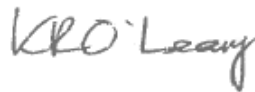


29 November 2018

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Housing Committee will be held on **TUESDAY 11 DECEMBER 2018** in the Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Ebley Wharf, Stroud at **7.00 pm.**



Kathy O'Leary  
Chief Executive

**Please Note:** This meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site ([www.stroud.gov.uk](http://www.stroud.gov.uk)). By entering the Council Chamber you are consenting to being filmed. The whole of the meeting will be filmed except where there are confidential or exempt items, which may need to be considered in the absence of the press and public.

### AGENDA

- 1 **APOLOGIES**  
To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
To receive declarations of interest.
- 3 **MINUTES**  
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2018.
- 4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**  
The Chair of Committee will answer questions from members of the public submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.  
**DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF QUESTIONS**  
**Noon on THURSDAY 6 DECEMBER 2018.**  
Questions must be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive, Democratic Services, Ebley Mill, Ebley Wharf, Stroud and sent by post or by Email:  
[democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk)
- 5 **WORK PROGRAMME**  
To consider the work programme.

**6**     **MEMBER REPORTS**

- a) Housing Review Panel
- b) Performance Monitoring
- c) Older Person's Strategy – Task and Finish Group (verbal update by Councillor Miles)

**7**     **COUNCIL RESPONSES TO HOMELESSNESS**

To support the further investigation of options to deliver temporary accommodation for homeless households.

**8**     **HOUSING STRATEGY 2019-2024**

To endorse the draft Housing Strategy prior to consultation.

**9**     **HOUSING COMMITTEE ESTIMATES – REVISED 2018/19 AND ORIGINAL 2019/20 AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2018/19 – 2022/23**

To present to the committee the revised estimates for 2018/19 and the original estimates for 2019/20.

**10**    **TENANT INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT STRATEGY**

To provide committee with an update and to approve the above strategy.

**11**    **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

See Agenda Item 4 for deadline for submission.

**Members of Housing Committee 2018-19**

**Councillor Chas Townley (Chair)**

**Councillor Jenny Miles (Vice-Chair)**

Councillor Catherine Braun

Councillor Miranda Clifton

Councillor Jim Dewey

Councillor Chas Fellows

Councillor Colin Fryer

Councillor Julie Job

Councillor Norman Kay

Councillor Phil McAsey

Councillor Tom Skinner

Councillor Debbie Young

**Tenant Representatives**

Ian Allan

Sadie Tazewell

**HOUSING COMMITTEE****11 September 2018****7.00 pm – 9.05 pm****Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud****3****Minutes****Membership**

Councillor Chas Townley (Chair)	P	Councillor Colin Fryer	P
PCouncillor Jenny Miles (Vice-Chair)	P	Councillor Julie Job	P
Councillor Catherine Braun	P	Councillor Norman Kay	P
Councillor Miranda Clifton	P	Councillor Phil McAsey	A
Councillor Jim Dewey	P	Councillor Tom Skinner	P
Councillor Chas Fellows	A	Councillor Debbie Young	P

P = Present      A = Absent

**Tenant Representatives**

Ian Allan	P	Sadie Tazewell	P
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**Officers in Attendance**

Director of Development Services	Housing Renewal Manager
Principal Accountant	Head of Property Services
Head of Finance	Principal Tenancy Management Officer
Sheltered Housing Project Manager	Democratic Services Officer
Tenancy Operations Manager	

**HC.013****APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor McAsey and Fellows.

**HC.014****DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Young declared an interest in item 13 on the agenda, Older Person's Strategy as she works with older people.

**HC.015****MINUTES – 12 JUNE 2018****RESOLVED**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2018 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

**HC.016****PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were none.

**HC.017****WORK PROGRAMME**

Discussion on the work programme took place there were no additions to the programme.

**HC.018**                      **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

At the previous meeting only Councillor Braun was appointed performance monitoring representative. During the interim period Councillor Clifton had volunteered to be a representative. This was confirmed by Committee.

**HC.019**                      **MEMBER REPORTS**

- (a) Housing review panel – Councillor Townley had circulated the notes of the panel which took place in August, and updated Members on discussions at the panel.
- (b) Performance Monitoring – The performance monitoring report had been circulated to Members and Councillor Braun gave an update, explaining that the focus is on delivering the corporate plan and looking at the risks surrounding issues identified.

**HC.020**                      **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2018/19 Month 4**

The Principal Accountant introduced the report explaining that this is the first monitoring report of the year, looking at the general fund and HRA. Both the General Fund and the HRA are on target and a revised budget setting process will begin in January 2019.

Questions were received from Members which included:

- Queries relating to tables 3, private sector housing and table 4, spend to date.
- Recovery of rents
- New Homes
- Southbank, Woodchester
- Major works
- Checklist of monies spent.

- RESOLVED**
1. **To note the outturn forecast for the General Fund and HRA Revenue budgets and Capital programmes for this Committee**
  2. **To approve the continuation of development at Southbank, Woodchester, providing 5 new homes at an estimated cost of up to £1.3m**

**HC.021**                      **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY**

The Housing Renewal Manager presented this report to recommend the adoption of a revised Policy for 2018-23, the previous policy was adopted in 2013. Due to changes in legislation, it was necessary to have an updated policy in place to address issues such as eviction, houses in multiple occupation, housing conditions penalties, improvements such as energy efficiency, smoke and carbon dioxide detection.

- RESOLVED**                      **Adopt the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2018-23.**

**HC.022**                      **ADDITIONAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BORROWING PROGRAMME (2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22)**

The Principal Accountant presented this report which provided information on the proposed bids to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Homes England. There are 8 schemes and the bids would total £6.3m.

Questions from Members included issues such as, flexibility of borrowing if the schemes are overspent.

Bids need to be submitted by 30 September 2018. Strategy and Resources Committee and Full Council will be considering these reports in October. .

**RECOMMENDED To approve the bids to Homes England for additional borrowing from the 'Additional HRA Borrowing Programme (2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22)' for the following schemes:**

**To Strategy and Resources Committee**

**Broadfield Road, Eastington  
Orchard Road, Ebley  
Queens Drive, Cashes Green  
Ringfield Close, Nailsworth  
Southbank, Woodchester  
Summersfield Road, Minchinhampton  
Tanners Piece, Nailsworth  
The former Ship Inn site, Bridgend**

### **HC.023**

### **THE CHANGING FUTURE OF TENANT INVOLVEMENT**

Councillor Fryer introduced this item explaining that the Task and Finish Group had looked at best practice from other authorities, grant funding would be reducing and tenant groups would need to be self sufficient by the end of 2019. Tenant Representatives will be called Neighbourhood Ambassadors and some key criteria was being considered by Committee. Tenant representatives on the community groups were not to be confused with the two tenant representatives on Housing Committee.

Questions from Members included the process which will be taken to recruit the ambassadors, how will tenants be encouraged to be involved and amendments to the criteria for volunteers. Following discussion it was proposed and seconded to add to the resolution, relating to the amendments to the wording of the criteria and report on progress to Committee in December 2018. This was unanimously carried.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1 The recommendation at 5.2 for a phased reduction in grant funding be agreed over the next 2 years.**
- 2 The criteria and conditions of role for the Neighbourhood Ambassadors are agreed.**
- 3 To give delegated authority to the Principal Neighbourhood Management Officer to make changes to the criteria and conditions for the role for the Neighbourhood Ambassadors following discussion with the task and finish group.**

### **HC.024**

### **TENANT INVOLVEMENT ACTION PLAN**

The Principal Neighbourhood Management Officer presented this report which included a plan for tenant engagement including tenant repairs inspectors and to begin the process of recruiting two tenant representatives to Housing Committee.

Members asked if a similar process would be used to recruit the tenant representatives to Housing Committee and commented that perhaps an election amongst the tenants, could take place to appoint the representatives, to be open and transparent. The ability for the representatives to bring relevant issues to Committee was discussed. The current

representatives could re-apply. As previously Full Council would need to approve the recommendation of the appointment of representatives.

- RESOLVED**
1. **To approve the Tenant Involvement Action Plan is fit for purpose (Appendix A).**
  2. **Subject to approval at Council, the Head of Housing Services using delegated authority recruits 2 new tenants to sit on Housing Committee (without voting rights) to replace the current representatives.**

**HC.025**                      **OLDER PERSON'S STRATEGY**

Councillor Young left the meeting following her declaration of interest.

The Sheltered Housing Project Manager presented this report on the progress of the Older Person's Strategy. The recommendation was to set up a Task and Finish group to consider the need for older person's housing over the next 20 years.

Members questioned whether the strategy included private sector housing, people who own their own home, homecare and extra care. The Director of Development Services explained that work is being carried out through housing needs assessment and the review of the local plan. The strategy is for the council's housing stock, the Housing Strategy picking up the private sector and wider issues. Work is being carried out throughout the County on housing needs and it would be useful for the Task and Finish Group to meet with the County Council to understand their perspective. Group Leaders would be asked to nominate Members to sit on the Task and Finish Group. The group need to determine the terms of reference and an initial report to Committee in December.

- RESOLVED**                      **to set up a task and finish group to explore the expectations of the 'next generation' in relation to SDC's older people's housing.**

**HC.026**                      **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

There were none.

The meeting closed 9.05 pm.

Chair

**STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**AGENDA  
ITEM NO**

**HOUSING COMMITTEE**

**11 DECEMBER 2018**

**5**

**WORK PROGRAMME**

<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Matters to be considered at the meeting</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>05.02.19</b>	Work Programme	Leads: Chair and Director of Tenant and Corporate Services
	Member Reports a) Housing Review Panel b) Performance Monitoring c) Older Person's Strategy – Task and Finish Group (Final Report and presentation by Future Focus Research)	Leads: Chair: Cllr Chas Townley Cllrs C Braun and M Clifton
	Willow Road, Stonehouse	Sheltered Housing Project Manager
	Homelessness Strategy	Housing Advice Manager
<b>09.04.12</b>	Work Programme	Leads: Chair and Director of Tenant and Corporate Services
	Member Reports a) Housing Review Panel b) Performance Monitoring	Leads: Chair: Cllr Chas Townley Cllrs C Braun and M Clifton
	Older Person's Strategy	Sheltered Housing Project Manager
	Budget Monitoring Report 2018/19 Q3	Head of Housing Services and HRA Accountant
	De-pooling project	Tenancy Operations Manager
	Sheltered alarm system	Principal Sheltered Housing Officer
	HRA Delivery Plan	Top and HRA Accountant
	Tenancy Agreement	Tenancy Operations Manager
	Housing Committee Report to Council	Lead: Cllr Chas Townley
	Military Covenant	Head of Housing Services

**Information sheets sent to Committee Members**

<b>Date sent &amp; ref no</b>	<b>Topic</b>
4 June 2018 H-2018-2019-001	Income Collection 2016 to 2018
5 July 2018 H-2018-2019-002	Referrals to Support Agencies
7 September 2018 H-2018-2019-003	Income Management and Vulnerability Assessments
11 September 2018 H-2018-2019-004	Housing Green Paper

## MEETINGS FOR CIVIC YEAR 2019/20

Date of meeting	Matters to be considered at the meeting	Notes
<b>11.06.19</b>	Work Programme	Leads: Chair and Director of Tenant and Corporate Services
	Member Reports a) Housing Review Panel b) Performance Monitoring	Leads: Chair: Cllrs
	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) outturn 2018/19 – Summary of Variances.	Principal Accountant
	Properties at Gloucester Street and Bradley Street, Wotton-under-Edge	New Homes and Regeneration Manager
<b>10.09.19</b>	Work Programme	Leads: Chair and Director of Tenant and Corporate Services
	Member Reports a) Housing Review Panel b) Performance Monitoring	Leads: Chair: Cllrs
	Budget Monitoring Report 2019/20	Principal Accountant
<b>10.12.19</b>	Work Programme	Leads: Chair and Director of Tenant and Corporate Services
	Member Reports a) Housing Review Panel b) Performance Monitoring	Leads: Chair: Cllrs
	Housing Committee Estimates – Revised 2019/20 and Original 2020/21 and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Medium Term Financial Plan 2018/19-2022/23	Principal Accountant
<b>11.02.20</b>	Work Programme	Leads: Chair and Director of Tenant and Corporate Services
	Member Reports a) Housing Review Panel b) Performance Monitoring	Leads: Chair: Cllrs
<b>31.03.20</b>	Work Programme	Leads: Chair and Director of Tenant and Corporate Services
	Member Reports a) Housing Review Panel b) Performance Monitoring	Leads: Chair: Cllrs
	Budget Monitoring Report 2018/19	Principal Accountant



<b>Report Title</b>	<b>COUNCIL RESPONSES TO HOMELESSNESS</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To update Members on council initiatives to combat homelessness and seek authority to examine options to deliver temporary accommodation in the district for homeless households.
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<p><b>The Committee RESOLVES to:</b></p> <p><b>(1) Support the further investigation of options to deliver a temporary accommodation for homeless households; a further report to be brought before Housing Committee once options are clarified and costings known.</b></p> <p><b>(2) Locate suitable HRA properties to provide accommodation for former rough sleepers being supported via the Social Impact Bond.</b></p>
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Any proposals for new provision will be brought before strategy and Resources Committee and will be fully consulted upon as part of the planning process.
<b>Financial Implications and Risk Assessment</b>	<p>There are no finance implications arising directly from this report.</p> <p>Any costs associated with preparing an options appraisal for delivering temporary accommodation will need to come from existing resources. A full business case for any additional spend will need separate approval and will need to consider the revenue cost of any capital expenditure as well as the ongoing revenue costs of the accommodation.</p> <p>The financial position of the HRA would not be affected if a small number of properties are leased to a provider of supported accommodation.</p> <p>Lucy Clothier, Principal Accountant Tel: 01453 754343 Email: <a href="mailto:lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk">lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Risk Assessment: the provisions of this report should help to mitigate the risk to the council and to individuals facing homelessness. The health risks of homelessness and rough sleeping are well-known and the provision of appropriate accommodation can alleviate this risk.</p>

<b>Legal Implications</b>	<p>This report seeks authority to take steps towards enabling the Council to satisfy the statutory duties in relation to homelessness that it is bound to fulfil.</p> <p>Nicola Swan, Interim Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer  Tel: 01453 754369  Email: <a href="mailto:nicola.swan@stroud.gov.uk">nicola.swan@stroud.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Report Author</b>	<p>Pippa Stroud  Policy Implementation Manager  Tel: 01453 754099  Email: <a href="mailto:pippa.stroud@stroud.gov.uk">pippa.stroud@stroud.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Options</b>	<p>The council has a statutory duty to carry out certain activities in relation to homelessness. One of these is to provide temporary accommodation to qualifying homeless households. At present, private sector provision outside the district is relied on to accommodate these households. This could continue but may not represent good value nor provide as good accommodation as more permanent housing provision appropriate to the needs of those households.</p>
<b>Performance Management Follow Up</b>	<p>A further report will be brought to Housing Committee with options for delivery once these have been explored.</p>
<b>Background Papers/ Appendices</b>	<p>Homelessness Reduction Act fact sheets:  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-reduction-bill-policy-factsheets">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-reduction-bill-policy-factsheets</a></p>

## 1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 imposed new duties on Councils dealing with homeless households and has been described as ‘one of the biggest changes to the rights of homeless people in 15 years’.
- 1.2 In summary, it introduces a new prevention duty which applies to all applicants threatened with homelessness within 56 days. The council now has a duty to assess and provide a written ‘personalised housing plan’ for all eligible applicants.
- 1.3 It also introduces a new relief duty within which the council has a duty to take ‘reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure that suitable accommodation becomes available’.
- 1.4 On the face of it, these new duties reflect the good practice that the Housing Advice Team were already following prior to the introduction of the Act. However, practice has shown that the added paperwork and extension of time periods (from 28 to 56 days) that duties are owed has had a considerable impact both on the Housing Advice Team’s capacity

to process homelessness applications, and on the amount of temporary accommodation and extended stays required by these new aspects of the Act.

- 1.5 At time of writing, there are 6 people that we know of who are regularly rough sleeping in the district. A further 17 have accepted interim temporary accommodation and are waiting for suitable permanent accommodation to become available.

## **1.6 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **1.7 Temporary Accommodation**

- 1.8 As a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act, the budget expended on temporary accommodation has increased considerably, and shows no sign of reducing. At present, households are accommodated in a mixture of accommodation provided by private sector landlords and ranging from use of Travel Lodge hotels to private 'bed and breakfast' style facilities. None of these are located in the Stroud district and, at times of high pressure, can be as far away as Bristol or Worcester.

- 1.9 Clearly, this situation is unsustainable both from a budgetary or suitability perspective and the temporary accommodation budget of £50,000 is currently overspent by 240% to £172,000. In addition, accommodating homeless households away from schools, support networks or places of employment can be detrimental to the life chances of that household.

### **1.10 Social Impact Bond**

- 1.11 Following a joint partnership bid in 2016 Gloucestershire was successful in obtaining £1.2m funding from the MHCLG to support work with entrenched rough sleepers and individuals experiencing repeat homelessness. In the case of Gloucestershire, the forward funding is provided by Charity P3 who provide the support element of this project, with a 'payments by results' mechanism to refund these costs to the charity from central government.

- 1.12 The provision of accommodation is pivotal to the success of the project and we have been approached by P3 to ask for 2 x 1 bedroom flats to be provided by the HRA. It is expected that the units will be leased to P3 who will provide intensive support to the residents.

- 1.13 We are currently already providing 2 accommodation units for specialist support by leasing them to Greensquare as 'Places of Safety' for those fleeing domestic abuse.

### **1.14 Gloucestershire Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)**

- 1.15 The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol is operational between 1<sup>st</sup> November and 31<sup>st</sup> March during periods of extreme weather. Emergency accommodation is made available for people sleeping rough for the night, and they are offered support to find more permanent

housing. Emergency accommodation is available in Cheltenham and Gloucester, with the Stroud District being the only rural Gloucestershire district having SWEF provision, provided from January to March 2019 by the Salvation Army and Stroud Baptist Church.

## **2. CONCLUSION / RECOMMENDATION**

### **2.1 Temporary Accommodation**

2.2 Initial conversations have been held with Registered Providers about developing temporary accommodation within the district and managing it on behalf of the council. There could be options for this accommodation to be funded via capital borrowing by the council, or by borrowing by the Registered Provider, depending upon cost effectiveness.

2.3 Given the need to provide this accommodation without delay, it seems likely that the purchase and conversion of an existing property within the district would be the most appropriate route.

### **2.4 Social Impact Bond**

2.5 Charity P3 has asked the council for the lease of 2 x 1 bed HRA units in order to accommodate former entrenched rough sleepers within the district.

### **2.6 Other Homelessness Issues**

2.7 Homelessness is a complex issue with a number of routes available to the local authority to prevent or alleviate the effects on households. It has been identified that regularisation of revenue funding involved in the commissioning of specialist support services is required. As a result Members will note that £45,000 in revenue funding has been made available to the Housing Strategy budget in order for relevant services to be commissioned and retained.

## STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA

ITEM NO

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

11 DECEMBER 2018

8

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>HOUSING STRATEGY 2019 - 2024</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To approve the new draft housing strategy prior to consultation.
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<p><b>The Committee RESOLVES to:</b></p> <p><b>(1) Endorse the draft Housing Strategy for public consultation; and</b></p> <p><b>(2) Grant delegated authority to the Policy Implementation Manager to make minor textual changes to the document prior to the commencement of consultation</b></p>
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Consultation will take place in early 2019, pending the approval of this consultation draft.
<b>Financial Implications and Risk Assessment</b>	<p>There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Should any actions require funding outside of the approved budget, a separate report would need to be taken to Council to allocate funding.</p> <p>Lucy Clothier, Principal Accountant Tel: 01453 754343 Email: <a href="mailto:lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk">lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Having an adopted Housing Strategy in place helps mitigate risk by co-ordinating the Council's housing activities and monitoring actions.</p>
<b>Legal Implications</b>	<p>The Council as local strategic housing authority needs a current Housing Strategy to inform future housing needs for the district and enable future new supply. This strategy is useful to monitor and manage housing provision.</p> <p>Nicola Swan, Interim Head of Legal &amp; Monitoring Officer Tel: 01453 754369 Email: <a href="mailto:nicola.swan@stroud.gov.uk">nicola.swan@stroud.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Report Author</b>	<p>Pippa Stroud, Policy Implementation Manager Tel: 01453 754099 Email: <a href="mailto:pippa.stroud@stroud.gov.uk">pippa.stroud@stroud.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>Options</b>	The council could choose to not update the current housing strategy. However, the council has previously fulfilled a statutory duty to periodically review the housing needs of its area and to formulate and publish a housing strategy.
<b>Performance Management Follow Up</b>	A further report will be brought to Housing Committee to approve the completed Housing Strategy prior to publication.
<b>Background Papers/ Appendices</b>	Housing Strategy 2015 – 19 <a href="https://www.stroud.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategy">https://www.stroud.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategy</a> Appendix A: Draft Housing Strategy 2019 - 2024

## **1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Accessible, affordable and safe housing forms a fundamental part of the wellbeing of all communities and the life chances of every individual. To this end, there is a raft of statutory duties relating to the housing activities that councils must undertake.
- 1.2 The Housing Strategy is the Council's overarching document that seeks to reflect the range of housing interventions that the Council takes part in, and set the direction of travel for housing-related services in future through the action planning process.

## **2. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 2.1 The previous Housing Strategy is now out of date, and given the rapid legislative, policy and economic changes that have taken place in the last five years in this sector, an update is appropriate.

## **3. CONCLUSION / RECOMMENDATION**

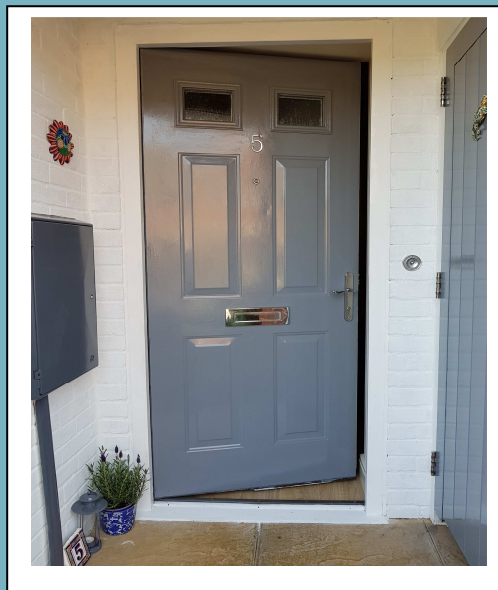
- 3.1 Members are invited to approve this draft of the Housing Strategy prior to it being made available for public consultation. This consultation will be carried out via the Council's website and will be publicised via a press release and using the Council's social media channels.
- 3.2 Consultation responses from Members, colleagues and the public would be warmly welcomed.



# Housing Strategy 2019 - 2024

## Consultation Document

December 2018



## Foreword

Housing is about more than just bricks and mortar. The ability to access good quality, affordable housing and housing related services makes a real and enduring difference to people's lives, and it has long been understood that poor quality housing has a significant adverse impact on the wellbeing of the occupants and on the quality of life in the surrounding area.

Perhaps now more than ever, the condition, availability and affordability of housing plays a vital role in the overall health of our district as a whole. Young people denied access to the housing they need will simply move elsewhere, resulting in a lack of talented young employees that local businesses need. Older people who lack safe, warm and suitable housing are likely to become much more reliant on health and institutional care. In our more prosperous rural villages, basic local services such as cleaning, gardening, handyperson and home care services are becoming more scarce as the people who have traditionally worked in these areas are pushed out by unattainable house prices.

The provision of decent and affordable housing is a key corporate priority for Stroud District Council, and we recognise that the solution doesn't lie with any particular type or tenure. In this strategy we consider all the housing activities that we as a Council take part in, whether that is in building and managing our own stock, preventing and relieving homelessness or helping private tenants and landlords understand their rights and responsibilities. We also want to ensure that there are greater opportunities for community-led and cooperative housing to be developed in the District. In addition, this strategy examines vital cross-cutting issues such as fuel poverty which can affect people across all tenures, at all stages of life.

We recognise that the district's continued success depends on meeting the housing needs of all its residents. Successful communities throughout history have been home to populations of people with diverse incomes, abilities and household types; our challenge as a Council is to target our resources to the greatest effect to support those communities.

*Cllr Chas Townley*





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## Executive Summary

This housing strategy has been developed during a time of considerable national change, with the introduction of new government policy and legislation having a considerable impact on what we do at a local level.

The tools available to us, and some of the constraints within which we work, are influenced by this legislation and by national policies which relate not just to housing but planning, environmental health and the welfare benefits system. We need to be alert to all of these aspects in order to ensure that we provide the best possible housing opportunities to residents.

The local housing market is becoming increasingly polarised between those who were able to buy properties at a time of better wage to house price ratios, and those households who are struggling to access suitable properties.

The Stroud district has a population of 118,130, presenting 51,000 households. The population is predicted to grow to 136,000 by 2041. There are 47,640 private homes in the district with 5160 properties in the ownership of the council and 1640 housing association homes.

Many of the district's properties are categorised as 'hard to treat' in terms of fuel efficiency improvements with 32% being of solid wall construction and 16% off the gas network. We offer a range of help, advice and interventions to help owner-occupiers, private tenants and landlords keep their properties in a safe and healthy condition.

As a landlord we have a number of initiatives in order to ensure that we make the best use of our stock by keeping it well-maintained alongside being updated and refurbished where appropriate. We also take part in anti-fraud and community safety initiatives to protect our homes and estates.

There is an assessed need for 446 new affordable homes every year in the district. We work with a wide range of Registered Providers (housing associations) as well as rural and community housing groups in order to maximise the delivery of new affordable homes. We also have our own in-house development programme to provide new council housing which has delivered 236 homes to date.

As in many areas in the UK, homelessness is growing in the district. We have introduced a wide range of interventions in order to prevent homelessness where at all possible. We also offer a comprehensive housing advice service and maintain the 'Homeseeker' choice-based lettings service for council and housing association rented properties.

# Introduction

## Housing and Our Communities

### Who is this strategy for?

- Ourselves
- Our Partners
- Our Residents

### Why do we need it?

Recent years have seen some huge upheavals in the housing market, from the market collapse in 2007 to the current unprecedented rise in private renting and the related decline in owner-occupation.

As a result, there is a growing divide between the housing 'haves' and 'have nots' with the older generation having been well placed to take advantage of smaller house price to income ratios in the past, pitched against younger households facing unattainable house prices in relation to their incomes.

As a result, discourse has become increasingly polarised, resulting in headlines like these:

**Millionaire tells millennials: if you want a house, stop buying avocado toast.**

(Independent May 2017)

**Selfish baby boomers stop new housing**

(Metro November 2017)

The fact remains that healthy, interesting and vibrant communities are home to the broadest mix of people. Villages, towns and cities throughout history have been home to a spectrum of residents of all ages, abilities and incomes.

The big question facing all local authorities is how best to sustain these types of communities while supporting the vulnerable and delivering services in the most efficient way.

**UK rents to rise 15% in next five years, property group warns**

(Independent August 2018)

**UK facing its biggest housing shortfall on record with backlog of 4m homes, research shows**

(Independent May 2018)

# The National Context

## Introduction

This housing strategy has been developed during a time of considerable national change, with the introduction of new legislation and national policy having a considerable impact on what we do at a local level.

As recently as the 1990s, a first-time buyer couple on a low-to-middle income, saving five per cent of their wages each month, would have enough for an average-sized deposit after just three years.

Today it would take them 24 years. Home ownership among 25- to 34-year-olds has fallen from 59 % just over a decade ago to just 37 % today.

National policy changes include:

- The National Planning Policy Framework 2018
- The Housing Green Paper 2018
- National Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Universal Credit

Relevant changes will be covered in the individual chapters to this strategy, but those with more wide-reaching effects are:

### National Planning Policy Framework

The new Affordable Housing definition extends the definition of Affordable Rent to include Build to Rent units marketed at an affordable rent, Starter Homes, Discounted Market Sales housing and 'other affordable routes to home ownership'.

### Social Housing Green Paper

This paper reflects that the most consistent theme raised by residents was the perceived stigma of being a social housing tenant. The Green Paper looks at ways of overcoming this and refers to a number of initiatives by landlords to tackle this.

### Rough Sleeping Strategy

The government is committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027.

### Homelessness Reduction Act

The Act introduces a requirement for local authorities to provide improved advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness, alongside

the extension of the ‘threatened with homelessness’ period. It also Introduces new duties to prevent and relieve homelessness for all eligible people, alongside a requirement for formal assessments and personalised housing plans to be drawn up.

### Houses in Multiple Occupation Legislation

From October 2018, powers under the Housing Act 2004 require mandatory licensing of HMOs that comprise of 5 or more people in two or more separate households. This is an extension of previous licensing which only applied to larger HMOs of three or more storeys. This extension also sees the introduction of minimum room sizes, which for a single room will be 6.5m<sup>2</sup> with no discretion to go below this.

### Universal Credit

Intended as a flagship reform of the benefits system, Universal Credit rolls together six benefits (including unemployment benefit, tax credits and housing benefit) into one benefit, paid monthly in arrears. The aim is to simplify the benefits system and increase incentives for people to work.



Affordable flats under construction 2017, Long Street, Dursley.

## The Local Context – the Stroud District

The Stroud District is a largely rural area covering 175 square miles in the south of Gloucestershire. Much of the eastern half of the district falls into the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which covers just over 50% of the District's total land area.

### Key POPULATION facts

**Population:** 118,130  
(2017) up 0.56% since  
2016

**Change in  
households  
by 2041:** up  
9,000

**Number of households 2018:**  
51,000

**Age profile:** by 2036, 30%  
of the district population  
will be over 65.

Predicted  
population  
**growth to**  
2041: 136,000

### Key AGE PROFILE facts

**Young  
People aged  
0 -15:** 21,114

**Working Age  
Adults:** 70,802

**Retirement Age  
Adults:** 26,214

### Key HOUSING STOCK facts

**Council  
properties:**  
  
**5071**

**Private homes:** **47,640**

**Number of households on  
waiting list:** **2367**

**Housing  
Association:**  
  
**1640**

### Key HOUSING CONDITION facts

**36.5% of private rent  
dwellings were built  
before 1919**

**32% of  
dwellings are  
of **solid wall**  
construction**

**16% of properties are **off**  
**gas** network**

# The District's Housing Needs

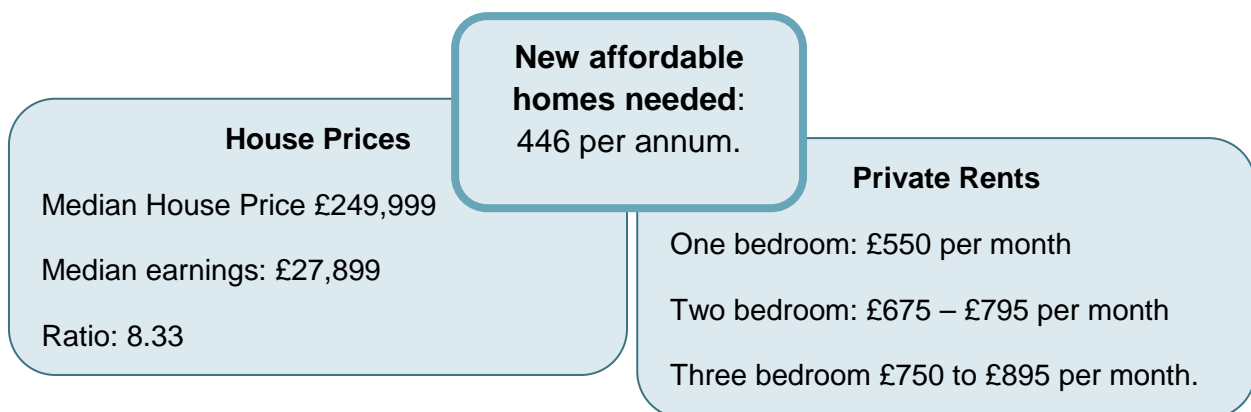
## Measuring the need for affordable housing

Stroud District Council commissions a number of pieces of research to look at the need for affordable housing, usually in partnership with the other Gloucestershire Local Authorities as housing markets tend to span more than one local authority area.

This research calculates who needs what sort of affordable housing, where, and when, so that we have a good understanding of what new affordable housing might be required in future and can shape policies and delivery to meet this need.

The most recent of this research is the Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) of 2015. This updates existing survey data to give a picture of the current and future need for affordable housing in the district, and an affordable housing needs figure is calculated according to government guidelines.

The SHMA document can be found on the Council's website [www.stroud.gov.uk](http://www.stroud.gov.uk)



## The Private Rented Sector

Despite the ageing of the general population in the district, the proportion of younger households in the private rented sector is increasing.

Whilst single person households and households containing two adults and no children comprise over 60% of this sector, there has been a significant growth in the number of households with children in rented housing and they are over-represented in this tenure relative to the wider population – around 15% of households with children now live in the private rented sector.

Affordability in the private rented sector is an increasingly important issue, with rents rising faster than earnings. Nearly 40% of households spend over 30% of their income on housing and more than 15% spend over 50% of their income on housing. Younger people, older people and those with disabilities living in private rented properties are more likely to spend an excessive proportion of their income on rent.

**Action:** we are currently jointly commissioning a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment (now called a Local Housing Needs Assessment) for publication in 2019.

## Making the Best Use of Existing Housing: Our Role as a Landlord

**Introduction:** Stroud District Council is the only Council in Gloucestershire which has retained its housing stock in direct Council management, and we are the largest landlord in Gloucestershire.

Tenant Services provides the housing management function for the Council. This service covers all landlord functions including repairs and maintenance, gas servicing, resident involvement, rent and income collection and management of tenancies including lettings.

### Why we need to do it:

In order to achieve our aims and aspirations we need to have robust financial planning in place for the next 30 years. This ensures that we are able to deliver our plans relating to stock maintenance in terms of both planned programmes of replacement and responsive repairs, as well as carrying out risk analysis on our income and expenditure. In addition, tenant engagement adds value for money for residents.

The Regulator for Social Housing sets standards for landlords delivering social housing. As a local authority we are held to the Consumer Standards which have four elements:

- The Home Standard 2015 (Quality of Accommodation and Repairs & Maintenance)
- The Tenancy Standard 2015 (Allocations, Mutual Exchanges and Tenure)
- The Neighbourhood and Community Standard 2015 (Neighbourhood Management including Anti Social Behaviour)
- The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard 2017 (Customer Service, Choice and Complaints including involvement and empowerment)

### What we've done:

#### Top achievements in the last 5 years

- Brought our gas servicing in-house rather than contracting it out.
- Successfully recovered several properties where fraud was a factor in the original letting or application for the Right to Buy.
- Developed and delivered an 'obsolescence' strategy to deal with stock which is beyond economic repair
- Minimised the impact of welfare reform in relation to the spare room subsidy (bedroom tax) and the roll out of Universal Credit by developing approaches which are informative, supportive and effective.
- Delivered renewable energy solutions including fitting 329 properties with Air Source Heat Pumps and 612 properties with Solar PV.
- Reduced Leaseholder debt from £45K to £7K within 12 months (2017-2018)



## Policies, Practices and different ways of working:

### Tackling Under-Occupancy

By identifying under-occupancy we help make the best use of our stock by supporting tenants who wish to downsize by offering a moving home grant, which releases larger properties for those in need. This approach has been gaining momentum with the roll out of Universal Credit and the spare room subsidy (bedroom tax).

**Damp and Mould** is recognised as a significant risk to health and wellbeing and our approach is very much around prevention through education about lifestyle behaviours (hanging damp clothing over radiators without adequate ventilation, for example). The Repairs and Maintenance (including damp and mould) policy 2016 has been developed to make clear what our responsibilities are as a landlord, and which are the responsibilities of our tenants.

**The Tenant Empowerment Strategy 2018** takes the opportunity to engage with a wider range of tenants through the use of digital access such as social media, online services and mobile phone apps. We are raising the standard of formal engagement and also increasing opportunities for tenants to dip in and out of areas where they may have a special interest, for example, by community or by activity.

**The Non Traditional Homes Strategy and Obsolescence Procedure Guide 2016** provides clear direction on how we manage the 600 properties of 9 different types that have been constructed using non-traditional methods. These units are often difficult to heat and suffer from poor thermal insulation, meaning that a complex approach is required to improve them. It provides a clear decision-making tool with guidance for officers and Members and a framework by which the Council can effectively consult with all stakeholders.

**The Aids and Adaptations policy 2016** supports our work with care professionals, including the NHS, to reduce hospital admissions and improve discharge times so that tenants can stay or return to their homes with the correct adaptations to support them. £145K has been spent on adaptations to our properties during first 6 months of 2018.

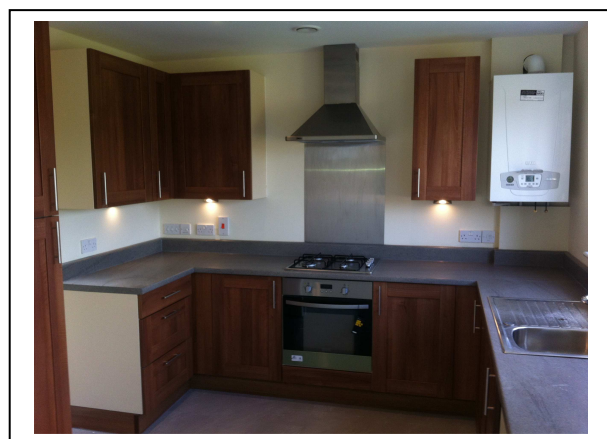
**The Gloucestershire Tenancy Fraud Forum.** As a founder member of the forum, we have worked closely with our social landlord partners detecting and preventing fraud. Two cases of attempted Right to Buy fraud were investigated in 2018 with the successful result that the two properties have been returned to the Council's housing stock.

**Community Safety.** We are undertaking a new collaborative working approach with Community Safety colleagues, with joint operations involving Neighbourhood Management Officers and Neighbourhood Wardens tackling instances of fly tipping, anti-social behaviour and drug misuse. We also work with Gloucestershire Constabulary to identify cases involving 'County Lines' criminality, which seeks to exploit children and young people in the selling of drugs.

We are leasing some properties direct to specialist support agencies to ensure that people with physical or mental health challenges can be offered suitable supported accommodation in the district.

### What we're doing next:

- Investigate the de-pooling of service charges and new tenancy agreement (2019)
- New Service Standards (2019)
- Tenancy Fraud detection programme ongoing
- Satisfaction survey (2019)
- Online Tenant Engagement (2019/20)
- Military veterans sensitive lets policy (2020)
- Develop a tenant-led Stroud Standard for repairs and maintenance (2019)
- Identify cases where disabled adaptations can sustain tenants in their own homes to prevent hospital admissions, or secure early discharge from hospital (2019)
- Develop a Policy of supporting victims of Domestic and Mental abuse (2019)



## Making the Best Use of Existing Housing: Improving Private Sector Housing

### Introduction:

We help to improve the health, safety, and wellbeing of residents in private sector housing within the district that are affected by poor housing standards, particularly those disadvantaged through social deprivation, disability, age, vulnerability or infirmity. We place a particular emphasis on those living in the rapidly increasing private rented sector.

'Private sector' housing means homeowners, tenants renting from a private landlord and those renting from a Registered Provider (housing association). Every five years we publish a Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy detailing the actions we propose to take to improve the condition of private sector housing in the district; you can find this policy on our website via the following link [Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2018-23](#)

Local authorities can provide assistance in the form of grants, loans, advice or materials, or we can directly carry out work repairing, improving, extending, converting or adapting housing accommodation. Our Policy reflects the national trend which is moving away from providing grants and instead supplying low-cost loans. This helps resources to be stretched further as repayments are recycled over a number of years.

### Why we need to do it:

In the Stroud District there are 47,110 private sector dwellings. These include owner occupied (74%), dwellings owned by private landlords (12.3%) and those owned by Registered Providers (3.4%). Of these dwellings 25% were built before 1919 with 36.5% of private rented dwellings built before 1919.

Living in a home which is cold, damp, overcrowded or in poor repair can lead to health problems, which in turn can have a negative influence on community stability and crime levels, cause environmental problems and lead to increased costs for healthcare providers. It goes without saying that improved health brings wider benefits for everyone. Energy efficiency improvements help to prevent excess winter deaths each year by ensuring homes are adequately and affordably heated by reducing heat loss and improving heating systems.

Whilst the private rented sector will always be the housing of choice for some, it is becoming the only option for a large number of people. The private rented sector in England is expanding rapidly, mainly due to the lack of other affordable housing options available.

### What we've done:

During the last 5 years, the Housing Renewal Team has achieved the following:

- Carried out investigations into 317 complaints from private sector tenants and carried out actions to resolve those complaints and improve the standard of private rented property.
- Approved 32 Healthy Homes Loans totalling £180,000 to vulnerable owner occupiers on low incomes to carry out essential repairs to their properties.
- Approved 139 Disabled Facilities Grants totalling £1.1million to enable adaptations to be carried out to allow people to continue living in their own homes.
- Identified all properties in the district which met the criteria for Mandatory HMO licensing and ensured that they were all licensed.

By working in partnership with the Warm & Well Scheme we have also assisted in the installation of 548 energy efficiency measures to homes and brought in an additional £600,000 of external funding towards the cost of those measures.

### How we do it:

We help to improve the health, safety, and wellbeing of residents in private sector housing within the district that are affected by poor housing standards or disadvantaged through social deprivation, disability, age, vulnerability or infirmity. We place a particular emphasis on those living in the rapidly increasing private rented sector.

### Objectives

To help achieve the Policy's aim a number of key objectives have been identified:

1. Remove the most serious home hazards (category 1)
2. Improve housing conditions in the private rented sector
3. Promote and improve energy efficiency in the home
4. Mandatory licensing of Houses In Multiple Occupation (HMOs)
5. Licensing of mobile homes and caravan sites
6. Adapt accommodation to meet the needs of those with disabilities.
7. Tackle empty homes

### Assistance

In order to meet these objectives, the council works in partnership with other local authorities, agencies and charities. A range of policy tools are used to meet the needs of residents in the private housing sector, such as:

- Advice and Signposting
- Financial assistance
- Enforcement

We give free advice to both owner occupiers and tenants on housing repairs, making adaptations, improving home energy efficiency, letting accommodation, accessing private rented properties, mobile homes and caravan sites and reusing empty properties. We also carry out a range of activities to reduce fuel poverty; you can find out more about this in the Health and Wellbeing chapter of this document.

### What we're doing next:

### **Healthy Homes Loan**

Owner occupiers are entitled to apply for a Healthy Homes Loan of up to a maximum of £15,000 for essential repair works to their homes. Full details on this loan can be found on our website.

### **Enforcement**

Legislation places a duty on local authorities to take action if a category 1 hazard is identified in a dwelling. This legislation aims to protect the health, safety and welfare of tenants, home owners and the general public. The Housing & Planning Act 2016 introduced further powers to prosecute, issue simple cautions and/or carry out works in default of landlords who fail to comply.

### **Protection from Retaliatory Eviction**

The Deregulation Act 2015 introduced rules to protect tenants from unfair eviction (known as retaliatory eviction) following a complaint to the landlord concerning the condition of the property. We have been raising awareness of this with private sector tenants and there is further information on our website, including a template letter that tenants can use to notify their landlord about problems.

### **Letting Agents Redress Scheme**

The Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirements to belong to a Scheme etc) (England) Order 2014, introduced a legal requirement for all lettings agents and property managers in England to belong to one of three government redress schemes. Where an agent or property manager has not joined a scheme the Council can issue a £5,000 fixed penalty fine.

### **Protection from Smoke and Carbon Monoxide**

The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 place a duty on landlords to ensure that a smoke alarm is installed on each storey of a property and a carbon monoxide alarm in any room where there is a solid fuel burning appliance. We can issue a fine up to a maximum of £5,000 to landlords who don't comply.

### **Mandatory Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)**

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) often provide inexpensive shared accommodation for those who need it. The council offers advice to tenants, owners and managing agents. Where HMO properties are found to be unlicensed the Council will either issue a Civil Penalty Notice or prosecute in accordance with the adopted Civil Penalties Enforcement Policy.

### **Licensing of Mobile Homes and Caravan Sites**

The council responds to any complaints regarding the condition of sites and offers advice to owners who are unsure if a license is required. Advice on compliance with license conditions is given to ensure a satisfactory standard of health, safety and wellbeing for the occupants.

### **Adapting Accommodation to Meet Disability Needs**

The Council offers a range of information and advice on its website to assist those wishing to adapt their home to make it more suitable to meet their needs. This has

recently been updated to include a database of local builders, architects and surveyors which is available from our website: [Help with the repair and adaptation of homes in Gloucestershire](#)

### **Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)**

It is a requirement for the council to grant aid necessary and appropriate works to adapt accommodation to allow disabled persons to remain in their own homes. A grant is available of up to £30,000 to provide financial assistance to make essential adaptations to a disabled person's accommodation. Eligibility for a DFG is determined by an assessment of need by an Occupational Therapist and a test of resources.

### **Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants**

Discretionary grants and loans may be available for works not eligible for Mandatory DFG such as:

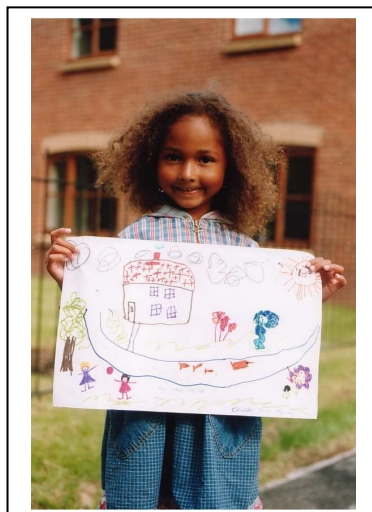
- Relocation costs to a more suitable property
- Top-up funding where costs are above the Mandatory maximum
- Works considered necessary to meet need but are outside of the Mandatory scheme.

### **Empty Homes**

We actively target empty properties to bring them back into use. The owner (if known) is contacted to seek their cooperation. If it is not possible to persuade an owner to deal with a property, we have the option of implementing a number of statutory powers.

### **Empty Homes Loans**

An Empty Homes Loan of up to £15,000 may be offered to assist the owner of the property with renovation costs to bring the property back into use for affordable private rented housing. An assessment is made by a Private Sector Housing Officer to identify any works necessary to make the property habitable and meet the Fit to Rent Standard. Applicants must also agree to apply for a Fit to Rent certificate and accept the council's Deposit Bond scheme.



## **Housing Needs: Other Types of Accommodation.**

### **Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

The cultural and housing needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople community can be very different to the district's general population. The 2017 update to the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, which was commissioned by the Gloucestershire District Councils, identified the need for additional pitches for travelling communities in Gloucestershire. The Council will examine a number of recommendations through the Local Plan review process that could for example include additional pitches or short-term stopping areas situated on specific pieces of ground, which are made available where needed for an agreed and limited period of time.

### **Boat Dwellers and Van Dwellers**

At times of high housing pressure, some households will seek alternative accommodation to the traditional 'bricks and mortar' routes to finding a home; one of these options is dwelling on a houseboat. Some communities have a heritage of living, working and travelling on the waterways but, more recently, additional households are choosing to live on boats because of the relative affordability of this type of accommodation. While this is not generally a problem locally, we need to be alert to significant increases in boat dwelling where this could put strain on limited infrastructure or cause conflict with local residents.

Alongside this, there is anecdotal information that there are a growing number of people in the district resorting to living in vans; vehicles which have not been formally converted to living accommodation. We have a protocol in place with Gloucestershire Highways that they will inform us when they are made aware of these sorts of households. We can then ensure that these households have access to housing advice, where appropriate, or other services that they may need.

### **Beds in Sheds**

Beds in sheds are informal, and often illegal, dwellings formed from sheds or other structures. They provide sub-standard living conditions which are potentially dangerous to tenants, and could conceal other problems such as modern slavery or trafficking. While this problem is generally only currently an issue in larger cities we need to ensure that it does not become a problem in our district. If we are made aware of any of this sort of accommodation we will thoroughly investigate and take action where appropriate.

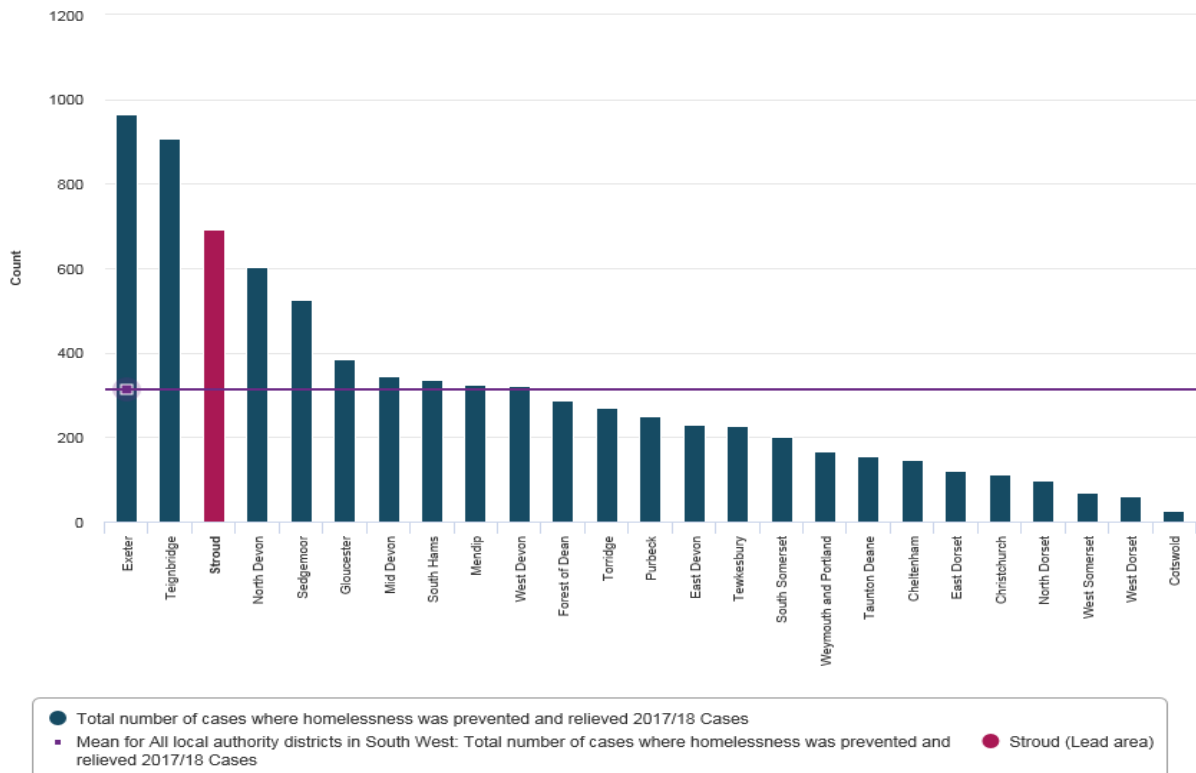
## Housing Advice and Homelessness

**Introduction:** Homelessness has been increasing both nationally and locally. The focus on homeless prevention has been further strengthened by the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 which was enacted in April this year. Stroud District Council’s Housing Advice Team has an impressive record in preventing homelessness, achieving the highest figures in Gloucestershire and one of the highest in the entire south west.

**Why we need to do it:** The council has a number of statutory duties relating to homelessness. Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 introduced a duty on Councils to tackle homelessness and the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 expanded this. However, it was the Homelessness Act of 2002 which first imposed a duty on all housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their area and develop a homelessness strategy.

**What we’ve done:** Stroud District Council has performed consistently well over the last few years when compared to other councils in the South West. We have had high numbers of homeless preventions as measured by central government, relatively low numbers of households in temporary accommodation and cost effective use of funds to prevent homelessness.

**Total number of cases where homelessness was prevented and relieved (cases) (2017/18) for All local authority districts in South West**





**How we do it:** The Housing Advice Team has developed a variety of methods to help prevent homelessness including:

- Grants for deposits and agency fees to access private rented homes
- Mediation for young people and their families, and for couples
- Sanctuary scheme for victims of domestic abuse to enable them to remain safely in their homes.
- Double deposit payments for landlords in lieu of having a guarantor.
- Support for people leaving hospital to secure suitable accommodation if they cannot go back to their previous home.
- Support to access Discretionary Housing Payments and the financing of a specialist debt advice worker in Stroud Citizens Advice.
- Provision of rent guarantee insurance.
- Payment of rent arrears to secure a tenancy at risk (where extenuating circumstances have resulted in arrears).
- Referrals to specialist community based housing support.
- Renegotiation fee to bring rents in line with Local Housing Allowance rates.
- Paying for other solutions to tenancy breakdown e.g. clearing garden or property, providing sound insulation.
- Setting up direct payment of Housing Benefit.
- Training to support organisations to ensure accurate advice is given at the earliest opportunity, and that the organisations are aware of the help available from the Housing Advice Team.
- Advertising our services in all GP surgeries, health centres and community centres.
- Outreach advice sessions at partner agencies.

#### **What we're doing next:**

There are fresh challenges ahead for the team. Although still relatively low compared to other housing authorities, the use and cost of temporary accommodation has escalated. The temporary accommodation currently available to the council is not sufficient to meet demand and the use of accommodation such as Travelodge and Premier Inn has increased. At times, there has been no accommodation available within the district and families have had to be placed as far away as Bristol. We are seeking to improve this situation by:

- Converting a property within our own stock to provide three units of temporary accommodation.
- Sourcing self-contained accommodation through the private sector.
- Proposing the purchase or building of our own bespoke temporary accommodation within the district.

The other major new challenge relates to the extra duties imposed by the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. This is affecting our homeless prevention figures in two ways, actual preventions and recorded preventions:

- The duties imposed by the Act have resulted in a significant increase in bureaucracy which is impacting on the time spent actually working with customers to prevent or relieve homelessness.
- The increase in caseloads (averaging 167% in the first six months) has also had a significant impact.
- The extra personal details needed to meet the new requirements to record prevention and relief mean that, although we will be preventing and relieving homelessness, they will not be officially recorded. This is particularly where we work with partners, both internal and external, where the partners are unwilling or unable to record the necessary personal details. Recording accurate figures is important because government resources are often allocated according to those figures.

The Housing Advice Team is currently trying to simplify and streamline the processes to reduce the amount of time spent on paperwork. We are also encouraging our internal and external partners to record the personal details we need by providing simplified consent forms and privacy statements.



Affordable flats in converted former hotel, Newport, Berkeley.

## Health and Wellbeing: Tackling Fuel Poverty

### Introduction

Put simply, fuel poverty occurs when a household is unable to keep their home adequately heated and there are around 2.5 million households in fuel poverty in the UK. There are three main factors that contribute to fuel poverty: the energy efficiency of the property, the cost of the energy, and household income.

### Why we need to do it

Households that spend more time at home, for example older households, or those with young children, are most at risk from fuel poverty. A significant part of the district's housing stock is classified as 'Hard to Treat' where occupiers are likely to be in fuel poverty, with 32% of solid wall construction and 16% in off-gas areas. 26% of private sector dwellings in the district have serious (category 1) hazards. This is higher than the national average of 22%.

Designing new homes, retrofitting older homes and improving existing housing stock by placing energy conservation at the heart of the process are all steps to achieving healthy and sustainable homes.

### What we've done

#### **Warm & Well Partnership**

The 'Warm and Well' advice line provides free and impartial energy efficiency advice to residents in Gloucestershire on a range of areas from basic 'top tips' for saving energy to more complex renewable energy systems. Warm and Well also has officers who carry out home visits to offer guidance.

#### **Warm Homes Fund**

In conjunction with Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire authorities, we successfully led a bid for £5million of funding to pay for the installation of affordable central heating systems for any household in fuel poverty.

#### **Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards**

Living in private rented accommodation significantly increases the likelihood of a household being fuel poor, and we will enforce the Energy Efficiency (Privately Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 which were introduced to improve the energy efficiency of privately rented property. The regulations set out a minimum level of energy efficiency for any privately rented property which is required to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

In Gloucestershire we have secured £200,000 funding a year from the Gloucestershire CCG and the Warm Homes Fund which landlords can access. Where funding is available and a landlord fails to carry out the necessary works we can serve a Financial Penalty Notice of up to a Maximum of £5,000 on the landlord.

### How we do it

We provide a range of advice, signposting and intervention services through the Private Sector Housing Team who work within the Environmental Health department.

## Health and Wellbeing – Low Carbon development

### Why we need to do it

The construction sector is one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. Global concerns about climate change and rising energy costs are leading to the focus falling on the way buildings are designed, built and used.

On a more immediate basis, homes that are inexpensive and easy to keep warm and dry are essential to every household's wellbeing.

### What we're doing

There are a wide range of standards that new homes could meet; low carbon, zero carbon, Passive Haus and eco homes are just some of the standards and targets used. As a result, research has been commissioned for the Local Plan to examine the advantages and disadvantages of different potential targets. As there are different costs associated with each target, we need to ensure that seeking particular standards for new homes don't have the effect of reducing the overall number of new affordable homes built.

Alongside looking at targets for energy, water, climate change adaptation, biodiversity and waste, the Local Plan research will also examine the wellbeing effects of new developments.

### What we're doing next

The results of this research will be assessed and Local Plan policies developed in response to ensure that the best possible standards are achieved for all local housing development.

## Health and Wellbeing - Tackling Health Inequality

**Introduction:** Health inequalities are a ticking time bomb for our district. They might be caused by rural isolation, poverty, obesity, mental ill health, adverse childhood experiences, being a carer or living with long term conditions like dementia or heart disease. Health inequalities increase demand on our front-line services, impact on housing needs and on the quality of life for our residents.

**Why we need to do it:** We have a number of local demographic drivers for our work. We have an ageing population who are living longer and with more long term conditions. Mental ill health is increasing as well as self harm and risk of suicide. Loneliness and social isolation causes ill health and affects the population of all ages, not just older people. Physical activity levels drop every year and with it, obesity levels increase.

**What we've done:** We have provided targeted activities to promote healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities in the following ways:

- Due to demand we increased the number of Better Balance classes being offered around the district which saw an increase of **178%** from the previous year.

- **3496** attendances on our Healthy Lifestyles Scheme.
- **260** yr 4/5/6 girls from Stroud District Primary Schools participated in the annual Football Tournament organised in partnership with South Gloucestershire and Stroud College Students as part of their Level 3 Sport course.
- **416** attendances at Walking Netball at Stratford Park Leisure Centre following on from a taster session held at the Active for Life Day.
- Established a Cancer Rehab Class in partnership with Macmillan Next Steps Team at Gloucestershire Care Services.
- **2746** attendances recorded on Health Walks across the district.

#### How we do it:

##### Health and Wellbeing Plan

Stroud District is one of the few Councils in Gloucestershire to have a dedicated Health and Wellbeing Plan to pull together the different strands of Council work that impact on health and wellbeing. The Plan can be found at [www.stroud.gov.uk](http://www.stroud.gov.uk)

#### What we're doing next:

##### Targeted Health Activities

Healthy Lifestyles Scheme (HLS) is looking to expand its community offer in the next 12 months in the following areas:-

- Peri & Post Natal exercise classes. There currently is a limited supply of exercise classes for peri & post natal mothers in the Stroud area. We will be working closely with the local midwife team & health visitors to ensure the sessions are offered in place where there is the most needed & at an affordable price.
- Cardiac rehab (gym based). The HLS currently offer circuit-based cardiac rehab classes which are really popular, but with the age of people who are having cardiac events decreasing it is vital we respond to this trend. We will be establishing gym-based cardiac rehab classes at Stratford Park Leisure Centre in 2019. Participants who attend the gym will follow a tailor made gym programme and complete it under the instruction of a qualified cardiac instructor.
- Aqua Activity for Health class. The HLS currently offers swimming as part of the 12 week scheme but there is no water based class options. This class would be a 12 week block of classes, where by the patient would complete weekly aqua classes at Stratford Park Leisure Centre with the additional option of access to a wellbeing programme.

Our Active for Life Programme continues to go from strength to strength providing awareness and opportunities for people living within the Stroud district to participate in health and wellbeing activities

## Older Person's Housing

### Introduction:

We currently have around 720 units of sheltered accommodation for older people in our stock, and we're committed to delivering accommodation for older people which is fit for purpose and meets the diverse needs of an ageing population.

### Why we need to do it:

The number of people living in the Stroud district over the age of 60 is set to dramatically increase over the next 20 years. We recognise that the needs of older people vary, and that their needs continue to change through later life. We're therefore committed to providing a range of older person's accommodation which can meet these diverse needs, whilst enabling people to live as independently as possible in their home.

### What we've done:

The Sheltered Modernisation Project has delivered a number of changes to existing sheltered housing schemes which is starting to shape the Council's housing for older people, making them places where people want to live.

### How we do it:

The Council recognises that there are constraints on Social Care, and that as a landlord, we need to work in partnership with other bodies such as Gloucestershire County Council as the primary authority providing care services to older people. We are currently working closely with them on the Housing with Care Strategy, keen to play our vital role in providing good quality homes which meet the needs of our residents and reduce the likelihood of admissions to institutional care.

### What we're doing next:

We're currently developing an Older Person's Strategy, which will focus on our accommodation for older people, ensuring that it is suitable for current and future tenants. To do this, we will continue to invest in the modernisation of its sheltered housing schemes through the Sheltered Modernisation Project. We also hope to use some communal areas in these schemes to reduce social isolation by encouraging group activities in these spaces. All our assets will also be reviewed as part of the Older Person's Strategy to ensure that we are maximising the availability of accommodation which is suitable for older people.

## Housing- Related Support

### Helping People to Live Independently

The needs of our residents can go beyond the provision of a place to live; support is often required to allow people to remain in their own homes or to assist with specific problems they may face. We work closely with Gloucestershire County Council to help people to live independently in their own communities through the provision of community-based support. This can be either short-term to help people develop the skills and confidence to manage their own accommodation, or longer term where needed.

### Supported Housing

For people who are unable to live independently in the community, supported housing is available. This type of accommodation is able to offer intensive and specialist support to help people recover and move on to regain their independence.

### Young People

Supported accommodation is available specifically for young people to help them develop the independent living skills that they will need to be able to maintain their own accommodation in the future, and we currently have 47 units of this type of accommodation across three projects in the Stroud District. We also fund Gloucestershire Nightstop, who provide temporary, emergency accommodation for young people aged 16-25 who are either waiting for settled accommodation or may be in need of 'breathing space' as a result of problems at home.

### Entrenched Rough Sleepers

Individuals who have slept rough for a long time can be harder for services to help. They often mistrust support staff and may be reluctant to engage with services. On the street they risk being attacked, robbed, or becoming seriously ill. Many have complex needs or an addiction which they may not feel willing to tackle. We are part of the Gloucestershire Social Impact Bond project which is providing funding of over £1m to provide direct help to rough sleepers facing these problems. This help is provided by P3, a national charity.

### People Experiencing Domestic Abuse

County Council funding arrangements for domestic abuse services have changed from the provision of refuge accommodation across the county to a more support-based provision model. Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS) provides a range of specialist support including helping people to remain in their own homes should they wish and when it is safe to do so. We will continue to work closely with GDASS.

Currently the only refuge accommodation provision in the county is provided by the Stroud Beresford Group, who own and manage two refuges in the Stroud district. We work closely with the Stroud Beresford group, providing regular grant support and over the last five years we have successfully secured £267,000 through bid funding to support and expand the work of the Stroud Beresford Group.

To help provide additional accommodation we have worked closely with our district colleagues and GDASS to develop self-contained accommodation units across the county specifically for victims of domestic abuse. This followed a successful countywide bid for £500,000 government funding.

### **Sanctuary Scheme/Target hardening**

To support households to remain in their own home we work in partnership with district colleagues to fund a countywide scheme whereby properties are made more secure so that households experiencing domestic abuse can remain safely in their own homes.

### **Universal Credit**

Until now, only people making a new application for benefits in certain areas have been able to apply for Universal Credit. The next stage – ‘managed migration’ – will see those people currently receiving tax credits or benefit payments under the old system sent a letter telling them to reapply for these payments under Universal Credit. Each person will have to wait at least five weeks for the first payment and if the deadline for application is missed, payment may stop completely. We have specially trained staff who can help with budgeting advice for anyone concerned about Universal Credit or about managing their money during this transition.



Affordable flats under construction at Dursley, 2017



## Creating More Affordable Homes: Developing New Council Housing

### Introduction:

The delivery of our award-winning council homes programme is a key corporate priority for the Council. For the first time in over 30 years the Council set a five year programme to deliver 236 new homes and has, in the last the last four years, completed 228 new homes with a further 16 new homes currently under construction.

The Council was at its debt cap and unable to borrow further money for building. However, following the Government's announcement in the Autumn Statement of October 2018, we have been able to increase our borrowing 'headroom' to enable a further programme of new council homes to be delivered.

### Why we need to do it:

With a need for 446 new affordable homes in the Stroud district every year, we need to grasp every opportunity to increase affordable housing delivery.

### What we've done:

The delivery of 228 new homes over the last four years has been a great success as it has delivered much needed affordable housing across the district. The schemes have included a number of regeneration projects where non-traditionally built 'Woolaway' properties have been demolished and replaced, at increased density, with energy-efficient new homes.

The homes delivered include ex-warden accommodation on some of our sheltered schemes that have been converted from family houses to additional flats for older people.

Of the 228 new homes, 194 have been built for affordable rent with the remaining 34 developed for shared ownership. This enables first time buyers, who can't afford to buy a property outright on the open market, to purchase a share of their property with the opportunity to buy further shares as their circumstances change.

### How we do it:

A large proportion of the costs of the new homes are met from the Council's HRA capital programme. However, additional financial subsidy is always required to develop affordable homes. The subsidy for the rented homes is met from Right to Buy (RTB) receipts that the Council is able to retain in order to replace the homes sold. Grant funding for the shared ownership properties is sought from the Homes England (HE) 2016-21 grant programme.

We recognise that every new home is an opportunity to develop a property that has built-in flexibility to adapt for future needs, has a high standard of energy efficiency to address the government's Clean Growth Strategy, and makes allowance for future technologies.

The district has an ageing population and it is recognised that many older people will remain living in their existing properties rather than moving to more specialist housing. It is therefore important that our new homes are built to enable future adaptation if required.

In addition, changes in technology are moving at a fast pace and we want to ensure that technological infrastructure is included at the new build stage, where practical and financially viable to do so, rather than having to retrofit items at a later stage.

### **What we're doing next:**

Following the lifting of the Government's borrowing cap a further programme of schemes is being developed to provide additional new council homes. The budget for this has been included in the Council's future budget-setting process.

A major challenge for the development of further new homes is the availability of land, as the majority of suitable sites within the Council's landholdings have already been developed. As a result, we will need to consider purchasing suitable sites from the open market.

Our current build specification will be reviewed for the next programme of schemes to ensure that it continues to take on board any changes in legislation, good practice and innovation.



Pre-fabricated bungalow, Leonard Stanley

## Creating more affordable homes: Housing Enabling

### Introduction:

We don't just build houses ourselves. We work to facilitate, enable and support new affordable homes to be built by a range of our partners in order to make a real difference to people's lives. New and existing partnerships are an essential part of bringing forward new affordable homes and we are always looking for new ways to achieve our aims and accomplish more together by sharing knowledge, experience and opportunity. Over the last five years we've delivered an average of 120 new homes through these routes.

**Why we need to do it:** There are 6614 affordable homes in total throughout the district. The Housing Market Assessment of 2015 showed that we need a further 446 new affordable homes a year just to keep up with demand. There is no single solution to meet this need this as planning policies alone cannot deliver the homes we need.

In a high value area like Stroud it can be difficult for employers to recruit staff to local businesses and services such as schools, care homes, restaurants, pubs, shops and leisure centres because employees on low incomes cannot afford to buy or rent housing locally on the open market. Workers are unlikely to commute long distances to undertake low paid work and this problem is particularly acute in the care sector. With an ageing population locally, there is an increasing lack of care provision in rural areas where workers cannot afford to live locally.

Many households want to stay in the rural communities where they were brought up or lived and worked for a long time, but they are often left with no choice but to move away. Just over 45% of those living in rural areas are aged below 45 years, compared with almost 60% in urban areas. As young people and families move out, the character of a rural village can change dramatically and local services such as shops and schools may be forced to close. This lack of affordable housing also has a knock-on effect on the ability of local employers to recruit and retain staff, impacting on businesses, services and the local economy.

Affordable housing provided in the right areas supports the local economy and helps sustain essential local services.

Young people are can be marginalised by the housing system and are more susceptible to the impact that inappropriate housing can have on their lives. A combination of low wages, insecure employment and national housing policy has led to limited availability of affordable and suitable housing for young people in the district. In this era of "generation rent", huge numbers of young people are locked out of home ownership and face limited access to declining numbers of affordable homes for rent. As a consequence, young people are living with relatives and friends for longer than either party would wish, and many are forced out of the area they grew up in order to find housing they can afford.

**What we've done:** We have a good track record of working in partnership with our Housing Association and community partners and together we have brought forward an average of 120 new affordable each year over the last five years. There are 168 affordable homes currently under construction and an estimated 260 affordable homes with planning permission that should come forward over the next 3 years.

**How we do it:** National planning policy allows for local planning policies to be put in place which seek a percentage of affordable housing on housing developments and in the district's case we seek 30% to be affordable housing. However, national planning policy also allows for this to be reduced in some circumstances, including where there is an existing building on the site, or where sites are under a certain size. In addition, in some circumstances developers are able to argue that the cost of providing affordable housing would make their development unviable and as a result, demonstrate that they are unable to deliver some or all of the affordable homes.

**What we're doing next:** The emerging Local Plan review gives us an opportunity to retain affordable housing policies that are working well, and examine options to deliver more affordable homes through the planning system. For example, we will assess whether a 'single plot exceptions policy' to allow single, affordable self-build plots on the edge of rural settlements would be feasible. We will also look at the opportunities to maximise affordable housing delivery through the Government's new 'entry-level exception site' policy which is aimed at first time buyers.



Coldwell Lane Rural Affordable Housing, Kings Stanley

## Creating More Affordable Homes - Self- Build

**Introduction:** Many other countries have a track record of delivering large numbers of local homes through self- or custom-build. The Government has an aspiration to help increase housing supply by doubling the number of custom and self-build homes by 2020.

**Why we need to do it:** From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 Councils have had a duty to keep a register of aspiring self and custom builders. The Housing and Planning Bill requires authorities to ensure that the number of planning consents for serviced plots for self and custom build projects match local demand on the register.

**How we do it:** The 2016 Stroud District Local Plan introduced a new policy to seek 2% of plots on allocated housing sites as serviced self-build plots. The first of these plots will be made available on the 'West of Stonehouse' site.

**What we're doing next:** As part of the Local Plan Review, we will be seeking to increase the delivery of self and custom built homes to meet needs identified on the Self and Custom Build Register. This will be through a combination of site allocations, proportionate development on Local Plan housing sites and rural exception sites. We are considering a 'single plot' exceptions policy in order to meet need for plots in rural areas and will be producing a supplementary planning document specifically for self-build.



Lynch Road, Berkeley Rural Exception site under construction 2016

## Creating More Affordable Homes - Rural and Community Housing

**Introduction:** Parts of the district can have particular problems with affordability and access to suitable housing options, especially our more rural areas. As a result, we place a particular emphasis on support for rural areas, and as a result have a strong track record of delivery new affordable homes in rural parishes.

A newly emerging approach to local affordable housing delivery is the community-led housing approach. Community-led housing projects are led by community groups determined to make sure that new affordable homes are built, or empty homes and buildings brought back into use to meet local housing needs.

**Why we need to do it:** In many rural areas, younger people, those on low incomes or older people seeking options to downsize can find it impossible to access suitable housing options. As a result, some rural parishes are in danger of becoming solely the residence of the elderly and wealthy, with the related depletion of shops, schools and services.

**What we've done:** In the last five years we have enabled the development of 77 affordable homes on rural sites in the district and there are a further 40 in the pipeline. We also donated an underused garage site in Nailsworth to Nailsworth Community Land Trust to develop 10 new affordable homes for local people.

**How we do it:** National planning legislation allows for Councils to adopt 'rural exceptions' planning policies, which allow very limited development of affordable housing schemes to take place outside the normal settlement boundary.

The Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership is a consortium of the rural districts councils of Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council and Registered Providers (housing associations). Together we fund a 'Rural Housing Enabler' to work with Parish Councils on examining local housing need and bringing forward rural exceptions sites to meet that need.

In 2017 we were awarded funds from DCLG's 'Community Housing Fund' which we have used to support the employment of a Community Housing Enabler by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council. The Community Housing Enabler provides dedicated support to community groups looking to explore options to deliver community-led housing in their local area.

**What we're doing next:** Sometimes unmet housing need isn't apparent to all parts of a community. We'd like to find more ways to encourage communities to consider how they could play a part in examining and meeting local housing needs. We also want to focus our work on rural parishes in places where parish councils haven't yet carried out a housing needs survey of their local area.

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>HOUSING COMMITTEE ESTIMATES – REVISED 2018/19 AND ORIGINAL 2019/20 AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2018/19 – 2022/23</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To present to the committee the revised estimates for 2018/19 and the original estimates for 2019/20
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<p><b>The Committee RECOMMENDS to Strategy &amp; Resources that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The revised General Fund Housing revenue budget for 2018/19 and original budget 2019/20 are approved</li> <li>(2) The revised HRA revenue budget for 2018/19 and original budget 2019/20 are approved</li> <li>(3) The movement to and from HRA balances and capital reserves as detailed in Appendix B and section 11 are approved</li> <li>(4) That from 1 April 2019: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Social rents and affordable rents are decreased by 1%, as calculated in accordance with legislation</li> <li>ii) Garage rents are increased by 2.4%</li> <li>iii) Landlord service charges are increased by 2.4%, except district heating charges which are increased by 14%, capped at £1 per week</li> </ul> <p>As detailed in Appendix A</p> </li> <li>(5) That provision for repayment of HRA borrowing is made on an annual basis, with flexibility retained for this to be made from revenue, the Major Repairs Reserve, capital receipts, or any combination of these</li> <li>(6) That the General Fund Housing Capital Programme, as detailed in Section 4, be included in the Council's Capital Programme</li> <li>(7) That the HRA Capital Programme for 2018/19 to 2022/23, as detailed in Appendix C, be included in the Council's Capital Programme.</li> </ul>

<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Budget holders and senior managers
<b>Financial Implications and Risk Assessment</b>	<p>The report sets out the medium term financial forecast for the HRA over the next 4 years. Revenue and Capital budgets have been reviewed in detail for 2018/19 and 2019/20, although further work will need to be undertaken on the Major Works capital schemes over the medium term plan period.</p> <p>The MTFP aims to maintain minimum balances of £1.5m over the medium term. The overall level of expenditure across the HRA is increasing from £20.8m to £23.8m, with rental income projected to increase from 2020/21 as social housing rent can increase by CPI +1% for a five year period.</p> <p>The report sets out two important changes to the approach around HRA borrowing and financing. Firstly, this report includes a preferred option on making provision for the repayment of HRA borrowing (paragraph 10.3 to 10.16) on an annual basis. Secondly, the removal of the HRA borrowing cap in October 2018 (paragraphs 10.17 to 10.19) does allow for HRA to fund elements of the New Homes and Regeneration Programme.</p> <p>A number of risks and uncertainties remain with the MTFP forecasts, and these are set out in paragraphs 14.1 to 14.6 in the report.</p> <p>David Stanley – Accountancy Manager Tel: 01453 754100 Email: <a href="mailto:david.stanley@stroud.gov.uk">david.stanley@stroud.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Legal Implications</b>	<p>This report forms part of the budget setting process for 2019/20 which involves the Council calculating estimated expenditure and income which will be charged / allocated to its Housing Revenue Account.</p> <p>Recommendations on rent levels take account of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 requirement of the Council to reduce social housing rents payable by individual tenants by 1% each year from 2016 to 2019.</p> <p>This committee needs to be satisfied the proposed recommendations are appropriate, in reliance on professional financial advice.</p> <p>Nicola Swan, Interim Head of Legal &amp; Monitoring Officer Tel: 01453 754369 Email: <a href="mailto:nicola.swan@stroud.gov.uk">nicola.swan@stroud.gov.uk</a></p>



<b>Report Author</b>	Lucy Clothier, Principal Accountant Tel: 01453 754343 Email: <a href="mailto:lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk">lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk</a>
<b>Options</b>	a) Reduce or increase capital and revenue expenditure b) Reduce dwelling rents c) Reduce or increase landlord service charges
<b>Performance Management Follow Up</b>	Budget Monitoring report to Housing Committee in April 2019 Outturn report to Strategy and Resources in May 2019 and Housing Committee in June 2019
<b>Background Papers/ Appendices</b>	A – Rents and Service Charges B – MTFP and reserves position C – Capital Programme and funding

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The Budget Strategy report to Strategy and Resources Committee in October 2018 set out the way in which the Council would approach setting budgets for the forthcoming financial year.
- 1.2 It would be helpful where members have questions on matters of detail if they could be referred to the report author or the appropriate service manager before the meeting.

## 2. Summary

- 2.1 This report updates Members on the draft General Fund Housing and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budgets for 2019/20, and the revised budgets for 2018/19.

### 2.2 General Fund Housing

A proposed increase of £45k would bring the total General Fund housing revenue budget to £552k in 2018/19. The proposed original budget for 2019/20 is £540k.

- 2.3 The capital budget is proposed to increase to £1,179k in 2018/19 and £1,530k in 2019/20.

### 2.4 Housing Revenue Account

A reduction in overall budget of £644k in 2018/19 (revised) will allow a return to HRA general reserves of £519k, with a transfer to HRA general reserves of £102k included in the draft budget for 2019/20.

- 2.5 It is proposed that weekly rents reduce by 1%, with most other charges rising with inflation.
- 2.6 The HRA now has the ability for prudential borrowing which has allowed a refreshed new build programme to be included in the budget proposal.
- 2.7 The HRA has a balanced position forecasted over the medium term, and it is proposed that an ongoing provision is made for the long term repayment of HRA borrowing.

### 3. General Fund Housing

- 3.1 Members will be aware from both the 2018/19 budget and MTFP (approved in January 2018) and the Budget Strategy reports, the Council is facing a number of financial challenges in 2019/20 and future years. A budget deficit has been forecast in the latter part of the medium term due to anticipated reductions in the level of government funding, and inflationary and cost pressures across the Council's services. The service committee's revenue budgets have been prepared in accordance with the budget framework set out in the Budget Strategy report.
- 3.2 The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) report to Strategy and Resources will set out a projection of General Fund Expenditure over the medium term 2019/20 to 2022/23.
- 3.3 The original budget for General Fund Housing was £503k, although this was already revised to £507k in the Outturn 2017/18 Report.
- 3.4 It is proposed that the 2018/19 budget be revised to £552k, and the 2019/20 base budget be set at £540k.
- 3.5 Pay inflation of 2% has been included across the General Fund.
- 3.6 Below is a summary for each service

Table 1: Summary of General Fund Housing

	<b>2018/19 Original Estimate (£'000)</b>	<b>2018/19 Revised Estimate (£'000)</b>	<b>2019/20 Original Estimate (£'000)</b>
Homelessness	261	263	246
Housing Strategy	90	136	138
Private Housing	152	153	156
<b>Total Housing (General Fund)</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>540</b>

#### 3.7 Homelessness

The budget for Bed and Breakfast has been increased to recognise the higher need for temporary accommodation. The gross expenditure budget has increased from £50k to £200k. Housing Benefit would be claimable in most cases, however, benefit would not be fully reclaimable from Central Government (since the cost of bed and breakfast or temporary accommodation is largely higher than the limit on Housing Benefit). Therefore a net increase of £50k has been included in the budget.

The budget has also been changed to reflect the Government grants that have been confirmed for 2019/20. As previously reported these grants are supporting additional posts within the service, and are also contributing towards the cost of temporary accommodation. Should these not be fully spent in year it would be recommended that any balance, subject to the overall General Fund position, be transferred to the Homelessness earmarked reserve.

### 3.8 Housing Strategy

An ongoing virement into Housing Strategy of £45k is proposed, to come from savings in other areas of the General Fund.

This funding would be used to sustain specialist housing delivery and related support. As an example of housing based support, alongside the other Gloucestershire Authorities SDC currently part-funds a county-wide contract for supporting rough sleepers to move towards more permanent and settled lifestyles. In addition SDC also provides some funding for housing-based solutions to support the victims of domestic abuse. Neither of these contracts currently has an identified budget and are funded through ad hoc savings made from within existing budgets.

### 3.9 Private Sector Housing

There are no significant changes to the Private Sector Housing revenue budgets.

## 4. **General Fund Housing Capital**

4.1 The original capital programme budget was £449k, but this was revised to £619k in May 2018.

4.2 The proposed revised budget for 2018/19 is now £1,179k, with the increase being funded from external grant income.

4.3 The proposed original budget for 2019/20 is £1,530k.

Table 2: General Fund Housing Capital Programme

	<b>2018/19 Original Estimate (£'000)</b>	<b>2018/19 Revised Estimate (£'000)</b>	<b>2019/20 Original Estimate (£'000)</b>
Affordable Housing Capital Programme	119	149	
Disabled Facilities Grants	330	330	330
Warm Homes Fund		500	1,000
CCG Health through Warmth Grants		200	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>1,179</b>	<b>1,530</b>

4.4 Further detail of the revised budgets are below.

4.5 Affordable Housing Capital Programme – this is funding to provide occasional grant assistance to Housing Associations. Any remaining budget from 2018/19 will be carried forward into 2019/20.

4.6 Warm Homes Fund – this is funding for central heating systems in households across Gloucestershire, for which SDC is leading. It is externally funded by National Grid, through Affordable Homes Solutions.

It is possible to access some of this funding in the HRA, and should this happen, the spend and grant income would be reflected in the HRA rather than the General Fund.

4.7 Health through Warmth Grants – this is funded by the CCG and like warm homes covers the whole county. The funding for the Health through Warmth is predominantly used for insulation and heating systems to increase thermal efficiency in homes of people with cold or damp related health issues. Where possible this used in conjunction with the Warm Homes funding.

4.8 Should any of the externally funded grant payments change, the capital spend will need to change accordingly to prevent leaving the Council with unfunded capital spend.

## 5. Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

5.1 The MTFP proposes a revised revenue expenditure of £20,756k for 2018/19, funded by income of £22,769k, with transfers to reserves of £2,043k, of which £1,494k is to earmarked reserves.

5.2 The proposed budget for 2019/20 includes expenditure of £22,518k, funded by £22,394k, with a net transfer from reserves of £124k.

Table 3: HRA MTFP Summary

	2018/19 Base £000s	2018/19 Revised £000s	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	2021/22 £000s	2022/23 £000s
Dwelling Rents	(20,829)	(21,078)	(20,816)	(20,987)	(21,506)	(22,184)
Other Income	(1,706)	(1,691)	(1,578)	(1,580)	(1,593)	(1,616)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(22,535)</b>	<b>(22,769)</b>	<b>(22,394)</b>	<b>(22,567)</b>	<b>(23,099)</b>	<b>(23,800)</b>
Expenditure	22,710	20,756	22,518	22,650	24,384	23,779
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>22,710</b>	<b>20,756</b>	<b>22,518</b>	<b>22,650</b>	<b>24,384</b>	<b>23,779</b>
Transfers to/(from) EMR	(50)	1,494	(226)	604	(1,847)	(309)
<b>Transfer to/(from) HRA General Reserves</b>	<b>(125)</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>(687)</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>330</b>
<b>HRA General Reserves Balance c/f</b>	<b>2,878</b>	<b>3,522</b>	<b>3,624</b>	<b>2,937</b>	<b>3,499</b>	<b>3,829</b>

5.3 A more detailed analysis of the HRA MTFP can be found in Appendix B.

5.4 The budget proposal includes a number of changes from the 2018/19 base budget. A summary of the significant changes can be found in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Summary of proposed budget changes

Service Area	Para	2018/19 (revised) £000s	2019/20 (base) £000s
Transfer (to)/from HRA reserves – 2018/19 base budget		125	125
Rents and service charges update	6	(316)	342
Rents – 53 week rent year	6.3	-	(411)
Provision for bad debt	6.11	(120)	(120)
Pay Inflation	7.1	-	70
Non pay inflation	7.2, 7.3	-	152
Vacancy Savings	8.3	(144)	-
Contingency	9.2	(86)	(186)
Sheltered Housing	8.4	(180)	(127)
Project Costs	8.6	-	70
Contribution to Sheltered Modernisation EMR	11.2	-	(390)
Contribution to Estates EMR	11.2	-	(820)
Insurance Costs	9.6	(59)	(114)
Interest Costs	9.7	(93)	(134)
Depreciation	9.8	350	469
Pension lump sum	9.9	-	72
Provision towards repaying debt	10.15		900
Other minor changes (net)		4	0
<b>Final position – transfer (to)/from HRA reserves</b>		<b>(519)</b>	<b>(102)</b>

## 6. Proposed Rent and Service Charges 2019/20

6.1 Appendix A sets out the proposed increases in fees and charges.

### 6.2 Dwelling Rents

2019/20 is the final year of the four year rent reduction as set out in the Housing and Planning Act. It is therefore proposed that all social and affordable rents are decreased by 1% in line with the legislation. This reduces the average rent from £81.96 per week to £81.14 per week, a decrease of 82p per week.

6.3 Although weekly rents will decrease by 1%, 2019/20 is a 53 week year. This happens every five or six years when there are 53 Mondays during the financial year, and so 53 weekly payments due during the year. Therefore, although weekly rents are lower, tenants who choose to pay monthly will see a small increase in their payments. For the average rent this equates to a monthly increase of £3.22, or 0.9%.

6.4 Members could choose to reduce rents by more than 1%. Each additional 0.5% reduction would reduce the average weekly rent for tenants by £0.41 per week, or £21.32 per year (for a standard 52 week year), and decrease dwelling rent income to the HRA by approximately £104k per year. If Members chose to implement a further reductions, the corresponding amount would need to be funded from reductions in existing services.

6.5 On becoming vacant, dwellings at social rent are being relet at the Target Rent, a national rent calculation for social housing which is designed to give fair and consistent rents across all local authority and housing association stock. Currently 83% of tenants have rents below the Target Rent (a decrease from 88% last year). Of those, the average difference is £1.79 per week. This is equivalent to loss of income of approximately £440k per year. This figure will reduce as dwellings become void and are relet, but as existing tenancies will be unaffected it will be a very gradual change. Members could choose to implement Social Rents at above Target Rent on relet (up to 5% on General Needs and 10% on Sheltered properties), but this is not being proposed at this time.

6.6 Shared ownership rents are to increase by the inflationary uplifts set out in each lease.

6.7 Garage rents and service charges

Garage rents and service charges are recommended to increase by 2.4% (September Customer Price Index – CPI), with the exception of district heating charges. This is for the five sheltered schemes with a communal boiler that serves all of the dwellings in the scheme. As an authority our gas prices have increased by 14%, and it is proposed that this increase is passed on to tenants, as it would if they were charged directly from the utility provider. However, as this is a large increase, any increase would be capped at £1 per week and so no tenant will see an increase higher than this.

6.8 A review of landlord services is being undertaken by Tenant Services, and will initially report to Housing Committee in April 2019.

6.9 Void assumptions

Void levels are currently assumed to be 2% for General Needs properties and 5% for Sheltered. This is higher than is being experienced and so this will drop to 1% for General Needs for two years.

6.10 Additional income of £316k is forecast in 2018/19, largely due to this lower void level and so the budget will be revised in line with this.

6.11 Provision for bad debt

Assumptions around non payment of rents and charges have been set at a higher level for 2018/19 and the following two years. This was to make an allowance for the anticipated impact of Universal Credit. As a full roll out is not expected to take place before 2023, it is proposed that the provision made for bad debt is reduced from £200k to £80k for both 2018/19 (revised), and 2019/20. The higher level of £200k will still be included over the medium term, but pushed back to reflect the later date of implementation.

**7. Pay and Price Inflation**

7.1 In line with the Budget Strategy, future years pay inflation has been provided for in the MTFP at a rate of 2%.

- 7.2 Provision has been made for non pay inflation for major contracts at a rate of 3%.
- 7.3 Utility budgets have been increased in line with contractual increases.

## **8. Service Changes**

- 8.1 Significant work has been undertaken across the housing service to realign the budgets for both 2018/19 and 2019/20. These changes are not to change the service being provided, but rather to align the budget to the current service level. Going forward it is likely that further revision will be required, but this represents a big step towards having the right information on which to make financial decisions.
- 8.2 A summary of the key changes are below:
- 8.3 Vacancy savings – savings of £144k across supervision and management are expected in 2018/19 and so it is proposed to return these saving to reserves. This figure could change over the year as posts are filled or new ones become vacant, and this transfer will not prevent vacancies being filled during the remainder of the year.
- 8.4 Sheltered Housing – ongoing savings of £127k are identified, largely due to reducing staffing levels and costs associated with the closure of schemes identified as red in the sheltered modernisation programme. There are also additional savings in 2018/19 with the inclusion of vacancy savings in year.
- 8.5 Tenancy management – by reviewing budgets across Tenancy Management, the opportunity has arisen to redirect funding towards a new Sustaining Tenancies budget of £25k. By working in collaboration with a wide range of organisations, this budget would be used to deliver services and solutions to help and support new and vulnerable tenants for the common good - sustaining tenancies.
- 8.6 Repairs and maintenance – maintenance budgets have been realigned, but there are no material changes overall. An additional cost of £70k has been identified in 2019/20 to bring in expertise on the project looking at options for delivery of responsive maintenance from 2020.

## **9. Central Changes**

- 9.1 A number of changes are proposed to central budgets:
- 9.2 Contingency – The base budget includes a £50k general contingency and a £135k staffing contingency. Neither contingency has been used in the last three years. It is therefore proposed that these revenue contingencies cease, with a transfer in 2018/19 to a new General Contingency HRA earmarked reserve (EMR) of £100k. This new EMR could be accessed by senior management within Housing, should the need arise (in line with the current contingency budget). Any use of the EMR would be reported to Housing Committee in the next Budget Monitoring report.
- 9.3 There is already a Staffing EMR of £250k and so no further transfer is necessary.

- 9.4 No transfer to either reserve has been included in the base budget for 2019/20, but should either EMR be used, a transfer would be made from revenue, as part of the budget setting process, when funds are available.
- 9.5 Further information on the EMRs held by the HRA are included in section 11.
- 9.6 Insurance – the cost of insurance has reduced from the start of a new contract in October 2018. This has led to expected savings of £59k in 2018/19 and £114k in 2019/20 budget, when compared to the base budget for 2018/19.
- 9.7 Interest costs – by utilising the reserves held by the HRA, we are able to internally borrow, which means that external interest is not payable on this amount. As reserves are effectively offset, it means that investment income is no longer receivable on the full balance, but the amount lost in investment income would be lower than the amount saved by not paying interest.
- 9.8 Depreciation – depreciation charges have been reset, and are expected to be higher than previously budgeted. Although a ‘cost’ to the HRA, the depreciation charge is transferred to the Major Repairs Reserve to finance the capital programme and so this higher charge in year will be used to fund major works capital spend.
- 9.9 Pension lump sum – in line with the triennial review, the contribution towards the past pension cost lump sum has increased.

## **10. HRA Borrowing and Provision for Repayment of Debt**

### **10.1 Current borrowing position**

Total borrowing for the HRA is £102.5m. Loans totalling £97.7m held by the HRA are due for repayment between 2032 and 2066. A £2m loan is due for repayment in early 2019 and it is expected that this will be internally borrowed initially, bringing the total internally borrowed balance to £4.8m.

- 10.2 By internally borrowing this balance, a saving can be made on interest payable. Since balances would not be as high, some investment income is lost, but the net position is positive as the interest rates on borrowing are higher.

### **10.3 Repayment of debt**

Unlike the General Fund, the HRA doesn't have to make a specific annual contribution towards repaying debt through Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP).

- 10.4 At the start of self financing it was forecasted that reserves would be enough to repay any borrowing when it was due, and so annual contributions were not needed. Since 2012 the national picture has changed significantly, and reserves are not now expected to be high enough.



10.5 Therefore it would now be prudent to start making an annual provision - putting money aside to repay the loans, where possible, when they are due.

10.6 As there is no 'minimum' payment that needs to be made, the amount put aside can be flexible, and Members should be minded to weigh up the cost vs benefits for both current and future tenants.

#### 10.7 Proposed Options

Although there are unlimited options available for the repayment of debt, this report will focus on three of the options:

##### 1. Repay borrowing over 48 years

This option has been chosen as it is broadly in line with the original self financing plan, which would have repaid the debt in 49 years (from 2012) and also this option would repay approximately half of the debt over the next 30 years.

By putting aside £1.3m in 2019/20, which then would rise in line with inflation each year (ie in line with rental income), all of the £102.48m would be repaid in 48 years.

##### 2. Repay borrowing over 60 years

This option recognises that the financial position of the HRA is not as strong as it was at self financing and so pushes the repayment of debt out to 60 years.

Starting with a provision of £0.9m, and again increasing with inflation each year, the borrowing would be repaid over 60 years.

##### 3. Make no provision

This option would not make any repayment of borrowing, and as loans become due for repayment, they would need to be refinanced.

Note: these options would relate to the existing debt only, with any new borrowing being considered separately (paras 10.19 and 17.5)

10.8 Although putting aside additional funding to repay debt on top of paying the interest increases the overall cost to the HRA in earlier years, as borrowing is repaid interest costs will reduce and so over the longer term the cost evens out. By the end of the 30 year period the total amount being paid is actually forecasted to be lower than if interest alone was being paid.

10.9 The below table shows the total cost of the borrowing (interest costs plus the provision for repayment of debt) over the three options

Table 5: Total revenue cost of borrowing

	Total Revenue Cost		
	5 years £m	30 years £m	60 years £m
1 - repay borrowing over 48 years	24.0	142.5	210.9
2 - repay over 60 years	22.1	129.4	243.3
3 - no provision	17.8	113.7	259.5

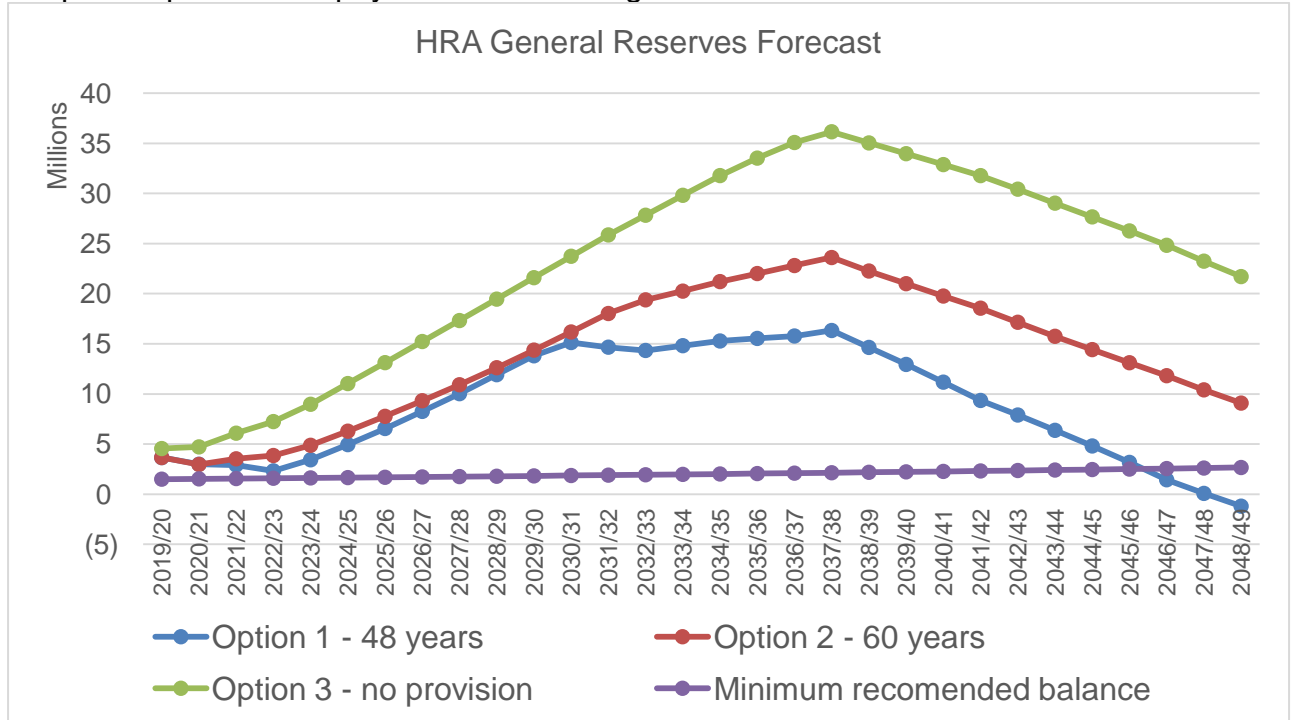
10.10 As provision is made, it is effectively put in the bank and saved up ready and waiting for the loans to be repaid. As the loans taken out have fixed redemption dates, it is unlikely that the loans will be repaid early as the penalties would be high, however this would be regularly reviewed as part of the standard treasury management process. Even though provision will build up, it is likely that under any option some loans would need to be refinanced (as the repayment profile would be different). Clearly the higher the provision made, the fewer loans would need to be refinanced, but any refinancing, although likely to be at higher rates than the current borrowing which was at preferential rates as part of self financing, could be over a shorter period and so interest would only be payable for a short additional period.

10.11 If no provision is made, all borrowing would need to be refinanced, leaving the HRA open to a higher level of interest rate risk.

10.12 In the HRA this provision doesn't have to come directly from revenue funding, it could also come from the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR), which is funded from depreciation and used to fund the capital programme, or from capital receipts. The overall cost remains the same, but being flexible in the way that it is funded means that the most beneficial option can be selected each year.

10.13 The below graph shows the impact on HRA general reserves over the 30 year period for each of the options.

Graph 1: Options for repayment of borrowing



10.14 As is clear from the graph, with the current position both option 2 (60 years) and option 3 (no repayment) are affordable, but option 1 (48 years) is not affordable without finding savings across the service.

10.15 The recommended option is therefore Option 2 – Repay borrowing over 60 years, with this to be funded flexibly between revenue, the MRR, or from capital receipts. In 2019/20 the first payment of £0.9m has been included in the MTFP as being financed from revenue funding.

10.16 This provision should be reviewed regularly, and should the overall financial position improve, the amount put aside for the repayment of debt could increase, and if for any reason it needs to be reduced for a period, for instance if rents are further reduced, it could be considered as an option.

10.17 HRA Debt Cap

The Autumn Budget confirmed the end of the HRA debt cap, and now means that the HRA comes under the same prudential borrowing rules as the General Fund. This means that the HRA can now borrow, providing that it is ‘affordable’.

10.18 This announcement has superseded the Additional Borrowing Bid and so all schemes included in the bid have been added to the capital programme. Further borrowing is planned for completion of the Glebelands (Sheltered Modernisation red scheme) site, as well as an opportunity land acquisition pot. Further details of the schemes can be found in section 17.

10.19 As the borrowing for these schemes will be financed from the rental income from the housing that is built, it is proposed that the borrowing be paid back over 30 years. This will allow the borrowing to be repaid without needing additional subsidy (other than the capital receipts as stated in the Additional Borrowing Bid), and so won't affect services provided to current tenants. Any provision for repayment of this additional borrowing will be on top of the provision made for existing debt, as set out in paragraphs 10.3 to 10.16.

## 11. Earmarked Reserves

11.1 The below table shows a summary of the earmarked reserves held in the HRA. This includes the proposed transfer of £100k to an HRA General Contingency EMR as set out in paragraph 9.2.

Table 6: HRA Earmarked Reserves

Earmarked Reserve	2018/19				2019/20			
	Opening balance £000s	Transfers out £000s	Transfers in £000s	Closing balance £000s	Opening balance £000s	Transfers out £000s	Transfers in £000s	Closing balance £000s
Sheltered Modernisation	1,976	(816)	1,390	2,550	2,550	(1,226)	1,000	2,324
Estate Redevelopment	350	0	820	1,170	1,170	0	0	1,170
Staffing	250	0	0	250	250	0	0	250
HRA General Contingency	0	0	100	100	100	0	0	100
	<b>2,576</b>	<b>(816)</b>	<b>2,310</b>	<b>4,070</b>	<b>4,070</b>	<b>(1,226)</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>3,844</b>

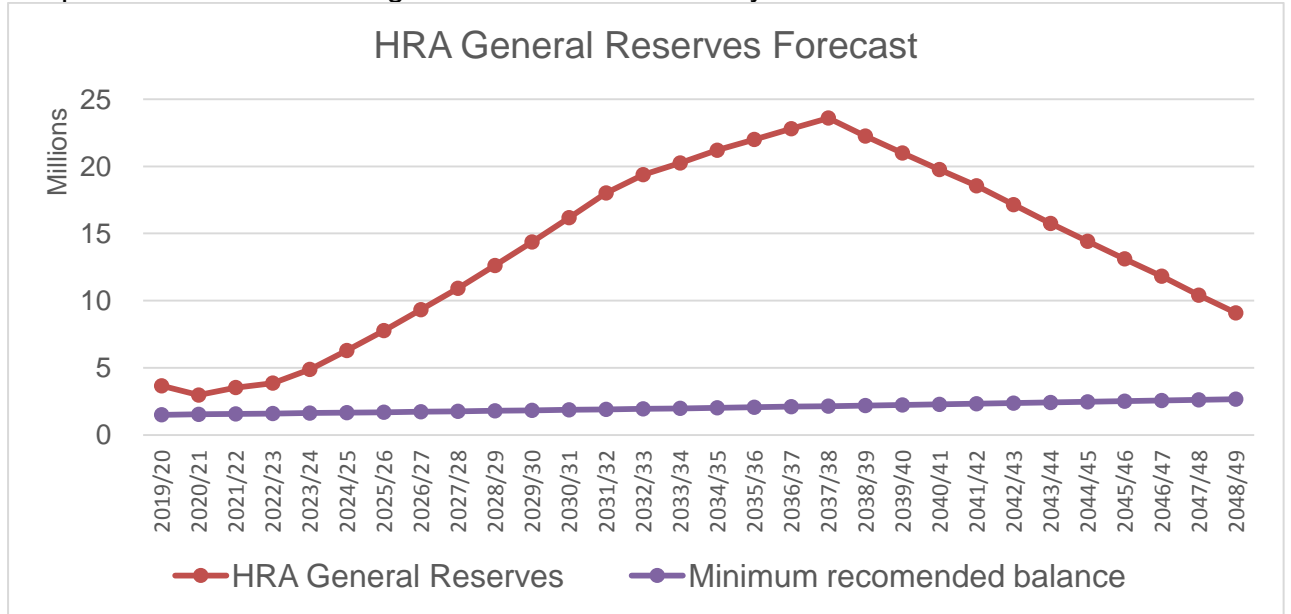
11.2 Transfers to the Sheltered Housing and Estate EMRs are in line with previous assumptions.

11.3 The transfers from the Sheltered Modernisation are in line with current forecasts of spend.

## 12. HRA Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and 30 Year Position

12.1 With the changes proposed in this report the HRA is forecasted to have a balanced position across the full 30 year period.

Graph 2: Forecast of HRA general reserves over 30 years



### 13. Material Assumptions Made in the HRA MTFP

13.1 The MTFP forecast is made under a number of assumption. The main ones of note are summarised below:

- Rents are decreased by 1% across all social and affordable rented housing stock up to 2020. Rents will then rise by CPI+1% for five years, then CPI only.
- Void levels of 2% in general needs (after a two year period of 1% as detailed in paragraph 6.9), and 5% in sheltered housing properties are assumed (in schemes not affected by the Sheltered Housing Modernisation Programme).
- Inflation of 2% has been assumed across rents and contract inflation.
- 30 Right to Buy sales a year have been assumed in terms of rent loss
- HRA balances will be maintained at a minimum of £1.5m (rising with inflation) over the MTFP period in order provide resilience against the negative financial impact of future legislative changes.

### 14. Risks and Uncertainties

14.1 Although some previous risks have now been removed, such as the Higher Value Asset Levy, the HRA still faces a number of risks and uncertainties over the medium to long term.

These include:

14.2 Capital receipts – the MTFP includes the use of capital receipts to fund the New Build and Development Programme and the Sheltered Housing Modernisation. Should these assets not be sold, or sold for a lower price than expected, alternative funding would need to be allocated for the schemes to progress as planned. However, should a higher capital

receipt be achieved, this would provide additional funding for other projects.

- 14.3 Right to Buy Receipts – The ability to borrow has greatly changed the forecasted position on the use of Right to Buy (RTB) receipts. However, although the new programme as indicatively shown in section 17 is in part funded from RTB receipts, there is still a risk that the programme could slip, or some schemes may not be possible to deliver and so because of changes to timing, receipts would need to be repaid.

There is also a potential risk that the receipts may not be sufficient to fund the capital programme. If this were to happen, alternative funding would need to be found.

- 14.4 Interest Rates - the HRA is largely sheltered from interest rate changes in the medium term as all of the current borrowing is at fixed interest rates. As loans become repayable, advice will be sought from our treasury advisors on the most advantageous approach to refinancing.
- 14.5 Stock Condition – the information held on the condition of the stock continues to grow, with data being collected regularly. As more data is collected, the longer term forecasts are revised and could mean that more, or less, spend is required compared to the current forecast.
- 14.6 Internal Council Changes – Any major changes to the Council could impact on the HRA medium/long term position.

## **15. Capital Programme**

- 15.1 A revised programme of £10.153m in 2018/19 is proposed, followed by an increased budget of £14.753m in 2019/20. The total indicative spend over the five year capital programme is £56.514m, however this is subject to change as schemes are worked up.
- 15.2 A full breakdown of the capital programme and funding can be found in Appendix C.

## **16. Major Works**

- 16.1 It is proposed that the base budget for 2018/19 is revised from £6.657m to £8.124m. This will allow slipped works from last year to take place in areas such as door entry, external works and doors and windows, on top of the 2018/19 programme. There is also a pressure on major voids due to a number of properties being carried forward to this year because of the change in provider, as reported in the Outturn report which came to Housing Committee in June 2018.
- 16.2 The proposed budget for 2019/20 remains high at £8.549m. This includes an inflationary uplift of 3%. Note: the budgets for both Environmental Works and Non Traditional Properties have been combined with External Works.
- 16.3 The programming of works for 2019/20 is already well underway which allows greater certainty over the deliverability of the work streams. However, even with a fully planned programme there will always be some element of variation due to unknown void costs, tenant refusals, adverse weather and further stock condition data being known.

- 16.4 With the major maintenance contracts coming to an end in 2020, it is prudently being planned that fewer works would be completed in that year. Work is already underway to determine the most beneficial way of delivering maintenance across the service.
- 16.5 As the works are not yet programmed after 2019/20, the Capital Programme is condensed to show all capital major works on one line. This will be expanded on each year to show the full programme when it is in place, with future years also being reprofiled.

## **17. New Homes and Regeneration Programme**

- 17.1 With the confirmation that the HRA is able to borrow (paragraph 10.17) the New Homes Programme has expanded over the medium term.
- 17.2 The schemes in the additional borrowing bid have all been included in the programme, along with funding for Bradley Street and Gloucester Street in Wotton under Edge, the full completion of Glebelands (the Sheltered Modernisation programme only included part of the build, with the remainder of the site to be passed to a Registered Provider), and also an Opportunity Land Acquisition Pot.
- 17.3 As there is now very little developable land left, in order to continue building new homes, further land will need to be purchased. A £3.000m budget has been included in the 2019/20 capital budget which would allow site/s to be purchased should any site/s of interest become available. As this is very much an opportunistic pot, there is no guarantee that site/s would be purchased in 2019/20 and so the budget would need to remain available in any subsequent years. Due to the nature of any acquisition, officers would need to move quickly and so it may not be possible to follow a full committee/council report structure. The Capital Strategy will look at the delegated authority and member consultation that would be needed to use this budget.
- 17.4 Please note that all costs and timings are only estimates at this point, and as there is still a lot of investigative work to do on each site, it is possible that cost or timings may change, or it may not be possible to progress certain sites. Any updates will be included in the New Homes and Regeneration Information Sheets.
- 17.5 The revised programme includes new borrowing of £10.700m. As this relates to new dwellings it is proposed that provision for repaying this new borrowing is made over a period of 30 years from the additional rental income received. This will be provided for on top of any provision made for the existing borrowing. Any further borrowing for new schemes would need to be assessed and the period over which the repayments are affordable determined. This may not be as short as 30 years on future schemes when the purchase of land must also be funded.

## **18. Sheltered Housing Modernisation**

- 18.1 The Sheltered Modernisation Programme continues on the green/amber schemes, with works to the common areas of Concord and George Pearce House planned for 2019/20. Tanners Piece which formed part of

the red scheme at Ringfield Close is on site and due to be completed in summer 2019.

- 18.2 With further borrowing now available, it is possible to fully build out both the Ringfield Close and Glebelands sites for our own housing. Although the capital receipt for Ringfield Close had been included in the funding assumptions, it has been possible to replace this funding from a higher than expected anticipated receipt for Dryleaze Court. This will allow Ringfield Close to be developed for new housing, without affecting the delivery of the Sheltered Modernisation Programme.
- 18.3 As previously reported, the funding available in the MTFP is not sufficient to complete the modernisation works (the funding included was only the first stage). A Task and Finish Group is currently exploring 'the expectations of the next generation in relation to SDC's housing stock' which will be fed into the developing Older Persons Strategy, setting a vision for SDC's Older People's accommodation. The outcome of this will need to be considered for funding in the future.



## Proposed Level of HRA Rents and Service Charges 2019/20

<b>DRAFT Proposed level of rents and service charges</b> (on a weekly basis over 53 weeks)	Current 2018/19 £	Proposed 2019/20 £	Increase/ Decrease £	Increase/ Decrease %
<b>Rents</b>				
Dwelling rents (average)	81.96	81.14	-0.82	-1.0%
Garage rents (excl VAT which is chargeable to non tenants only)	12.45	12.75	0.3	2.4%
<b>Landlord Service Charges</b> (charged where applicable)				
TV relay (communal aerials – basic IRS)	0.35	0.36	0.01	2.4%
TV relay (communal aerials – comprehensive IRS)	0.89	0.91	0.02	2.4%
Cleaning charges (average)	2.45	2.51	0.06	2.4%
District heating (average)	7.85	8.82	0.97	14% (capped at £1 per week)
Water charges (average)	2.59	2.65	0.06	2.4%
Sheltered Housing	24.7	25.29	0.59	2.4%

**APPENDIX B**

**HRA Medium Term Financial Plan 2018/19 to 2022/23**

	<b>2018/19 Base £000s</b>	<b>2018/19 Revised £000s</b>	<b>2019/20 £000s</b>	<b>2020/21 £000s</b>	<b>2021/22 £000s</b>	<b>2022/23 £000s</b>
Dwelling rents	(20,829)	(21,078)	(20,816)	(20,987)	(21,506)	(22,184)
Non dwelling rents	(228)	(222)	(125)	(107)	(109)	(111)
Charges for services and facilities	(1,020)	(1,016)	(1,005)	(1,024)	(1,034)	(1,054)
Contributions towards charges	(458)	(453)	(448)	(449)	(450)	(451)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(22,535)</b>	<b>(22,769)</b>	<b>(22,394)</b>	<b>(22,567)</b>	<b>(23,099)</b>	<b>(23,800)</b>
Repairs and maintenance	3,667	3,795	3,973	4,083	4,202	4,319
Supervision and management	5,459	5,030	5,219	5,435	5,585	5,720
Special services	2,743	2,183	2,305	2,192	2,222	2,320
Contribution to capital programme (depreciation and RCCO)	7,153	6,273	6,687	6,071	7,140	6,098
Provision for repaying debt	0	0	900	1,037	1,171	1,236
Provision for bad debt	200	80	80	111	208	212
Interest Payable	3,513	3,420	3,379	3,750	3,873	3,884
Investment Income	(25)	(25)	(25)	(29)	(17)	(10)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>22,710</b>	<b>20,756</b>	<b>22,518</b>	<b>22,650</b>	<b>24,384</b>	<b>23,779</b>
Transfers to/(from) EMR	(50)	1,494	(226)	604	(1,847)	(309)
<b>Transfer to/(from) HRA General Reserves</b>	<b>(125)</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>(687)</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>330</b>

	<b>2018/19 Base £000s</b>	<b>2018/19 Revised £000s</b>	<b>2019/20 £000s</b>	<b>2020/21 £000s</b>	<b>2021/22 £000s</b>	<b>2022/23 £000s</b>
<b>General Reserves</b>						
Opening Balance	3,003	3,003	3,522	3,624	2,937	3,499
Transfer to/(from)	(125)	519	102	(687)	562	330
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>2,878</b>	<b>3,522</b>	<b>3,624</b>	<b>2,937</b>	<b>3,499</b>	<b>3,829</b>

APPENDIX C

HRA Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2022/23

HRA Capital Programme	2018/19 Base £000s	2018/19 Revised £000s	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	2021/22 £000s	2022/23 £000s
<b>Major Works</b>						
Central Heating	710	624	1,021			
Disabled Adaptations	315	143	200			
Kitchens and Bathrooms	1,590	1,506	1,389			
Major Voids	424	570	464			
Asbestos/Radon	257	337	422			
Doors and Windows	530	791	1,022			
Electrical Works	212	212	218			
Environmental Works	127	127				
Non-Traditional Properties	350	595				
Door Entry	212	352	218			
Suited Locks	148	74	76			
External Works	1,750	2,793	3,519			
Lifts	32					
Major Works				4,726	6,843	6,429
<b>Total Major Works</b>	<b>6,657</b>	<b>8,124</b>	<b>8,549</b>	<b>4,726</b>	<b>6,843</b>	<b>6,429</b>
<b>New Homes and Sheltered Modernisation</b>						
Southbank, Woodchester	1,000	300	902			
Former Ship Inn Site, Bridgend	1,433	15	1,000	485		
Sheltered - Tanners Piece	1,700	1,345	449			
Broadfield Road, Eastington			31	1,084		
Orchard Road, Ebley			20	695		
Queens Drive, Cashes Green			27	1,013		
Ringfield Close, Nailsworth			55	1,552	1,606	
Summersfield Road, Minchinhampton			28	892		
Gloucester St and Bradley St, WuE			28	1,279		
Sheltered - Glebelands					1,898	1,897
Opportunity Land Acquisition Pot			3,000			
New Homes Contingency	571	50	50	50	50	50
Sheltered - Ex Warden		17				
Sheltered - Amber/Green Schemes	359	302	614	309	536	213
<b>Total New Homes and Sheltered Modernisation</b>	<b>5,063</b>	<b>2,029</b>	<b>6,204</b>	<b>7,359</b>	<b>4,090</b>	<b>2,160</b>
<b>Total HRA Capital Programme</b>	<b>11,720</b>	<b>10,153</b>	<b>14,753</b>	<b>12,085</b>	<b>10,933</b>	<b>8,589</b>

**APPENDIX C**

<b>HRA Capital Financing</b>	<b>2018/19 Base £000s</b>	<b>2018/19 Revised £000s</b>	<b>2019/20 £000s</b>	<b>2020/21 £000s</b>	<b>2021/22 £000s</b>	<b>2022/23 £000s</b>
Revenue Funding (including depreciation and Sheltered Modernisation reserve)	9,457	8,687	9,179	5,035	8,231	6,642
Capital Receipts (including RTB receipts)	2,065	1,466	1,491	3,326	1,241	50
Homes England Grant Funding	198	0	158	233	75	0
Borrowing	0	0	3,925	3,491	1,386	1,897
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>11,720</b>	<b>10,153</b>	<b>14,753</b>	<b>12,085</b>	<b>10,933</b>	<b>8,589</b>

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

11 DECEMBER 2018

10

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>TENANT INVOLVEMENT &amp; EMPOWERMENT STRATEGY</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	Feedback to Housing Committee to provide an update on Tenant Involvement activities The Tenant and Involvement Strategy for 2019 - 2021
<b>Decisions</b>	Committee resolves To approve the Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Strategy ( Appendix A).
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair &amp; Vice Chair of Housing Committee</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Ambassadors</li> <li>• Tenant Representatives on Housing Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Implications and Risk Assessment</b>	<p>Any expenditure associated with the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Strategy will be funded from the existing Resident Involvement budget, and so there are no further financial implications.</p> <p>Lucy Clothier, Principal Accountant Tel: 01453 754343 Email: <a href="mailto:lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk">lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>Risk Assessment</b> The Regulator for Social Housing administers compliance with the tenant and involvement and empowerment standard which requires providers to ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in decisions relating to housing related services including policies. This process is fully compliant with that approach</p>
<b>Legal Implications</b>	<p>There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. Specific legal advice can be provided regarding any actions or activities that might result from operation of this Strategy when they are conceived and prior to implementation.</p> <p>Nicola Swan Interim Head of Legal &amp; Monitoring Officer Tel: 01453 754369 Email: <a href="mailto:nicola.swan@stroud.gov.uk">nicola.swan@stroud.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Report Author</b>	Michelle Elliott, Principal Neighbourhood Management Officer Tel: 01453 754113 Email: <a href="mailto:michelle.elliott@stroud.gov.uk">michelle.elliott@stroud.gov.uk</a>
<b>Performance Management Follow Up</b>	Updated performance to Housing Committee in April 2019
<b>Background Papers / Appendices</b>	Appendix A - The Tenant Empowerment & Involvement Strategy Appendix B - Action Plan

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 Tenant Involvement is a key regulatory compliance requirement as part of co-regulation, supporting tenants and improving the services we provide, Tenant Services recognise the benefits of tenant involvement in enhancing the communities in which they live and providing social value to individuals, improving wellbeing, increasing confidence and environmental sustainability and involving tenants in issues which matter and are transparent.
- 1.2 Following the paper to Committee in September 2018, outlining the changing future of tenant involvement, the Tenant Empowerment and Involvement Strategy has been developed. This will plan and action how we move forward and encourage a greater number and broader range of tenants to engage with Tenant Services.

## **2. Introduction**

The Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Strategy demonstrates the commitment that Tenant Services has in involving tenants in the services it provides.

### **2.1 The Housing Regulator**

- The Regulator requires the Landlord to ‘ provide choice, information and communications that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants in the delivery of all standards’
- Ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in, including involvement in housing related strategies and service standards.
- Tenants should be involved in the scrutiny of their Landlords performance and recommendations to the landlord of how performance can be improved.
- Agree local offers for service delivery

#### **Highlights of the Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Strategy include:**

- Tenants are given a voice to help improve the services they receive
- Tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to be involved at a time to suit them
- Expanding our social media involvement
- Information & best practice ideas to be shared between Officers, Tenants & Councillors
- Increased community involvement
- Improved efficiency
- Better value for money
- Looking at barriers to involvement
- Discuss local offers

We aim to listen to tenant’s views on local offers and support tenants to improve their neighbourhoods. We aim to put tenants at the heart of all we do and support and empower tenants to check how we perform, challenge us to improve and hold us to account.

## **2.2 Action Plan for Communication & delivery of Tenant Involvement**

1. Action plan in place to deliver tenant involvement through the Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Strategy
2. Task & Finish and working groups involving councillors, tenants and officers in place earlier this year defined the action plan and agreed on practices moving forward.
3. The development of Tenant Inspectors to scrutinise the service as part of an agreed work programme with defined outcomes and recommendations This group have undergone a training session on void properties and later this month will be receiving training on our Repairs standard. They will be going live early in 2019.
4. Development of Neighbourhood Ambassadors. We currently have four Neighbourhood Ambassadors in place, who have given their input into the action plan for 2019.
5. Tenants have been involved in changes to our new Tenant handbook, which is due to go online early in 2019.
6. Procurement for the Independent Tenant Assessor has been conducted with involvement from tenants and an assessment day is being planned where by tenants will be involved in scoring and choosing the two new tenant representatives.
7. Star Survey planned for early 2019

## **2.3 Activities planned for 2019**

- Continue to promote the role of Neighbourhood Ambassador
- Continue to promote the role of tenants Voids & Repairs Inspectors
- Arrange training programme
- Review Service Standards with tenant groups
- Evaluate results of STAR survey
- Increase involvement through digital approach
- Formal recruitment of two tenant representatives to sit on Housing Committee
- Promote & advertise for tenants to scrutinise our services
- Consider local offers in neighbourhoods

## **3. Summary**

It has been widely recognised that tenant engagement is key to the delivery of our housing service, by working through our Tenant Involvement Action plan and sharing our tenant Involvement and empowerment plan we hope to engage with more tenants over a broader age range.

If the recommendations are accepted, we will report back to Housing Committee in April 2019 on the implementation of the Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Strategy.

## **Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Strategy 2019-2021**



## **1. Why do we have a Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Strategy?**

Stroud District Council believes that it is essential to work with and consider the views of our tenants, concerning the services we provide. Tenant Involvement and Empowerment is giving tenants the opportunity to have a say about how their housing service is delivered and placing our tenants at the heart of service delivery. We believe that by listening to and working with tenants, we can ensure that our policies and services are responsive to changing needs. This strategy sets out our commitment to make sure that all tenants, officers and councillors achieve this vision in relation to tenant involvement and empowerment.

The strategy focuses on our approach to tenant involvement and empowerment until 2021. We recognise that it is important to offer a range of involvement methods, providing our tenants with the opportunity to get involved with us at a level that suits them.

The strategy has been developed in partnership with Tenants, Councillors and Officers building on all partners continuing commitment to promote tenant involvement in a wide range of services.

### **Equality & Diversity**

The Council is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and promote quality of opportunity. The Council's goal is to ensure these commitments are reinforced by the Council's values and statutory and legislative requirements, ensuring these are embedded in our day to day working practices.

## **2. Introduction**

For many years, Stroud District Council has worked closely with tenants to improve our services – Tenancy Management, Repairs, Income Collection, ASB, Asset Management and Tenant Involvement. Tenants' views have been invaluable in shaping the service we now deliver in improving homes, neighbourhoods and communities throughout the District.

We want Stroud District Council tenants to be involved in checking, challenging and shaping our services to ensure they meet the varied needs of our communities. This is particularly relevant to adapt to changes in demography with emphasis on achieving cost savings through collaborative work with tenants and the wider community.

This strategy sets out the opportunities for tenants to be engaged in developing, shaping and monitoring our services and policies. This includes addressing needs and helping with aspirations as well as boosting community resilience and self-reliance. The principles apply to current and future residents and communities to whom we provide a service.

### **What have Tenants told us about involvement?**

Our housing profile is made up of:

5088 General Needs Properties which includes 823 Sheltered Housing Properties. We are promoting our tenant and involvement programme across the district to attempt to encourage cross generational involvement. Currently our involved tenants are on average over 60 and we would like to encourage younger people to become involved and hope that through the use of social media outlets we may be able to achieve this.

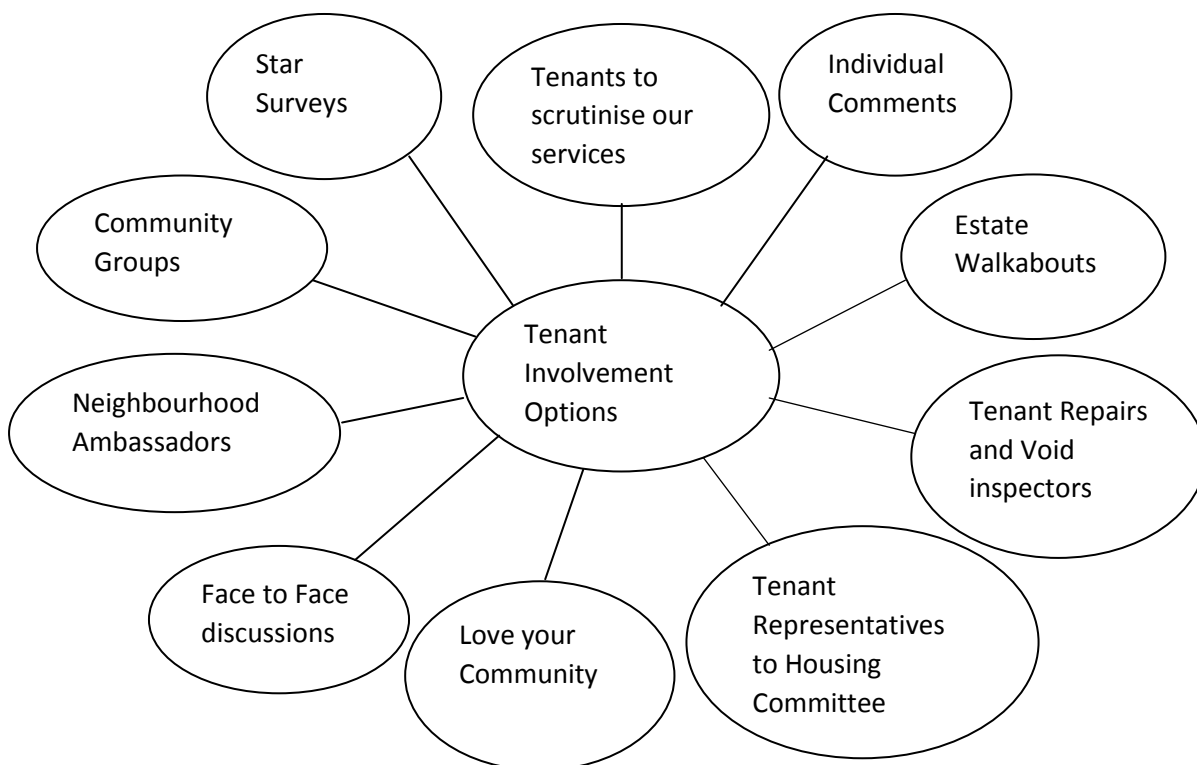
Previous tenant surveys have, the results of which were used to develop our approach to tenant involvement. Tenants told us that:

Overall satisfaction was 86%, results were slightly better than the previous survey and when benchmarked the results were generally at or above average in comparison with other Councils who were stock retained

The majority who responded to the survey thought that the Council were good at keeping them informed about issues that affected tenants (80%). However, Tenants felt there was a need to improve communication on common themes, particularly with regards to the repairs and maintenance service, ASB and complaints.

Feedback from the task & finish and working group indicated that Tenants enjoy being involved in decision making and relished the task of researching information from other Council's in order to benchmark where we are.

**What is Tenant Involvement & Empowerment**



Tenant Involvement is a process of communicating between Stroud District Council and our tenants ensuring that:

- Tenants are given a voice to help improve the services they receive
- Information and best practice ideas to be shared between Officers, Tenants and Councillors.

- Improvement in the quality of our services
- Increased tenant satisfaction
- Increased community involvement
- Better quality of life for tenants
- Improved effectiveness
- Improved efficiency
- Better value for money

By involving tenants the benefits to Tenant Services and our tenants are:

- To empower tenants to have a say in their housing service and the way it is delivered
- To deliver services through continual improvement
- Services that reflect tenants needs
- Better communication between Landlord and tenants
- Increase in stakeholder interest

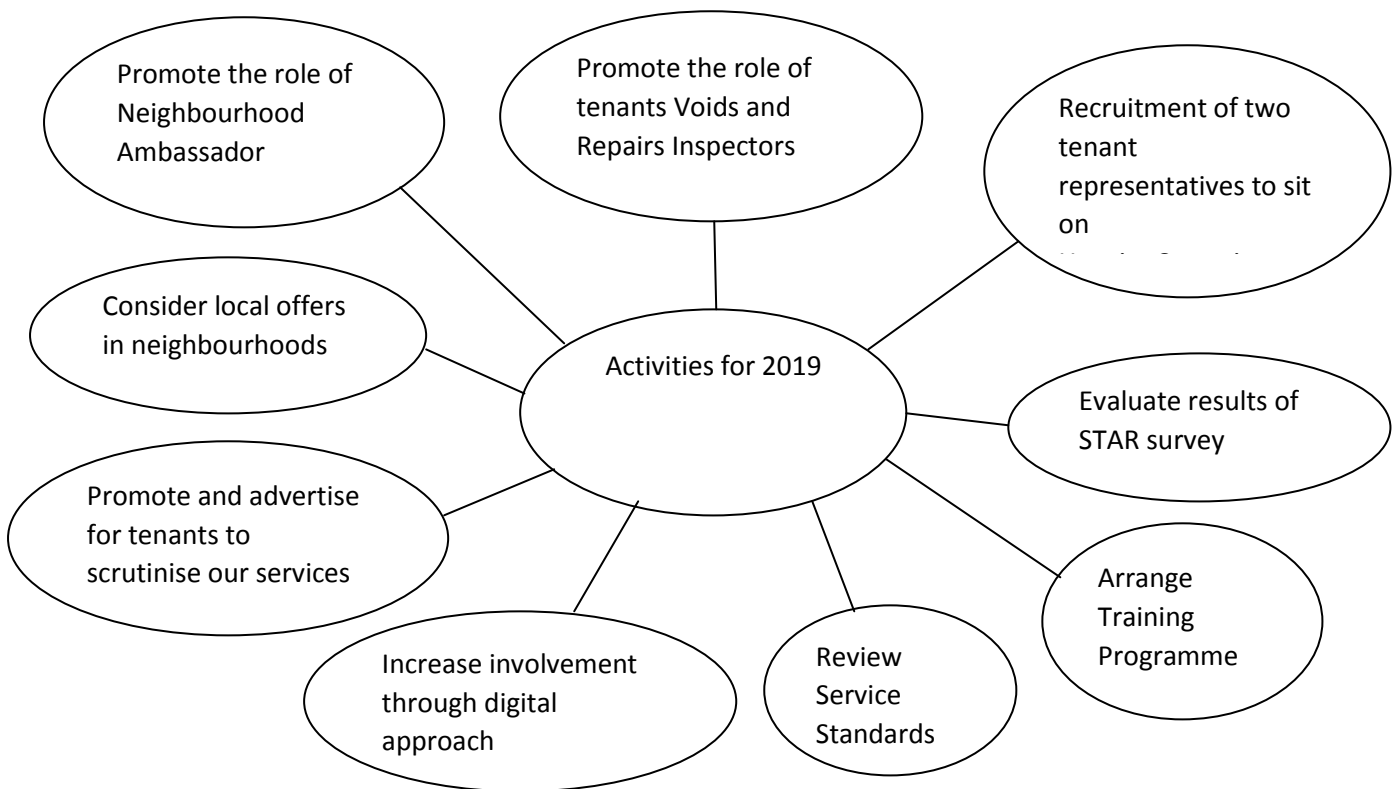
### **Current Tenant Involvement at Stroud District Council**

- We are in the process of training a group of Tenant Void & Repairs Inspectors.
- Tenant Involvement has taken place in the Procurement of an Independent Tenant Advisor to recruit Tenant Representatives for Housing Committee
- Tenants to be involved in an assessment afternoon to recruit Two Tenant Representatives for Housing Committee
- Implemented 'Love where you live' weeks on our Estates to address local issues
- Dementia event for Sheltered and General Needs tenants
- Training and promotion of Neighbourhood Ambassadors arranged for 2019
- Tenants participated in Task & Finish groups to revolutionise the way we engage with tenants and to look at ways of engaging further in the future
- Tenants were involved in the process of reviewing our revised Tenant Handbook
- STAR survey to be sent out to all tenants early 2019
- Estate Walkabouts



*Our new Neighbourhood Ambassadors*

**Tenant Involvement Activities planned for 2019 -2021**



*Neighbourhood Ambassadors discussing the Action plan*



### **Barriers to Involvement**

Stroud District Council recognises that tenant involvement requires commitment from tenants and that there may be barriers, which prevent tenants from becoming involved, such as:

- Lack of training
- Transport
- Family commitments
- Time
- Apathy
- Lack of interest

We are therefore committed to offering practical support to ensure tenant involvement is a viable option for as many as possible by:

- Providing training & Support
- Providing information in alternative formats
- Offering a wide range of involvement opportunities and methods

- Covering financial costs incurred
- Arranging meetings at locations and times accessible to tenants

*Tenant Void & Repairs Inspectors out on site inspecting a void property*



**The Tenant Involvement Strategy commits to:**

- Provide greater choices for more tenants on how they want to be engaged ensuring access to services are improved and adapted to suit all tenants removing barriers that may prevent them becoming involved
- Make best use of Tenant Services limited resources
- Improving our communication with all tenants
- Better measures and reports on what has improved as a result of tenant involvement
- More support to help tenants develop their knowledge and skills and improve their homes, and their neighbourhoods

- Seek tenants' views about service delivery and using this to improve our services and refine how they are delivered including continuous service improvement through tenants scrutiny
- Adjusting the way we work so that engaging tenants is given more prominence. The need to ensure Tenant involvement is a central part of all of Tenant Services day to day activities
- Ensuring tenants are more involved in influencing decision-making and offering more opportunities for developing residents' skills, knowledge and abilities, e.g. through training, advice, and support
- Developing and providing appropriate financial support
- Reviewing the recognition criteria for funded groups to ensure the criteria are fit for purpose.
- Reviewing funding practices and procedures as part of this Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Strategy review.

### **Our Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Strategy**

We are committed to giving tenants :

- A wide range of opportunities to be involved at a time to suit them
- Expanding our social media and text involvement

Our aim is to ensure that we are communicating honestly and that we are able to demonstrate how we have listened and taken action, feeding back widely and in a timely way. Effective tenant involvement and empowerment is part of our customer service and is everyone's responsibility. The focus of our involvement activity must invest as much in clearly communicating views to decision makers and ensuring a timely response to tenants, (as we do in the activities) to get their views. We must also regularly look at the wider picture; drawing together our feedback and service satisfaction with other performance information. This rebalancing and supporting analysis will ensure that involvement has an impact and gets demonstrable results.

### **What we want to achieve**

There are many benefits of tenant engagement and involvement. It is central to good governance, effective business improvement, and good customer service and our aim is to provide our tenants with excellent services to meet their expectations and needs. Our main outcomes that we want to achieve from our tenant involvement strategy are that:

- Tenants views influence on local offers
- Tenants are supported to improve neighbourhoods
- Tenants are involved in decisions about how housing related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards
- Tenants are involved in housing related policies and strategic priorities
- Tenants involved in the scrutiny of our performance and how it may be improved

### **How we plan to deliver excellent involvement**

#### **1. Demonstrate the outcomes and value for money of involvement**

Putting tenants at the heart of all that we do, we will support and empower tenants to play a lead role in checking how we perform, challenging us to improve, and holding us to account if we fail to do so.

To do this, we will:

- Develop a clear method for capturing outcomes from and impact of all our involvement activities, enabling us to demonstrate the value of involvement
- Develop clear routes for feedback on actions and identify what difference has been made as a result of involvement
- Assess the impact of all our involvement activities in collaboration with tenants and report back on the difference involvement has made
- Provide opportunities for tenants to assess the overall value for money of services through resident-led scrutiny
- Provide regular updates to Housing Committee on progress and success

**Activities planned for 2019 include:**

**2. Provide a wide range of involvement opportunities, which give tenants influence over local and strategic decision-making**

We know that tenant involvement is most successful when it is planned around the lives and interests of tenants. We will ensure that there are ways for tenants to influence the things that matter to them.

To do this, we will:

- Implement a new involvement structure which supports wider involvement and promotes opportunities for tenants to challenge and scrutinise our services
- Involve tenants in setting standards, performance indicators and targets and reporting on both good and bad performance
- Develop the performance monitoring role of tenants by providing them with accurate performance data so that they can effectively review services and challenge poor performance
- Support Neighbourhood Ambassadors to widen the communication channels they use within the community
- Enable and support tenants to develop local involvement opportunities to meet local community needs

**3. Increase involvement and use of tenant intelligence to drive service improvements**

We know that some tenants do not get involved because they do not believe that we will listen and act on what they tell us. We will aim to develop a 'you said, we did' approach that will help residents and staff to see where feedback has made a difference to the way we do things.

To do this, we will:

- Develop our approach to the collection of information we have about our tenants
- Understand and respond to the diverse needs of tenants
- Make our involvement opportunities more accessible to our diverse tenants and communities ensuring that tenants can have a say without having to travel miles or commit lots of time



*Dementia event held at Stonehouse Court Hotel for General needs and Sheltered Housing Tenants*



#### **4. Make better use of technology for involvement**

We know that tenants have busy lives and we want to make use of modern technology to make it as easy as possible for tenants to contribute.

To do this, we will:

- Develop the use of modern technology to give as many tenants as possible the chance to share and express their views, contributing to shaping and improving services
- Develop a database of involved tenants to support consultation and involvement activities
- Explore the potential for improving how we promote, measure and report the impact of involvement through the use of specialist software

#### **5. Provide training, capacity building and other support for both residents and staff**

We want to work with tenants and staff to create the very best opportunities for tenants to truly influence the decisions which impact on their lives.

To do this, we will:

- Ensure that staff are aware of the role of involvement, trained and are skilled in delivering effective involvement and supported to achieve clear performance targets
- Offer training, learning and support to all tenants to develop the skills and confidence to be effective in their involvement

#### **Monitoring performance in Tenant Involvement**

- Tenant Services recognises that a commitment to involving and engaging tenants can be weakened by a failure to effectively monitor progress and performance against these aims. Therefore, to support the continued promotion of tenant involvement activities as a key function in the delivery of services to tenants, we will collect information against a series of Performance Indicators (PIs) which will be

created with tenants that monitor the impact and effectiveness of tenant involvement activities.

- Develop a flexible involvement offer that is focused on results and outcomes, and action. As well as being embedded in the business planning cycle, proactively informing plans and strategies. It will be responsive to emerging priorities and issues by pop-up panels and task groups as well as one-off customer enquiry events.
- Ensure we understand feedback by looking at other performance information and through additional clarification or further research.
- Grow our activities and involvement opportunities in response to changing tenant needs, as well as through a continual striving for better engagement.
- Assess which tenants are impacted by change, and create tailor-made approaches to gain meaningful feedback. Our tenant involvement will be embedded throughout the organisation in a culture of good customer service and continuous improvement. Our involvement activities and our organisation will grow, evolve and develop in response to our residents' needs.
- Present performance information to Housing Committee at least annually, publish information on the website and social media as appropriate, publish improvements in the tenants newsletter (Keynotes)
- Ensure feedback is prompt. Regularly and widely communicate our tenants views and our response and action to them.
- Widely report on what our tenant and residents are saying and how we have responded and on a "you said we did" web page which will include 'you said- why we didn't' with a response to explain the situation.

This strategy will cover the period 2019 – 2021 but still be reviewed annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose and may change if the regulatory standards change or an act of legislation affects it.

Monitoring arrangements are to be fed back to Housing Committee

## Regulatory Compliance

The Regulator for Social Housing has a Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard (2017) which can be seen at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/725831/Tenant\\_Involvement\\_and\\_Empowerment\\_Standard.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/725831/Tenant_Involvement_and_Empowerment_Standard.pdf) *With required outcomes for customer Service, choice and complaints including:*

Registered providers shall ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in:

- The formulation of their landlord's housing-related policies and strategic priorities
- The making of decisions about how housing-related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards
- The scrutiny of their landlord's performance and the making of recommendations to their landlord about how performance might be improved
- The management of their homes, where applicable
- The management of repair and maintenance services, such as commissioning and undertaking a range of repair tasks, as agreed with landlords, and the sharing in savings made, and
- Agreeing local offers for service delivery.

### **Specific expectations**

- How tenants can access services
- The standards of housing services their tenants can expect
- How they are performing against those standards
- The service choices available to tenants, including any additional costs that are relevant to specific choices
- Progress of any repairs work
- How tenants can communicate with them and provide feedback
- The responsibilities of the tenant and provider
- Arrangements for tenant involvement and scrutiny.
- The provision of timely and relevant performance information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in a form which registered providers seek to agree with their tenants. Such provision must include the publication of an annual report which should include information on repair and maintenance budgets
- Providing support to tenants to build their capacity to be more effectively involved.

Registered providers shall consult with tenants on the scope of local offers for service delivery. This shall include how performance will be monitored, reported to and scrutinised by tenants and arrangements for reviewing these on a periodic basis.

Registered providers shall consult tenants at least once every three years on the best way of involving tenants in the governance and scrutiny of the organisation's housing management service.

### **APPENDIX B – Action Plan**

**Tenant Action Plan towards Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Strategy**

Key Activities 2019

- Implement Tenant Voids & Repairs Inspectors programme
- Advertise & Promote Neighbourhood Ambassadors
- Neighbourhood Ambassadors to review service standards
- Implement programme for existing Neighbourhood Ambassadors to scrutinise our services
- Arrange regular meetings with Community groups
- Set up training programme for involved tenants
- Recruit two Tenant Representative for Housing Committee
- STAR survey to be sent out to cross section of tenants
- Love where you live weeks across the district

Key Activities 2020

Review 2019 engagement & performance

Promote Performance

Agree local offers for service delivery

'Love where you live ' weeks across the district

Promote results of 2019 activities

Consider tenant forums to discuss specific services

Key Activities 2021

Consider new and emerging pathways for tenant involvement and empowerment