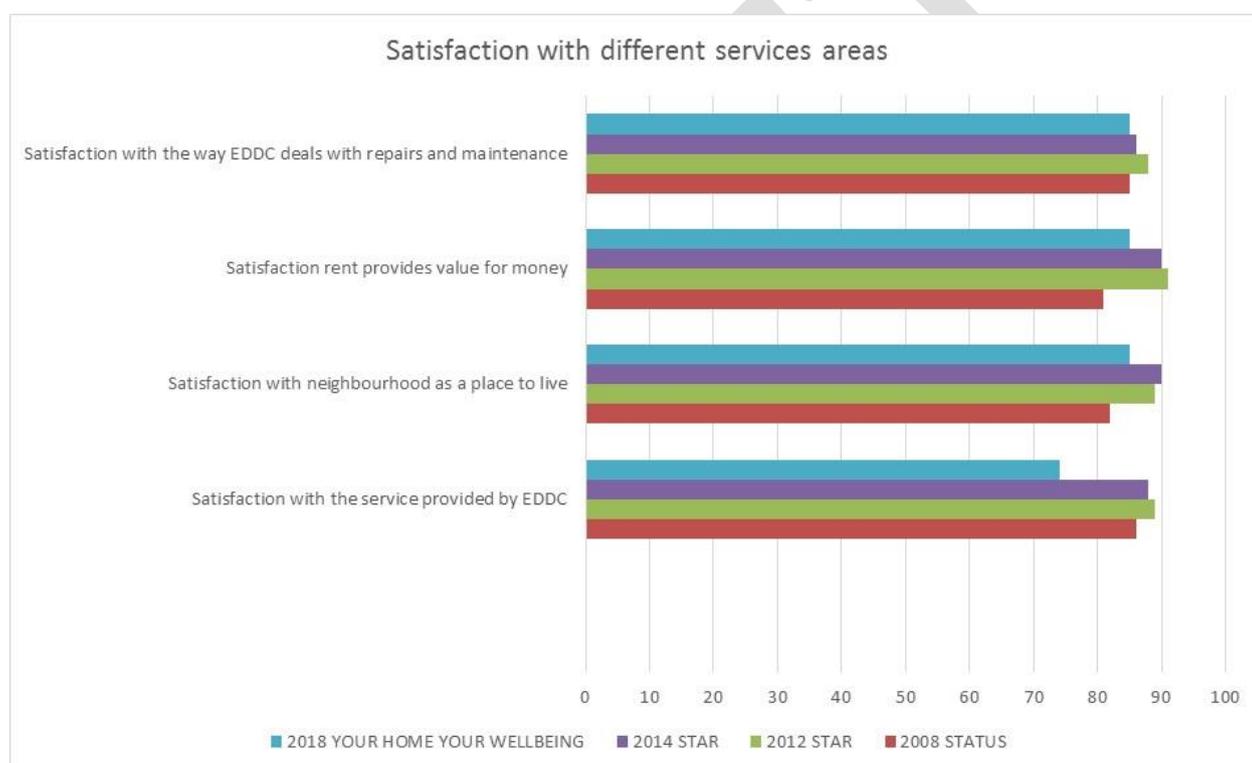
3.0 Complaints

Description	2018/19	2019/20				2019/20	Performance against 2018/19 quarter 2
	Cumulative Total	April- Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Cumulative Total	
No. of new stage 1 complaints	24	7	9			16	
Allocations complaints	6	2	1			3	
ASB complaints	1					0	
Estate services complaints	5					0	
Tenancy management complaints	3	2				2	
Rents and service charges complaints	7		1			1	
Repairs and maintenance complaints	7	1	5			6	
Staff & customer service complaints	3	1	2			3	
Other complaints	0	1				1	
Average time in calendar days to issue full response to all Stage 1 complaints	25.5	24.14	23			23.6	

4.0 Customer Satisfaction

Description	2008 STATUS	2012 STAR	2014 STAR	2018 YOUR HOME YOUR WELLBEING
Satisfaction with the service provided by EDDC	86	89	88	74
Satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live	82	89	90	85
Satisfaction rent provides value for money	81	91	90	85
Satisfaction with the way EDDC deals with repairs and maintenance	85	88	86	85

Source: STATUS and STAR surveys and Your Home, Your Wellbeing Survey (2018). NB: The STAR results are based on valid responses only, STATUS on non-valid and valid responses – they are therefore not directly comparable.



5.0 EDDC Stock

Stock	2018/19	2019/20								
Housing Type	Cumulative Total	April- Jun		Jul-Sep		Oct - Dec		Jan - March		Cumulative Total
		GN	SH	GN	SH	GN	SH	GN	SH	
Bedsit	40	23	17	23	17					40
Bungalow	984	201	781	200	781					981
Flat	1169	640	530	640	530					1170
House	1998	1971	15	1970	15					1985
Maisonette	5	5	0	6	0					6
Room	6	14	0	14	0					14
Total	4202	2854	1343	2853	1343					4196

Source: Open Housing

6.0 Homelessness

Performance Indicator	2018/19	2019/20				
Description	Cumulative Total	April- Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan - March	Cumulative Total
Approaches: Number of people who indicate that they are homeless or about to become homeless	871	249	306			555
Acceptances: Number of people who EDDC have accepted as homeless	15	6	1			7
Successful Prevention Outcomes	161	70	79			149
Successful Relief Outcomes	79	39	39			78
Verified rough sleeper count	36	6	8			#
No of households living in temp acc at the end of the quarter (not in B&B)*	131	30	9			#
No of households placed into temp B&B accommodation during the qtr	81	22	8			#

Source: Jigsaw

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7.0 HomeSafeguard

Description	2018/19		2019/20				Progress against last quarter 2 2018/19
	Cumulative total	Apr-June	July-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-March	Cumulative total	
Call Handling							
Answered in under 1 Minute	97.70	98.18	97.41				
Answered in under 3 Minutes	99.60	99.65	99.44				
Answered in over 3 Minutes	0.36	0.35	0.56				
Installations							
Under 2 working Days (urgent) - Number	25	7	14				
Under 2 working Days (urgent) - % installed within target time	100%	89%	100%				
Under 5 working Days - Number	0	1	0				
Under 5 working Days - % installed within target time	100%	100%	100%				
Under 15 working Days (non urgent) - Number	346	113	111				
Under 15 working Days (non urgent) - % installed within target time	100%	100%	100%				
Under 20 working Days (non urgent) - Number	0	0	0				
Under 20 working Days (non urgent) - % installed	100%	100%	100%				
Repairs*							
Critical Repairs							
Total Number Critical Repairs	155	32	40				
Total Number Critical Repairs within 48 hours	155	31	40				
Total Number Critical Repairs over 48 hours	0	1	0				
% Critical within target time	100.0%	97.0%	100.0%				
Non Critical Repairs							
Total Number Non Critical Repairs	127	31	22				
Total Number Non Critical Repairs within 96 hours	125	26	0				
Total Number Non Critical Repairs over 96 hours	2	4	0				
% Non Critical within target time	98%	84%	100.0%				
Complaints							
Total complaints	0	0	0				

8.0 Lettings

Performance Indicator	2018/19	2019/20			
	Cumulative	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar
Total number of units vacant at the end of the period	10	23	38		
Number of voids started in period	274	100	69		
The average re-let time in days General Needs	25.18	#	#		
The average re-let time in days Sheltered Housing	24.75	#	#		
Total number of re-lets during the period benchmarked (incl mutual exchanges)	343	96	60		
The number of properties accepted on first offer GN*	99	#	#		
The number of properties accepted on first offer SH*	57	#	#		
The % of properties accepted on first offer GN	84.5	#	#		
The % of properties accepted on first offer SH	83.8	#	#		

Source: OH

information not available through CORE and consolidating new repairs contract data and will report on void times when this work has been completed.

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9.0 Number of Households on the East Devon Housing Waiting List

Performance Indicator	2018/19	2019/20			
	End of Year Total	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Apr-Mar
Band A - Emergency Housing Need	6	6	3		
Band B - High Housing Need	289	289	318		
Band C - Medium Housing Need	655	655	724		
Band D - Low Housing Need	1095	1095	1135		
Band E - No Housing Need	2623	2623	2548		
Total	4688	4668	4728		

Source: Devon Home Choice

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10 Private Sector Housing

Description	Cumulative Total 2018/19	2019/20				Cumulative Total 2019/20
		April- Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan - March	
Empty homes investigated	0	22	26			#
Empty homes genuinely brought back into use	0	9	7			#
Disabled Facilities Grant Approvals	127	23	42			65
Disabled Facilities Grant Completions	68	28	20			48
Long term empty homes (6mth - 2 years)	#	442	418			860
Long term empty homes (> 2 years)	#	86	93			179

Source: Council Tax Return & Private Sector Team records

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11 Rental

Performance Indicators	2018/19		2019/20		
	Apr-Mar	Apr-Jul	Apr-Sep	Apr-Dec	Apr-Mar
Debit less voids	£18,527,117.83	£5,972,047.31	£9,122,294.08		
Voids		£110,476.92	£226,353.20		
Debit adj	-£8,021.07	-£74.30	-1759.85		
Adjustments	£74,271.33	£24,698.10	£37,801.76		
Court Fees	£15,057.50	£2,845.00	£2,740.00		
Less write offs	-£31,657.59	-£13,091.53	-£13,091.53		
Total to collect	£18,576,768.00	£5,883,689.64	£9,147,984.46		
Year Projection	£18,576,768.00	£5,883,689.64	£9,147,984.46		
Arrears Cfwd	£218,238.09	£257,856.22	£286,145.50		
Year Projected Total Debit	£18,795,006.09	£6,141,545.86	£9,434,129.96		
Housing Benefit	£8,912,699.75	£2,662,004.20	£4,027,677.26		
Income	£9,300,611.69	£3,090,439.97	£4,896,959.60		
Prepaid B/Fwd	£425,900.39	£299,921.41	£296,627.44		
Prepaid C/Fwd	-£151,960.81	£231,733.94	£217,705.78		
Total credit	£18,487,251.02	£6,114,484.20	£8,924,636.86		
Year Projection	£18,487,251.02	£5,883,689.64	£8,924,636.86		
% Rent Collected (without arrears)	99.52	103.92	97.56		
% Rent Collected (with arrears)	98.36	99.56	94.60		
Total number of evictions due to rent arrears year to date	6	2	2		
Number of tenancies at the start of the period	4166	4192	4132		
Number of tenancies at the end of the period	4192	4132	4134		

Source: OH, Rental Team

The table below is a summary of the impact of universal credit since December 2018

	Dec – Apr	Apr- June 2019	Apr-Sept 2019
Number of Universal Credit Full Service claimants	191	298	382
Total Universal Credit debt	£52,621.37	£59,563.49	£71,359.58
Number of UC tenants in credit or no arrears	58	85	151
Number of UC tenants owing less than 2 weeks rent	19	75	65
Number of UC tenants with rent arrears between 2-4 weeks	34	50	54
Number of UC tenants with rent arrears between 4-8 weeks	45	56	58
Number of UC tenants with rent arrears of 8 weeks or more	35	32	54

*Payments arrangements are in place where appropriate to help reduce the debt.

12 Repairs

Performance Indicator	Cumulative Total 2018/19	2019/2020					Progress against 2018/19 quarter 2
		Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Cumulative	
		P.P.P	P.P.P	P.P.P	P.P.P	P.P.P	
The total number of emergency repairs completed year-to-date	1067	#	226			226	#
The total number of emergency repairs completed year-to-date that were completed within target	1023	#	210			210	#
Percentage of emergency repairs completed within target time - Year to date	95.9%	#	92.9%			92.9%	
The total number of routine repairs completed year-to-date	10461	#	2350			2350	#
The total number of routine repairs completed year-to-date that were completed within target	9509	#	2178			2178	#
Percentage of routine repairs completed within target time	90.9%	#	92.7%			92.7%	
The percentage of properties, requiring a landlord gas safety record, that have a valid landlord gas safety record	100.0%	100%	99.99%			100%	
Overall gas safety check service rating - % positive satisfaction rating	#		93.7%				#

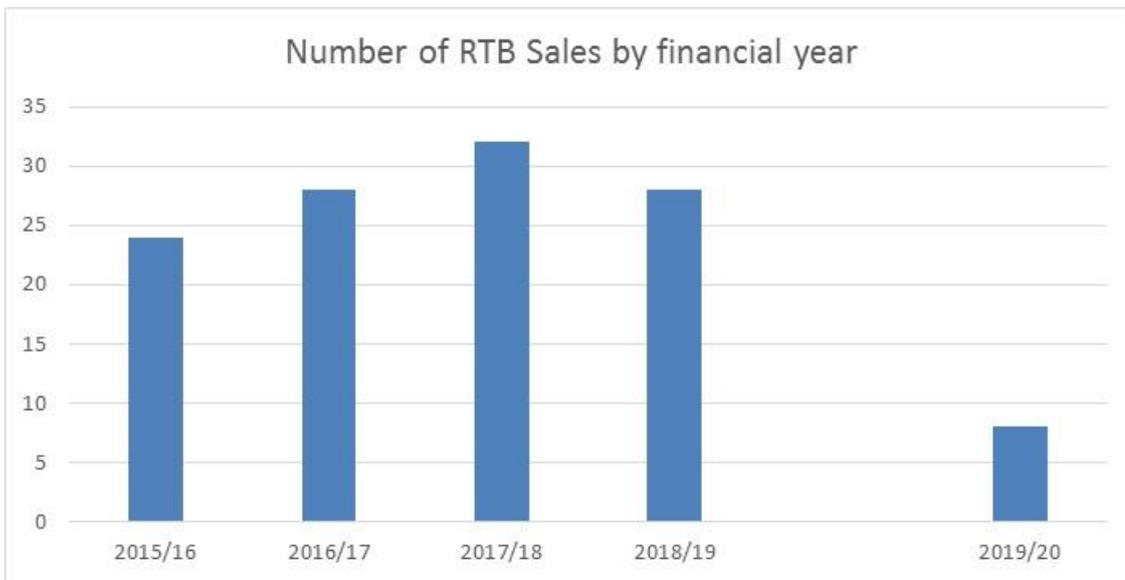
Source:Open Housing

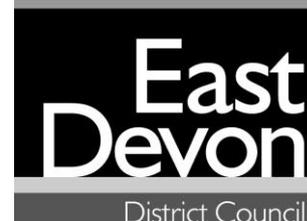
(Please note repairs data is still going through a period of audit and these numbers require validation)

13 Right To Buy

Performance Indicators	2019/20				2019/20	Performance against 2018/19	2018/19
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar			
Number of completed RTB sales	6	2			8		28

Source: Open Housing





Report to:	Overview Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 November 2019
Public Document:	Yes
Exemption:	None
Review date for release	None

Subject: **Poverty – A Local Picture**

Purpose of report: **To note:** The main report that sets out the local picture is attached at the end of this covering report. The supporting appendices are in the background links.

This main report provides Members with a detailed assessment of a number of factors that relate to poverty within East Devon. The report outlines work that is already undertaken that links with poverty as well as information around how customers are currently supported. The content is focused around the following areas;

- Debt and financial vulnerability
- Homelessness
- Employment and Earnings
- Health and Wellbeing

From this we have established a series of recommendations as set out below. The recommendations put forward have been identified to better support people living in East Devon who may be impacted by poverty.

This work is a follow up to the recommendation made by Cabinet on 6th March 2019.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet;

1. Consider funding the creation of an East Devon Poverty Strategy to further develop and target the areas identified within this report that we are able to influence and to support a corporate approach to ensure consistency across Council Services.
2. Carry out a review of the funding and delivery arrangements for Money Advice to ensure that we're focussing on the key issues identified in the report.
3. Recommend that Council protect the existing funding levels contributed for Money Advice to Homemaker South West and Citizens of circa £120,000 for 2020/21 to enable the review (Recommendation 2) to be undertaken.
4. Update Corporate Debt Policy to include; Breathing Space in-line with proposed Government changes & to consider any other supportive measures that may be beneficial.
5. Agree to the Council's frontline services, in collaboration, setting up a series of local events across the District with key stakeholders that focus on Universal Credit, Money/Debt advice (including how to avoid Loan sharks), budgeting, fuel poverty, etc with the overarching aim of supporting people to become more financially resilient.

6. Consider lobbying central Government directly and/or through our MPs in the following areas;
 - Right to Buy
 - Removing the freeze on Local Housing Allowance Rates in order to be reassessed to reflect market rents.
 - Universal Credit – More financial support to be given to customers to help with the transition. More funding to be given to local Councils to reflect the support that customers need with moving onto this Benefit.
7. Continue to explore opportunities to increase our supply of social housing through either redevelopment of existing stock and/or building new Council Housing, in conjunction with a review of the current Housing Revenue Account business plan.
8. Agree to the Council working alongside East Devon foodbanks to better understand demand and eradicate dependency that could lead to a reduction and possible extinction of the need for foodbanks in the district.
9. Undertake a detailed analysis of fuel poverty in the district with a view to developing a separate action plan.

Reason for recommendation:

The work undertaken to date is a snapshot into some of the areas that we as a District Council have direct oversight and understanding of. This is a complex topic, with no simple definition or way of truly capturing everything that poverty means. In reality much of the causes of poverty are as a result of national social policy that we have little influence over.

The recommendations provide a starting point for the development of work in this area in order to better understand how we can continue to assist people in the most effective ways by focusing our work on the causes of poverty.

Much of work in the area is closely linked with a view to developing and strengthening work that is already being undertaken with partners.

The report closely aligns with the following Corporate strategies/ policies:

- Homelessness Strategy (2019-2023)
- Public Health Strategic Plan (2019-2023)
- Discretionary Housing Payment Policy
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme Policy
- Corporate Debt Policy
- Discretionary Rate Relief Policy
- HotSW Productivity Strategy
- Exeter and Heart of Devon shared Economic Strategy 2017-20
- Local Industrial Strategy (Draft 2019)

Officer:

Libby Jarrett, Service Lead- Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services
Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Service Lead- Housing

Financial implications:

The direct financial implications of recommendations outlined in the report are:

The report has been led and written by the Services Leads Revenues & Benefits and Housing with input from other officers; this has however taken a significant amount of time and is an addition to the day job of these Officers. It is therefore proposed with the creation of an East Devon Poverty (Recommendation 1) this will require temporary resource to produce, this resource can also assist in the review of money advice

as outlined in Recommendation 3. A new budget of £16k is being requested for this work.

The report requests the continued funding of CAB and money advice, currently at £120k a year. This was an area where possible savings were being considered in the 2020/21 budget (£20k), but this report recommends (Recommendation3) that this funding remains in place.

- Legal implications:** All of the recommendations / proposals are permissible from a legal point of view. Obviously some of the proposals are recommending further work and possibility of changes to policy / strategy and the legal impacts of this will be considered on a matter by matter basis
- Equalities impact:** Low Impact as the report is not recommending any adverse changes that will have an equalities impact on vulnerable people. It is likely that these recommendations will have a positive impact on many of our most vulnerable residents in the district.
- Climate change:** Medium Impact
Factors that relate to fuel poverty can be linked with the climate change agenda.
- Risk:** High – the report highlights issues of inadequate equality and impact assessments on national policy.
- Links to background information:** • [Appendices that link to main report](#)
- Link to Council Plan:** Outstanding communities, Outstanding Local Economy and an Outstanding Council

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The main poverty report sets out the local picture and is attached. The supporting appendices are available here [Appendices that link to main report](#). The main themes of what the report covers are set out in section 2.0 below.
- 1.2 At Full Council on the 23rd October 2019 a motion was agreed to include the following aspirations within its Corporate Plan:
- That no one in East Devon is destitute without immediate help
 - That nobody should be in involuntary poverty for more than two years duration
 - All Corporate plans, strategies and service plans shall be subject to poverty proofing which means a poverty impact assessment will be undertaken and reported to Overview Committee of the effect of the strategy or service plan on those in poverty.
- 1.3.1 The main report intends to inform of East Devon's current position in relation to issues linked to poverty. This provides a basis for taking forward measures, such as an East Devon Poverty Strategy that could better support and help alleviate poverty in the district.

2.0 Poverty: A Local Picture

- 2.1 The report covers the following areas as previously agreed:
- Section 3 – What is Poverty
- Section 4 – Assessing the Local Picture (this summarises the data used that is contained within the appendices. (See background link)

- Section 5 – Debt & Financial Vulnerability - we have looked at the levels of indebtedness, customer's abilities to budget, the use of foodbanks, the impact of Universal Credit and other welfare cuts.
- Section 6 – Homelessness – focussed on rough sleepers, people accessing our housing options services and the reasons why, rent levels, the impact of the Housing Reduction Act 2017, numbers in temporary accommodation, people registered on Devon Home Choice, our housing stock, the role of Housing Associations, stock being lost through right to buy and current partnership arrangements
- Section 7 – Earnings & Employment – focussed on employment rates and earnings, the East Devon economy, impact of seasonal and agriculture employment, economic development and support available to help people into work plus support available for existing and new businesses.
- Section 8 – Health & Wellbeing - we have looked at the early results of our Your Home, Your wellbeing study, considered the work of our Mobile Support Officers who work across sheltered housing, reviewed homelessness data, reviewed Devon County Council data that relates to health and wellbeing and considered both our own Homelessness Strategy 2019-2023 and our Public Health Strategic Plan 2019- 2023.

3.0 Key issues identified in the main report

- 3.1 The main report provides a detailed analysis of the issues that we have identified (based on the agreed themes) that contribute to the overall picture of poverty in East Devon:

The key issues are:

- Customers needing support with budgeting and accessing other benefit entitlements to better improve financial resilience. **(Recommendations 2 & 3)**
- High levels of indebtedness which means people are living on the edge of financial crisis. **(Recommendations 2,3,4 & 5)**
- High cost of private rents means that the majority of customers are having to make up the shortfall due to the widening gap between Local Housing Allowance rates and actual rents. **(Recommendation 6 & 7)**
- High levels of part time workers (higher than the South West). This means there is higher risk of them being in poverty compared to households who work full-time. **(Recommendation 1)**
- The need to consider wider support for foodbanks including the importance of understanding root causes in order to create independency. **(Recommendation 8)**
- The need to improve consistency in the referral process to foodbanks. **(Recommendation 8)**
- Those claiming Universal Credit are more likely to be in arrears with their rent and Council tax compared to those claiming other types of benefits. **(Recommendation 5 and see note 1 below)**
- Demand for housing advice is continuing to increase with the two most common reasons for people contacting us being the loss of a private sector tenancy and a family/relationship break- up. **(Recommendation 6 & 7).**
- Demand for our social housing stock is continuing to increase, recognising the priority of delivering more affordable housing. **(Recommendation 6 & 7).**
- Customers claiming Council Tax Reduction have disproportionately higher levels of council tax arrears compared to the proportion of net collectible debit. **(Note 1 below)**

- Further work to be done on a number of areas, such as fuel poverty, etc
(Recommendation 1 & 9)

Note 1:

Members of Cabinet on 4 September 2019 agreed to consult on changing our Council Tax Reduction Scheme to better align with Universal Credit. The proposed changes also include increasing financial support.

4.0 Summary

4.1 A summary of the poverty report is under section 9 and this links in with the key issues and the recommendations as set out above.

5.0 Moving Forward

5.1 It is important to remember that this topic is not only vast but also complex. Even keeping within the above themes there will clearly be data and information that we will not have captured or evaluated in the poverty report. The significant amount of local data that we have assessed and the issues identified we hope will provide a greater insight into the local picture and therefore a good starting point in how the Council may want to take this forward. The first recommendation to create a Poverty Strategy would provide a mechanism to allow Members to continue to develop work in this area.

6.0 Main report – see attached.

Poverty: A Local Picture

1.0 Introduction

1.1 A motion was put to Council on 12 December 2018 to better understand:

- The impacts of welfare reform within the District and
- What more EDDC could do to help customers affected.

This motion which was unanimously supported followed two reports that were published in 2018 which highlighted the detrimental effects of cuts in welfare spending.

1.2 The reports are:

- [Cumulative impact of tax and welfare reforms](#) by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2018). This revealed that the largest negative impacts of changes to taxes, benefits, tax credits and Universal Credit (UC) will be felt by those with lower incomes. The poorest 20% will lose, on average, approximately 10% of net income, with the changes having a disproportionately negative impact on several protected groups, including disabled people, certain ethnic minorities, and women.
- The [Statement on Visit to the United Kingdom](#), by Professor Philip Alston, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. The Special Rapporteur's report documented the growth of poverty in the UK, with 14 million people, a fifth of the population, living in poverty. The implementation of Universal Credit was identified as a cause of hardship, with detrimental effects on many claimants' mental health, finances, and work prospects.

1.3 The scope of this work was considered by Members of Cabinet on 6 March 2019 where it was agreed that the areas of focus would be:

- Poverty analysis – (in particular how Universal Credit affects people across different housing tenures)
- Homelessness (including the increases in homelessness and the causes)
- Employment and earnings (including employment rates, income levels, numbers of people in work/out of work poverty)
- Debt and financial vulnerability (including reliance on foodbanks, payday loans, rent and Council Tax arrears, general indebtedness and budgeting abilities)
- Health & Wellbeing of individuals

See

<https://democracy.eastdevon.gov.uk/documents/g142/Public%20reports%20pack%2006th-Mar-2019%2017.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

2.0 Background

2.1 Spending on welfare benefits nationally has shrunk by nearly a quarter over the last decade. By 2020/21, it is forecasted that £37 billion less will be spent on working age welfare benefits compared with 2010. By contrast, spending on the state pension will be £1.7bn higher by 2021. As working age customers have experienced the majority of cuts the focus of our analysis is mainly directed at this demographic.

2.2 It is inevitable that Government cuts in welfare spending will have left those affected worse off. As the national reports highlight the cuts are regressive – the largest impacts are felt by those with lower incomes. Nationally more children are now living in poverty compared to 2015 despite the UK being the fifth largest economy in the world. There are many areas where poverty has an impact that are outside of our control or we will have limited influence. This report aims to provide a starting point into what measures EDDC could take to better support customers and how we need to work with other public bodies and the voluntary sector if we really want to make a difference.

2.3 Universal Credit, the most significant reform, is now being rolled out in Devon with a potential total of 109,000 claimants by 2023. Universal Credit aims to bring positive changes including stronger work incentives, increased employment and an easier transition into work. However it is recognised that the delivery of this new benefit is causing hardship. Many vulnerable customers are finding the transition to Universal Credit difficult and have a wide range of support needs. There is clear evidence to show that the 5 week payment time delay in customers moving over to Universal Credit is a key driver behind the increase in food bank use. This is not surprising when 37.4%¹ of the South West adult population have less than

¹ <https://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/blog/millions-at-risk-with-savings-of-100-or-less>

£100 in savings; meaning people don't have anything put aside to deal with this type of situation.

- 2.4 There are many links to be made when considering housing and poverty and as part of this report we have begun to look at a number of data sets to help us understand the position for people accessing our homelessness services, as well as our own housing tenants. Our landlord role places us in an informed position to take a deeper insight into the lives of our tenants and to consider the impact of work we already undertake to support tenants who are struggling.
- 2.5 One of the themes was to get a better understanding of the use of foodbanks because it is known that the demand for this support is increasing. We were keen to work with one of the foodbanks to understand the customer demographic (single, family, working, not working etc), reasons for needing a food parcel and how many times they have received help. Due to restrictions over data protection, we are reliant on the foodbanks carrying out their own analysis for us. Unfortunately at the time of submitting this report the information from one of the foodbanks that we had been working with had not been provided. We realise that the foodbanks are run by volunteers and therefore will have different priorities. This means that we have only been able to analyse our own foodbank referrals together with published data.
- 2.6 It is important to remember that this topic is not only vast but also complex. Even keeping within the above themes there will clearly be data and information that we will not have captured or evaluated in this report. The significant amount of local data that we have assessed and the issues identified we hope will provide a greater insight into the local picture and therefore a good starting point in how the Council may want to take this forward.
- 2.7 Lifting people out of poverty is not something that East Devon can achieve on its own as there are many areas that are outside of our control or influence. We recognise that we don't have all the answers but we have identified a number of additional measures (through the creation of 9 recommendations) that could be taken to better support our residents who are struggling. Alongside this, we can also see the importance of working more closely with the voluntary sector and other public bodies.

3.0 What is Poverty?

- 3.1 There is more than one definition of poverty and it can mean different things to different people, but it is generally considered that someone is in poverty when they are not able to heat their home, pay their rent, pay for food or buy the essentials for their children.
- 3.2 There are 4 levels of poverty (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2019):
- **Income at minimum income standard or better** – able to afford a decent standard of living
 - **Income below minimum income standard** – getting by day-to-day but under pressure, difficult to manage unexpected costs and events
 - **Not enough income** – falling substantially short of a decent standard of living, high chance of not meeting needs
 - **Destitute** – can't afford to eat, keep clean and stay warm and dry
- 3.3 Poverty is most commonly measured using either:
- People in relative low income – living in households with income below 60% of the median in that year;
 - People in absolute low income – living in households with income below 60% of (inflation adjusted) median income in some base year, usually 2010/11.
- 3.4 For example using the 2019 Median UK household income which is £29,400. 60% represents £17,640 which is equivalent to £1,470 per month or £339 per week. (Minimum

wage at £8.21 x 37 hours per week = £304). These figures then have to be adjusted to reflect household size. See appendix 1.4.²

- 3.5 In the UK there are currently 14.2 million people in poverty and 48.3% are living in families with a disabled person. 7.7 million people live in persistent poverty (people who would also have fallen below the poverty line in at least two of the last three years).
- 3.6 In East Devon **15.5%** of households live below the 60% of median income, falling 5.6% below the national average. For East Devon it is estimated that 10,899 households are below the poverty line.
- 3.7 The poverty rate in the UK has been fairly consistent over the past 15 years staying between 21% and 24%. However, this trend hides significant changes in rates of poverty among different groups. The poverty rate for working age adults over the last 15 years has increased slightly (by 1.5 percentage points) and since 2011 there has been a rise in child poverty rates (see appendix 1) and is now 34%. East Devon's child poverty rate falls far below this but is still at a concerning 22.3%.
- 3.8 Poverty levels are much higher in families where either adults only work part-time and those that don't work at all compared to those in full-time work. Also those households that are in poverty nearly half are living in families with a disabled person.
- 3.9 More information about the national picture of poverty is available at appendix 1.

4.0 Assessing the local picture

- 4.1 As we already deliver a number of services that support low income households, it's important that we analysed our own data. These hold a wealth of information that will provide a more informed understanding of the local picture rather than just drawing on published data. This means that there is an appropriate link that we can make between those living in poverty and the local data we have assessed. However that doesn't mean that we can assume that everyone is in poverty but what we are saying is that they are at greater risk of being in poverty. We have also been able to overlay some of them in order to see what else we can draw from this. For example; awarding a discretionary housing payment (DHP) to one of our council tenants that has the effect of clearing their rent arrears, does that achieve a successful outcome of them not falling back into rent arrears? Alongside this we have included some case studies that will hopefully add another dimension to understanding the local picture by focusing on a 'lived experience' of an East Devon resident/household.
- 4.2 For each of the different sets of data we have reviewed and analysed we have provided a full breakdown of the demographics and the issues identified. We felt that it was important to capture all this information within the report but have included this within the appendices as set out below:

Data analysed	Appendix	Pages
Housing Benefit & Universal Credit	2	5-9
Council Tax – Council Tax Reduction Caseload, profile and arrears	3	10-16
Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)	4	17-20
Housing Rents	5	21-23
Homelessness and Housing Data	6	24-39
Foodbanks	7	40-43
Money Advice/ Budgeting Support – Homemaker Southwest & Citizens Advice	8	44-47
Wellbeing	9	48-54
Employment data	10	55-63
Case Studies	11	64-65

². <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-low-income-is-measured/text-only-how-low-income-is-measured>

The link to the appendices are here [Appendices that link to main report](#)

4.3 The report is broken down against the agreed areas of focus (see para 1.3) which are:

- Debt & financial vulnerability
- Homelessness
- Employment & earnings
- Health & Wellbeing

5.0 Debt & financial vulnerability

5.1 We have been looking at the levels of indebtedness, budgeting and money management, the use of foodbanks, the impact of UC and other welfare cuts.

5.2 The main headlines from this are summarised in the table below:

Headlines: Debt & financial Vulnerability	Evidence
10,899 household in East Devon are below the poverty line and 14,068 of our adult population are over indebted	Appendix 1
Council Tax: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 13% of all Council Tax arrears relates to working age Council Tax Reduction (CTR) claims despite only liable to pay 1.12% of the net collectible debit	Appendix 3

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax has risen by just over 23% since 2013/14 but people claiming Benefits will have seen these frozen and wages have risen just 11% nationally • Highest proportion of households claiming CTR who are in arrears with their Council Tax live in the Cranbrook & Broadclyst areas. There is no face to face money advice service offered in these areas. They have the two highest precept charges in East Devon. • 80% of our claimants are not working and of the 20% that are working the average hours per week would equate to 18.6, suggesting that the majority of workers are part-time. 	
<p>Housing Benefit (HB):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 72% of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Housing Benefit (HB) cases have rent higher than the LHA rate with an average shortfall of £29.03 per week (£1,509.56 per annum) • 42% of HB claims are in the private rented sector • 47% of the caseload have a disabled person in the household which is similar to the national picture. • 80% of HB claimants are not working – similar to CTR. 	Appendix 2
<p>Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) claimants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paying on average £270.10 per year more on water and energy than the national average. • 55% of DHP claimants is awarded to those in the private rented sector • 29% of claimants are on UC • 57.7% of successful HB DHP claimants are awarded to single claimants. 24% were lone parents and 10% were couples with children. • Customers are spending more than the national average on broadband/internet 	Appendix 4
<p>Universal Credit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers that have moved over to UC are more likely to be in arrears with their Council Tax and rent compared to those claiming other types of benefits • 382 (9.3%) housing tenants are on UC of which 60.5% are in arrears with their rent. They account for 19.8% (£71,359.58) of the total rent arrears. • UC cases claiming CTR are the highest category of benefit claimant in arrears with their Council Tax. • 40% of East Devon UC claimants received support with their UC claim despite this being a digital process. 	Appendix 3 & 5
<p>Two out of the top four issues that customers present themselves to Citizens Advice are linked to financial vulnerability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits – customers need help applying for DWP benefits or appealing decisions- PIP, ESA, UC, DLA, HB etc. • Debt – highest issue is customers having lots of different debt that they need help with. This is also linked with poor budgeting skills. <p>98% of Personal Independent Payments (PIP) appeals that Citizens Advice lodge on behalf of the customer are successful.</p>	Appendix 8
<p>Customers not accessing all the Benefits they are entitled to receive, lack of budgeting/money management which is supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homemaker Southwest referrals for 2018/9 show on average yearly financial gains of £3,033.05 & budgeting uplift £187.89 per client that customers could access. • DHP data shows customers paying more than the national average for energy and water tariffs, broadband/internet packages, etc. <p>Feedback from staff & the voluntary sector identify the lack of budgeting skills that customers have.</p>	Appendix 4 & 8

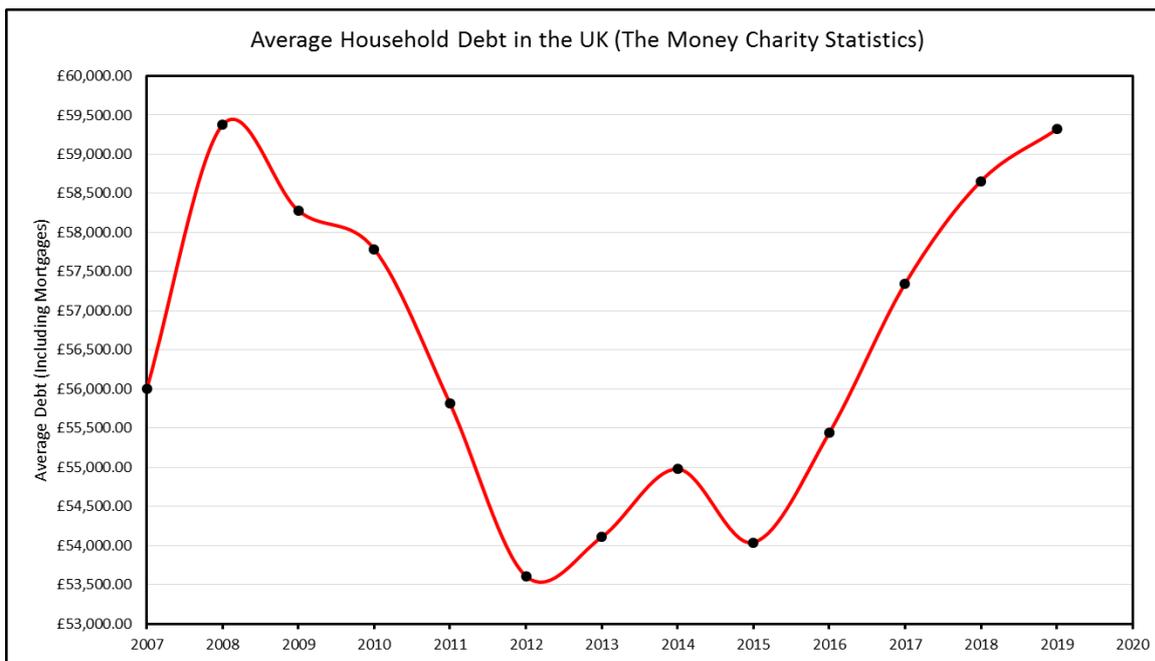
<p>Foodbanks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in foodbanks due to five week delay in Universal Credit payments • There is a high risk of people becoming dependent on the use of foodbanks • Need for foodbanks to be supported by other organisations to help address root cause. 	<p>Appendix 7</p>
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5.3 Level of Indebtedness – national & local picture

5.4 Nationally one in three workers are “one pay day away from not being able to pay their rent or mortgage³”. This means that millions of people are living (not just those on low incomes) on the edge of a financial crisis as they don’t have any safety net.

³ https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_releases/articles/one_paycheque_away

5.5 At the end of July 2019 UK residents owed **£1,647 billion** at an average of **£59,319** per household⁴. This is an increase of **£888** per UK adult since July 2018 and a constant increase from July 2015.



5.6 1 in 6 individuals living in the UK are over-indebted, 8.2 million, of which 54% have children.

5.7 The following table shows that the percentage of East Devon’s population that are considered over-indebted is 11.6%, this is 4.5% below the national average⁵. Our district also has the lowest percentage out of all the Devon authorities. However in East Devon this means with an adult population (18 & over) of 121,276 that **14,068** are over indebted.

Area	% Over-Indebtedness
National	16.1%
South West	14.5%
Devon	14.0%
East Devon	11.6%
Exeter City	16.7%

⁴ The Money Charity (2019) <https://themoneycharity.org.uk/money-statistics/september-2019/>

⁵ The Money Advice Service (2016)

https://masassets.blob.core.windows.net/cms/files/000/000/334/original/A_Picture_of_Over-indebtedness.pdf

<i>Mid Devon</i>	<i>14.0%</i>
<i>North Devon</i>	<i>14.1%</i>
<i>Plymouth</i>	<i>17.9%</i>
<i>South Hams</i>	<i>11.8%</i>
<i>Teignbridge</i>	<i>13.0%</i>
<i>Torbay</i>	<i>14.6%</i>
<i>Torridge</i>	<i>13.4%</i>
<i>West Devon</i>	<i>12.7%</i>

Definition: Someone is defined as being over-indebted when they find keeping up with bills and credit commitments a heavy burden and/or fallen behind or missed payments in at least three of the last six months.

5.8 The Money Advice Service identifies that nationally there are five key factors that link with over-indebtedness:

- Renting – 1 in 4 renters are over-indebted
- Having a large family – 25% of adults with three or more children
- Being a Lone Parent – 28% of lone parents
- Low Incomes – 24% of households with income below £10,000 per year are over-indebted
- Age – someone between the ages of 24 and 35 is four times more likely to be over-indebted than someone who is 65 or older

5.9 Working age customers claiming a Council Tax Reduction (due to low income) represent 13% of all outstanding Council Tax arrears despite the proportion of Council Tax they pay in relation to other Council Tax payers represents only 1.12% of the net collectible debit. Over the past 6 years Council Tax has risen by 23% but those on low incomes will have either experienced cuts to their benefits or had their benefits frozen. It will therefore not come as a shock that the level of Council Tax arrears that we have are disproportionately higher for those on low incomes compared to what they are liable to pay. Members of Cabinet at their meeting on 4 September 2019 (report available [here](#)) approved to consult on changes to our existing scheme. One of the main changes is to increase the amount of financial support. This is a positive measure the Council is taking to address the inequity.

5.10 We have a consistently high rent collection rate but analysis of our rent arrears data reveals a number of key issues (appendix 5) which are relevant when thinking about poverty within East Devon:

- The number of current tenants who owe <£500 has increased from 105 in 2017 to 255 in 2019
- 78.6% of tenants that were in rent arrears in September 2018 were also in arrears in September 2019
- The amount of arrears owed is significantly different across the areas of East Devon
- 60.4% of current tenants on UC are in arrears in September 2019
- Since December 2018 there has been an increase of 35.2% of the number of UC claimants who are in rent arrears of 8 weeks or more

5.11 We forecast the amount of rent arrears will increase as UC is rolled out across the district and we will need to continue to support these tenants as best we can whilst being mindful that this will impact on our rent collection rate.

5.12 One of the top two issues that customers are accessing Citizens Advice for is in relation to debt where money is owed to many creditors (loans, credit cards, store cards, etc). Customers on low incomes are more likely to be at risk of paying higher rates of interest and susceptible to pay day lenders. Getting out of debt then becomes increasingly difficult.

5.13 Customers abilities to budget/ manage money

- 5.14 One of the big concerns that is common across much of this work links back to a lack of budgeting and money skills (including customers not accessing their full entitlements). There is a problem in customers not understanding or recognising priority essential household expenditure over non-essential items. This is evidenced from our DHP data and Homemaker Southwest reports we have analysed and through some of the case studies we have looked at in more detail. It is also supported from feedback from our own staff, Citizens Advice, Homemaker Southwest, foodbank volunteers, etc.
- 5.15 Customers who are struggling to pay their rent can apply for a DHP (see appendix 4). From the analysis carried out we can see that our policy is targeting support to those customers on the lowest incomes with the lowest levels of expenditure which is what you would expect. In order to be considered for a DHP customers have to provide a full breakdown of income and expenditure. We can see from our DHP data that out of the 387 Housing Benefit applicants who applied in 2018/19, 29% had debts/arrears in excess of £3,000. 54% had debts/arrears in excess of £1,000. Alongside these arrears/debts, 30% of customers are paying mobile phone bills in excess of £40 per month, despite the cheapest SIM only deals starting at £10-£15 per month. 40% are spending more than the average of £30.30 on Internet/Broadband which includes TV package.
- 5.16 An example of this is Customer A who is a lone parent with one child and has been claiming Housing Benefit for a number of years. At the time of their DHP application the customer had arrears in excess of £6,000 split between rent, heating company, online retailers and a credit card. They were spending £150 per month on Sky TV/Broadband and Mobile Phone contracts. If this customer reduced their spending on non-essential items then they would be able to pay the shortfall in their rent. (Appendix 11, case Study 4)
- 5.17 From our DHP data, these customers are spending on average £4.71 per day on water and energy which is 74p higher than the national average of £3.97. This equates to £270.10 per year that these customers are spending over national averages. This is predominantly linked to higher water charges even compared to others in the South West. This is a worrying statistic and is something that needs exploring further to better understand the real reasons behind this because paying an extra £270 a year on water and energy is a lot of money for people to find who are already struggling.
- 5.18 One of the areas looked at was whether giving someone a backdated DHP to cover their shortfall in rent; in essence clearing their arrears - had meant that they would be able to cover the future payments after that period ended. In 2018/19 there were 227 DHP's awarded and 10% of these were to Council Tenants meaning that we could analyse whether customers were managing to maintain rent payments after the DHP because EDDC are the landlords. Of the Council Tenants who were given a DHP in the last financial year a third are still in rent arrears, as well as having Council Tax arrears. One of these cases highlighted a very complex situation where by arrears were accumulating because of a Non-Dependent not paying their way as well as the claimant not necessarily being on the benefits they were entitled to (Appendix 11, case Study 3).
- 5.19 As we are unable to measure the success of DHPs awarded to customers in the private rented sector (over 50%) there is a risk that customers may not be achieving sustained outcomes because of the pressure on household income including the higher levels of rent in the private sector.
- 5.20 As part of the DHP process we may also refer customers for Money Advice which is a service delivered by Homemaker Southwest. They deal with referrals made by our Housing (Homeless prevention work, Housing rents) and Revenues & Benefits (DHP's and Council Tax arrears) teams. They provide independent financial advice to customers on budgeting, debts and access to other benefits, etc. Having impartial independent money advice is key in helping to provide that wider support to our customers in creating financial resilience rather than just dealing with issues in isolation. This is demonstrated in the financial outcomes that were identified for the 392 customers that were referred in 2018/19. The average gain if they act on the advice given would be:

- Financial gains (applies for Benefits such as PIP, Carers Allowance, Council Tax Reduction, UC, etc) - £3,033.05 average annual uplift per client
- Budgeting uplift (changing to cheaper tariffs, etc) £187.89 per client.

This further supports the view that customers are not accessing all their entitlements or are paying more for things than they need too.

5.21 Use of foodbanks (see appendix 8)

- 5.22 It is highly publicised that the use of foodbanks is on the increase both at a national and local level and one of the reasons we know for the increase is because of customers moving onto UC.
- 5.23 What is believed to be the UK's first children's book about foodbanks was recently covered in the Guardian. The article was headed up 'A children's book about foodbanks is a grim sign of our failure as a society'. Despite being the fifth largest economy in the world this is a stark reminder of how foodbanks are becoming part of some people's everyday life.
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/oct/30/food-banks-childrens-books-britain-hungry-election?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other
- 5.24 We recognise that foodbanks are not just providing support on a short term basis as they are seeing an increase in customers with longer term needs. This is concerning when the use of foodbanks should not be a solution as their purpose was about providing short term support to those most in need.
- 5.24 As the majority of the East Devon Foodbanks are run independently this means that they can all operate and distribute food parcels in different ways. Some take the 'we don't ask any questions and we don't judge' approach and some attempting to get to the root cause. It would appear that foodbanks are relying on the organisations that make referrals to have carried out some form of 'gateway assessment'. There is a risk that this will create inconsistencies in how foodbank referrals are made by various organisations including ourselves. Also, opportunities for providing that wider support in identifying 'root causes' especially for those with longer term need are not necessarily being provided.
- 5.25 The new Chief Executive at Citizens Advice recognises the importance of working more closely with our foodbanks and also shares the view that linking in with other agencies and providing support to address the root cause is key if we are to reduce dependency on foodbanks.
- 5.26 Feedback from two of the volunteers at Exmouth Larder highlighted:
- An increase in people with addictive disorders, such as gambling, drugs and alcohol and reported many instances where the same people were being referred continuously, appearing to be without specialist support or perhaps choosing not to engage with services that are attempting to support them.
 - High levels of people are presenting with some sort of mental health issues whether it be short term stress and anxiety or longer term depression.
 - Inability of people to manage their own finances. Particularly amongst younger people a real lack of awareness of what a priority debt is compared to luxuries such as Sky TV and expensive mobile phone contracts.
 - Lack of basic living skills, such as the ability of younger people to cook fresh food. They have seen an increase in more people requesting ready-made type produce.
- 5.27 They also highlighted the reliance on agencies, such as us to ensure the right people were being referred. There were inconsistencies highlighted that indicated they had instances where the same person was being referred by two different departments within East Devon and this has highlighted the need for us to consider our referral process to ensure a consistent approach is being taken every time.
- 5.28 We should consider a Council wide referral process and procedure that can be held in a central database. Officers referring can then quickly identify trends and cases where perhaps

repeated usage may mean other underlying issues. Consideration over GDPR will need to be fully explored.

5.29 Volunteers at one of the foodbanks have raised concerns that the long term use of foodbanks could have serious impacts on mental health, motivation and addiction in our rural towns.

5.30 This has identified that there is a clear need or opportunity for EDDC to work closely with all foodbanks in the area, as well as other voluntary services, to eradicate the dependency and replace it with independency for our customers. Unless foodbanks are supported by other organisations then helping to get to the root cause will be difficult.

5.31 Impact of Universal Credit (UC)

5.32 With the introduction of UC which has a five week wait for the first payment, it is not surprising that an increasing number of people will need to rely on other forms of help in order to stay afloat - foodbanks, discretionary housing payments, borrow money, etc. This means that it is inevitable for people moving onto UC that don't have savings are likely to fall into arrears with other bills, such as; rent, Council Tax, utilities, etc.

5.33 When we look at the impact of UC on our own current housing tenants we can see that despite only having 9.3% (382) of Council tenants being on UC they account for 19.8% of total rent arrears (appendix 5.3.4). Looking closely at the actual reason for the arrears we can pull out some themes;

- an inability to manage their online UC account (understanding the importance of checking the details and financial information to ensure it is correctly linked to their circumstances)
- Lack of awareness and in some cases a reluctance to pay rent at the time the claim is received by them without an understanding that housing costs are now included in this and they now have to pay us directly
- The claim is paid in arrears so the first 5 week wait for the first payment is seeing a spike in arrears.

5.34 Council Tax is showing a similar trend where 33% of UC claimants are in arrears with Council Tax. This is significantly higher than other claimant's types such as Job Seekers at 23%. This means that on average customers are in arrears by £280. Members of Cabinet approved at their meeting on 4 September 2019 to consult on changing our Working Age CTR scheme to an income banded scheme and at the same time to increase the maximum support from 80% to 85%. The Council is currently consulting on these changes and then the final scheme will need to be approved by Full Council. A copy of the report that was considered by Cabinet is available [here](#).

5.35 29% (97) DHP applicants in 2018/19 were UC claimants.

5.36 48% of the foodbank referrals that EDDC made between September 2018 and May 2019 were because of issues in relation to UC in particular the 5 week wait but also due to incorrect awards.

5.37 DWP data shows that during 2018/19 there were an additional 1,266 claimants in East Devon who moved onto UC. During this same period Citizens Advice saw 308 clients over UC and between July 18 and March 19 East Devon helped 195 customers to apply. This may suggest that 40% of East Devon UC residents received support with their UC claim. This does not take account of other unrecorded support that would have been given by staff within East Devon or other agencies. Considering this is a working age benefit that has been designed as a digital process there is clearly additional support that customers need, that is much higher than the Government estimated when UC was designed.

5.38 Rental Officers are spending a significant amount of time supporting tenants with administering their UC account and more generally offering day to day budgeting advice. This goes above and beyond focusing on how tenants can pay their rent. Advice is

regularly given in relation to how to manage creditors, switch energy tariffs and access the voluntary sector for wider support. (Appendix 11, case study 6).

5.39 Impact of other Welfare Cuts

5.40 We have looked at customers impacted by the changes to the Local Housing Allowance (the maximum amount we can pay up to in Housing Benefit - Housing costs under UC) to understand what impact this is having in the District. 72% are above the LHA rate. Customers are having to make up the shortfall putting more pressure on their household budgets. The range of average shortfall is as low as £0.22 up to £194.65 per week. See appendix 2.5.

5.41 We looked at customers impacted by the Size restriction and how many of housing tenants were in arrears with their rents. It was found that 72 (35%) of Council tenants with the size restriction are in arrears with their rent, with 23 (11.3%) in excess of £100.00. This doesn't appear to be having a significant impact as the percentage with arrears in excess of £100 is relatively low. However, what we don't know is whether this position is similar with other Social Housing providers.

6.0 Homelessness

6.1 For the purposes of this report we have focused on rough sleepers, people accessing our housing options services and the reasons why, rent levels, the impact of the Housing Reduction Act 2017, numbers in temporary accommodation, people registered on Devon Home Choice, our housing stock, the role of Housing Associations, stock being lost through right to buy and current partnership arrangements.

6.2 The main Headlines from this are summarised in the table below;

Headlines: Homelessness	Evidence
<p>East Devon has relatively low numbers of rough sleepers. However we must be aware of the difficulties of capturing a truly accurate number within our rural environment.</p> <p>We are already successfully utilising a number of central government funding streams (albeit time limited) and in line with the Governments current focus on reducing rough sleepers, we must remain vigilant to such opportunities in the future and be able to respond quickly.</p>	<p>Appendix 6.2</p>

Demand for housing advice services is steadily rising in East Devon with a marked increase of over 50% of the number of people approaching our service since 2014/15. This is consistent with the national picture.	Appendix 6.3.1
Loss of a private sector tenancy and relationship breakdowns are the most common reason for people approaching us for housing advice Tenancies in the private sector are not being retained due to affordability, this is due to particularly high rents and low wages. There is a significant difference in social rent between housing association properties and East Devon rents, this is also contributing to financial difficulties and problems with housing affordability not just in the private sector.	Appendix 6.4 Appendix 6.4.1
The majority of our customers (63.8%) are of working age and 26.5% approaches to us were from families with at least 1 child under the age of 18.	Appendix 6.6
Our highest need is for 1 bed unit accommodation, this is concentrated highest within Exmouth (29.4%).	Appendix 6.12.2 & 6.12.4
Within East Devon and nationally there has been an increase in the number of households who were owed a duty and over two thirds have had a support need (s)	Appendix 6.6.1
Like the national picture, the number of people in temporary accommodation has been rising over the last 4 years.	Appendix 6.7.1 & 6.7.5
As at April 2019 there were 4668 applicants on the housing register, we have seen an increase of 38% since 2017 of applicants in Band A to Band D. 26% of people on the Housing Register are at risk of becoming homeless 42.6% said their health and/or wellbeing was made worse by their current home	Appendix 6.12.1
9.3% of housing in East Devon is social rented, this is low compared to the 17.6% national average. Nationally more than a quarter (27%) of all people living in social rented accommodation live in persistent poverty and 20% in the private rented sector compared to just 6% of those living in mortgage owned accommodation. Also a high proportion of households in the social rented sector are one parent families.	Appendix 6.8
East Devon 72% of housing benefit claimants under the LHA scheme have rent higher than the LHA rate	Appendix 2.5
Support with housing is one of the top 4 reasons people are accessing Citizens Advice Service.	Appendix 8.3.5

6.3 Homelessness- Rough Sleeping: National and Local Picture

6.4 Homelessness can be one of life's most traumatic and disruptive events. It is also one of the most onerous statutory duties the council has to manage and therefore an area where we can directly influence and work to improve the local picture. Measuring homelessness is multi-faceted with a number of factors to consider. One of the most visible forms of homelessness is rough sleeping and the chart below captures the position nationally which indicates a particularly sharp rise since 2010⁶ with a slight decrease within the last year. A similar trend has been observed for the South West and East Devon with actual numbers listed in Appendix 6.2.

⁶ Homeless Link (2019) <https://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/homelessness-in-numbers/rough-sleeping/rough-sleeping-explore-data>

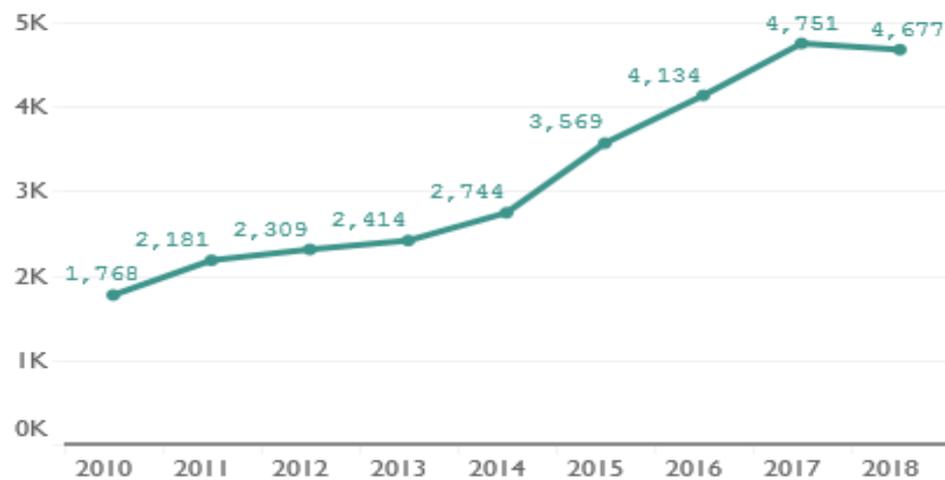
The data is based upon formal counts undertaken by each Authority, but it should be noted that this figure is impossible to gauge accurately particularly in rural districts such as East Devon.

Our rough sleeper figures remain low when compared to the rest of the South West, with the highest figures in Exeter and Plymouth.

Rough sleeping across England

The number of people sleeping rough is rising nationally

All charts - Number of rough sleepers from MHCLG 2010-2018



6.5 Rough sleepers, although a relatively small group of people who are homeless within the district, represent those who have the greatest housing need and who generally face the biggest barriers in obtaining accommodation. The impact of rough sleeping is detrimental⁷ with national figures reporting;

- 86% reporting some form of mental health issue
- 41% reporting to take drugs or be recovering from drug usage
- 27% have or are recovering from an alcohol dependency problem

6.6 Due to the severity of rough sleeping and the challenges we know exist, we are focusing resources on outreach work to intensely support this group and we have prioritised this area as one of our 4 priorities in our recently revised homelessness strategy. Rough sleepers are a group that are typically hard to engage requiring a specialist, sometimes alternative approach to engagement. Significant time is often required to build up trust and understanding and there can be a considerable amount of time before any progress is made to improve an individual's situation. Case Study 2 is a lived experience of a rough sleeper in East Devon.

6.7 As a follow up to the Government's 2018 Rough Sleeping Strategy⁸, funding has been made available in this area and we have been working with our local district partners to maximise these opportunities.

Over the past 12 months we have successfully secured external funding under two initiatives;

⁷ Homeless Link (2019) <https://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/homelessness-in-numbers>

⁸ Gov.UK <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-rough-sleeping-strategy>

- **Rapid Rehousing Pathway-** A joint bid with Teignbridge, Mid Devon, South Hams and West Devon with the award to each District of £41,000 to fund a Navigator post for 12 months.
- **Rough sleeper initiative-** A joint bid with Mid Devon with funding of £42,000 to recruit a shared navigator post and £35,000 to fund a support worker for a Housing First project for up to 6 properties.

6.8 Both funding streams are for a period of 12 months only, which presents uncertainty over future funding. There are also significant physical challenges in carrying out an effective outreach service for rough sleepers throughout a large rural, geographical area such as East Devon and we remain particularly reliant on the public reporting rough sleepers to us.

6.9 The additional resources have only been put in place recently although there are already successful outcomes being measured, these include:

- A reduction seen in the monthly figures of verified rough sleepers, compared to the same periods last year. Rough sleeping within the region fluctuates seasonally, with higher numbers in the summer months.
- 12 successful outcomes for verified rough sleepers since April 2019 including 5 being accommodated in supported accommodation projects, 5 being accommodated in accommodation in the private sector and 2 being accommodated in council accommodation.
- One of the former rough sleepers has subsequently got back into work since being accommodated
- Positive effect on the homelessness budget; a total of £79,000 benefitting the budget as a result of the bids. This addition adds to a saving of £12,000 from last year's budget by ending the previous contract for a rough sleeping outreach service by an external organisation and a further £5,000 by reducing the need to contribute towards a winter shelter.
- Positive impact on other regional services including our own Street Scene team, the police and local charities aimed at assisting rough sleepers, where scarce resources are used to tackle rough sleeping throughout the district and the related effects.

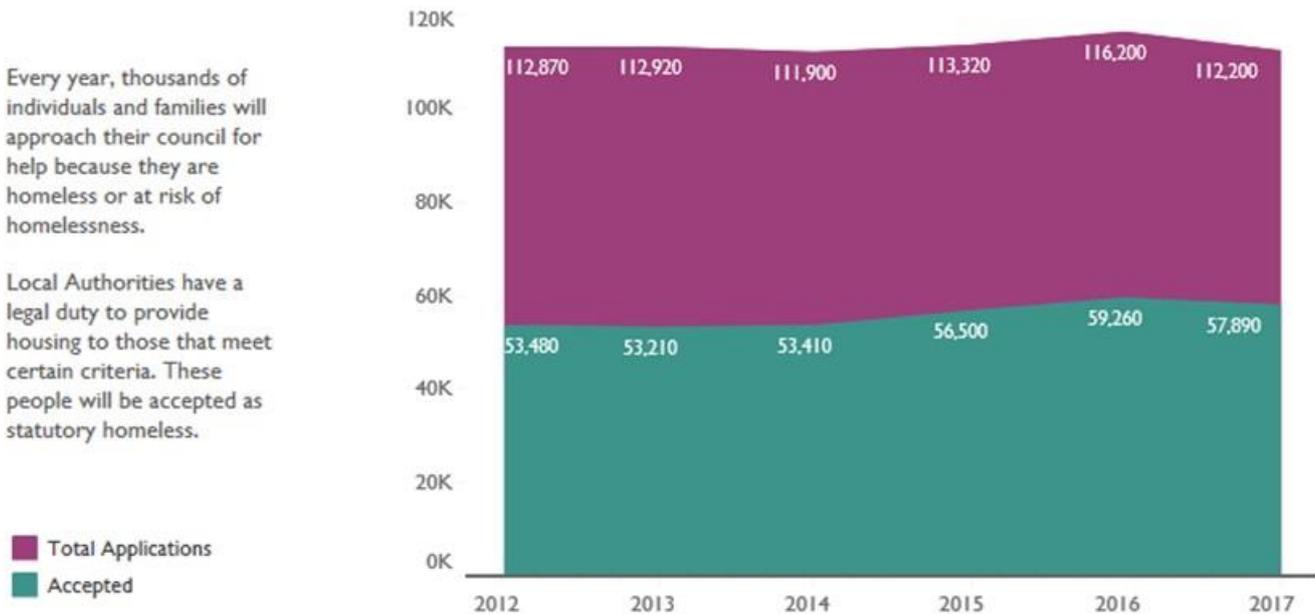
6.10 Demand for Homelessness/Housing Advice

6.11 Every year thousands of individuals and families will approach their Council for help because they are homeless or could be at risk of homelessness. Local Authorities have a legal duty to provide housing to those that meet certain criteria, these people will be accepted as statutory homeless. Our housing service operates daily from Exmouth and Honiton via a drop in facility and appointments. Our belief is that the sooner we are aware of a potential housing issue the sooner we can act to assist and we therefore promote our drop in service as a quick, easy way for people to access help and assistance.

Statutory homelessness: The national picture



Overall applications and number accepted as statutory homeless



- 6.12 In line with the national picture, the last 4 years has seen a steady increase in people accessing the services of our homelessness team with demand for these services currently continuing to rise. As shown in appendix 6.3,1, there has been a significant increase since 14/15 of over 50% and figures so far for the first two quarters of this year show an increase compared to the same period last year. Of people accessing the service, appendix 6.3.2 demonstrates a similar significant increase in homelessness acceptances since 2014/15 indicating a higher number of people approaching us with higher needs.
- 6.13 There are similarities between the causes of homelessness and reasons for people approaching the Council for assistance and this is summarised in Appendix 6.4 and 6.4.1. The two most common reasons for an approach to us remains to be the loss of a private sector tenancy and relationship breakdowns. There are also some slight differences between age and gender (see appendix 6.5.1). This is consistent with the national picture, where loss of a private sector tenancy is one of the most common causes of homelessness. There can be many situations that may lead to a loss of a private sector tenancy, one of the most common ones for us is affordability as we know that the private sector rents in our district are high, particularly compared to average earnings (Appendix 10.3.5). Our Discretionary Housing Payment spend also indicates the highest need as being in the private sector which again raises the issue of affordability. This problem is further exacerbated by the freezing of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, as in East Devon 72% of housing benefit claimants under the LHA scheme have rent higher than the LHA rate (Appendix 2.5). There is little influence we can over this as the LHA rates are set by central Government.
- 6.14 Looking at the age profile of people accessing our homelessness services, the majority of customers sit within the working age range of 21 to 40 (63.8%), with an increase in older males compared to females accessing our services from the age of 40 and over. Looking more specifically at families, 26.5% of approaches had 1 more or more child. (See appendix 6.5).
- 6.15 It is important to point out that of all approaches, we only owe a housing duty to a certain amount of customers, who we define as being in a priority need category. As a snapshot, of the households assessed in East Devon from Jan-Mar 2019, 99.38% were owed a duty and

over a quarter had dependent children, See appendix 6.6. This means that a proportion of people are receiving housing advice and short term intervention and are then continuing to manage themselves. This preventative work has been further enhanced by the introduction of the Housing Reduction Act 2017⁹ which places a legal duty on us to support people in this way. Providing more advice in this way has seen a considerable rise in caseloads per housing officer, typically now being around 38-40 cases per full time officer. Our preventative work is based around the need to prevent a homeless situation arising by ensuring an individual's current accommodation can be maintained and we do this in a number of ways;

- Intense support and liaison with the individual/household in an attempt to understand circumstances in some depth. This is done through face to face meetings as well as phone support.
- If appropriate, an offer of financial assistance through our rent deposit and bond scheme.
- Negotiation with landlords, family members to try and resolve matters that could prevent the eviction.
- A referral to Homemaker Southwest, to assist with financial advice and signposting to specialist debt agencies.

6.16 Temporary Accommodation

Even with the emphasis on prevention work that the Housing Reduction Act has introduced, there are growing numbers of people that are assessed as being in priority need and many of these we end up initially supporting with the offer of temporary accommodation. Nationally, there were 83,700 households in temporary accommodation at the end of last year in the UK, a 5% increase on the end of 2017, according to government statistics. Homelessness figures show that the number of people in temporary accommodation on 31 December 2018 was at its highest level in more than 11 years.

- 6.17 Our temporary accommodation data is set out in Appendix 6.7. For the year 18/19, we housed 151 households into temporary accommodation. Comparing Q1 and Q2 in 2018/19 and 2019/20 there has been an increase in 43 families in temporary accommodation and in single households this has risen by 49 (see appendix 6.7.5). Seeking suitable temporary accommodation is challenging and due to not having any designated temporary accommodation, our reliance in East Devon often falls on bed and breakfast type facilities which can also be costly. We have to carefully risk assess the type of temporary accommodation being accessed for people. Often people approaching us can be suffering from complex health issues therefore access and suitability of accommodation have to be carefully considered.
- 6.18 In response to rising demand for temporary accommodation, we have purchased a house that is in the process of being converted for up to 8 single people (house in multiple occupation).
- 6.19 Cases are becoming increasingly more complex for Housing Officers to resolve with customers often presenting with a range of mental health issues that often result in Safeguarding referrals and liaison with social services to help with access for additional, specialist support. We are also seeing increases in cases that involve domestic violence, case study 1 (Appendix 11) sets out a recent case where a mother with 3 children presented following an alleged DV attack as well as ongoing financial abuse. We supported the family with a placement in temporary accommodation, a referral for specialist support and safety advice that also involved liaison with the police. The family were also referred to

⁹ Gov.UK (2018) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-reduction-bill-policy-factsheets>
page 143

the foodbank for short term support and they were supported to register on Devon Home Choice with a banding of B, indicating high housing need.

6.20 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2023

East Devon's approach to managing homelessness has been recently refreshed through our revised Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019- 2023¹⁰. Having a homelessness strategy is a statutory requirement as set out under the Homelessness Act 2002. This was a timely refresh in order to take into consideration the changes implemented as part of the Housing Reduction Act 2017. The strategy is based upon the results of a review of homelessness in our area with the need to provide direction on our future approach to how we can best manage homelessness.

As outlined in the strategy our four key priorities are to;

- Maximise prevention activities and outcomes
- Increase accommodation options
- Minimise rough sleeping
- Improve health and wellbeing

6.21 We are actively monitoring the strategy with a steering group made up of Officers, Members and uniquely customers who have experienced homelessness issues themselves. The steering group are responsible for ensuring that the objectives of the strategy are delivered.

6.22 Housing by tenure, increasing affordable housing options

6.23 The proportion of owner occupied homes in East Devon is high at 74.9%, this is compared to a national average of 63.3%. Of the homes that are not owner occupied, 23% of the homes are rented with 9.3% defined as social rented housing. The table in appendix 6.8 shows 41.2% of households in social rented sector are lone parent families compared with 5% in owner occupied.

6.24 Details on our own stock composition are broken down in appendix 6.9 reflecting a high number of sheltered housing units. This is reflective and in line with East Devon's older age profile with the 65+ age range looking set to grow more than any other over the next ten years increasing from 29.9% in 2014 to 33.1% in 2024.

6.25 As well as our own contribution to social rented housing, there are within the region of 10 Housing Association's (HA) operating in the East Devon District. In order to make development opportunities viable, we are increasingly seeing HA's charging affordable rent as opposed to social rent, a difference of £43 (see appendix 6.10). We are also aware of further barriers that may be leading to challenges with accessing HA properties, such as a more recent introduction by some of the requirement for a deposit and rent payment in advance. As we have already identified, for a large proportion of people who have no savings, finding these funds can create real challenges.

6.26 In 2018/19 there were 221 affordable housing completions from Housing Associations. Housing Associations remain seen as trusted partners in the delivery of affordable housing in the district however in order to support us with our statutory homeless obligations, we should perhaps be sharing our experiences more closely and looking for more innovative, joined up approaches to tackling some of the districts homelessness challenges. To compare, Appendix 6.10.2 gives an indication of current private sector rents in the District, the challenges that exist around affordability are clear to see with the sector seeing a 4.5 % rise in the last 12 months.

¹⁰ East Devon District Council Website (2019) <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2814843/eddc-homelessness-strategy2019-2023-final.pdf>

- 6.27 When we consider work that has been done to increase our own stock, over recent years this has been centred around our stock acquisition programme that has focused on buying properties off the open market and adding them to our stock. In 2018/19 we acquired 16 properties in this way. This has been a sustainable way of being able to spend our Right to Buy receipts which have to be spent within a set time frame at the risk of having to pay the receipt back (plus interest) to central government. There is a challenge to be made around whether acquiring stock in this way demonstrates value for money and we are keen to explore options of either redevelopment of existing stock or new build on land still owned by the Housing Revenue Account. The recent lifting of the borrowing cap on HRAs¹¹ presents further opportunities for us to do this however we must of course assess our financial position carefully with the need to review our Housing Revenue Account Business plan in order to consider future viability.
- 6.28 The Right to Buy scheme (Appendix 6.11) remains a constant threat to our Housing Revenue Account Business plan, 120 properties have been lost since 2015. Each RTB application is carefully considered and although there are provisions that allow us to refuse a RTB (example- sheltered housing properties are exempt), numbers have remained constant resulting in an overall depletion of our stock when numbers against acquisitions are compared. Although numbers of successful RTB completions can evidence a desire for home ownership amongst our tenants, the majority of people accessing our homelessness services are out of reach of home ownership and this further supports the need for us to consider increasing our own housing stock.
- 6.29 Demand for our own housing stock
- 6.30 A high percentage (34.87%) of people (appendix 7.1.2) accessing our homelessness service end up registering on Devon Home Choice in an attempt to secure social housing in the district. Due to this we can closely link homelessness to the increasing demand we are experiencing for our own housing stock. Demand for social housing properties in East Devon remains high and those in band A to band D has increased by 26.3% since 2017/18 (appendix 7.1.3). Demand for East Devon appears particularly high compared to other Devon districts, this could be due to other Authorities cleansing of the Housing Register fairly periodically where band E applicants are often removed. There is a view that such applications should be treated as not being in housing need (band E) although our approach has been to not ignore their desire to access social housing. Although the system will always place a focus on the higher need applicants we must not lose sight of lower band applicants who although may be deemed as managing, will in many cases be struggling and only just getting by.
- 6.31 Through analysis of our housing register we can see that;
- over half (54%) of people seeking social housing are within the working age group of 20 to 39
 - 49.2% are single people
 - 33% of applicants are families with more than one child(ren)
 - 14.1% are single parent families
 - 6.1% of those on the register are currently living in temporary accommodation – hospital, hostel, sofa surfing, rough sleeping or no fixed abode.
- 6.32 National analysis provides evidence to suggest single parent family households, those in workless households and those working part time are likely to have higher rates of poverty. Analysis of the housing register reveals a high proportion of our residents who ‘fit’ within these groups. The median income of applicants is £14,000 and 57.4% do not have a job. Of

¹¹ Local Government Association 2019 <https://www.local.gov.uk/housing-revenue-account-cap-removal>

this proportion 56% have child(ren). 17.1% of all applicants under 60 years age report they are on Income support, ESA or JSA.

6.33 Partnership working; Housing

6.34 We recognise that we cannot tackle homelessness alone and our Homelessness Strategy provides a summary of partners we are currently working with.

6.35 When considering homelessness issues amongst young people, one particular partnership to highlight is Young Devon. Young Devon are a specialist organisation who work with young people across Devon between the ages of 16 to 24. They assist young people in many ways from helping them to develop new skills, supporting mental health and improving accommodation options for young people including supported housing and lodging schemes. The ability to refer young people to Young Devon is particularly valuable and ensures specialist support from experts in dealing with young people. Young Devon dealt with 133 cases in East Devon in 2018/19. Over the last two years, most young people who approached Young Devon was because of a breakdown in the relationship with parents and their wider family/social network, this is followed by both violent and non-violent breakdown in relationship with their significant other. In 2018/19 over half of the young people Young Devon saw in East Devon were identified as having mental health difficulties. In order to access Young Devon, we contribute an amount of just over £20,000 and going forward we should look to protect this funding in order to protect our access into this vital service.

6.36 As already highlighted in 5.20 of this report, the Homemaker Southwest partnership is providing us with the ability to signpost people who need financial support. The primary purpose of Homemaker Southwest is to prevent homelessness and promote independence. Their involvement as a third party also gives the opportunity for an unbiased view of a households finances, highlighting where savings or sensible cut backs should be encouraged. Demand for Homemaker Southwest from the housing service is high with regular referrals from both the homelessness team as well as the housing rental team. This more recently has led to increased waiting times which can mean a delay in people able to access the service, therefore a limit in how quickly their situation can potentially be improved. As this is an arrangement shared across the Council, there is the need for a complete review to ensure the arrangement is as efficient as it can be. It is also a service we pay for and due to increasing demand we should consider the protection of this funding from the general account going forward.

7.0 Earnings and employment

7.1 The ability to access a decent, well paid job is a key determinant of household income. In this section we have looked at levels of employment rates, pay and productivity, skills and education and what the council is currently doing to support economic growth. Most of the data in relation to earnings, employment, productivity growth rates is published data from the Office of National Statistics. Alongside this we have also reviewed in-house statistics on CTR, HB & UC claimant levels (see appendix 10). The headlines are as follows:

Headlines: Earnings and Employment	Evidence
Average weekly earnings in East Devon have reduced between 2016 and 2018. These are now below regional and national averages. Prior to 2018 they were higher.	Appendix 10.3.5
The out of work benefits claimant rate in East Devon was 1.4% in September 2019. This is below both South West and UK averages (at 2% and 2.8% respectively) and has been consistently lower for the past 15 years.	Appendix 10
East Devon has a higher proportion of Part-Time workers (37.5%) than the South West (36.3%) and the UK (32.4%). We are under-represented in higher value digital, telecoms, data processing and web based employment (EMSI, 2019). Two of our largest employment sectors are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture and related services. • Large tourist industry in the summer months (Jurassic Coast, East Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) Both these sectors have among the lowest levels of average wage and productivity. Levels of associated employment are also exposed to risks including Brexit and automation	Appendix 10
In the UK the poverty rate for households where the only earnings are from Part-Time work is 58%	Appendix 10
27% of Universal Credit claimants searching for work are between the ages of 20 and 30. Only 2% of UC claimants searching for work are below the age of 20.	Appendix 10
Only 20% of the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) caseload are in employment with an average earned income of £7,924.28 per year. This suggests that most earners are only working part-time.	Appendix 10
86% of CTR earners live in households with 4 or less occupants with an average earned income of £7,470.32 which is well below the £10,000 level. However this will exclude other Benefit payments such as Housing Benefit, child benefit, disability incomes, etc that they will be receiving to top this up.	Appendix 10
The fourth top issue that Citizens Advice deal with clients over is in relation to employment matters and these tend to be from those between the ages of 50 to 65. Over 50% of the employment issues are to do with pay, T&C's & dismissal. Zero hour based contracts are also a very big issue because employment can cease at any time. They also find that part-time/seasonal work there are often no written terms and conditions of employment	Appendix 10

7.2 Employment rates & pay

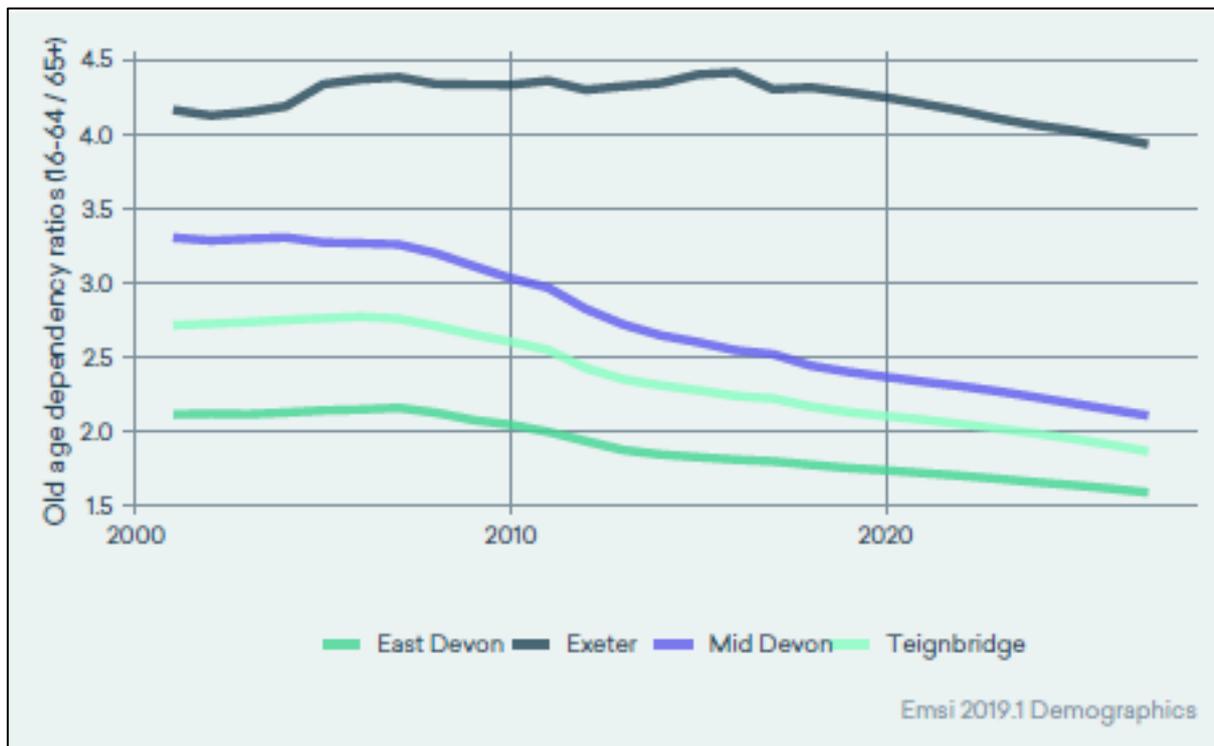
- 7.3 The published data shows that in the main the employment position in terms of the number of economically active (16- 64) people employed in East Devon is better than the national picture. Our unemployment rates are 2.2% lower than the national average. East Devon has an economically active population of 68,900 (Nomis, March 2019) of which 84.9% are in employment, 9.5 percentage points above the national average. In comparison to March 18 it was 79.1%, a significant increase of 5.8%. As described above, these statistics tell us nothing about the quality, levels of pay, skills and GVA associated with these jobs.
- 7.4 The statistics illustrate that we have less of an employment problem in quantitative terms. Rather we need to focus on qualitative aspects of the local labour market including the type of employment and relative wage level. For example East Devon's proportion of residents in part time employment is 5.1% more than the UK average. This is a concerning statistic as we know that poverty rates are much higher with families who are in work part-time compared to those in full-time work.
- 7.5 From our Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction data we can see that only 20% of the caseload are in work. These earnings are at an average of £152 per week, £7,924 per annum. It is likely that the majority of these customers are in part-time work. As seen in the

links to over-indebtedness (Para 5.8) customers with an income below £10,000 per annum are at a much higher risk of falling into financial hardship, and if combined with renting a property (of which the vast majority of our CTR caseload are) it is understandable why customers may be finding it hard to cope.

- 7.6 Equally the statistics in terms of business start-up and survival rates in the District are comparatively healthy. But productivity within the district remains relatively low with many small lifestyle led businesses. Overall 89% of businesses are classified as micro enterprises, employing fewer than 10 people. Two of our largest areas of employment are in agriculture and tourism. Traditionally these have among the lowest average wages and the lowest levels of GVA (gross value added). There are threats to some of our higher value sectors including aviation given the significance of Flybe as an employer at Exeter Airport.
- 7.7 East Devon has the fourth lowest productivity level of any Devon district, equivalent to just 80% of the national average with GVA per employee at £42,162¹² (See Appendix 10.6). In relation to recorded levels of poverty in the district, this persistently lower level of productivity is important because jobs in sectors with lower levels of productivity (GVA) are associated with lower wages and household incomes.
- 7.8 East Devon continues to trail behind many of our rural district neighbours in terms of productivity growth. The reasons for this are not straightforward and a deeper understanding of the causal factors behind this trend is required.
- 7.9 Up until 2018, the average weekly earnings in East Devon have been generally above those for Devon as a whole, but still lower than the South West and National averages. For 2018 wages were lower than the rest of Devon and have decreased significantly since 2016 (see appendix 10). This is a challenging development and again demands further analysis and assessment.
- 7.10 As a district with such high levels of employment and a lowering average wage, we are compelled to focus on the *types* of jobs we work to promote – not just the number. Between 2012 and 2017 East Devon added 2,200 jobs though the highest proportion of these were in agricultural inputs and services. We have also seen increases in childcare employment. We need to take tangible steps which favour skilled jobs with higher average wages and increased levels of GVA. We are compelled by the HotSW LEP's Productivity Strategy (2018) and Local Industrial Strategy (draft 2019) to examine what can be done to improve skills and address underemployment and productivity across our bedrock and emerging sectors and to deliver local improvements.
- 7.11 Opportunities for improvement do exist. We have targeted our EDDC funded business support programme to improve productivity of our new and existing businesses and we are providing tangible support to Propeller Exmouth, the collaborative tech based initiative for example. The growth programme in the West End of the District and flagship projects such as the development of Exeter Science Park have the potential to have a transformational impact.
- 7.12 Low economic activity in East Devon:**
- 7.13 What is clear is that we need to be more proactive in both attracting and retaining working age residents in East Devon. This is difficult to achieve when our average house prices are above both the county and regional average compared to median earnings (ONS, 2018).
- 7.14 The district is increasingly an attractive destination for the retired (numbering 42,660 in 2018) meaning East Devon now has the largest proportion of pensioners by District in Devon. With an aging demographic, East Devon has a higher level of economic inactivity than the county average and this has inevitable consequences for levels of household income and poverty.

¹² Productivity growth in the Heart of the South West: A Technical Paper (2016)

7.15 The changing age structure is a national phenomenon, with people living longer and fewer working age people. One analysis to explore this change is the 'old age dependency ratio', which takes the ratio of working age (16-64) to retired (65+) people in a region. This is valuable in showing the number of potential 'workers' available to produce goods and services for every 'pensioner' who will need to be supported. East Devon's old age dependency ratio is the lowest of any authority in the Greater Exeter area this situation is worsening. Whereas in 2001, we had more than two working age people to support one retired person, by 2027 this will be trending towards 1.5:



Old age dependency ratio by EHOD district, 2001-2027 (EMSI, 2019)

7.16 Skills and Education:

7.17 Provision of skilled jobs, apprenticeships and training will help address some of the key challenges facing our economy - reducing our dependence on surrounding economies, increasing the quality of local employment opportunities and closing the productivity gap. East Devon has experienced a 14% increase in skilled trade roles between 2008 and 2018 whilst Teignbridge and Mid Devon have seen increases of 43% and 28% respectively (See Appendix 10.7 for a breakdown of East Devon).

7.18 Education is clearly relevant in considering respective levels of poverty. Our qualification composition also presents a complex picture. Between 2004 and 2017, East Devon has seen a significant increase in the proportion of residents with a degree or higher. At the same time, we have gone from having the lowest share of no or low qualifications in the EHOD region, to having the highest share and falling from 31st to 249th nationally (Working age population data, 2004-2017).

7.19 To meaningfully improve household income across our district, we need to be geared towards encouraging higher GVA employment growth. The quality of new employment associated with proposed development to support indigenous business growth and inward investment should be considered at least as important as the quantity. Equally ensuring that our residents are equipped with the right skills to access these opportunities points to the significant role that the education system will play in addressing some of the upstream causes of poverty. This also needs to include the role of adult and community learning (see www.learndevon.co.uk for example)

7.20 What the Council is currently doing to support economic development

- 7.21 The Council recognises the importance of having a strong economy. This is one of the Council's four priorities in the Council Plan– outstanding economic growth, productivity and prosperity. The draft Council Plan sets out a number of key objectives for the next four years and within these there is a clear commitment to create new business opportunity and an increase in job numbers.
- 7.22 Having an Enterprise Zone covering four different sites (Skypark, Airpark, Science Park, & Cranbrook Town Centre) within our district is evidence of the work the Council is doing to create additional business employment areas. This is a direct intervention by East Devon and partners focussing on creating the conditions to attract higher skilled work which will increase the number of higher average earning wages and higher levels of GVA.
- 7.23 The Science Park provides a significant opportunity to deliver higher value jobs and improve economic growth. With a gateway policy, the park supports innovative science, technology, engineering, maths and medical companies to deliver growth and connect with the business community. The park has rapidly grown since 2017, with now over 700 staff on site. Further space on the park is being supported by the Enterprise Zone, due to be completed in 2020. This is the very kind of high value employment which, over time, will begin to transform our average earning and GVA indicators.
- 7.24 In addition to the above the Council has been investing and continues to do so in the regeneration of two of our seaside towns to add to the prosperity of the District, this supports the economic growth with employment and visitors to the district. The Council provides a range of employment units within the district, including office space in the East Devon Business Centre. This has been operating at capacity since 2016. There are also opportunities to develop additional workspace across the district, with particular demand within the West End, Exmouth, Seaton, Axminster and Honiton.
- 7.25 Our Exeter and Heart of Devon shared Economic Strategy 2017-20 is a partnership strategy aimed at securing high quality jobs for the region, raising skills and ensuring that employment is well paid. Whilst the strategy does not consider poverty in any detail there is a clear ambition for well-paid employment. The Strategy is available here - <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1986797/ehod-shared-economic-strategy-2017-20.pdf>
- 7.26 More information about what the Council is doing to support economic growth is detailed in the Economic Development report to Overview Committee on 14 November 2019. This includes an update on our dedicated free independent business support programme to East Devon businesses and individuals who need help to get their business ideas off the ground and to improve productivity. It also includes details of how Economic Development have applied our discretionary rate relief policy to incentivise the development of businesses that bring tangible benefits to our wider local economy.
- 7.27 At a headline level it would be tempting to conclude that, with near full employment, the local labour market is not a major determining factor in terms of levels of poverty in the District. However this analysis demonstrates that it is the qualitative aspects of the labour market, including the type of employment and relative wage levels, which require real focus. Indeed there are worrying emerging trends in terms of earnings and productivity which demand further analysis so that we can ensure that the right policies and interventions are in place, alongside established initiatives, so that our residents can access a decent well paid job locally.

8.0 Health and Wellbeing

8.1 Under this theme we have looked at the early results of our Your Home, Your wellbeing study, considered the work of our Mobile Support Officers who work across sheltered housing, reviewed homelessness data, reviewed Devon County Council data that relates to health and wellbeing and considered both our own Homelessness Strategy 2019-2023 and our Public Health Strategic Plan 2019- 2023.

8.2

Headlines: Health and Wellbeing	Evidence
<p>As a result of Housing's Your Home, Your Wellbeing Study;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People living in social housing stock report increased levels of satisfaction with life and home compared to those who live in the private rented sector.• Social housing tenants are reporting less anxiety compared to those who live in other tenures.• The three top issues that are impacting on wellbeing, associated with a person's home are affordability, keeping warm and noisy neighbours.	Appendix 9.6

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with mobility issues are nearly twice as likely to say they are anxious than those without mobility issues. • Poor mental health is more prevalent with those reporting having benefit problems • Those on higher incomes report being more happy than those on low incomes 	
We are supporting increasing numbers of people with mental health issues, highlighting the need for us to have a fit for purpose strategy as well as strong links with the Primary Care Trust.	Appendix 6.6.1
East Devon is in the top 20% healthiest areas of the Country according to the health domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation. 20 neighbourhoods in East Devon are in the 10% most deprived nationally, including parts of Exmouth, Axminster and Honiton.	Appendix 9.1
Health and Wellbeing is recognised as a key priority in our recently revised Homelessness Strategy 2019-2023 and various streams of work are already underway to address this.	Homelessness Strategy 2019-2023
East Devon's Public Health Strategy is integral to the impact we can have across the health and wellbeing of our District and needs to continue to link in closely with Service Plans across all services to ensure a focus on this area.	Public Health Strategy
We have limited access to fuel poverty information for both our own housing stock and analysis of the private sector, this needs more focus and resource going forward.	Appendix 9.2
Leisure East Devon provide a 25% discount on all the monthly and annual memberships to low income households known as the Passport to Leisure scheme. This scheme is funded by East Devon through the service level agreement that we have in place.	

8.3 Poverty can have a massive impact on a person's health and wellbeing. An inadequate income can cause poor health because it is more difficult to;

- Avoid stress and feel in control
- Access experiences and material resources
- Adopt and maintain healthy behaviours
- Feel supported by a financial safety net

Poverty can also limit social and economic opportunities, making it harder to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles which impacts on both short term and long term physical and mental health. This has a further knock on effect to local services such as the cost to these people accessing NHS services.

8.4 Your Home, Your Wellbeing- A Housing Study

8.5 There are intrinsic links between housing and health and it is well documented that poor housing conditions (such as damp conditions and overcrowding) can lead to poor health (appendix 6.10.4). However, issues of security, affordability and suitability of home have also been found to play a very important role in wellbeing. There is growing evidence in East Devon to support this as a result of our Your Home Your Wellbeing Study, a longitudinal study that is exploring wellbeing amongst people living in East Devon at a deeper level than we ever have before. (Appendix 9.6)

8.6 The study is based around in-depth surveys of a proportion of our tenants and a proportion of applicants on the housing register as well as face to face interviews (see case study 5- Appendix 11) that have been carried out by our Information and Analysis Officer. The study focuses on a number of areas including financial status, health and wellbeing and general satisfaction with landlords. Quite powerfully, the study compares the tenure differences of a

social housing tenant compared to someone living in the private rented sector and the impact that this has on overall health and wellbeing.

- 8.7 The study is approaching the end of year 2, Appendix 9.6 provides an infographic of the results so far.
- 8.8 What has been found in recent study is that the wellbeing of those in social housing is far better than those in other tenures, such as the private rented sector due mainly to their tenancies that are providing more security and better affordability. Often, the poverty discussion are focussed on those in social housing and this it is true that some of the most vulnerable in our society are social tenants. However, it is important to not forget the many who are living in poverty who do not have a social home. These are often the forgotten groups who are struggling financially. Working but struggling to afford high rents, living in substandard accommodation and unable to access benefit support. The likelihood of being on housing benefit is greater for those who are social tenants and this has a significant effect on positive wellbeing compared to those who do not have this support. In addition, overall social housing tenants are significantly more likely to report being happy than people on the register and are less likely to feel anxious. This again supports the need to invest in more social housing in order to provide more people with safe, secure housing which in turn improves people's health and wellbeing.
- 8.9 The reference to living in substandard private rented accommodation, highlights the importance of our private sector housing team's role in ensuring standards of accommodation in the private sector are maintained. The team's purpose is 'better housing, better health' and this is delivered on the ground in a number of ways including the delivery of disabled facility grants, issuing of licenses for Houses in multiple occupation as well as actively addressing fuel poverty amongst the private sector by supporting landlords and helping access to financial grants that target this area.
- 8.10 Evidence gleaned from our private sector housing colleagues supports this showing nearly 100 more complaints in 2019 than in 2015 against private sector landlords (appendix 6.10.6).
- 8.11 Mental Health
- 8.12 Across society we have seen an increased awareness of people suffering from mental health issues. There is debate around whether this is due to more people suffering or whether the awareness has resulted in more people openly talking about the matter. Evidence supports that poverty increases the risk of mental health problems, and can be both a causal factor and a consequence of mental ill health. Mental health is shaped by the wide-ranging characteristics (including inequalities) of the social, economic and physical environments in which people live¹³
- 8.13 Front-line Officers are reporting increasing levels of mental health issues amongst residents we are supporting. This is being felt the most in front-line services such as housing where Officers are also reporting an increasing number of referral's to specialist agencies in an attempt to access appropriate levels of specialist support for people. Following cuts in mental health services in Devon, it is felt that more people are struggling without appropriate support, services such as housing are often seeing the impact of this first hand. The homelessness team have also felt the impact of the limited provision of specialist supported accommodation in the district particularly for those with drug and alcohol addiction (appendix 6.6.1). Our wellbeing study found 16.4% of people surveyed reported suffering from problems with mental health, this attributes to an increase of 3% in 2019. We are already attempting to address this by making health and wellbeing one of the key areas of focus in our recently revised Homelessness Strategy 2019-2023.

¹³ Poverty and Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, 2016
page 153

8.14 The Housing service has captured the need to create a Mental Health Strategy within the current years' service plan, recognising the challenges that exist and as an attempt to ensure continuity and clarity over the approach we should be taking. As part of creating the strategy we are liaising closely with the Primary Care Trust who have statutory responsibility for this area, their input is critical and further enhances our desire to achieve a partnered approach. There is no current way of capturing accurately the levels of tenants who are suffering from mental health issues but anecdotally staff across all services are reporting concerns. There are particular areas within the service where this is being felt more intensely, one area is sheltered housing where Mobile Support Officers support tenants with a range of health and wellbeing issues.

8.15 Over recent years we have invested heavily in building our community development function as part of our core housing service. Community development is about working across our housing communities to build resilience and encouraging people to get involved in issues that impact on them which in turn improves their wellbeing. We have targeted this work across some of our most deprived areas including Littleham, Axminster and Honiton St-Pauls. One example of this is the Open Arms project in Honiton that has been set up with the assistance of our Community Development team and is being run from one of our Community Centres in Honiton. The sessions are aimed at providing support to people suffering from mental health issues. The sessions are so popular that the group have recently had to create a waiting list due to being over-subscribed.

8.16 East Devon Public Health Strategy 2019-2023

8.17 East Devon has recently refreshed its Public Health Strategy 2019-2023¹⁴. The strategy has identified 3 key aims;

- To help more people to be healthy and stay healthy
- To enhance self-care and support community resilience
- To integrate and improve support for people in their homes

8.18 The Strategy cuts across all Council Services in order to ensure public health matters are considered against every area of Council service delivery. The strategy is designed to link in with existing service plans in order to ensure public health issues are identified and prioritised accordingly. Behavioural factors have considerable impacts when considering mortality and through intervention as set out in our Public Health plan we aim to take a pro-active approach to this.

8.19 One of these behavioural factors relates to the food we eat, this links closely with the increasing reliance on foodbanks and highlights the importance of their existence. As set out in Appendix 7, one of the Foodbanks in the District has reported increasing levels of people presenting with mental health issues but also increasing numbers of people without the ability to cook and prepare meals from fresh. We are already attempting to address this as part of our partnership with HALFF, a local food charity and so far to date this year we have held 23 live cooking demonstrations in Community Centres. The sessions are for anyone in our communities wishing to attend, they have been particular popular with housing tenants. The sessions are designed around teaching people to prepare healthy meals from scratch, this is an excellent example of pro-active work that can be encouraged in order to raise the profile of health and nutrition in relation to food.

8.20 Financial Wellbeing

¹⁴ <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/environmental-health-and-wellbeing/health-and-wellbeing/east-devons-public-health-plan-and-review-of-progress/public-health-strategic-plan/>

8.21 Nationally, over half of people living in poverty are in working households and many are in vulnerable groups. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, UK Poverty 2017). Too often work doesn't pay enough or people fall into poverty through circumstances beyond their control, such as universal credit.

8.22 Appendix 10 highlights that in East Devon we have a high number of people in part time and/or seasonal work. Evidence from Your Home, Your Wellbeing shows that part timers are more likely to say they are struggling financially compared to those in full time and those who are job seeking. We also know more women than men are in part time work and 40.7% of women compared to 13.9% of men said they were struggling financially. Other vulnerable groups who said in the study they were struggling financially were older households and those households with children

8.23 The wellbeing of the groups is also different, with 31.7% of those in part time employment saying they feel anxious compared to 17.6% of those in full time employment and those respondents reporting higher incomes more likely to report being happy than those on lower incomes.

8.24 Rural Challenges

8.25 There are more rural areas in East Devon than urban areas. With this comes specific challenges which can impact on the poverty of a household. Notably homes in rural areas are typically less energy efficient and can be more reliant on potentially more expensive heating fuels (appendix 9.2). The fuel poverty gap is the additional income which would be needed to bring a household to the point of not being fuel poor. Overall the average fuel poverty gap for household that were fuel poor in 2017 was £321. However, the average fuel poverty gap for fuel poor households in rural villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings was £571 (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2017).

8.26 Digital exclusion is often associated with more rural areas creating inequality in various opportunities, such as employment opportunities.

9.0 Summary

9.1 Much of the local picture supports a degree of affluence across the East Devon District particularly when considering average house prices and the encouraging economic position, this runs the risks of masking poverty where it does exist. This raises even more so the need to consider poverty across our district and ensure we are working to target the individual groups and areas of the district that we know are most effected.

9.2 The causes of poverty can be complex and the reality of living in poverty can create multiple issues. It is not only influenced by a person's current economic circumstances, it is also linked to a range of other factors including childhood experiences, education, housing and health. The report has captured a number of datasets that relate to poverty in East Devon and has attempted to focus in on the areas that the Council does have the opportunity to improve and influence. Matters relating to poverty can cut across every area of service delivery and as highlighted through the report there are some encouraging examples of how the Council is already playing its part in combatting poverty across the district.

9.3 The report intends to better inform Members and provide a platform for taking forward measures that could better support and help alleviate poverty in the district such as the creation of our own East Devon Poverty Strategy. As highlighted in the report, many of the causal factors that are creating an increase in poverty in our district (cuts in Welfare spending) have been driven by Central Government policy. This means we have limited influence and control on what measures can be taken but we are increasingly working to deal with the consequences. It should also be recognised that some of the consequences of extreme

poverty, such as drug and alcohol addiction, fall outside of our areas of service delivery meaning there are limitations around how we can respond, requiring the involvement of partner agencies.

What we are already doing

9.4 The Council is already doing a significant amount to support those experiencing poverty and to create a more prosperous district. This is recognised by the Council Plan and therefore links in with our priorities.

The Council has a number of strategies and policies already in place, these include:

- Homelessness Strategy 2019-2023
- Housing Strategy 2016-2020
- Public Health Strategic Plan 2019-2023
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme Policy
- Discretionary Housing Payment Policy
- Discretionary Rate Relief Policy
- Corporate Debt Policy
- HotSW Productivity Strategy
- Exeter and Heart of Devon shared Economic Strategy 2017-20
- Local Industrial Strategy (Draft 2019)

9.5 The report has summarised some of the intrinsic links between housing and poverty and has demonstrated that the current strategic focus of the work done in housing is already addressing many of the issues raised in this report. The data we have examined reinforces the importance of having an informed Homelessness Strategy for the district and reassuringly, the priorities that have been set for our current 5 year homelessness policy directly link to many poverty factors with the overarching priority being the need to ensure everyone in the district can access suitable accommodation that meets their needs. The significant increase in people accessing our services for homelessness assistance is of concern and from a financial perspective we need to be alert to the risk and cost of us needing to increase resources in this area in the future. The report is also timely as we prepare to refresh our current Housing Strategy, consultation on this piece of work is about to begin.

9.6 The report has highlighted and emphasised the important role we play as a social landlord, this places us in an ideal position to focus hard on poverty and much of our day to day work in housing is already doing this. This is made further achievable with many of the areas of deprivation containing high numbers of Council properties, this indicates our presence within the communities with the opportunity to directly influence and work to improve deprivation. Evidence is also suggesting that this is already having a positive impact on people with levels of wellbeing considerably higher amongst people living within social housing in the district compared to those living in the private rented sector.

9.7 As can be seen from high levels of people on our housing waiting list, demand is continuing to outstrip supply and this further supports our ambitions to increase our own supply of social housing stock within the District. Increasing affordable housing in the district has remained one of our top priorities for a number of years and following the announcement by government around the lifting of the housing revenue account borrowing cap, this has given us more freedom for borrowing and therefore presents opportunities. In reality this has to be carefully assessed against our current housing revenue account business plan in line with an accurate, up to date asset management strategy as well as consideration of the risks associated with the government's right to buy policy.

9.8 The shortage of social housing stock in the district means there is currently a huge reliance on the private rented sector and through-out the report this is continually highlighted as an area of concern. High rents, poor conditions and the lack of security attached to this tenure are all

factors in why many people are struggling and it is therefore of no surprise that our housing register indicates high demand for people trying to access social housing stock. We need to recognise that as demand for housing continues to rise, we will be increasingly reliant on the private sector and this therefore emphasises the need for us to focus on this tenure. The freezing of local housing allowance rates are directly contributing to this picture with 72% of housing benefit claimants in East Devon currently having rent above the LHA allowance meaning they are having to find the shortfall from other sources.

9.9 Foodbank usage is not the only area where we are seeing impacts due to UC. High levels of administrative support are being given to UC claimants in order to support them in managing their claims. This goes against one of the main intentions of Government in so much as promoting this as a self-managing benefit. This is also being felt by high numbers of people accessing Citizens Advice services for the same reason. This is an additional area of work that from 1st April 2019 we ceased to get funding for. Clearly this support is required to ensure people are supported as well as to protect our own income.

Partnership Working

9.10 The importance of partnership working has been highlighted over and over again and in this we recognise that we are unable to achieve our priorities alone so we need to continue to strengthen work we are doing with partners, creating shared visions and monitoring outcomes effectively to ensure these arrangements remain fit for purpose as we move forward.

9.11 We already work closely with a number of partners such as CAB, Homemaker, DWP, Registered Landlords, Local Enterprise Partnership, Other Councils and Young Devon as well as other Stakeholders in relation to economic growth.

9.12 An example of a successful arrangement we already have in place is with Homemaker Southwest, where we go above and beyond to provide wider impartial support to people who are struggling financially whether this is through our homelessness work or our revenues and benefit service. This highlights the importance and value of funding money advice services in order to help people become financially resilient and directly links to the information we have discovered around levels of indebtedness. However, we recognise the opportunity to do more ourselves in relation to this and this has formed the basis of a recommendation that is centred around us doing more pro-active work to support people with budgeting, money management and debt management. We have discovered increasing levels of people who are paying considerably more than average for utilities and other household costs such as mobile phones and TV packages. We are therefore suggesting more support and pro-active work in this area. There is clearly a need for people to be supported in applying for benefits or appealing DWP decisions in order to be accessing their entitlements. There is also the need to raise awareness around the concept of priority debts and helping people to understand the consequences of not doing so.

9.12 Another partnership that links closely with poverty is our links with the East Devon Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). With a recently appointed new Chief Executive Officer, we are already working closely to align our focus and priorities and it is suggested we undertake a complete review of the arrangement in order to substantiate the circa £60K annual funding that we contribute towards the service. As part of our work on poverty we can and should be taking the opportunity to better influence the priorities and outcomes of the work the CAB do in our area.

Moving Forward

9.13 As recognised through-out the report, poverty is a multifaceted topic and there are clearly areas that we have not fully covered. The list below is not exhaustive but highlights some of the areas that could be further considered;

- Fuel Poverty
- Understanding transport links and cost in the District
- Rural Isolation
- Furniture Poverty
- The role of our Private Sector Housing team including Empty Homes
- A better understand of our Sheltered Housing service
- Supported Housing schemes in the District
- Better understanding of the reduction in weekly earnings
- The impact of zero hours based contracts

9.14 The report has given us a good opportunity to reflect on current mechanisms in place designed to help people who are struggling financially, an example of this is the delivery of discretionary housing payments and we have been reassured to see that we appear to be targeting support to the right claimant groups. Another example is high take-up of our rent and bond deposit scheme to assist people in being able to access the private rented sector.

9.15 One of the positive measures that we are looking to implement for April 2020 which is currently out to public consultation is to change our Council Tax Reduction scheme to better align with Universal Credit and at the same time to increase support as it is recognised that those on low incomes have been disproportionately impacted by welfare cuts and rises in Council tax compared to other Council tax payers.

9.16 Our Corporate Debt Policy is designed to provide a lot of support to customers who fall into arrears, by ensuring a fair, consistent and proportionate approach to recovery of Council debts (eg. rents and Council tax, benefit overpayments) The Government are looking to introduce a formalised 'breathing space' for customers who need to access money advice and we are already considering this as part of our approach and subsequent review of the Corporate Debt Policy. Alongside this we will also consider additional measures that can be built in as other ways of alleviating poverty.

9.17 We have considered the role of foodbanks and have been able to conclude the increased demand of people accessing them is attributed to the five week delay in people receiving a Universal Credit payment. Whilst considerable recognition should be given to the role of foodbanks, there is the need to do more work at getting to the root causes around why people are accessing them. We need to review our referral process to make it more consistent across our own departments and it would be worthwhile us doing this with input from the foodbanks themselves. There is also an opportunity to help the co-ordination of aligning agencies such as the CAB alongside the foodbanks in order to encourage more emphasis at getting to the root causes of why people are accessing and working proactively to encourage less dependency.

9.18 Support is clearly needed for customers in helping them to access and claim their benefit entitlements. The Welfare system is complex and often difficult to navigate which in itself creates barriers for customers. This is demonstrated by the fact that 98% of Personal Independent Payments (PIP) appeals that Citizens Advice lodge on behalf of the customer are successful. Customers can be left waiting without the income that they are entitled to receive. Additionally, frequently reviewing household bills is an ongoing commitment for people in making sure that they are not paying more for things than they should. It is our understanding that the Education system doesn't currently equip people with budgeting skills and so are normally reliant on family members or friends to help understand and develop the best ways to manage money. Helping people to budget better, reducing the levels of indebtedness and increasing savings are all intrinsically linked and will play a part in helping to improve financial resilience.

9.19 To meaningfully improve household income across our district we need to be geared towards encouraging higher GVA employment growth. Positively, we are experiencing the highest

employment levels that we have had historically however we can see we have had a drop in average weekly earnings for the period 2016-2018 compared to the rest of Devon. The Council is already taking many pro-active measures to attract new businesses and grow the economy which intend to attract a higher skilled workforce, examples of this are the Enterprise Zone, designated growth point area and the work of the Regeneration team. We need to better understand the cause of this and there is further work to be done here. There are worrying emerging trends in terms of earnings and productivity which we need to better understand to ensure we have the right policies and interventions in place, alongside established initiatives, so that our residents can access a decent well paid job locally.

9.20 Many of our frontline services are contributing directly towards improving the health and wellbeing of people living in our district. We should recognise the emphasis the council has placed on this by continuing to provide non-statutory services such as Countryside services and Sheltered housing support which are actively playing a part to improve health and wellbeing. Our current longitudinal study that is exploring the links between housing and wellbeing is also placing us in an informed position to track the circumstances of people over a longer period of time in order to look more closely at issues that are impacting on people's wellbeing. This links very closely with work in relation to poverty and is something that once concluded will offer us a reliable, evidence based insight into deeper factors that impact on a person's wellbeing.

9.21 Mental Health can be both a causal and consequential factor when we consider the impacts of poverty and the report has highlighted the importance of links we currently have and perhaps need to strengthen in relation to specialist support agencies. We know nationally that mental health is effecting as many as 1 in 4 people and as a local authority we must look at all ways we can work towards improving outcomes that can assist people. Our recently revised Public Health Strategy already highlights mental health as a key priority and services such as housing are closely considering how work should be targeted in this area. The work being undertaken as part of our Community Development focus is making an additional contribution and this work continues to be targeted in areas that are deemed to be struggling the most. For a rural district such as East Devon, the issue of social isolation remains of great importance especially when combined with our older demographic.

9.22 The selection of case studies that have been provided have been designed to draw our attention to 'lived experiences' within the District and as a way of bringing to live some of the issues we have raised in this report.

9.23 A series of recommendations have been put forward that directly link to matters raised in this report and Members are asked to consider and debate these as a starting point for taking forward further work that relates to poverty within our district.