



# Public Document Pack STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices • Ebley Mill • Ebley Wharf • Stroud • GL5 4UB

Telephone 01453 766321

[www.stroud.gov.uk](http://www.stroud.gov.uk)

Email: [democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk)

23 January 2023

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Housing Committee will be held on **TUESDAY, 31 JANUARY 2023** in the Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Ebley Wharf, Stroud at **7.00 pm**

Kathy O'Leary  
Chief Executive

**Please Note:** The meeting is being held in the Council Chamber at Stroud District Council and will be streamed live on the Council's [YouTube Channel](#). A recording of the meeting will be published onto the [Council's website](#). 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.

If you wish to attend this meeting, please contact [democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk). This is to ensure adequate seating is available in the Council Chamber.

### AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES**  
To receive apologies of absence.
2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**  
To receive declarations of interest.
3. **MINUTES (Pages 3 - 8)**  
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2022.
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 Wednesday, 25 January 2023**

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. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**  
See Agenda Item 4 for deadlines for submission.

**6. LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND BID (Pages 9 - 12)**

On 21<sup>st</sup> December the Government launched the 'Local Authority Housing Fund', a new fund to support Local Authorities with the purchase of properties to house households fleeing conflict in the Ukraine and Afghanistan. Stroud has been given an indicative allocation of £1.8m to purchase 15 properties with a deadline of 25<sup>th</sup> January to submit an expression of interest and the end of February to complete a Memorandum of Understanding with Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

**7. INFORMATION SHEETS**

- (a) Out of Hours Service Provision (To Follow)
- (b) Tackling Damp and Mould (Pages 13 - 16)
- (c) The Housing Enabling Process (Pages 17 - 20)

**8. MEMBER / OFFICER REPORTS**

- (a) Progress Update on Key Action Plans (Cleaner Estates & Service Standards and Tenant Engagement) (Verbal Report)
- (b) Tenant Representatives (Verbal Report)

**9. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 21 - 22)**

To consider the work programme.

**Members of Housing Committee**

**Councillor Mattie Ross (Chair)**

Councillor Paula Baker  
Councillor Katrina Davis  
Councillor Colin Fryer  
Councillor Lindsey Green  
Councillor Jessie Hoskin

**Councillor Lucas Schoemaker (Vice-Chair)**

Councillor Nicholas Housden  
Councillor Steve Hynd  
Councillor Christopher Jockel  
Councillor Jenny Miles  
Councillor Loraine Patrick



# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices • Ebley Mill • Ebley Wharf • Stroud • GL5 4UB

Tel: (01453) 754 351/754 321

www.stroud.gov.uk

Email: democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 6 December 2022

7.00 - 8.51 pm

Council Chamber

### Minutes

#### Membership

##### **Councillor Mattie Ross (Chair)**

Councillor Paula Baker  
 \* Councillor Katrina Davis  
 Councillor Colin Fryer  
 Councillor Lindsey Green  
 Councillor Jessie Hoskin  
 \*Absent

##### **Councillor Lucas Schoemaker (Vice-Chair)**

\* Councillor Nicholas Housden  
 Councillor Steve Hynd  
 Councillor Christopher Jockel  
 Councillor Jenny Miles  
 \* Councillor Loraine Patrick

#### Tenant Representatives

Becky Adams

Mike Richter

#### Officers in Attendance

Strategic Director of Communities  
 Interim Head of Housing Services  
 Head of Strategic Housing Services  
 (Interim)  
 Accountancy Manager

Housing Manager  
 Head of Property Services  
 New Homes & Regeneration Manager  
 Principal Accountant  
 Democratic Services & Elections Officer

#### HC.027      Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Davis, Housden and Patrick.

Councillor Patrick passed along her thanks to the Officers.

#### HC.028      Declaration of Interests

There were none.

#### HC.029      Minutes

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2022 and the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on the 18 October 2022 were approved as a correct record.

**HC.030**      **Public Question Time**

There were none.

**HC.031**      **Members' Questions**

There were none.

**HC.032**      **New Homes and Regeneration Programme Update**

The New Homes and Regeneration Manager introduced the report and drew the Committees attention to the following key points:

- Construction costs, materials cost and the cost of borrowing had all increased considerably. During the past 9 months, 3 cost reviews had been undertaken to understand and monitor movement within the housing construction market which showed an increase of 40% and 60%. The cost increase had resulted in an additional £5.4m required to deliver the programme.
- The site at Orchard Road, Ebley was recommended to be removed from the programme and was not included in the revised costings. The recommendation to remove the site was subject to a review, the results of which would be brought back to Housing Committee.
- Should a future decision approve the sale of the Orchard Road site, the Capital Receipt would be re-invested into the New Homes Programme.
- The New Homes and Regeneration Programme was not funded by rental income from existing properties, a proposed funding plan could be found in Table 4 on page 19 of the reports pack.
- There were a few rental options available for the New Build properties. These were detailed in section 4.6 of the report. It was recommended to charge the full 80% market rent where necessary to fund sites.

The New Homes and Regeneration Manager gave the following answers to questions:

- There was no specific modelling completed to date to justify the increase in rent for higher energy performance however, they had reached out to tenants to request that they shared their usage data in order to model the saving opportunity to future tenants.
- The typical lifespan of a new house would be in excess of 60 years, if well-built and well maintained.
- The council had recently made contact with a modular housing suppliers in order to explore other options and construction types.

In response to Councillor Hoskin, the Accountancy Manger confirmed that the local housing allowance was not linked to market rents and also spanned an area of Gloucester which meant that it didn't always cover Stroud District rental prices. However, the 80% of market rent was not calculated each year, therefore if rental prices changed drastically, tenants rent would only increase in line with social rents. When the property was re-let, the 80% of market rent would then be recalculated.

Councillor Miles asked for a summary of the position of the Orchard Road site. The New Homes and Regeneration Manager explained that the site had planning permission for 5 affordable homes. It was recommended for removal due to the cost of developing the site. The cost had increased by over 100% since the original estimate which made it no longer viable to develop.

Councillor Baker proposed and Councillor Jockel seconded.

Councillor Miles expressed her support that the Council were looking at other options to support affordable housing on the Orchard Road site. She also expressed disappointment that there were no bungalows included in the upcoming builds and whether they could be included in the future.

Councillors Baker, Schoemaker, Hynd and Jockel commended the report.

After being put to a vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED To:**

- a) **note the position of the current New Homes & Regeneration Programme.**
- b) **approve the removal of the Orchard Road site in Ebley from the New Homes & Regeneration Programme, subject to a report back to Committee on options for the future use of the site to support affordable housing.**
- c) **delegate authority to the Head of Property Services in consultation with the Accountancy Manager and the Chair and Vice Chair of Housing Committee to charge a mixture of either social rents, affordable rents capped at LHA, or affordable rents at the full 80% of market rent to maximise the funding available to the programme and assist with the long-term viability of particular sites and**

**RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** To approve the request for additional budget of £5.42m to be funded from capital receipts and borrowing as set out within the report to enable the council to continue with the next phase of the New Homes & Regeneration Programme.

**HC.033      BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 QUARTER 2**

The Principal Accountant introduced the report and highlighted the following key points:

- The General Fund Budget Monitoring position showed an underspend of £158k which was summarised in table 1 on page 32 of the reports pack. The main variances were set out in paragraphs 3.3 & 3.4 of the report.
- The General Fund Capital Programme was reprofiled which meant there were no variances at that time.
- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Monitoring position showed a net overspend of £559k. The Forecast Outturn position included estimates of the increased gas and electricity costs. The main variances for the HRA were detailed in paragraphs 5.6 – 5.11 on pages 34-35 of the reports pack.
- The HRA Capital Programme was revised to £16.389k which included revised Capital Budgets due to the re-profiling of the Capital Programmes.

In response to Councillor Baker, it was confirmed that the £35k overspend detailed in paragraph 5.11 was in addition to the £75k increased variance relating to Council Tax mentioned in paragraph 5.8 of the report.

Councillor Schoemaker questioned whether there was an underspend in Repairs and Maintenance during the Covid Pandemic when work was unable to take place. The Accountancy Manager explained that none of the staff were furloughed and they had continued to be paid during that time however, they would look into getting the figures.

Councillor Jockel proposed and Councillor Baker seconded.

After being put to a vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED To note the outturn forecast for the General Fund and HRA revenue budgets and the Capital Programmes for this Committee.**

**HC.034 HOUSING COMMITTEE BUDGET ESTIMATES – REVISED 2022/23 AND ORIGINAL 2023/24 AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022/22 – 2026/27**

The Accountancy Manager introduced the report and explained that the report included a revised budget for the current financial year and budget setting for the coming financial year 2023/24. She highlighted an error (Error! Reference source not found) that had been published in the decision box of the report and asked the Committee not to include it in the decision. She then provided an overview of the report and its salient points which included: General Fund (Overview on table 1, page 41)

- Increased budget for pay and national insurance due to the national pay award.
- Fees and charges set out in appendix A.
- The homelessness grant from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) was due to continue which was an unexpected additional income.

General Fund Capital Programme

This was set out in table 3 on page 42 of the reports pack and changes included:

- The addition of a £1m Warm Homes-Low Carbon Initiative grant scheme for private sector homes in the 2022/23 budget.

Housing Revenue Account

This position had changed significantly throughout the year, and further savings were required, the changes were outlined in table 4 on page 43. The Accountancy Manager highlighted the proposed changes in rents and service charges which were set out in appendix B and included:

- Dwelling rents - Central Government had capped the rental increases to 7% which equated to a £900k a year difference from the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1% (11.1%). It was assumed that any new lets would be charged at the higher 11.1% increase.
- Shared Ownership rents would be increased by 13.1% in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI) due to the lease agreement. Support by way of a Tenant Support Fund could be provided for tenants impacted by these increases.
- District heating systems (IL) - The average weekly charge for tenants was £7.38 with the actual cost rising to £54pw. It was proposed to cap the cost in line with the residential rate to £28.09pw.
- Independent living (IL) - Proposed costs had again been capped at the residential rate and IL tenants were eligible for housing benefits and universal credit to support with costs.

Capital Programme

The proposed capital programme included a revised budget of £16,389k for 2022/23, and a budget of £25,710k for 2023/24. A full breakdown of the capital programme and capital financing was included at Appendix D

Councillor Miles questioned the difference in increases between Walter Preston Court and Malvern Gardens listed in appendix B. The Accountancy Manager explained that those figures did not including the district heating system and were solely based on utilities.

2022/23

The Accountancy Manager gave the following answers in response to questions asked:

- The Tenant Support Fund was due to start in April 2023, they would be looking to complete the modelling for this in the coming months in order to best target those tenants who will need it.
- It was difficult to compare to other Social Housing Providers because Stroud District Council were much earlier in the budget setting process.
- The forecast figures included within the report were based on the rent cap only being in place for a 12 month period. Should the Government decide to put an additional rent cap in place for a further year, the figures would need to be recalculated.
- The rent was cap created a difference of 4% between rental income and inflation however because actual costs had risen by more than inflation it meant that the percentage difference between costs and income was greater than 4%. This would continue to have an impact on the HRA in future years due to existing tenants remaining on the lower charges.

Councillor Schoemaker proposed and Councillor Hynd seconded.

Councillor Fryer highlighted the importance of the Tenant Support Fund.

Councillors Jockel, Baker, Miles and Hynd commended the Officers for the report.

After being put to a vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

- RECOMMENDED TO STRATEGY & RESOURCES AND COUNCIL** That:
- a) The revised General Fund Housing revenue budget for 2022/23 and original budget 2023/24 are approved
  - b) The Resource Fees and Charges list in Appendix A is approved
  - c) The revised HRA revenue budget for 2022/23 and original budget 2023/24 are approved
  - d) The movement to and from HRA balances and capital reserves as detailed in Appendix C and section 11 are approved
  - e) That from 1 April 2023:
    - i. Social rents and affordable rents are increased by 7%, in line with national rent guidance
    - ii. Garage rents are increased by 7%
    - iii. Landlord service charges are increased by 7%, except Independent Living Scheme charges and district heating charges which are increased as set out in Appendix B
  - f) That the General Fund Housing Capital Programme, as detailed in Section 4, be included in the Council's Capital Programme
  - g) That the HRA Capital Programme for 2022/23 to 2026/27, as detailed in Appendix D, be included in the Council's Capital Programme.

### **HC.035      Member / Officer Reports**

- a) Progress update on Key action plans (Cleaner Estates & Service Standards and tenant engagement)

A report was circulated prior to the committee.

There were no questions.

b) Tenant Representatives

Mr Ritcher, Tenant Representative, explained that they had complete a scrutiny panel on voids, which involved interviewing officers, reviewing data and learning about the process. He further informed the Committees of the recommendations that they had concluded from the scrutiny.

Ms Adams informed the committee her activities since the last Committee Meeting which included:

- A visit to Middle of the Hill Community Group and the end of November to engage with residents as part of the Christmas Tree Festival.
- A visit to All Pulling Together (APT), a Community Group in Stonehouse, to introduce herself. She hoped to return weekly on a Monday to support and engage with residents.
- A meeting with the Accountancy Manager to gain a better understanding of the budget report ahead of the committee.
- A Zoom meeting with Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) to gain understanding of the services they offer and to connect with other Involved Tenants.

c) Performance Monitoring

The report was circulated prior to the Committee.

Councillor Green highlighted that there was some information that could not be attained due to software issues. They were looking into solutions for this.

Councillor Baker raised a question with CDPCW2.2A on page 69 of the reports pack. The Interim Head of Housing explained that they did not have any benchmarking data at that time and it was unlikely they would be able to attain the data. This was a long-standing issue which they had hoped to resolve.

Councillor Green explained that those items would be reviewed in the future as it was impossible to performance manage something without the necessary data.

**HC.036**      **Work Programme**

The following changes had been made to the Work Programme:

- The Anti-social Behaviour Policy and Tenant Handbook Update had been postponed to the March Committee
- The Older Persons Strategy had been renamed to the Independent Living Strategy 2023-26
- The Results of Star Survey had been renamed to Tenant Support and Engagement

**RESOLVED To note the above updates to the Work Programme.**

The meeting closed at 8.51 pm

Chair



## STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

### HOUSING COMMITTEE

**31 JANUARY 2023**

<b>Report Title</b>	Local Authority Housing Fund bid			
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	On 21 <sup>st</sup> December the Government launched the 'Local Authority Housing Fund', a new fund to support Local Authorities with the purchase of properties to house households fleeing conflict in the Ukraine and Afghanistan. Stroud has been given an indicative allocation of £1.8m to purchase 15 properties with a deadline of 25 <sup>th</sup> January to submit an expression of interest and the end of February to complete a Memorandum of Understanding with Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).			
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<b>The Committee RESOLVES to approve the submission of a capital bid to DLUHC for the purchase of accommodation to be held within the HRA.</b>			
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Cross-departmental consultation has taken place with Property Services and Finance.			
<b>Report Author</b>	Pippa Stroud, Head of Strategic Housing Services (Interim) Email: pippa.stroud@stroud.gov.uk			
<b>Options</b>	A decision could be made not to submit a bid to the fund; however, this would mean that we would lose the opportunity to add to housing stock and limit our options to provide housing for those fleeing conflict.			
<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 The Government has launched a new Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) to assist Local Authorities to provide accommodation to families with housing needs who have arrived in the UK via Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement and relocation schemes. The intention of the LAHF is to address immediate pressures as well as increasing the stock of affordable homes for the future.
- 1.2 The LAHF is a £500m capital grant fund in financial years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 to support selected local authorities in England to obtain and refurbish property in order to provide sustainable housing for those unable to secure their own accommodation who are here under the following schemes: Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) (collectively referred to as the Afghan Schemes), Ukraine Family Scheme, the Homes for Ukraine and the Ukraine Extension Scheme (collectively referred to as Ukraine schemes).
- 1.3 As well as helping to fulfil the UK's humanitarian duties to assist those fleeing war, this fund is intended to reduce the impact of new arrivals on existing housing pressures and

ultimately create a lasting legacy for domestic households by providing a new and permanent supply of accommodation for local authorities to help address local housing and homelessness pressures. The Government expects up to 4,000 properties in total would be provided through this fund.

- 1.4 The fund aims to alleviate housing pressures on local authorities arising from recent and unforeseen conflicts in Afghanistan and Ukraine. As part of the government's humanitarian response to these crises, over 170,000 people have been welcomed to the United Kingdom. This has unavoidably created additional demand for housing at a time when local authorities are already under strain.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1 £1.8m of grant funding, subject to approval, is being provided by the Government to part fund the provision of 15 properties in the Stroud district. Due to the tight timescales involved these would need to be delivered by purchasing more inexpensive properties from the open market, such as properties previously sold under the Right to Buy or new properties from developers, if discounts are available.
- 2.2 The grant funding equates to about 35% of the expected purchase price, with the remainder needing to come from the HRA. It is proposed that £600k is funded from capital receipts (from the sale of garage sites) and £1.6m is HRA borrowing. This borrowing would be serviced from the rental incomes from the homes and so does not put any further financial pressure on the HRA. There will be additional revenue costs associated with these purchases as it will require additional resource, but these costs will be met from the General Fund as the initial purpose of these properties is to house families at risk of homelessness.
- 2.3 For the purposes of this scheme, we are being asked to purchase one larger (four or five bedroom) property. The remainder of the properties are likely to be two- or three-bedroom properties.

## **3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 In summary, the government is offering grant funding of £1.8m to part-fund 15 properties to house those fleeing conflict in the Ukraine and Afghanistan. The properties will form an addition to HRA stock, with the intention that they would then be available to any households in housing need once the current refugee crisis has passed.

## **4. IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1 Financial Implications**

The report above sets out details of significant implications in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2

Lucy Clothier, Accountancy Manager

Email: [Lucy.Clothier@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:Lucy.Clothier@stroud.gov.uk)

### **4.2 Legal Implications**

Stroud District Council has a general power to acquire land and property under Section 120 of the Local Government Act 1972 and may also rely on section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 where the purchase relates to regeneration and economic/social benefits in the council's area.

The District Council has a general duty to act prudently when purchasing land. To this end, in addition to valuations, appropriate title checks and searches will take place before the District Council commits to purchase the properties, to ensure that the title the District

Council acquires is good and marketable. Stamp Duty Land Tax will be payable on completion of the purchases.

Any concerns on the title will be reported to the Head of Strategic Housing Services for further instruction. Ambiguities in, for example, in any occupational lease, may result in unanticipated expenditure by the District Council in the future.

Tel: 01684 272141 Email: [legalservices@onelegal.org.uk](mailto:legalservices@onelegal.org.uk)

#### **4.3 Equality Implications**

There are not any specific changes to service delivery proposed within this decision.

#### **4.4 Environmental Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Tackling Damp and Mould**

### **Introduction**

In November 2022 a coroner's report attributed the tragic death of toddler Awaab Ishak in December 2022 to respiratory problems caused by prolonged exposure to damp and mould in his family's social housing managed by Rochdale Boroughwide Housing. Awaab's family had repeatedly reported problems with damp and mould in their home, dating back to 2017, but their landlord failed to remedy the problems. National attention has since focussed on poor housing conditions relating to damp and mould in both social and privately rented housing.

In October 2021 the Housing Ombudsman issued a Spotlight report on damp and mould. This report provides guidance to social landlords on taking complaints about damp and mould seriously, responding promptly and deplores some landlords' tendency to blame tenant lifestyles for damp and mould.

The Government has announced that it is reviewing Decent Home Standards and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System to focus more attention on damp and mould.

Damp can have a number of causes. These include penetrating damp, where moisture results from a problem such as a broken gutter, rising damp where damp proofing has failed, and condensation. All types of damp are associated with mould growth. Black mould spores can cause or exacerbate a range of health problems, particularly respiratory problems such as asthma.

Condensation occurs when cold, moist air meets a cold surface. Condensation is an inevitable part of domestic living, as daily living activities such as cooking, using the shower and doing laundry all produce moisture. Occupants' breathing also produces moisture, and overcrowding is likely to raise the risk of condensation and mould.

In order to reduce condensation, it is necessary to maintain a background temperature of about 18 degrees, and to ventilate homes. Using lids on pans, ensuring that any tumble driers are externally vented, shutting the kitchen and bathroom doors when cooking and washing and opening windows and/or using ventilation units will all help to reduce condensation and avoid mould growth. Ensuring that there is sufficient air circulation, by keeping furniture away from walls, avoiding cramming a lot of

**Helen Scullard, Interim Head of Housing**

furniture/possessions into a room or a lot of clothes into drawers and wardrobes, will also help.

The national cost of living crisis, and in particular the very large increases in utility costs, mean that many tenants are cutting down on their use of heating and turning off electrical ventilation. While this is completely understandable, it creates a dilemma as low temperatures and inadequate ventilation will exacerbate problems with damp and mould.

### **Stroud District Council Homes**

The majority of Stroud's Council homes are older properties. Expected standards of thermal efficiency have increased over these homes' lives. The Council has a programme of asset management, upgrading and retrofit. This includes work to fit external wall insulation, and upgrade doors and windows. We also employ a stock condition surveyor and undertake rolling surveys of the housing stock.

In some cases, a simple mould wash treatment and advice to the tenant about preventing and reducing condensation is effective. However, since damp and mould can have a variety of causes, and more than one may be present, it can take weeks or even months to identify why a tenant is experiencing problems with damp and mould. This often results in frustration, as tenants often expect a rapid resolution. Tenants' anxiety about the health risks from mould have understandably heightened since the coroner's report last November and the subsequent publicity.

### Incidence of Damp and Mould

Service and repair requests relating to damp and mould have increased greatly since the publicity surrounding the coroner's report. This is the case with all social landlords. This has increased pressure on staff in property care, asset management and tenancy management. At a time when the cost of living crisis is impacting on tenants' wellbeing it is another trigger which has resulted in increasingly tense and abusive attitudes towards staff.

Between 1 April 2022 and 19 January 2023, we received 11 Stage 1 complaints and 3 Stage complaints relating to damp and mould, comprising 11.5% of all complaints during the period.

**Helen Scullard, Interim Head of Housing**

**HOUSING COMMITTEE  
INFORMATION SHEET (NO.3)  
31 January 2023**We are proactive - advise, investigate, and invest

All Property Care operatives carry information leaflets about damp and mould which they distribute to tenants. They also actively look out for any problems with damp and mould when attending to undertake routine repairs or servicing work, to help catch problems early and ensure that tenants know what they can do to tackle problems with condensation.

As part of our review of damp and mould policies and procedures (further details below) we intend to provide basic training to all Housing staff who visit tenants' homes to help to identify and tackle damp and mould.

Property Care has invested in remote monitoring equipment, which can monitor a range of indicators including room temperature, moisture levels and whether ventilation equipment is in use. This equipment helps to identify the causes of damp, and what can be done to resolve it. It is necessary to leave the equipment in place over a period of weeks rather than days in order to obtain the necessary information.

In response to Government requirements for social landlords to give additional priority to damp and mould, Housing Services has set up a working group to review our current damp and mould policy and procedures, including additional checks as part of the void process. This group comprises officers from Property Care, Asset Management, Tenancy Management and tenant representatives.

Housing Services will continue to review and upgrade our response to damp and mould, and follow recommendations from central government, the Housing Ombudsman and the Social Housing Regulator. We will continue to prioritise tenants who are more vulnerable to the effects of damp and mould due to ill health, and to follow fair and transparent procedures to respond to requests for repairs and transfers. It is likely that there will be budget pressures, as additional work to tackle damp and mould will involve additional costs.

**Helen Scullard, Interim Head of Housing**

This page is intentionally left blank



## **The Housing Enabling Process - how new affordable homes are delivered.**

### **Why is affordable housing needed?**

*The need for subsidised housing provision has long been recognised. The cost of private sector housing that meets acceptable standards, compared with the level and distribution of incomes and assets, means significant numbers of households lack the resources to make a demand for decent housing effective in the market. Without subsidised housing, these households may fail to obtain housing of a decent standard.*

(Research Briefing March 2022, House of Commons Library)

### **What is affordable housing?**

Affordable housing, which can be for either rent or sale, is a specific product for those whose needs are not met by the market. It comprises different tenures, including social rent, affordable rent, and shared ownership.

The most commonly referred to definition of affordable housing is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This is the definition used by local authorities when making provision within their areas to meet local need for affordable housing.

### **Who owns affordable housing?**

While the SDC owns the majority of existing affordable homes in the district, Housing Associations are the largest developers of new affordable housing locally, completing 1300 such homes in the last 10 years. The bulk of these were enabled with officer support through the council's planning policies.

### **National Planning policy**

National planning policy has long provided the ability for local authorities to create policies to meet housing need in their district

This process starts with detailed statistical analysis to calculate the quantum and type of need, with outputs setting out the number of new affordable homes needed, alongside the size, type and tenure required. This analysis must be robust and defensible, as it will be tested and challenged by developers.

**Pippa Stroud, Interim Head of Strategic Housing Services**  
Email: [pippa.stroud@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:pippa.stroud@stroud.gov.uk)

The analysis outputs are then subject to viability testing to ensure that policies resulting from this are deliverable, and don't render sites unviable. Although the housing need outputs may show, for example, that all major development sites should deliver 60% of homes as affordable housing, there would be no point in having a Local Plan policy seeking this if it prevented sites coming forward by making them unviable.

### **Local Plan policies**

The result of this combined work then feeds into the drafting of Local Plan policies which seeks to meet need, as far as is viable. These draft policies are then subject to consultation, examined and adopted as part of the wider Local Plan process.

To this point, the work - from evidence base to policy adoption - has taken place as a collaboration between Housing Strategy and Planning Strategy officers. Once the policies have been adopted, the work then becomes a collaboration between Housing Strategy and Development Management officers for those policies to be implemented through the planning process.

Officer time taken on this work varies, but the enabling work broadly accounts for one-fifth to one-quarter of a full-time officer post, plus planning officer time.

### **Planning Application Process**

For large strategic housing sites such as Great Oldbury, much of the initial work is done on a pre-application basis, when detailed negotiations will begin around the number, tenure split, size, type, and quality standard of affordable home to be delivered across the development. The resulting outline planning permission will be accompanied by a legal agreement securing the affordable housing and setting out a delivery timeframe to ensure that the affordable homes are built concurrently with the market homes.

Affordable homes on large sites are almost always delivered by housing associations; the developer has a free choice as to which association they work with. If required, officers will support the developer in identifying an appropriate housing association partner.

Reserved Matters applications are then received for each phase of development, and at this point the negotiations will focus on the design, location and standard of the properties. For these applications, officer attention is on the integration of the affordable homes into the wider development, ensuring that the homes are 'tenure blind' and benefit from the same design, parking standards and amenity space as the

**Pippa Stroud, Interim Head of Strategic Housing Services**  
Email: [pippa.stroud@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:pippa.stroud@stroud.gov.uk)

**Housing Committee  
 INFORMATION SHEET (NO.4)  
 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023**

market homes. In short, it shouldn't be possible to identify the tenure of any homes on a development by their location, design, or quality.

As an example of the long timeframes involved in housing enabling work, Great Oldbury was identified as a strategic site in the 2015 Local Plan. Early discussions on this site began in 2011, with detailed affordable housing discussions taking place from 2014 onwards. Reserved matters applications are still being submitted on a phase-by-phase basis and are expected throughout 23/24 and beyond.

### Who gets the homes?

New rented affordable homes are advertised on Gloucestershire HomeseekerPlus in the same way that council properties are, while shared ownership properties are advertised on the Help to Buy website. Both routes have qualifying criteria to ensure that the homes only go to those who need them. Most housing association tenancies are assured tenancies, which, like council secure tenancies, are tenancies for life.

### Affordable Housing completions per annum

Year	Rented	Shared Ownership	Discounted Sale	Total
2021/22	114	131	0	245
2020/21	111	107	1	219
2019/20	116	81	1	198
2018/19	53	57	4	114
2017/18	89	33	0	122
2016/17	100	24	0	124
2015/16	45	37	0	82
2014/15	112	9	0	121
2013/14	87	27	0	114
2012/13	79	35	14	128

**Pippa Stroud, Interim Head of Strategic Housing Services**  
 Email: [pippa.stroud@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:pippa.stroud@stroud.gov.uk)

This page is intentionally left blank

**STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**HOUSING COMMITTEE**  
**31 JANUARY 2023**  
**WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23**

Date of meeting	Matter to be considered	Notes (e.g Lead Member/Officer)
<b>28.03.2023</b>	Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund	Head of Housing Services
	Budget Monitoring Q3	Principal Accountant
	Empty Property Delivery Plan	Head of Housing Services
	De-pooling of Rents and Service Charges	Income & Systems Manager
	Tenant Handbook Update	Housing Manager
	Independent Living Strategy 2023-26	Service Delivery Manager (Independent Living)
	Anti-Social Behaviour Policy	Head of Community Services
	HRA Delivery Plan Update	Head of Housing Services
	<b>Member/Officer Reports</b> a) Progress update on Key action plans (Cleaner Estates & Service Standards and tenant engagement) b) Performance Monitoring Q3 c) Tenant Representatives	Lead Member/Officer

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

- Tenancy Agreement (part of the de-pooling project) (2023)
- New Homes update on the site at Orchard Road.

**Future Information Sheets:**

- Updated Local Plan Affordable Housing Policies (2023)– Head of Strategic Housing Services (interim)
- Review of the Gloucestershire private sector housing survey (June 2023) – Housing Renewal Manager
- Social Housing Regulation Bill - Head of Housing Services (Spring 2023)

This page is intentionally left blank