



# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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25 January 2021

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

A remote meeting of the Housing Committee will be held on **TUESDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2021** at **7.00 pm.**

Kathy O'Leary  
Chief Executive

*This is a remote meeting in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.*

### **Venue**

*This meeting will be conducted using Zoom and a separate invitation with the link to access the meeting will be sent to Members, relevant officers and members of the public who have submitted a question.*

### **Public Access**

*Members of the public, who have not submitted a question, are invited to access the meeting streamed live via Stroud District Council's [YouTube channel](#).*

### **Recording of Proceedings**

*A recording of the meeting will be published onto the Council's website ([www.stroud.gov.uk](http://www.stroud.gov.uk)). The whole of the meeting will be recorded except where there are confidential or exempt items, which may need to be considered in the absence of 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 8 December 2020.

**4 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Chair of the 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, 28 January 2021**

Questions must be submitted to the Chief Executive, Democratic Services, Ebley Mill, Ebley Wharf, Stroud and can be sent by email to [democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk)

**5 ENERGY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

To provide an update on the progress made against the Energy Strategy adopted in March 2017.

**6 GENERAL HOUSING: ALLOCATION OF GRANT TO EASTINGTON COMMUNITY LAND TRUST**

To request permission to allocate grant funding of £50,000 to Eastington Community Land Trust (ECLT) to support the purchase of land for affordable homes.

**7 SHELTERED MODERNISATION PROGRAMME**

To seek approval for the schemes to be modernised in 2021/22 and to provide Committee with a brief update on the progress of the modernisation programme.

**8 INCOME COLLECTION STRATEGY 2021-24 (TENANT SERVICES)**

To seek approval for the strategy, which sets out the priorities to be delivered in order to ensure the continued financial viability of Tenant Services, as well as a fair and robust approach to managing income.

**9 MEMBER REPORTS**

a) Performance Monitoring

**10 WORK PROGRAMME**

To consider the Work Programme.

**11 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

See Agenda Item 4 for deadline for submission.

**Housing Committee 2020/21**

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

Councillor Catherine Braun  
Councillor Stephen Davies  
Councillor Jim Dewey  
Councillor Chas Fellows

Councillor Colin Fryer  
Councillor Lindsey Green  
Councillor Julie Job  
Councillor Norman Kay  
Councillor Gary Powell  
Councillor Debbie Young

**Tenant Representative(s)**

Sandra Longstreth

TBC



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## HOUSING COMMITTEE

8 December 2020

7.00 pm – 9.00 pm

Remote Meeting

### Minutes

# 3

#### Membership

<b>Councillor Mattie Ross (Chair)</b>	P	Councillor Colin Fryer	P
<b>Councillor Jenny Miles (Vice-Chair)</b>	P	Councillor Lindsey Green	A
Councillor Catherine Braun	P	Councillor Julie Job	P
Councillor Stephen Davies	P	Councillor Norman Kay	P
Councillor Jim Dewey	P	Councillor Gary Powell	P
Councillor Chas Fellows	A	Councillor Debbie Young	P

P = Present                      A = Absent

#### Officers in Attendance

Strategic Director of Communities  
Strategic Director of Place  
Head of Housing Services  
Head of Contract Services  
Income & Systems Manager

Housing Renewal Manager  
Accountancy Manager  
Senior CN2030 Officer  
Democratic Services & Elections Officer

#### HC.010

#### APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lindsey Green.

#### HC.011

#### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

#### HC.012

#### MINUTES

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2020 are approved as a correct record**

#### HC.013

#### PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were none.

**HC.014****STROUD DISTRICT 2030 STRATEGY - LIMITING, ADAPTING, RESPONDING AND RECOVERING IN A CHANGING CLIMATE**

The Senior CN2030 Officer introduced the report and draft strategy. Members were informed that the report would be presented to the Council's four main committees as part of a wider period of consultation. The Council was looking for feedback from Members and the general public which feed into the strategic document for presentation to Full Council in March 2021. The strategy presented 7 themes and 26 targets. The Committee was asked to delegate authority to make changes to the draft strategy following the consultation period. Of relevance to the Housing Committee, Members were asked to consider the impact of the built environment and energy themes.

In response to Members' questions it was noted that the Council had submitted a bid to the Government's decarbonising and social housing fund, working with partners in the South West. The Council was looking at strategies to retrofit its homes. Councillor Young asked if it would be possible at the same time to retrofit 'right to buy homes' if they were adjacent to any of the Council's housing stock and would this allow for shared costs, for example in respect of scaffolding. It was confirmed that this would be possible but would be subject to funding and support from private home owners.

Members noted the Council's role as an exemplar, particularly the impact that people would see with changes within the housing stock, and that a large input from the community and also from Parish and Town Councils would be required for the policy to be effective.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED**

- a) **To endorse the draft 2030 Strategy;**
- b) **To delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Place and Senior Carbon Neutral 2030 Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and the Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee to make any changes to the draft 2030 Strategy arising from the current engagement and consultation process, and**
- c) **To commend the draft 2030 Strategy for adoption by Full Council in March 2021, incorporating any changes made as a result of the consultation and engagement process referred to in b) above.**

**HC.015****HOUSING COMMITTEE ESTIMATES – REVISED 2020/21 AND ORIGINAL 2021/22 AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2020/21 – 2024/25**

The Accountancy Manager introduced the report which set out the revenue and capital budgets for the general fund and the HRA. Key areas that were highlighted were:

- In respect of the general fund, there was a proposal for an increase in temporary accommodation costs for 2021/2022.
- In respect of the HRA, the main incomes would be from rents. The report proposed a rent increase of 1 plus the CPI figures which would give a rent increase of 1.5%. Service charges would also increase by 1.5%. Sheltered Housing charges would be set individually.

The report contained details of the Mid Term Financial Strategy and information on the HRA capital expenditure, the new build programme, the buy-back scheme and right to buy receipts.

Members noted the increase in rent arrears and asked if this would have an impact on delivery of the housing programme. Members were informed that there was an increase in provision within the budget for rent arrears. It was confirmed that the trends in arrears were being monitored including the impact that may be attributable to Covid-19. Officers confirmed that the arrears since the first lockdown had not been as severe as first feared. A lot of effort had been put into helping tenants with payment plans which had helped.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

- RECOMMENDED TO STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**
- a) **The revised General Fund Housing revenue budget for 2020/21 and original budget 2021/22 are approved;**
  - b) **The Fees and Charges list in Appendix A is approved;**
  - c) **The revised HRA revenue budget for 2020/21 and original budget 2021/22 are approved;**
  - d) **The movement to and from HRA balances and capital reserves as detailed in Appendix C and section 10 are approved;**
  - e) **That from 1 April 2021:**
    - i. **Social rents and affordable rents are increased by 1.5%, in line with national rent guidance**
    - ii. **Garage rents are increased by 1.5%**
    - iii. **Landlord service charges are increased by 1.5%, except sheltered housing charges which are individually set**
  - As detailed in Appendix B;**
  - f) **That the General Fund Housing Capital Programme, as detailed in Section 4, be included in the Council's Capital Programme, and**
  - g) **That the HRA Capital Programme for 2020/21 to 2024/25, as detailed in Appendix D, be included in the Council's Capital Programme.**

#### **HC.016**

#### **GREEN HOMES GRANT LOCAL AUTHORITY DELIVERY SCHEME PHASE 1B BID**

The Strategic Director of Communities and Housing Renewal Manager introduced the report. Members were reminded of a motion passed at Full Council in October 2020, to accept an offer of just under £1m funding under Phase 1a of the Green Homes Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LADS). This provided a Government grant for energy efficiency (insulation work) improvements for 100 park homes across Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire, with Stroud District Council being the lead body for the projects. That work was now underway. A subsequent round of funding, LADS Phase 1B, had since been opened up by the Government and due to the success of the earlier bid, the District Council was eligible to apply for another £1m funding for further delivery works on another 100 park homes, to be carried out during the period February to September 2021.

In response to Members' questions, it was confirmed that the first round of funding would be allocated by 31 March 2021 and that 75% of the work had already been completed.

There was also funding from National Grid to provide for a number of air source heat pumps to properties that did not have access to gas supplies.

Members were pleased to see that the Council had been successful in bidding for Government grants and congratulated Officers for their initiative in seeking these grants.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

- RESOLVED**
- a) Authorise the submission of a Bid;
  - b) If successful to authorise the Chief Executive to sign a Memorandum of Understanding and any accompanying documentation in relation to the Green Homes Grant: Local Authority Delivery Grant Scheme Phase 1B and to Further act on the Council's behalf with regards to the delivery of this project, and
  - c) If successful to add the Green Homes Grant to the capital programme.

**HC.017**                      **COUNCIL HOUSING – HOUSING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION**

The Income & Systems Manager introduced the report which summarised the proposals to invest in a single integrated housing management system which would encompass housing and repairs management functions. The existing system, which was twenty years old, consisted of seven individual systems. A new system would allow for the provision of performance management systems and the ability for tenants and customers to access services online.

In a response to a question about whether the investment proposed was sufficient to allow for all the self-service aspects and development costs, Members were informed that the Council had entered the high end of the market and the expectation was that there would be an interface with other Council services. Tenants would be consulted on the options for the self-service aspects and identify the services that tenants wanted. The Chair noted that one of the key benefits would be the case management system which would allow tenants to monitor a range of services such as: programmed works, servicing and payments. It was confirmed that for tenants who did not wish to use an online system then the telephone helpline would continue to be made available.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED**                      **To approve the procurement of an integrated Housing Management System (HMS)**

**AND**

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**                      **To approve an additional revenue budget of £260,000 in 2020/21 to allow the Council to invest in a single integrated system encompassing the whole housing and repairs functions, as well as better integration with the wider Council.**

**HC.018**                      **COUNCIL HOUSING – COMMUNITY ENERGY RETROFIT**

The Strategic Director of Communities and Senior CN2030 Officer introduced the report. Members were advised that what may appear to be a relatively small project would

provide invaluable information going forward as the Council worked towards meeting its 2030 carbon emission targets. The report identified the strategy towards renewable energy systems that were efficient and low cost to run. The targets would deliver an estimated 65% reduction in carbon emissions and 50% cost savings to tenants. Key to success would be to ensure wide community engagement and tenant involvement.

The proposed model would focus on seven independent living bungalows, currently fitted with electric storage heaters. These would be removed and new equipment would be installed which would generate and store electricity onsite and realise revenue benefits. A heat pump would be fitted in each property that draws on a shared ground loop system.

It was confirmed that results of the pilot would be brought back to Housing and other Council Committees. Members were informed that tenants would be supported through the process and assistance would be provided to know how best to utilise the new technology. Members were informed that it was a partnership project with specific timelines linked to the funding. It was likely that the project would take 12-18 months.

The Committee welcomed the project and noted the benefits for tenants including health benefits and savings on energy costs. The knowledge gained from the project would help the wider roll out of energy refit to the Council's properties.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

- RESOLVED**
- a) **To endorse the Community Energy Retrofit Pilot, and**
  - b) **To note that feasibility and pilot will progress through a collaborative planning and management process overseen by the Strategic Director of Communities in consultation with relevant officers and the Chair of the Committee.**

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

- a) Housing Review Panel: The Chair provided an update on rough sleepers, increase in ASB and the Green Homes Grant. Councillor Jenny Miles (Vice-Chair) would lead on the panel in the future and written reports would be provided where possible.
- b) Performance Monitoring: Members welcomed the written report which had been circulated.

## **HC.020**                      **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair introduced the report and commented on some of the changes to the programme which would be picked up in the New Year.

## **HC.021**                      **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

There were none.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

Chair

# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

# AGENDA ITEM

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

# 5

2 FEBRUARY 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>ENERGY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN UPDATE</b>			
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To provide an update on the progress made against the Energy Strategy adopted in March 2017			
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<b>The Committee RESOLVES to:</b>  a) <b>Note the progress made to date, and</b>  b) <b>Approve the next steps.</b>			
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Feedback during the formulation of the Energy Strategy has been incorporated within the final document.			
<b>Report Author</b>	Joe Gordon, Head of Contract Services Email: <a href="mailto:joe.gordon@stroud.gov.uk">joe.gordon@stroud.gov.uk</a>			
<b>Options</b>	N/A			
<b>Background Papers</b>	N/A			
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix A - Energy Strategy Action Plan – Update Feb 2021			
<b>Implications (further details at the end of the report)</b>	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	No	Yes

### 1. Background

1.1 The Tenant Services Energy Strategy was adopted by Housing Committee in March 2017. The Strategy sets out its key aims, which are to:

- Relieve fuel poverty
- Maximise carbon reduction in line with the Council's existing and future agreed targets.

1.2 The Energy Strategy is accompanied by a rolling 5-year Energy Action Plan which has the following explicit aims:

- Provide healthy homes
- Ensure effective and efficient use of council resources
- Provide our tenants with affordable warmth
- Reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions



- 1.3 The Energy Action Plan was last reviewed in December 2019 and an update provided on progress against the aims stated at the December 2019 Housing Committee.
- 1.4 At the December 2019 Housing Committee meeting, members resolved to note:
- Tenant Services will continue with the current investment model of planned improvements to energy efficiency in our existing dwellings, and
  - Tenant Services will commission/undertake a wider piece of work to fully consider all the viable options available, including costs and timescales required to maximise the SAP ratings of our existing dwellings.

## **2. Measurement and Investment**

- 2.1 It is worth noting that since the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) baseline for existing stock was established there have been three iterations of SAP. The effect has been that even though improvements in the stock have been made the change has not been reflected as anticipated.

For example, the change in conventions between SAP 2012 and SAP 2018 resulted in SAP levels going down from an average of 64 down to 58. A reduction of 6 SAP points. Every change in convention means officers have to manually intervene to update energy information as the system will not automatically recalculate.

- 2.2 Average SAP across all Council owned properties is Band "D". We are the higher end of Band "D" at 66 (SAP Band D is between 55 - 68).

Since 2017 we have moved from the lower end of a Band "D" to the higher end of a Band "D" with an aspirational target in our Energy Strategy to achieve an average SAP across all of our stock to Band "C".

- 2.3 Properties by band as of December 2020 are:

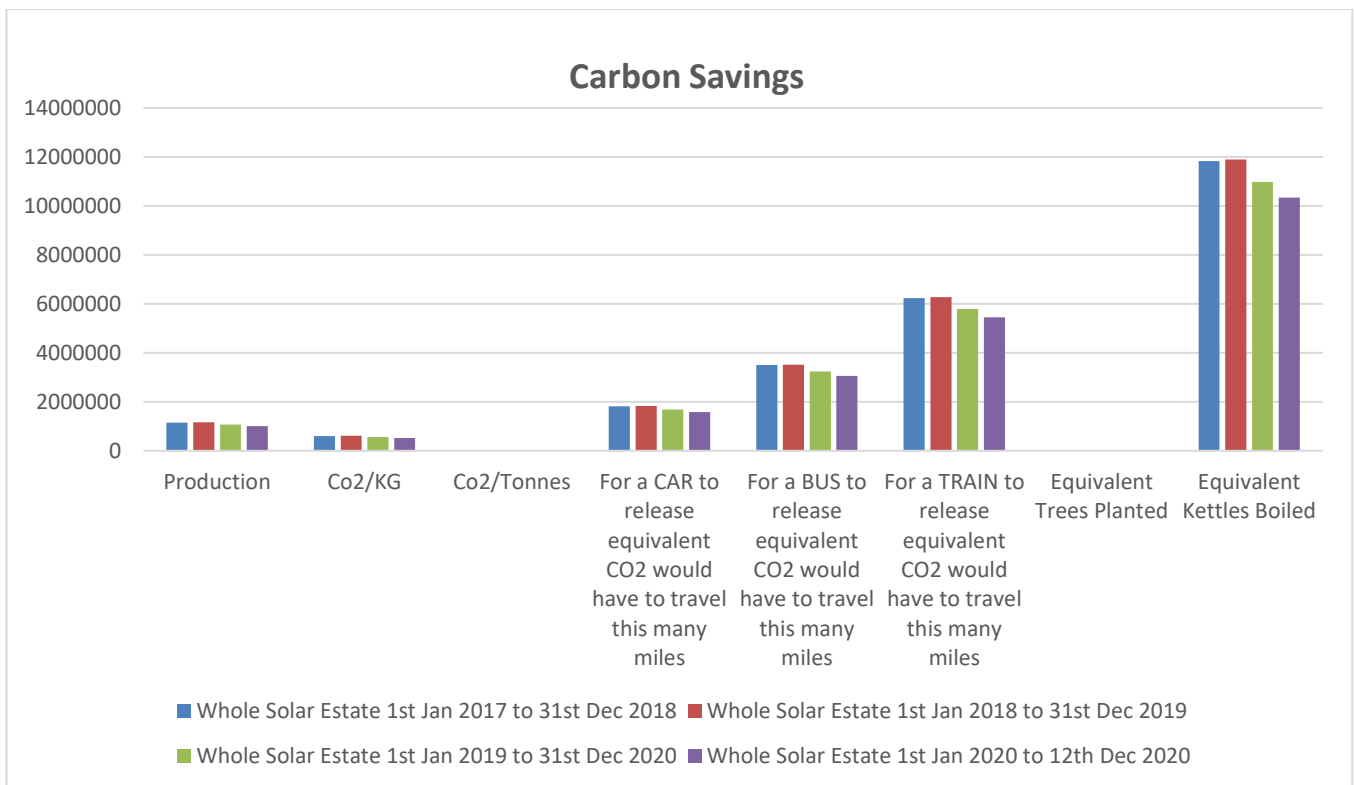
A – 2 Properties  
B – 255 Properties  
C – 1747 Properties  
D – 2390 Properties  
E – 597 Properties  
F – 41 Properties  
G – 3 Properties

The programme to validate data held against properties in bands "E"- "G" has been severely disrupted due to Covid 19 restrictions. However, it should be noted that all properties in Bands "F" and "G" have been re-assessed, and only 50% are showing the information to be accurate, and are of non-traditional construction. The balance are flats in blocks where neighbouring or adjacent properties have significantly higher SAP ratings. All properties have been included within existing major works programmes due to recommence in February 2021.

2.4 Over the past two years we have invested circa £2million pounds per year in measures to improve the thermal efficiency of Council dwellings. With improved data collection and validation this investment is set to increase in 21/22 and 22/23.

2.5 The illustration below indicates the amount of carbon that has been saved since 2017

Stroud	Production	Co2/KG	Co2/Tonnes	For a CAR to release equivalent CO2 would have to travel this many miles	For a BUS to release equivalent CO2 would have to travel this many miles	For a TRAIN to release equivalent CO2 would have to travel this many miles	Equivalent Trees Planted	Equivalent Kettles Boiled
Whole Solar Estate 1 Jan 2017 to 31 Dec 2018	1152304	604498.7	604.5	1814101	3500652	6239031	19733	11830321
Whole Solar Estate 1 Jan 2018 to 31 Dec 2019	1158657	607831.5	607.83	1824102	3519952	6273429	19842	11895545
Whole Solar Estate 1 Jan 2019 to 31 Dec 2020	1068709	560644.7	560.64	1682495	3246694	5786414	18302	10972079
Whole Solar Estate 1 Jan 2020 to 12 Dec 2020	1006924	528232.3	528.23	1585225	3058993	5451886	17244	10337753



2.6 Work streams undertaken to help generate these savings have included:

**2018/2019 Programme**

Windows -225

Boiler Replacement – 197

**Installation of insulation – 170**

Of which are solid walls – 35

Of which are cavity walls - 44

Of which are loft spaces – 91

Installation of renewable technologies – 8

**2019/2020 Programme**

Windows -95

Boiler Replacement – 215

**Installation of insulation – 56**

Of which are cavity walls - 47

Of which are loft spaces – 9

Installation of renewable technologies – 5

**3. Next Steps**

3.1 In line with our commitments outlined within the Energy Strategy we have, and are pursuing all viable opportunities to maximise funding through the pursuit of grants, and partnership working. At the time of writing this report, an application to the South West Energy Hub, was unsuccessful due to:

- Low numbers of hard to treat properties compared to other applicants
- The progress made in assessing property stock compared to other applicants

3.2 Along with a number of Partners across the County, we are awaiting the outcome of a bid to The Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator. The aim of the pilots is to raise the performance of low-EPC rated social homes by demonstrating innovative "whole house" approaches.

3.3 These types of projects have many synergies with our own outlook, including setting long dated standards to provide certainty across all tenures, and minimising market distortions. Improving awareness and access to information for stakeholders, and ensuring sustainability in supply chains.

3.4 We have engaged with a number of leading manufacturers and are in advanced negotiations to pilot a number of new and innovative technologies. By doing this we hope to be able to demonstrate how we can work with partners to overcome the innovation barriers and target investment for those households in most need.

3.5 The Energy strategy outcomes were based on known technological requirements and funding at the time of inception. However much has changed since then, including the resetting of our own organisational and government targets. A full review of current technologies, and the investment required now needs to be undertaken to ensure investment is maximised and targeted in the right areas.

3.6 We will look to develop a whole-house retrofit plan for each home to be updated to a high level of energy efficiency. Interventions may not be affordable right now, but it is essential to have a plan to prevent 'dead end' technologies being installed. Our focus will be on insulation first.

#### **4. Challenges**

4.1 We are aware that members would like us to do more, and do it faster. However, our experience has shown that this urgency needs to be tempered. We need to ensure we have robust sustainable plans which can be delivered at pace and scale without deviation. There can be no disconnect between our ambitions and business case, or indeed the lessons learned from previous excursions into this market.

4.2 Investment needs to be based on sound financial footings. The assumptions made with MTFP and 30-year forecast will need to be revisited based on the current and predicted levels of inflation as this could have an adverse effect on income assumptions which drive investment.

4.3 Existing national policy uncertainties, and market investment into emerging technologies.

4.4 Some technologies that can address elements of this challenge are known now: air and ground source heat pumps, solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, energy storage solutions and insulation systems. However, when deployed on their own, they aren't able to address the issue holistically. This is why we are building relationships across the sector so that organisations like ours can maximise the opportunities presented by the climate change agenda to exploit emerging opportunities and gain first mover advantage.

4.5 RTB may present a significant issue in protecting any capital investment in to dwellings as the Property Valuation Sector does not currently recognise this type of investment adding value to a dwelling. This simply needs to be recognised as risk in terms of payback on any investment.

4.6 Action to encourage households to change behaviour is an essential component of any plan to reduce carbon and address fuel poverty. This is and still remains an area where more work needs to be undertaken over a sustained period.

#### **5. IMPLICATIONS**

##### **5.1 Financial Implications**

This is an update report and there are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

The cost of investment needs to be included within the Medium Term Financial Plan and longer term 30 year position. These costs will be updated annually to ensure a balance between improvement of the housing stock and long term viability of the Housing Revenue Account.

Lucy Clothier, Accountancy Manager  
Email: [lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk)

## **5.2 Legal Implications**

Legal advice and support will be provided on grant conditions and in respect of the review of technologies referred to in paragraph 3 of this report as appropriate.

One Legal

Email: [patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk)

## **5.3 Equality Implications**

An Equality Impact assessment is not required as the report is for information only.

## **5.4 Environmental Implications**

Key documents and policy which will influence our approach going forward include but not limited to:

- CN2030 Strategy
- The Future Homes Standard
- The charter for social housing residents (Social Housing White Paper)
- The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Clean Growth Strategy
- Committee on Climate Change (December 2020) The UK's Path to Net Zero

## Steering Group


## AIMS

- Provide healthy homes
- Ensure effective and efficient use of council resources
- Provide our tenants with affordable warmth
- Reduce CO2 Emissions in line with Government targets
- Become a Leading Housing Provider for energy management

## OBJECTIVE

### 1. Reduce Condensation Mould Growth Issues

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
To develop an SDC Healthy Homes Standard to ensure correct tenant education and advice across Tenant Services						In conjunction with Warm & Well and Severn Wye Energy Agency "A guide to combating condensation" is available on SDC website alongside advice on condensation reduction and mould treatment. Energy Management Plan to be developed to implement training and education to staff and tenants.
Carry out a review of existing communications on damp & mould						Energy and Innovation Officer to carry out review on existing communication. To develop training plan within the Energy Management Plan.
Carry out a review of training on damp & mould, and look to get damp & mould on E-Training for all staff to provide awareness on the issues we may come across						Mould growth consultant attended training in May 2019 for TS operatives. Advised on damp and mould prevention and products to use for existing problems.  Energy and Innovation Officer to review E-Training for staff awareness. Develop Energy Management Plan to educate residents on issues.

## OBJECTIVE

### 2. Increase the average SAP rating of SDC stock

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Bring all properties where reasonably practicable to do so, up to sector average values as a minimum						Average SAP across the whole UK housing sector is currently 54.5 and across the Social Housing Sector 62.4. SDC housing stocks current average is 65.3 (higher end of D rating), as measured via the energy module in Keystone.
Increase the SAP by x amount, once worked out over an agreed period of x amount of years						SDC highest rating home is 93 (A rating) and the lowest are between 8 and 20 (non-traditional construction properties).  Energy and Innovation Officer and steering group to agree on period for SAP rating to be increased.
Fully utilize the energy module in Keystone, Quarterly reports on SAP improvements, develop planned programmes using SAP data						Some planned thermal improvement works to non-trad properties have been completed and we have an ongoing refurbishment programme for our non-trad properties. The renewal of boilers and heating systems to more energy efficient systems is an ongoing under planned programmers.

## OBJECTIVE

### 3. Training & Education for colleagues and customers

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Ascertain staff training gaps						Energy and Innovation Officer to develop Energy Management Plan with clear training direction, working with H&S and Health & Wellbeing Team.
Develop and implement training programme						Energy Management Plan to be developed by the Energy and Innovation Officer to implement education for staff and residents.

Provide Energy Angels training to key SDC staff and tenants						<p>Energy Angels MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) accessible via the Energy Water website. AC registered for information.</p> <p>Energy Efficiency training to be booked for late 2021 by Energy and Innovation Officer for TS operatives.</p>
Encourage behaviour change by offering tenants ongoing, high quality and easy to understand advice						<p>In conjunction with Warm &amp; Well and Severn Wye Energy Agency "A guide to combating condensation" is available on SDC website alongside advice on condensation reduction and mould treatment.</p> <p>Reasons and potential remedies are discussed with tenants on home visits alongside the Warm and Well and Severn Wye Energy Action Teams.</p>

## OBJECTIVE

### 4. Maximise funding opportunities for HRA

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Carryout regular reviews of the annual Delivery Plan allowances, supply chain costs, and available grant						<p>Regular consultation with Health &amp; Wellbeing Team re: Warm &amp; Well funding availability in line with TS delivery plans. Allowance made for 20 fuel switch properties in 19/20 heating programme.</p> <p>5 Night Storage Heaters upgraded to gas. 1 solid fuel upgrades to ASHP.</p>
Maximise resources through collaborative working with internal and external partners						<p>Continue to work with SDC Health &amp; Wellbeing team and Severn Wye Energy Action Team. Opportunity to collaborate nationally via Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Energy to support our local energy agenda.</p> <p>Energy and Innovation to regularly attend APSE Energy groups.</p>



## OBJECTIVE

### 5. Implement an energy benchmarking accreditation system (e.g. SHIFT)

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Agree what areas of the service need to be benchmarked within the strategy						To be agreed by the working/steering group.
Identify members to form a working/steering group						This has been delayed due the COVID-19. Working/Steering will be put into place before the end of the finance year to review TS Energy Strategy, taking account of potential for innovation and trial schemes.
Research which benchmarking systems are out there and recommend which one(s) to adopt						To be carried out by the working/steering group.

## OBJECTIVE

### 6. Identify new technologies/opportunities that can be implemented cost effectively

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Market Research against new technologies against other housing providers						APSE Energy conference attended and consideration being given to joining. Several local authorities nationwide participate allowing for access to market research on new technologies being trialed by like organisations. Publication: "Energy across the authority; How local authorities are using assets to develop the energy agenda" APSE Energy give 10 examples including funding models used.
Trials of new innovations/technologies on our stock & produce progress report to identify cost efficiencies						2 x Dimplex Quantum systems with Dimplex HW storage and Nuaire ventilation trialed in off-gas properties. This trial is ongoing with energy use and bills to be collated over the course of 2020/21.  Further innovations such as local heat networks, battery storage and hydrogen blending are being researched via updates on various trials being conducted i.e. Keele University & HyDeploy to commence mid-September 2019.

Actively look for funding opportunities within energy improvement works						Collaborative working on identifying funding opportunities are written into agreements for external and internal wall insulation.
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**OBJECTIVE**

7. Develop an Affordable Warmth strategy

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	PROGRESS																						
Investigate SDC affordable warmth policy and how it links to SDC housing						<p>SDC is affiliated with the Action for Affordable Warmth Strategy for Gloucestershire &amp; South Gloucestershire which is currently due for review.</p> <p>SDC TS Energy Strategy discusses addressing hard to treat/low EPC performing properties with the following energy efficient installations/upgrades completed in the past 2 years:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>EWI</td> <td style="text-align: right;">25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CWI</td> <td style="text-align: right;">76</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Windows</td> <td style="text-align: right;">417</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CH Boilers</td> <td style="text-align: right;">431</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ASHP</td> <td style="text-align: right;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dimplex Quantum</td> <td style="text-align: right;">5</td> </tr> </table> <p>Upgrades carried out during the 2019/2020 programme.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>EWI</td> <td style="text-align: right;">9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CWI</td> <td style="text-align: right;">47</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Windows</td> <td style="text-align: right;">95</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CH Boilers</td> <td style="text-align: right;">215</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dimplex Quantum</td> <td style="text-align: right;">5</td> </tr> </table>	EWI	25	CWI	76	Windows	417	CH Boilers	431	ASHP	3	Dimplex Quantum	5	EWI	9	CWI	47	Windows	95	CH Boilers	215	Dimplex Quantum	5
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CH Boilers	215																											
Dimplex Quantum	5																											

Integrate requirements of affordable warmth strategy into housing policies					<p>The key aims of the AW strategy align with that of the TS Energy Strategy. TS works with external organisations that are able to provide energy advice to our tenants and are committed to improving the energy efficiency of our housing stock.</p> <p>Once set up working/steering group will review the strategy in line with the AW review to ensure alignment.</p>
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## OBJECTIVE

### 8. Promote health & wellbeing

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
To work with SDC corporate Health & Wellbeing Team to promote a consistent approach across the whole of the district/healthy housing strategy						<p>Refresher sessions held with Health &amp; Wellbeing team and Severn Wye in 2021 re: advising tenants on energy efficiency and mitigation and treatment of damp &amp; mould. Plans to be developed within the Energy Management Plan.</p> <p>Also working together to maximise the take up of warm &amp; well funding where applicable.</p>
Identify our Health & Wellbeing priorities through the Steering Group						Once the working/steering group is put into place, a review will be under taken in line with the AW review to ensure alignment.
Investigate what Health & Wellbeing opportunities are available through voluntary partners/stakeholders						<p>Health &amp; Wellbeing team promote activities via The HUB focused on health, mindfulness and mental health awareness.</p> <p>Corporate social responsibility considered routinely as part of the procurement process for contracts. This takes into consideration the broader impact of SDC's contracts on all stakeholders and ensures bidders consider how best to achieve good social and environmental performance in the supply chain.</p>
To be mindful of the affordable warmth strategy, some actions may involve cross working						This will involve cross team and cross organisation working especially in reference to SDC Health & Wellbeing Team, Gloucestershire Energy Plan and potential conflict between the fulfilling the affordable warmth strategy and achieving the county's aim to be carbon neutral by 2030.

## OBJECTIVE

9. Co-ordinate across SDC to ensure joint working

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Put in place Energy Strategy Steering Group (EESG)						This has been delayed due the COVID-19. Working/Steering group will be put into place before the end of the financial year to review TS Energy Strategy, taking account of potential for innovation and trial schemes
Utilise internal staff as energy champions						Energy and Innovation has been appointed and started on Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> January. The Energy and Innovation Officer will be Tenant Services Energy Champion.
Set up training & briefing sessions to all client facing staff						Training and briefing sessions to be review by Energy and Innovation Officer under the Energy Management Plan. Full training plans to be develop.
Procurement to all other SDC Departments & potential joint procurement ventures						Work with procurement team and consortium partners to ensure CSR clauses are added to contract requirements

## OBJECTIVE

10. Adopt the Passivhaus standard into New Build and investigate integration into retrofit

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Where financially and technically practicable to do so adopt Passivhaus standards/principals for new housing and retrofit projects						<p>Retrofit project to be researched by Energy and Innovation Officer, to be under taken within the next 12 months.</p> <p>Passivhaus standard is often not feasible as retrofit due to architecture and conservation restraints. However, the Energy and Innovation Officer will review the relationship between SAP and Part L.</p> <p>Members have approved the action to address the Council's commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 by delivering the next three new build schemes to a minimum SAP rating of 86 (EPC B) with a fabric first approach and to review the specification for future schemes, by assessing new technology coming to the market and to learn from others to</p>

						achieve the best value approach to delivering greater energy efficiency and reduced running costs for the Council's residents.
Use grants where available to help fund work streams						Maximisation of grant funding is written into contracts for EWI, CWI & Loft insulation, heating installations and fuel swap.
Keep a watching brief on related low/zero carbon Government Policy and consultations						<p>Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), APSE Energy &amp; Energy Knowledge Exchange websites are monitored for updates on Government policy as well as progress by GFirst LEP (Gloucestershire Local Energy Partnership) on their road map of activities to ensure short, medium and long term changes from 2019 to 2025.</p> <p>Energy and Innovation Officer to attend regular APSE Energy groups.</p>

Updated: January 2021

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

2 FEBRUARY 2021

6

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>GENERAL HOUSING: ALLOCATION OF GRANT TO EASTINGTON COMMUNITY LAND TRUST</b>			
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To request permission to allocate grant funding of £50,000 to Eastington Community Land Trust (ECLT) to support the purchase of land for affordable homes.			
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<b>The Committee RESOLVES to authorise the allocation of £50,000 Affordable Housing Grant to Eastington Community Land Trust (ECLT), subject to the completion of a legal agreement between SDC and ECLT.</b>			
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Consultation has been carried out with Eastington CLT around the legal agreement required by SDC to secure the funding.			
<b>Report Author</b>	Pippa Stroud, Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager Email: <a href="mailto:pippa.stroud@stroud.gov.uk">pippa.stroud@stroud.gov.uk</a>			
<b>Options</b>	Committee could choose not to permit the grant funding, or to delay the allocation of funds. However, this is an opportunity to secure land for the future development of affordable housing; the landowner could choose to dispose of the land elsewhere in the meantime.			
<b>Background Papers</b>	None			
<b>Appendices</b>	None			
<b>Implications (further details at the end of the report)</b>	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	No	No

**1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Eastington Community Land Trust (ECLT) was established in 2013 with a mission to provide affordable homes for people with a connection to the parish of Eastington.
- 1.2 ECLT has already enabled the development of 23 homes for affordable rent in partnership with Aster Homes Housing Association. These 23 homes completed in December 2020 and have been heavily over-subscribed.

- 1.3 ECLT's next affordable homes project is for a further 31 homes and will again be carried out in partnership with a Housing Association and funded by Homes England. The proposals are currently in pre-application discussion with the Council's Planning Department. This development is again expected to be over subscribed.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1 Alongside the land required for this next project, there is an opportunity for an additional tranche of land to be secured in the same location for a further phase of affordable housing development. It is estimated that this land could accommodate a further 17 homes, with development expected to take place in around 2026.
- 2.2 This additional piece of land has been valued at £60,000. Homes England will not fund the acquisition of this land as it falls outside their current investment programme timelines. Accordingly, ECLT has approached the Council to ask for grant funding of £50,000 towards the £60,000 purchase cost.
- 2.3 Officers have delegated authority to allocate capital grant funds to Housing Associations. ECLT is not a Housing Association registered with Homes England, however it does have a record of proactive and positive engagement with Stroud District Council and an impressive track record of delivery of affordable homes.
- 2.4 We are holding sufficient S.106 funds to support this request for funding. These have been accumulated from developers where, for example, our 30% affordable housing planning policies have resulted from the payment of a commuted sum rather than on-site provision, and has to be spent on the provision of affordable housing elsewhere.
- 2.5 It should be noted that further affordable housing development at the proposed location will depend upon the outcome of a local housing needs survey which ECLT anticipates will take place during 2024. Should Members support this funding request, we will ask ECLT to enter into a legal agreement which will secure the return of the funds should the land not be purchased, or not be used for the development of affordable housing.

## **3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 This funding request is being made by a community organisation with a history of positive engagement and delivery of affordable homes. At a grant cost of under £3,000 per home, the request for £50,000 appears to represent good value for money.

## **4. IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1 Financial Implications**

There are sufficient S106 funds available to allocate this funding to support the affordable housing provision.

Adele Rudkin, Accountant  
Email: [adele.rudkin@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:adele.rudkin@stroud.gov.uk)

## **4.2 Legal Implications**

The Council has powers to give a grant to ECLT by virtue to Section 24 of the Local Government 1988 and General Consent C issued pursuant to Section 25 of 1988 Act. A grant can be given by a local housing authority to any person (which includes companies and other legal entities) for the purpose of, or in connection with the acquisition, construction, conversion, rehabilitation, improvement, maintenance or management (whether by that person or by another) of any property which is or is intended to be privately let as housing accommodation.

The position regarding state aid has recently changed due to ending of the transition period following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. The giving of aid by public bodies is now referred to as the Subsidy Control. Advice will be given to officers to ensure compliance with the new regime.

A legal agreement will be required with the ECLT that sets out the use of the grant.

One Legal

Email: [patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk)

## **4.3 Equality Implications**

An EqIA is not required because there are no specific changes to service delivery proposed within this decision.

## **4.4 Environmental Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.



## HOUSING COMMITTEE

2 FEBRUARY 2021

7

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>SHELTERED MODERNISATION PROGRAMME</b>			
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To seek approval for the schemes to be modernised in 2021/22 and to provide Committee with a brief update on the progress of the modernisation programme.			
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<b>The Committee RESOLVES that Vizard Close in Dursley and Jenner Court in Berkeley will have modernisation works carried out in the financial year 2021/22.</b>			
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Consultation has taken place with senior managers via the Sheltered Modernisation Steering Group and with relevant colleagues in Tenant Services.			
<b>Report Author</b>	Chris Horwood, Project Manager Email: <a href="mailto:chris.horwood@stroud.gov.uk">chris.horwood@stroud.gov.uk</a>			
<b>Options</b>	The Committee could choose not to continue with the modernisation programme or request alternative schemes to be considered for works in 2021/22.			
<b>Background Papers</b>	None			
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix A - Sheltered Modernisation Programme 2016-2026 Progress			
<b>Implications (further details at the end of the report)</b>	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

**1. Programme Update (current financial year)**

- 1.1 Further to the recent modernisation update contained within [Housing Committee Information Sheet No.7 \(November 2020\)](#), progress has been made as expected for the two schemes being modernised in 2020/21.
- 1.2 Modernisation works at Willow Road in Stonehouse, the first Independent + scheme to be modernised, were completed 1 week ahead of schedule on December 11<sup>th</sup> 2020.
- 1.3 The work at Willow Road was completed within budget, with a saving of £9k (3%) on the contract value.
- 1.4 Following the consultation process, the final scope of works has been established for the modernisation at Springfields Court in Cam; this is the fourth Hub to be modernised.

- 1.5 As detailed in the [information sheet](#), the work at Springfields Court will include:
- Refurbishment and remodelling of the lounge / kitchen area.
  - Renovation of laundry and salon/health & well-being room.
  - Creation of disabled access toilet.
  - Automatic main entrance door,
  - Fob access throughout communal areas.
  - Provision of scooter stores.
- 1.6 Following consultation additional works include:
- Renovation of additional unisex toilet.
  - Creation of additional storage space.
  - Creation of additional flexible space for Hub activities.
- 1.7 The contractor for Springfields Court was appointed in December 2020 via a 'direct award' following continued high levels of performance at the previous scheme.
- 1.8 Site set up and preliminary works began at Springfields Court in December 2020, the programme is 18 weeks (including the 2-week Christmas shut down) and completion is expected on April 12<sup>th</sup> 2021.
- 1.9 Both of the schemes planned for 2020/21 are due to be completed within the budgets set.

## **2. 2021/22 Programme**

- 2.1 The first five years of the programme will have resulted in the modernisation of four Hubs: Sherborne House in Stonehouse, Concord in Nailsworth, George Pearce House in Minchinhampton and Springfields Court in Cam, and also one Independent + scheme at Willow Road in Stonehouse. These schemes were all categorised amber in the Ark report and therefore given priority over those schemes categorised as green.
- 2.2 Tenant Services have appointed a Hub Coordinator whose role is to develop the provision of the Hubs in the community. This work was proceeding well at the first two Hubs with interest being generated among a wide range of stakeholders and other agencies. Unfortunately, one of the impacts of the Covid-19 situation was the necessity to close our communal lounges and this has delayed progress in this area. More details are set out in [Housing Committee Information Sheet No. 11 \(January 2021\) - Overview of community hubs in Sheltered Housing](#).
- 2.3 After consultation with both the Service Delivery Manager for our sheltered housing and also the Hub Coordinator, the Sheltered Modernisation Steering Group's recommendation is that the programme focuses on the Independent + schemes this year to allow feedback from those using the facilities to further develop the Hub model and inform future works.
- 2.4 It is anticipated that with the roll out of the Covid-19 vaccine, the lounges will be reopening later this year and work is continuing on developing the Hub model.

- 2.5 As defined in the Older Peoples Housing Strategy, the Hub schemes are complemented by Independent + schemes, these are generally smaller schemes which retain communal facilities. There are currently five amber schemes designated as Independent + that still require modernisation (Archway Gardens in Paganhill, The Beeches in Kings Stanley, Burdett House in Stonehouse, Jenner Court in Berkeley and Vizard Close in Dursley), in line with current works and the recommendations in the Ark Report, we propose to continue to prioritise amber schemes over those designated green.
- 2.6 Vizard Close in Dursley and Jenner Court in Berkeley both fit this category and have very dated communal facilities which would greatly benefit from modernising.
- 2.7 Vizard Close is the only remaining sheltered scheme in Dursley and has a very small and impractical communal space. There is a vibrant community at this scheme with an active social programme, remodelling of the space and modernisation of the facilities would greatly enhance the feel of this scheme.
- 2.8 Jenner Court in Berkeley has a similarly active community and very outdated and poorly laid out facilities. Again, remodelling and refurbishment of the communal areas will allow for much better utilisation of the space.

## **2.9 Summary**

- 2.9.1 Progress on the programme to date is shown at Appendix A. So far modernisation work has mainly concentrated on updating those schemes identified as suitable for becoming Hubs, this has resulted in the creation of four Hubs. Work has also concentrated on amber schemes ahead of green schemes. We will continue with the policy of prioritising the amber schemes and propose to focus on the Independent + schemes this year, this will allow time for the Hub model to be further developed to inform future works. The 2022/23 programme will start to be considered towards the end of this calendar year, by which time it is hoped that the completed Hubs are back in use.
- 2.9.2 In order to develop the options as set out in the Older People's Housing Strategy, it is also important to continue the modernisation of the schemes designated as Independent +. Vizard Close and Jenner Court are two of five remaining amber schemes identified as suitable for being Independent + and will expand this provision into two vibrant schemes in the south of the district.
- 2.9.3 There is budget provision within the MTFP to allow these modernisation works to be carried out.

## **3. Conclusion**

- 3.1 It is recommended that two Independent + schemes undergo modernisation works in 2021/22; Vizard Close in Dursley and Jenner Court in Berkeley. These improvements will be in line with the Older People's Housing Strategy and will result in the provision of two Independent + schemes in the south of the district.

## **4. IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report. The cost of the Sheltered Modernisation Programme is included within the Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Plan.

Lucy Clothier, Accountancy Manager

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### **4.2 Legal Implications**

Contractual arrangement to implement the improvement and modernisation works will need to comply with the Council's contract and procurement procedure rules and procurement legislation.

One Legal

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### **4.3 Equality Implications**

An EqIA is not required because there are not any specific changes to service delivery proposed within this decision.

### **4.4 Environmental Implications**

In accordance with the Council's commitment to the Carbon 2030 agenda, the specification for the modernisation works to these communal areas will look at the energy efficiency and assess whether improvements can be made as part of these works. The energy efficiency of the tenants' individual homes will form part of ongoing planned maintenance works.

**SHELTERED MODERNISATION PROGRAMME  
2016-2026 PROGRESS**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Update/Outcome</b>
<b>RED</b> (4 schemes)	Dryleaze Court, Wotton-under-Edge	Sell	Private development in progress 22 new homes
	Ringfield Close , Nailsworth	Redevelop	Tanners Piece 11 flats for older people completed June 2019  Permission for 20 new affordable homes work starts January 2021
	Glebelands, Cam	Redevelop	Planning app to be submitted Feb 2021
	Cambridge House, Dursley	Redevelop	Planning app to be submitted Feb 2021
<b>AMBER</b> (15 schemes)	Sherborne House, Stonehouse	Hub	Completed
	Concorde, Nailsworth	Hub	Completed
	George Pearce House & Trinity Drive, Minchinhampton	Hub	Completed
	Willow Road, Stonehouse	Independent Living +	Completed December 2020
	Springfields Court, Cam	Hub	Works started Dec 2020
	Jenner Court, Berkeley	Recommendation : Independent Living +	Works to commence 2021/22 subject to approval
	Vizard Close, Dursley	Recommendation: Independent Living +	Works to commence 2021/22 subject to approval
	Archway Gardens, Ashcroft House, Burdett House, Chapel Lane, Grange View, Grove Park Road, Malvern Gardens, The Beeches	to be programmed	

**SHELTERED MODERNISATION PROGRAMME  
2016-2026 PROGRESS**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Update/Outcome</b>
GREEN (9 schemes)	Broadfield Road, Eastington	Independent Living & new build scheme	9 new affordable homes. Projected start date March 2021
	Ashwell House, Draycott, Dryleaze House, Hamfallow Court, Hazelwood, The Corriett, St Nicholas Court, Walter Preston Court	to be programmed	

# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA  
ITEM NO

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

2 FEBRUARY 2021

8

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>INCOME COLLECTION STRATEGY 2021-24 (TENANT SERVICES)</b>			
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To seek approval for the strategy, which sets out the priorities to be delivered in order to ensure the continued financial viability of Tenant Services, as well as a fair and robust approach to managing income.			
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<b>The Committee RESOLVES to approve the strategy.</b>			
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Consultation with: Kevin Topping, Head of Housing Services Patricia Andrade, Tenancy Operations Manager Briefing with Chair and Vice-Chair of Housing Committee			
<b>Report Author</b>	Sara Weaver, Income & Systems Manager Email: <a href="mailto:sara.weaver@stroud.gov.uk">sara.weaver@stroud.gov.uk</a>			
<b>Options</b>	N/A			
<b>Background Papers</b>	N/A			
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix A – Tenant Services Income Management Strategy 2021-24 Appendix B – <a href="#">Corporate Delivery Plan 2018-22 &amp; 2019-20</a>			
<b>Implications (further details at the end of the report)</b>	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	No	No

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As a responsible social landlord, it is important that we have a fair and proportionate approach to managing our income to ensure we can continue to deliver a great housing service, which is both efficient and modern and offers the best value for money, whilst performing our functions effectively and economically, to ensure the continued financial viability of Tenant Services.

### 2. MAIN POINTS

The strategy:

- 2.1 Demonstrates our commitment to developing a culture where we work with our customers to tackle barriers that stop them from managing their money and paying their rent on time, so we can provide the housing services they need.
- 2.2 Outlines our priorities showing how this will be achieved by supporting our customers to pay their rent and asking for our help when they need it.

- 2.3 Recognises how our ability to collect rent and other income impacts on the services that we can provide, so it is essential we have a proportionate approach to taking action when money is owed such as continuing to invest in administering recharges, to tackle tenancy breaches, so individuals are accountable.
- 2.4 Shows that we understand how working with others helps us to maximise services and enlisting the help of different sectors allows us to focus on our responsibilities as a registered social housing provider.
- 2.5 The delivery and success of this strategy will also be affected by external factors so we recognise continued successful partnership working will play an integral role in the success of our priorities.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 There is increasing pressure from the Regulator of Social Housing to deliver value for money. Therefore, it is more important than ever that we can show we have considered not only our own, but also our customers' needs; as well as demonstrating a continued approach towards helping those who need financial support and/or are in rent arrears, delivering and achieving better outcomes to help customers sustain their tenancies.
- 3.2 The strategy supports several of the key priorities of the Council's Corporate Delivery Plan including Affordable Housing in which we focus on and "continue to deliver high quality services for council tenants" as well as Health & Wellbeing by "reduce(ing) poverty and inequality and help(ing) vulnerable people cope with welfare reform."
- 3.3 In March 2020, we had to move all our operations to homeworking due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Our business continuity arrangements, supported by the investment in our IT infrastructure and an agile team culture, meant we were able to do this quickly and efficiently, with a minimum of fuss and/or loss of service or risks arising to customer safety. Several months on, this is still the case; and the team continues to manage their work with minimal operational disruption.
- 3.4 The implementation of a new Housing Management System will have the potential for a positive impact on income collection due to the improved visibility of rent account information 24/7 for our customers; access to technology to support a proactive approach to rent management for our officers; improved task and communication management to facilitate a more consistent and personalised service; and improved access to reports and management information.

### **4. IMPLICATIONS**

#### **4.1 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implication arising directly from this report.

Income collection is important to the overall financial position of the Housing Revenue Account. Rents and charges fund the services provided by the HRA, including major works on properties and sustainable energy works.



Any policies included within this report will be delivered within existing provision and the ongoing impact of income collection will be monitored.

Lucy Clothier, Accountancy Manager

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#### **4.2 Legal Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category

One Legal

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#### **4.3 Equality Implications**

Customers' protected characteristics, particularly disability, will continue to be considered at all times, so their specific needs can be met as required.

#### **4.4 Environmental Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.




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# Income Management Strategy

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2021-2024

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Tenant Services

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## Document Details

Version	Status	Date	Author/Editor	Details of Change
1	Draft v1	15 August 2019	SJ Weaver	First Draft of Document
1.2	Draft v1.2	25 November 2019	SJ Weaver	Input from Kevin Topping & Pat Andrade
1.3	Draft v1.3	8 January 2021	SJ Weaver	Covid-19 Pandemic impact
1.4	Draft v1.4	11 January 2021	SJ Weaver	Comments from Kevin Topping

### Next document review by:

**Review by:** Sara Weaver – Income & Systems Manager

**Approved by:** *Housing Committee*

Housing Committee  
2 February 2021

Agenda Item 8  
Appendix A

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## Introduction

With over 5,000 properties in our ownership, split across 52 parishes, Stroud District Council is by far the largest social homes provider in the district.

As a responsible landlord, it is important that we have a fair and robust approach to managing our income to ensure we can continue to deliver a great housing service, which is both efficient and modern, and offers the best value for money.

We recognise that income collection is integral to everything we do both as a business and for our customers so must be able to demonstrate: -

- A strong corporate commitment, leadership, and accountability to deliver an effective approach to managing our income streams
- Our approach to governance and risk management enables us to understand and plan for potential challenges to our income streams
- We have robust governance in place to challenge and drive performance
- We are flexible and quick to respond to any economic, legislative, and regulatory changes that could impact on the way we manage our income
- We are agile, effectively managed and will continuously improve during what is a time of changing demands on our customers' financial capabilities as Universal Credit continues to be rolled out

Considering Housing Revenue Account (HRA) income sources, which include but are not limited to: rent collection, service charges, leaseholder charges, recharges and temporary accommodation fees, this strategy will focus on outcomes, not processes, setting out our immediate priorities covering the period 2021-2024 and the actions we will take to ensure we protect income sources in the current climate

## 1. Our Vision

- to support and maximise income solutions for our customers to prevent arrears and sustain tenancies
- to develop a culture where we work with our customers to tackle barriers that stop them from managing their money and paying their rent on time, so we can provide the housing services they need
- to promote financial inclusion so we can support our customers to live in safe, clean and enjoyable environments that build strong and vibrant communities
- to use our income to continue to provide good quality homes, particularly to those in greatest need
- to deliver excellent housing services and ensure the economic growth and prosperity of our district at the same time
- to enhance the overall financial viability of Tenant Services

## 2. Corporate Delivery Plan and Key Priorities

Collecting the money Tenant Services is owed as efficiently as possible enables us to meet our strategic objectives supporting Stroud District Council's corporate vision ***to lead a community that is making Stroud district a better place to live, work and visit for everyone, working positively and proactively with our communities and partners across all sectors to achieve this.***

Tenant Services mission statement also empowers our ***professional officers*** who are ***dedicated to delivering the highest quality of customer service with pride, loyalty, honesty, and integrity.***

This shows that we are committed to improving our properties and supporting customers when they need it, but that we also recognise our services must enable customers and avoid the unintended consequence of heightening their dependence on us.

### **3. Challenges Faced**

#### Welfare Reform

The majority of the Government's welfare reforms have now been implemented. However, one of the key welfare reform changes, and one that has the greatest potential to negatively affect rental income, is the continued rollout of Universal Credit.

Designed to replicate the experience of receiving a monthly salary, customers are responsible for using their housing costs element to pay their rent themselves, posing a significant challenge for those who have never had to pay rent directly before. If we fail to continue responding appropriately to these changes then this could pose a real and significant threat to our income streams and income levels.

#### Covid-19 Pandemic and Economic Climate

The Covid-19 pandemic has posed unprecedented challenges to social housing landlords, costing more than £100million nationally in rent arrears, built up since the pandemic caused the first major lockdown in the UK in March 2020. As at December 2020, rent arrears year-to-date for Stroud had increased by 35%.

Nationally, lettings also plummeted 77% month-on-month as government guidance at the time said all "non-essential" allocations should be paused. It is estimated that the fall has led to 45,000 extra social homes sitting empty, with void losses as a percentage of rental income expected to more than double from the previous sector average of 0.94% to 2.17% at the end of 2020.

Economic damage caused by the Covid-19 crisis also led to a 2.6 million increase in people claiming Universal Credit, whilst 9.6 million workers were furloughed. From March 2020 to December 2020, the number of Tenant Services customers in receipt of Universal Credit increased by 27% (1095 customers).

On 26 March 2020, the Coronavirus Act 2020 came into force requiring landlords not to commence or continue possession proceedings without a very good reason to do so. Since 29 August 2020, landlords are required to give six months' notice of any

possession proceedings; however, shorter notice periods can be applied to certain cases where a landlord wants to evict a customer because of rent arrears of six months or more.

During the crisis, the government advised all social housing tenants to continue to pay their rent and abide by all other terms of their tenancy agreement to the best of their ability. A strong package of financial support was made available to tenants by the government and tenants unable to pay their rent were advised to speak to their landlords as soon as possible.

Early conversations with tenants needing support and struggling to pay their rent helped, with temporary sustainable payment plans being agreed, and referrals made for debt management advice. This preserves the landlord and customer relationship and also gives the customer some time to resolve any financial issues they may have whilst ensuring that their rent arrears are repaid.

Housing possession claims in the Court system were stayed very early in the pandemic and could not be progressed before 21 September 2020. This meant that once action re-commenced, it was only for a very small number of tenants, who had pre-Covid 19 arrears, and where all previous attempts to engage had been unsuccessful.

Nationally, the housing market is stable with low interest rates but constraints now in place on access to mortgages have edged out some with a weaker credit history, or uncertain incomes due to being furloughed, so they have to remain in the private or social renters market, which impacts on housing availability.

We are operating in an increasingly challenging financial environment and so maximising our income collection is more important than ever before. The collection of money owed is important because it funds the continued delivery of core housing services and enables the continued investment in the properties we own and manage.

We are also increasingly required to provide more for less and come up with innovative cost effective ways of doing things to deliver value for money services.

## **4. Delivering a Great Service**

### Customer Care

It is the aim of the Income Management team to continue to deliver a consistent customer care approach as per the Council's Customer Care Guidelines<sup>1</sup>

### Equality and Diversity

Tenant Services is committed to equality of opportunity for all people regardless of race, disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, religious belief (including non-religious beliefs), gender (including gender reassignment), marital status, and pregnancy and maternity. We recognise and value the diversity of the local community and believe that equality is central to the provision of modern quality services. We are committed to being inclusive with our approach and determined to make sure that our approach to managing our income and allocating resources supports this.

### Value for Money

We must be able to demonstrate that value for money is understood and embedded in our work. It should be part of our performance management framework, determining how we allocate resources whilst being widely communicated to staff and our customers, who should be encouraged to identify opportunities to improve value for money, seeking to ensure that we have the resources to deliver excellent services at reasonable cost.

We understand that keeping income collection costs low will maximise the amount of income available to invest in service delivery and understand how our cost and performance compares with other similar or local landlords, and use that information to improve our service.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://hub.stroud.gov.uk/media/86484/customer\\_care\\_guidelines.docx](https://hub.stroud.gov.uk/media/86484/customer_care_guidelines.docx)



### Working in Partnership

Strong relationships with our partners and many other public sector and voluntary organisations enables us to deliver an excellent level of service whilst maximising resources and avoiding duplication of effort.

Identifying and dealing with our customers' issues at an early stage, can help to avoid problems with tenancy problems including debt management issues.

Partnership working is essential to assist our more vulnerable tenants to sustain their tenancies, access services and make the most of living in the Stroud district.

### Performance

We have an effective management framework in place to report, monitor, and review performance. Our income recovery targets are challenging, subject to regular review and contribute to ongoing improvement.

Our customers are provided with annual information in an agreed format on our costs, performance, and satisfaction, to enable them to make evidence-based, value for money judgments. We will work with councillor performance scrutiny members to inform and drive service development.

We encourage feedback about our income management service including comments, compliments, and complaints and use this feedback intelligently to continuously review and improve our service.

Good practice is sought and adopted from within and outside the sector.

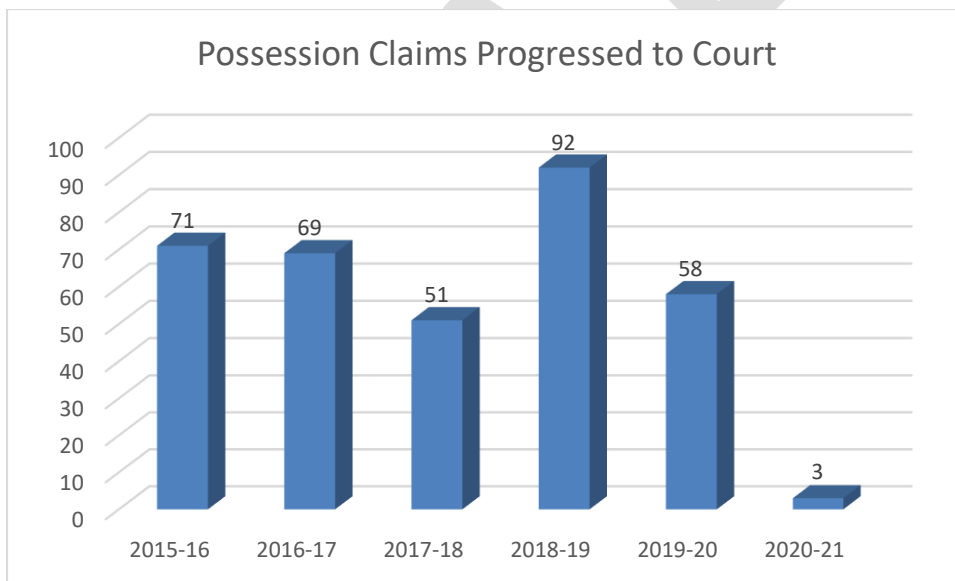
## **5. Why is Income Management Important?**

### **Impact of non-payment on Tenant Services**

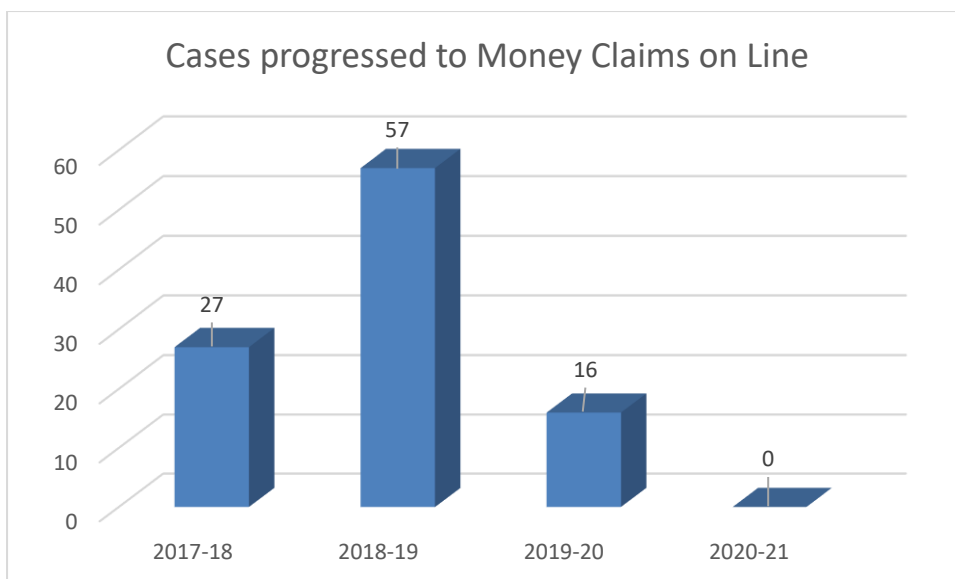
If our customers do not pay as required and on time it has a negative impact on our ability to deliver excellent services as it increases costs, both monetary and in terms of staff time, as the collection of rent arrears or debt must then be pursued.

Dealing with rent arrears and other debt takes resources away from services and prevents staff from carrying out other tasks. This affects the level of service that our customers receive. If we do not collect money owed in a timely manner, we could see a financial cost to the organisation, which customers ultimately pay for through higher charges or reduced services.

The number of accounts progressing to County Court for possession action due to rent arrears has remained steady over the past few years with earlier action being taken by the Income Management team, where tenants refuse to engage. However, due to the Coronavirus Act 2020, legal action has greatly reduced for 2020/21 as shown in the graph below. During this time, the Income Management team continue to communicate with customers offering support and advice, encouraging them to pay what they can afford in the short term without causing financial hardship.



Since May 2018, action has also been taken via Money Claims Online (MCOL) to recover former tenant rent arrears or rechargeable repair debt (graph overleaf). However, recovery action was paused for 12 months due to the current economic climate to allow former and current customers who were struggling financially; however, MCOL action will recommence in March 2021 for those who have not engaged with us.



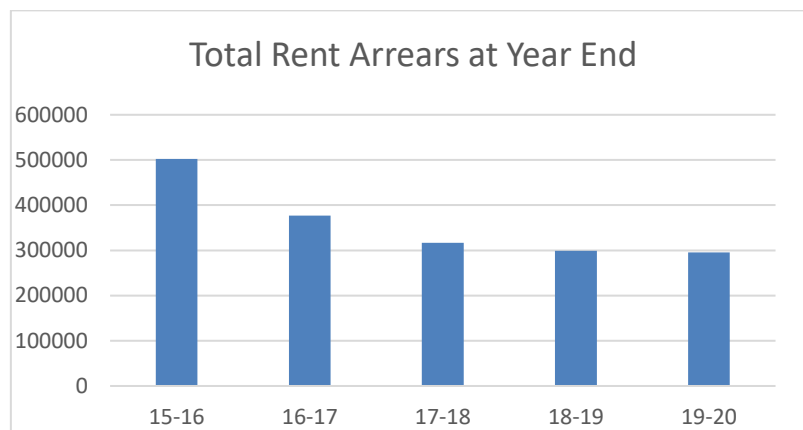
### The collection of income across Tenant Services

Money owed is raised as the weekly rent debit, court costs, bi-annual leaseholder service charges, or sundry debt, and then collected by the Income Management team.

The table below demonstrates who is responsible for paying each income stream and how income is collected across Tenant and Property Services.

Income Stream	Responsible for Payment	Responsible for recovery
Current and Former Rents (residential)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenants (current and former)</li> <li>Housing Benefit</li> <li>Universal Credit (managed payments)</li> <li>Direct Deductions</li> </ul>	Income Management team  Split as follows:  6 IMO's collecting current rent and arrears  1 IMO collecting former rent arrears, sundry debt and leaseholder service charges
Service charges (included in rent)		
Court costs		
Water and Heating (Sheltered)		
Rents (non residential – garages)		
Rechargeable Repairs		
Service charges (inc ground rent) - leaseholders	Leaseholders	
Major works invoices		
Rents (non- residential commercial) and Leases (residential)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local businesses</li> <li>Housing Associations</li> </ul>	Property Services

Strong collection performance had led to current rent arrears reducing year on year over the last five years as shown below. Arrears levels reduced by 41% from £502,479.58 in 2015/16 to £295,433.89 at the end of 2019/20, despite the huge impact of Covid-19 in March 2020, as well as the significant welfare reforms referred to earlier, affecting customers over this period.



Alongside lower overall rent arrears, the actual number of tenants in arrears reduced by 34% from 1,233 in 2015/16 to 810 in 2019/20.

However, the impact of Covid-19 on rent arrears in 2020/21 is now showing with a 26% increase - £372,735.00 (as at 10 January 2021). This is due in part to a 27% increase YTD in the number of customers in receipt of Universal Credit.

## 6. Looking back – what have we achieved so far?

- Introduced a specialised income recovery service to enable us to provide a more dedicated and focused service to our customers.
- Provided all income collection staff with negotiation training to improve the way in which they interact with customers about rent, leaseholder service charges, and sundry debt payments.
- Introduced a pre-tenancy assessment (Income Management and Vulnerability Assessment) to ensure all new customers can afford their rent and other housing costs before committing to a tenancy.

- Communicated regularly with under-occupying customers, advising them of the options available, whether this is remaining in their home or downsizing, and the grants and support available to assist.
- Promoted a rent payment culture for new and existing customers by encouraging them to make a payment in advance to build one month's rent on their rent account, to protect them against any changes in circumstances. This also sends out a clear message about the importance of future payments being made on time and is a significant cultural change for some customers who have traditionally paid their rent "in arrears".
- Carried out Universal Credit Information days, targeting tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit, in order to prepare them for a potential migration across to full service, advising them what they need to do to prepare and leaving them with a UC Information pack.
- Updated all system generated letters requesting tenants contact us if they are in receipt of UC or have any vulnerabilities/disabilities that affect their ability to pay their rent

## **7. Looking forward – where do we want to be and how are we going to achieve this?**

We aim to ensure the financial viability of Tenant Services by delivering on the following priorities.

### ***Priority One: Promoting a positive payment culture***

Promoting a positive payment culture will make it as easy as possible for all customers to pay their rent and/or other charges owed to Tenant Services in a timely manner and where possible in advance of their rent due date, ensuring that all of our customers clearly understand their obligations but also the link between income collected and our on-going ability to deliver a high quality service to them.

Where a large proportion of our customers have been in receipt of full housing benefit, directly paid to their landlord, and consequently alienated from a rent payment culture for a number of years, some of them do not even consider that they pay rent. General awareness of benefit changes has gathered pace amongst our customers but it is becoming clear that some need extra advice and assistance to enable them to cope with this cultural shift.

For all of our customers, including those not in receipt of housing benefit, we are committed to providing appropriate support where needed; however, we also need to ensure that our approach to income management balances prevention, support, and recovery. We will remain clear and firm with our customers from the outset regarding their obligations and the consequences that can result from non-payment. Of course, to ensure a payment culture we will also need to continue to make it as easy as possible for people to pay and we will do this by providing a wide range of payment method options.

It is vital that not only our customers, but also everyone who works for us, understands that we all have a role to play in helping to maximise our income in order to ensure that we can continue to deliver valuable services and that income collection is everybody's business.

All front line staff (including those who deal with telephone contact only), regardless of job function, clearly understand the role of the Income Management team and can confidently promote and advise on all the payment methods we offer to ensure that customers are fully aware of all the different options available to them. Any interactions with our customers, irrespective of the original reason, should be viewed as an opportunity to prompt payment where one is due.

Communicating and promoting this enormous shift in payment culture will require an ongoing campaign approach using a variety of appropriate methods tailored to the individual needs of customers.

### ***Priority Two: Continuing to Manage Universal Credit migration***

A managed migration process for existing "legacy" benefits claimants to be moved onto Universal Credit (UC) by the Department for Work & Pensions started across the district in 2018 with full "roll-out" expected to have been achieved by the end of

2023. However, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020)<sup>2</sup>, this has been suspended and no announcements have been made about next steps. It is unclear what impact this will have on the overall migration timetable.

In the meantime, we will continue to support customers currently in receipt of Housing Benefit and likely to migrate over to Universal Credit, to ensure that payments are made when due by introducing daily Direct Debits.

### ***Priority Three: Maximising rental income and minimising arrears***

Remaining committed to managing income collection in a socially responsible way, through a proactive and preventative approach to prevent the accumulation of arrears and ultimately eviction.

Ensuring that we maximise revenue by continuing to promote Direct Debit (DD) as an effective collection method, which guarantees customers will pay, and pay on time, therefore, minimising the risk of arrears. It is also the most cost effective method of payment for Tenant Services in terms of resource spent processing payments.

Over the past few years, we have campaigned to encourage tenants to pay by DD; as at 1 September 2020, 1,740 tenants (35%) paid this way. However, we need to keep working to ensure both staff and tenants clearly understand the benefits of DDs and recognise that we need to take action to continue to increase the number using this payment method. The move to daily DDs is currently being implemented and should be available by 2021/22. This is expected to increase revenue by 20%.

In order to be able to charge tenants for services we provide, we must ensure those services are always available. This means that in relation to the letting of properties, we must continue to work hard to minimise the number of void properties through decreasing re-let times. The faster we are able to re-let empty properties, the less potential income we lose.

Everyone involved in income management should be equipped with the right skills, capacity, and resources to help maximise income collection. By investing in training and development, we will ensure that staff at all levels have the appropriate

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<sup>2</sup> <https://revenuebenefits.org.uk/universal-credit/guidance/existing-tax-credit-claimants/managed-migration>

knowledge, skills, and flexibility to manage income recovery efficiently and effectively.

#### ***Priority Four – Maximising financial inclusion***

Financial inclusion is about our customers being able to access appropriate and affordable financial products and services, and having the knowledge, skills and confidence to use them. There is a strong link between being a social housing tenant and experiencing financial exclusion, benefit dependence, and personal debt.

In the current climate, there are many compelling business reasons why we should continue to support our customers to develop financial capability and capacity.

The monthly UC payment into a bank account has been designed to mimic the paid work experience. It assumes claimants will have a suitable bank account by the time they make a claim and further assumes that claimants will be able to budget their finances accordingly. We will continue to work in partnership to help support our customers to access banking products and take early intervention at the pre-tenancy stage to help ensure that potential customers have a bank account.

Some customers struggling with debt management and financial worries use coping strategies such as cutting back on food, heat, and electricity, falling into debt, depleting savings, and selling belongings. Many also borrow money from family and friends, loan sharks, legal doorstep, or online moneylenders.

Stroud Foodbank, Citizens Advice, and P3, all play a role helping people in crisis across the district and we will also continue with a range of initiatives to support our customers in order to avoid financial distress, including encouraging the use of local credit unions as an affordable way to borrow and save money.

Fuel poverty is also a potential issue, with some customers, particularly older residents, struggling to adequately heat and light their homes. Tenants Services has already implemented a number of environmental improvements to housing stock to improve energy efficiency and reduce household bills. Alongside this we will continue to offer advice and practical support to ensure customers who are affected, have access to the full range of benefits and initiatives that are available.



Changes to the benefit system, coupled with rising living costs means that more customers are experiencing money problems so helping them prepare for benefit changes by promoting budgeting as well as money advice and financial capability training continues to be an essential part of our income management strategy.

Measures to help our customers access affordable financial products and services is also a fundamental part of tenancy sustainment so customers will continue to be referred or signposted for floating support or debt management advice depending on their individual needs.

Working in collaboration with a wide range of organisations, a Tenancy Sustainability budget is used to deliver services and solutions to help and support new and vulnerable customers for the common good - sustaining tenancies; which can only be positive for the communities we serve.

#### ***Priority Five – Digital Transformation and Take-up***

The devastating impact of Covid-19, and the resulting lockdowns, has undoubtedly acted as a catalyst, speeding up digital adoption and introducing new trends at a rate few could have predicted. It has also provided the perfect opportunity to convert our customers to digital take-up (channel shifting), leading to enduring change.

As Tenant Services, and the Council as a whole, looks to define our “new normal”, understanding the immediate and long-term impact of Covid-19 on digital behaviours is paramount. As an example, during lockdown, between 14 March and 14 April 2020, six million people started banking online for the first time. Of these, 60% say they are likely to continue doing so at the same frequency once life returns to “normal”.

We should expect our customers to continue wanting more convenient and timely access to our services, embracing digital tools as a way to deliver some of them and interact with customers.

The basic concept of digital take-up is to take communication from one medium and move it to another. For example, moving towards services online from other channels such as paper or telephone.

As the table below shows, the current cost per transaction for an Income Management Officer's time is incredibly high, whereas channel shifting to self-service reduces the resources needed, resulting in a lower cost per digital transaction

COMMUNICATION CHANNEL	OFFICER INVOLVEMENT	COST PER TRANSACTION
Home visit	✓	£13.51
Walk-in	✓	£7.29
Live Phone Call	✓	£4.29
Email	✓	£2.43
Phone Self-Service (ATP)	✗	£1.49
Web Self-Serve (online)	✗	£0.52p

Accepting and using advances in technology, allows our customers the freedom to move away from more traditional communication methods (for example, email and telephone), incentivising them to use a digital channel to self-serve via a Smartphone, notebook or other such device; therefore, not only empowering them to support themselves but also giving them a feeling of greater control by shifting their behaviour.

Smartphones have been adopted by all age groups and are the most frequently used devices in the UK; 87% of 18 to 75 year olds own a Smartphone<sup>3</sup> with 95% using their device on a daily basis<sup>4</sup>; no other device gets close to this frequency of usage. Since 2013, use by 45-54 year olds has leapt from 60 to 90% and among 55-75 year olds doubled to 80%.

However, it's not just about cutting costs, it will also free up officer time to spend on higher value, more complex tasks, simply put, we will be assigning the right resource for the right job, allowing us to free up valuable resources.

Likewise, increasing digital take-up also doesn't mean we are expecting all our customers to use online services independently. There are many reasons why some

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.deloitte.co.uk/mobileuk/#uk-device-penetration-2>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.deloitte.co.uk/mobileuk/#uk-frequency-by-usage-of-device>

of our customers may be unwilling or unable to use a digital service, for example, due to mental health issues or learning difficulties; physical or cognitive disabilities; they lack language or literacy skills; or they can't access or afford the technology to go online.

Therefore, offline services, such as access to support, will still be available to those who prefer to complete tasks using non-digital methods. However, we will continue to explore why some customers are choosing these routes and take informed action to change how they access our services.

## **8. Monitoring the strategy**

All Council employees and Councillors can view Income Management and Recovery monthly strategic indicators by accessing Excelsis, the Council's performance management framework, which is the system used to help monitor progress against action plans, performance indicators, and risks.

The Head of Housing Services will also provide regular updates to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Housing Committee.

This strategy will be monitored in conjunction with the HRA Delivery Plan, Housing Strategy 2019-2024, Members Information Briefings, Keynotes, and social media.

## **9. Conclusion**

To conclude; we acknowledge that to be successful we have to be adaptable, remaining committed to continuously improving what services we have and taking an informed approach to investment and income generation so we can continue to meet housing need in the future.


## Performance Monitoring Report: Housing Committee

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	11 January 2021																								
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	<b>Members: Stephen Davies, Lyndsey Green, Mattie Ross, Jenny Miles</b> <b>Officers: Kevin Topping, Joe Gordon, Phil Bishop, Leonie Lockwood</b>																								
<b>PERFORMANCE UPDATE</b> <i>(please give a brief progress update on the following areas)</i>																									
	<p><b><u>Homelessness</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers moving into SDC accommodation out of temp accommodation.</li> </ul> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Period.</th> <th>SDC Tenancy</th> <th>RP Tenancy</th> <th>Other **</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2019/20 Q1</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019/20 Q2</td> <td>8</td> <td>3</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020/21 Q1</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020/21 Q2</td> <td>9</td> <td>3</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020/21 Q3</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> <td>16</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>** Other reasons include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding own accommodation.</li> <li>• Abandonment.</li> <li>• Assisted into private sector accommodation with Homeless Prevention Fund.</li> <li>• Use of mediation to allow a return home.</li> <li>• Eviction.</li> <li>• End of duty to provide accommodation. (Phil Bishop)</li> </ul>	Period.	SDC Tenancy	RP Tenancy	Other **	2019/20 Q1	6	7	8	2019/20 Q2	8	3	10	2020/21 Q1	0	0	4	2020/21 Q2	9	3	13	2020/21 Q3	4	1	16
Period.	SDC Tenancy	RP Tenancy	Other **																						
2019/20 Q1	6	7	8																						
2019/20 Q2	8	3	10																						
2020/21 Q1	0	0	4																						
2020/21 Q2	9	3	13																						
2020/21 Q3	4	1	16																						

## **Building Affordable Homes**

- Five new homes completed at Southbank, Woodchester on 25 November.
- Contracts awarded to Beard Construction for the next three schemes, Ringfield, Nailsworth, Summersfield Rd, Minchinhampton and Broadfield Rd, Eastington with start on site for Ringfield in January with the other two following on in March. All 36 homes currently programmed to be completed in this calendar year.
- Awaiting planning decision for the 5 unit scheme at Orchard Road, Ebley which can then be added into the programme with the same contractor due to the procurement through the Westworks DPS.
- Planning applications being prepared for Glebelands, Cam and Cambridge House, Dursley to provide a further 36 new homes.
- Strategy for New Council Homes was approved by members at the Housing Committee on 22 September 2020 and the action plan is being worked through.
- Modernisation works have been completed at the sheltered housing scheme at Willow Road in Stonehouse and works have started at Springfield Court in Cam and are due to be complete by the end of March.

## **Tenancy Management**

<b>Activity</b>		<b>Cases</b>
Anti- Social Behaviour (ASB)		41 open ASB cases (as at 30/12/20)
<b>Q1</b>	April	36
	May	29
	June	19
<b>Total Q1</b>		<b>84</b>
<b>Q2</b>	July	14
	August	16
	September	31
<b>Total Q2</b>		<b>61</b> 
<b>Q3</b>	October	11
	November	12
	December	18
<b>Total Q3</b>		41

### **Commentary:**

#### **Monitoring Comments:**

From the current 41 open ASB cases, 10 are drug related and are therefore considered high risk, 20 are noise related and 11 are neighbour disputes, these are low level cases.

#### **Explanation for Performance and Action:**

Since Q2, 20 ASB cases have been closed due to the NMO team resolving these cases by using a range of tools such as mediation, Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (ABA's) and partnership working. Resolving ASB issues can be time consuming as evidence needs to be gathered over a period of time and this is not always forthcoming.

Four existing cases have been carried through from Q1, which have required substantial evidence gathering, support, and continuous discussions with One Legal. One of these cases has been through the legal system and is still ongoing due to breaches of the civil injunction. Three are in the process of being considered for legal action.

## Income Management Performance Report

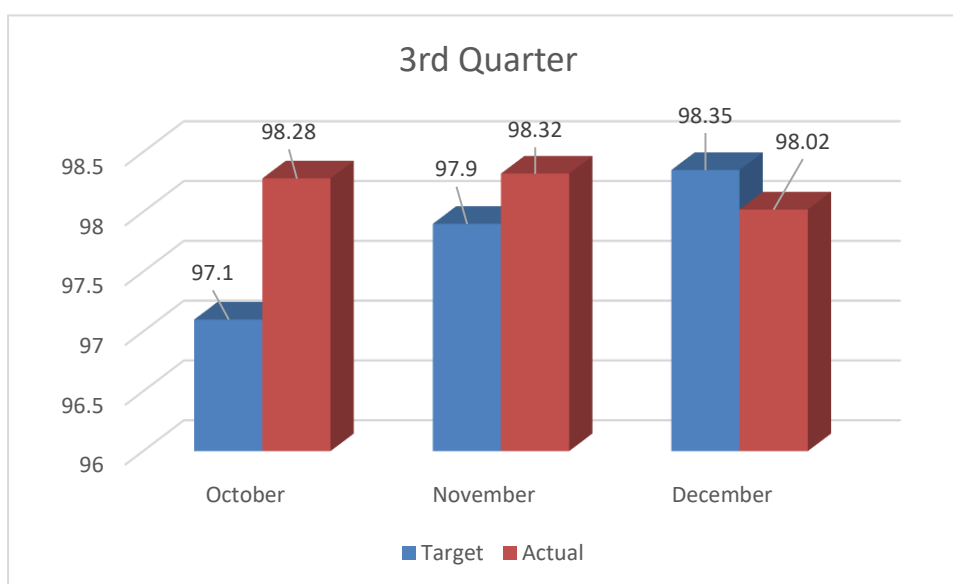
Indicator	Target	Actual Value	Trend	YTD %
<b>Rent Collection (BVPi66a)</b>	98.35%	98.02%	↓	~
<b>Current Rent Arrears (YTD)</b>	£274,210.13	£401,376.24	↑	+35.86%
<b>Universal Credit</b>	£303,710.94 <sup>^</sup> (total debt)	1095* (no of claimants)	↑	+27.18%* +35.49% <sup>^</sup>

### Performance Indicator Definition~

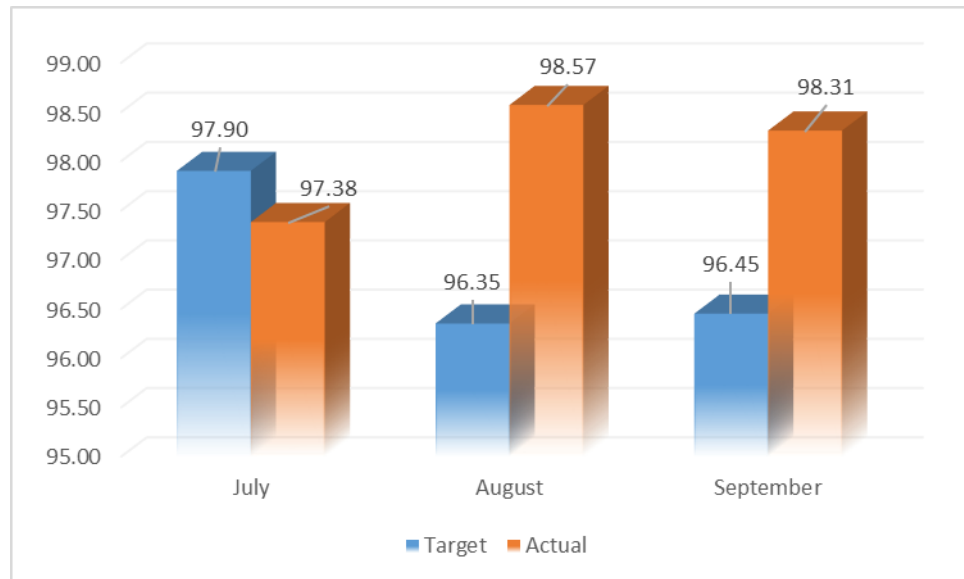
#### **Rent Collection (BVPi66a)**

The proportion of rent collected is calculated from the data on the gross HRA rent collected during the year (i.e. including that met through Housing Benefit), as a proportion of the total HRA rent available for collection in the year, but with rent arrears from former tenants accrued before the year end excluded (i.e. the latest potential rent income after allowing for vacant dwellings and including arrears of current tenants outstanding at the beginning of the year).

SI - IM01	<b><u>Rent Collection (BVPi66a)</u></b>	
Target	Actual Value	Trend
98.35%	98.02%	↓



### 2nd Quarter



#### Commentary:

##### Monitoring Comments:

The delay in posting the Direct Debit credit for 1 January 2021 (due to the New Year bank holiday) has impacted negatively on December's rent collection data.

##### Explanation for Performance and Action:

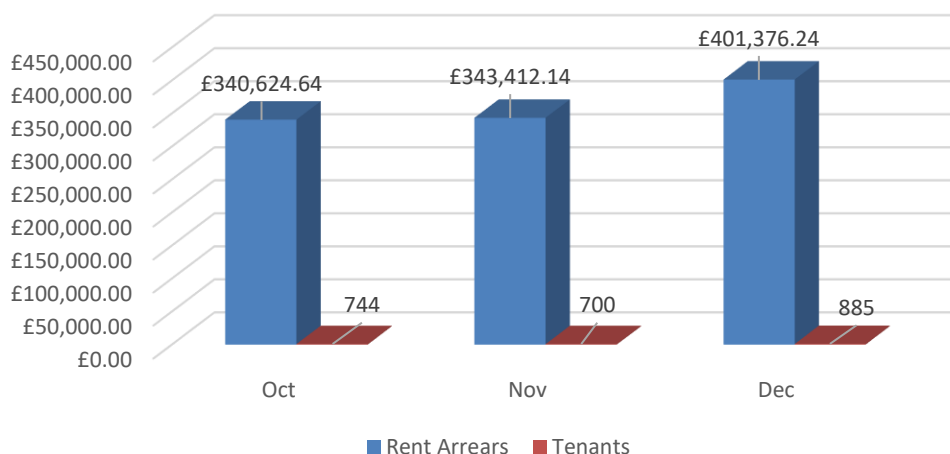
During lockdown, the government introduced several measures to protect social housing tenants, however, the message that tenants continue to pay their rent as normal has been, and is still, very clear as the government has made a strong package of financial support available. Therefore, the Income Management team continue to collect rent as per our Income Collection policy, taking into account tenants' individual circumstances, and agreeing sustainable payment plans where appropriate.

SI - IM04

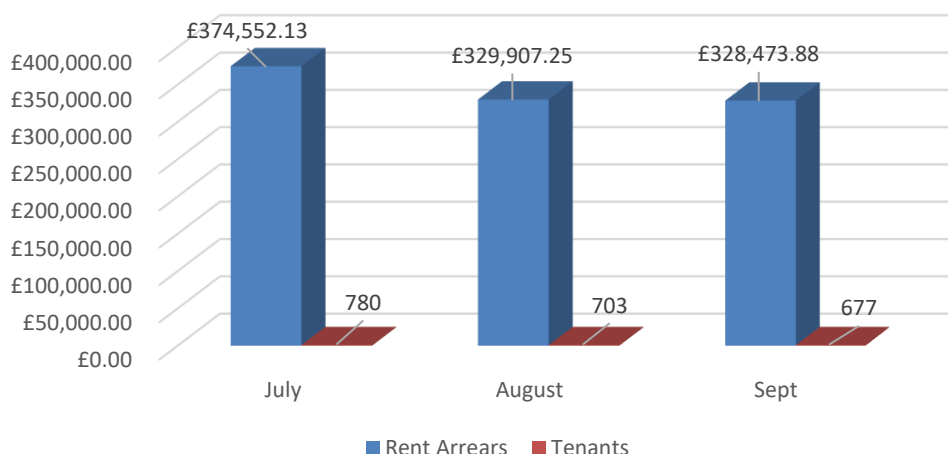
#### Current Rent Arrears (YTD)

Target	Actual Value	Trend	YTD %
£274,210.13	£401,376.24	↑	+35.86%

### 3rd Quarter



## 2nd Quarter



### Commentary:

#### Monitoring Comments:

Historically, rent arrears increase in December, due to the holiday period; but the prolonged impact of COVID-19 also continues to contribute.

- Rent arrears have increased by 35.86% YTD (17% monthly).
- The DD payment due for 1 January of £347,424.39 has not yet been credited to the rent accounts due to the New Year bank holiday and this will have impacted negatively on data.
- There has been a 31% increase in the number of tenants in arrears since the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter (677 to 885), 5.56% YTD (810 to 855).
- 112 tenants in receipt of housing benefit are in arrears, equal to 13% of all accounts in arrears with debt totalling £29,232.09. Housing benefit is currently paid to rent accounts weekly in advance.
- 1,746 tenants pay their rent via direct debit.

#### Explanation for Performance and Action:

The Coronavirus Act 2020 continues to protect tenants by delaying when legal action can be taken against them for non-payment of rent. The Act has also extended the required notice period length to 6 months following the service of a NOSP (Notice of Seeking Possession).

Whilst the stay on possession proceedings expired on 20 September 2020 and we are now able to progress possession claims through the courts, we are carefully prioritising cases and have yet to take further action against any tenants for rent arrears that have arisen directly as a result of COVID-19.

To protect against Coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission, the government changed the law to ensure bailiffs do not to enforce evictions in England until 11 January 2021. This means that no eviction notices can be served until 11 January and, given the 14-day notice period required, no evictions are expected to be enforced until 25 January 2021 at the earliest. The only exceptions to this are the most serious circumstances: illegal occupation, false statement, anti-social behaviour, perpetrators of domestic abuse in social housing, where a property is unoccupied following the death of a tenant, and extreme rent arrears equivalent to 9 months' rent with any arrears accrued since 23 March discounted.



- 96 tenants are currently under an active Possession order.
- There are no Warrant (eviction) actions currently pending.

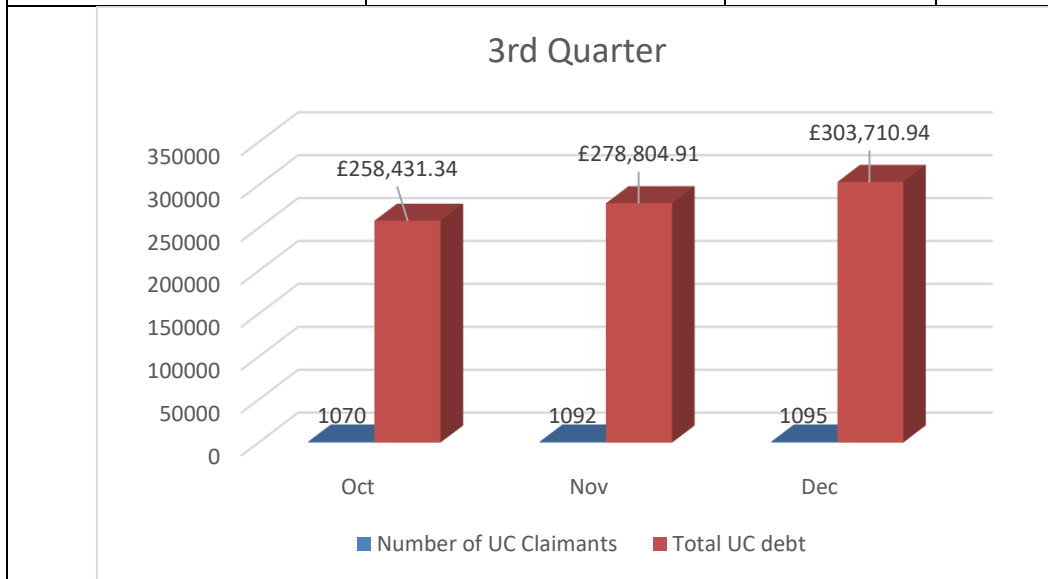
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-and-renting-guidance-for-landlords-tenants-and-local-authorities/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-landlords-and-tenants>

The IMOs continue to proactively engage with tenants to ensure they are receiving the support needed to help them manage their rent accounts and sustain their tenancies.

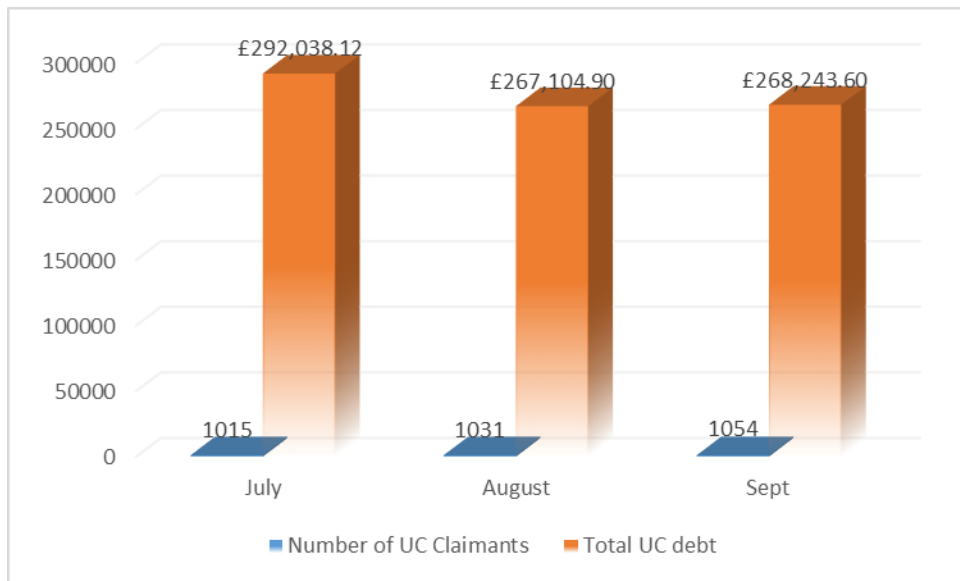
Year to date, 62 referrals have been made to GL Communities for free debt management and benefits advice. This service has been of great help to tenants who might not have had to access the benefits systems before, so were apprehensive about making a claim.

22 tenants have been referred to, and received, food parcels from Stroud Foodbank. During the week commencing 14 December 2020, 13 Christmas hampers were also delivered to tenants to sustain them through the holiday period.

<b>Universal Credit</b>			
No of Tenants in Receipt of UC	Total Arrears (£)	Trend	YTD %
1095*	£303,710.94^	↑	+27.18%* +35.49%^



## 2nd Quarter



### Commentary:

#### Monitoring Comments:

- Universal Credit claimants in arrears equates to 63% of all SDC tenants in arrears (544 / 885).
- Average debt per UC claimant in arrears is £558.29.
- 50.32% of UC claimants (551) are either in credit or have a zero balance on their rent account.
- Managed (direct rent) payments are being collected for 160 claimants totalling £120,909.32 for December.

#### Explanation for Performance and Action:

Universal Credit payments are made 4 weeks in arrears for all claimants.

The IMOs continue to communicate regularly with Stroud JobCentre resolving UC queries.

Claimants requiring additional support are encouraged to apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment which can be used to help with rent payments in the social rented sector. They are also encouraged to engage with GL Communities or other support agencies for free debt management advice.

#### Housing maintenance (contract services)

##### Comments:

The backlog of voids from Lockdown No 1 has been completed since November. Lockdown No 2 and the effect of the capacity of our voids contractor, working within Covid safe guidelines has resulted in a current backlog of 50 properties has been created. These are currently being programmed and a separate workforce is being allocated to ensure we are completing newly arising voids

We continue to try and manage tenant's expectations in terms of timescales to respond to and complete repairs. We are continuing to update communications via all channels to remind tenants that we are still in a post pandemic state of recovery.

The new Planned Maintenance contract mobilisation is going well with the external works are due to start mid-January. Internal works have been delayed due to Covid.

**Q3 Figures**

Q2 figures are indicated in brackets for comparison.

**Repairs & Voids**

Repairs raised = 1906 (2307)  
 Repairs completed = 1175 (1498)  
 Outstanding = 731 scheduled to date (all within target completion dates) (809)  
 Material spend = £119,644 to date (£71,380)  
 Backlog = 2131 (includes jobs awaiting parts and scheduled until end January) (1469)

Voids scheduled = 12 (20)  
 Voids issued = 165 (132)  
 Voids complete = 139 (71)  
 Voids open = 14 (18)  
 To be scheduled = 50 (22)  
 C19 Backlog remaining = 0 (3)

**Heating & Electrical**

Gas Servicing = 877 (1243)  
 Gas Repairs = 473 (291)  
 Electrical Repairs = 552 (579)

**Tenant Satisfaction**

Tenant satisfaction is at present not being measured due to capacity and ongoing Covid 19 restrictions. We hope to be in a position to start measuring this with some degree of accuracy from quarter 4.

**Comparison to Previous Service**

Again at present we are not in a position to accurately provide a comparison due to the initial impact of Covid 19. A fully costed performance and outturn report will be provided at the end of the financial year.

<p><b>PROJECTS / CAPITAL PROGRAMME (if not covered in CDP)</b></p>	
<p><b>PERFORMANCE MEASURES (see Excelsis where applicable)</b></p>	<p>Property Services: Performance is measured through project progress and outcomes Performance indicators need to be reviewed as part of future service planning.</p> <p>RTB sales, new build and sheltered completions, disposals are all recorded on Excelsis.</p>

<b>RISKS (SEE EXCELSIS)</b>	
<b>RELEVANT FINANCE ISSUES</b>	
<b>ANY OTHER ISSUES CONSIDERED AT THE MEETING (eg staffing / resources)</b>	<b>Homelessness section to be reviewed to be more relevant to Temporary Accommodation and impacts/effects and benchmarking against other providers</b>
<b>FOLLOW UP (any issues for consideration at the next meeting)</b>	

<b>ANY ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANT CONCERN TO BE REPORTED TO AUDIT AND STANDARDS</b>	
<b>ANY ACTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE</b>	
<b>REPORT SUBMITTED BY</b>	Councillor Stephen Davies and Councillor Lindsey Green
<b>DATE OF REPORT</b>	14 January 2021

**STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**HOUSING COMMITTEE**

**2 FEBRUARY 2021**

**WORK PROGRAMME**

**AGENDA  
ITEM NO**

**10**

<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Matter to be considered</b>	<b>Notes (e.g. lead Member/Officer)</b>
<b>23.03.21</b>	Cleaner Estates Strategy	Tenancy Operations Manager
	Tenant Led Service Standards	Principal Neighbourhood Management Officer
	Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy	Tenancy Operations Manager
	Disposal of HRA Sites	Head of Property Services
	Member Reports a) Housing Review Panel b) Tenant Representatives to provide a verbal update	Chair - Cllr Miles Tenant Representatives - Sandra Longstreth & TBC
	Work Programme 2021/22	Chair – Cllr Ross & Strategic Director of Communities

**Items to be considered at a future meeting**

- Revised Homeseeker Policy - Senior Housing Strategy & Enabling Officer
- 10 Year Strategy on Housing's Contribution to CN2030 – Head of Contract Services
- Energy Efficiency – Head of Contract Services
- Private Sector Housing Standards – Housing Renewal Manager
- De-pooling Rent and Service Charges - General Needs (Late 2021) - Head of Housing Services, Tenancy Operations Manager, Principal Accountant

<b>Published Members' Information Sheets</b>	
<b>Date sent &amp; ref no</b>	<b>Topic</b>
July 2020 HC.001	Update for Members regarding the prevention of housing debt during the COVID-19 emergency
July 2020 HC.002	Regulator Standards 2020
July 2020 HC.003	HRA Delivery Plan 2020 & Appendix
July 2020 HC.004	Older Persons Strategy Action Plan
July 2020 HC.005	Armed Forces Covenant 2019 - 2020
September 2020 HC.006	SDC Property Care
November 2020 HC.007	New Homes and Regeneration Programme and Sheltered Modernisation Update
December 2020 HC.008	Tenancy Fraud KT1 - December 2020

December 2020 HC.009	TV Licensing in Sheltered Housing
December 2020 HC.010	New Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) Complaint handling code
January 2021 HC.011	Community Hubs in Sheltered Housing

**Information Sheets for Future Meetings:**

- Budget Monitoring Report 2020/21 Quarter 2 (February 2021) – Accountancy Manager
- Budget Monitoring Report 2020/21 Quarter 3 (March 2021) – Accountancy Manager
- Annual review of the HRA delivery plan – Head of Housing Services – TBC
- Strategic Sheltered Housing Needs Assessment – Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager – TBC
- Gypsy and Traveller Protocol - Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager - TBC