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Cambridge City Council

HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To: Scrutiny Committee Members: Councillors Todd-Jones (Chair), Bird (Vice-Chair), Avery, Gawthrope, Holland, R. Moore, Page-Croft and Smart

Alternates: Councillors Perry and T. Moore

Tenants and Leaseholders: Lulu Agate (Tenant Representative) Diane Best (Leaseholder Representative), Kay Harris (Tenant Representative), John Marais (Tenant Representative), Diana Minns (Vice Chair /Tenant Representative), Caroline Oriokot (Tenant Representative) and Mandy Powell-Hardy (Tenant Representative).

Executive Councillor for Housing: Councillor Price

Despatched: Thursday, 9 June 2016

Date: Tuesday, 21 June 2016

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: Committee Room 1 & 2, The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge, CB2 3QJ

Contact: Toni Birkin

Direct Dial: 01223 457013

AGENDA

1 Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 Appointment of Vice-Chair (Tenant/Leaseholder Rep) for 2016/17

3 Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare at this stage any interests that they may have in an item shown on this agenda. If any member of the Committee is unsure whether or not they should declare an interest on a particular matter, they should seek advice from the Head of Legal Services **before** the meeting.

4 Minutes (Pages 7 - 16)

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

5 Public Questions

Please see information at the end of the agenda.

Items for Debate by the Committee and then Decision by the Executive Councillor for Housing

These items will require the Executive Councillor to make a decision after hearing the views of the Scrutiny Committee.

There will be a full debate on these items, and members of the public may ask questions or comment on the items if they comply with the Council's rules on Public Speaking set out below.

Part 1: To be chaired by Vice Chair (Tenant/Leaseholder Representative)
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Items for Debate by the Committee and then Decision by the Executive Councillor for Housing

6 2015/16 Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances – HRA *(Pages 17 - 30)*

7 Housing Transformation Programme

Report enclosed separately.

Part 2: To be taken by the Chair of the Committee
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Items for Debate by the Committee and then Decision by the Executive Councillor for Housing

8 2015/16 Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances – Housing General Fund Portfolio *(Pages 31 - 40)*

9 Homelessness and Strategic Approach to Homelessness in Cambridge City *(Pages 41 - 62)*

10 Local Government Ombudsman Decision Relating to Temporary Accommodation *(Pages 63 - 78)*

- 11 New Social Housing on Housing Revenue Account Infill Sites** (*Pages 79 - 86*)
- 12 Social Housing Programme** (*Pages 87 - 100*)
- 13 Cambridgeshire home improvement agency - adaptations plus framework procurement** (*Pages 101 - 104*)

Exclusion of Press and Public

It is recommended that the committee resolves to exclude the press and public during any discussion of **the appendix to** the following item by virtue of **paragraph(s) 3** of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

- 14 Disposal of 23 Magrath Avenue** (*Pages 105 - 110*)

Information for the Public

Location

The meeting is in the Guildhall on the Market Square (CB2 3QJ).

Between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. the building is accessible via Peas Hill, Guildhall Street and the Market Square entrances.

After 5 p.m. access is via the Peas Hill entrance.

All the meeting rooms (Committee Room 1, Committee 2 and the Council Chamber) are on the first floor, and are accessible via lifts or stairs.

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- For questions and/or statements regarding items on the published agenda, the deadline is the start of the meeting.
- For questions and/or statements regarding items NOT on the published agenda, the deadline is 10 a.m. the day before the meeting.

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Accessible toilets are available on the ground and first floor.

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HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 March 2016
5.30 - 6.55 pm

Present:

Scrutiny Committee Members: Councillors Todd-Jones (Chair), Avery, Ashton, Bird, Moore, Sarris and Gawthroe

Executive Councillor for Housing: Councillor Price

Tenant/Leaseholder Representatives: Diane Best, Kay Harris, John Marais, Diana Minns, Caroline Oriokot and Terry Sweeney

Officers:

Director of Customer & Community Services: Liz Bisset

Head of City Homes: Robert Hollingsworth

Head of Strategic Housing: Alan Carter

Head of Estates & Facilities: Trevor Burdon

Resident Involvement Facilitator: James Bull

Committee Manager: Toni Birkin

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

16/11/HSC Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Holland and Councillor Baigent. Councillor Gawthroe was present as an alternate.

16/12/HSC Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Item	Interest
Bird	16/18/HSC	Personal: Has used the service in the past.

16/13/HSC Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 13th January 2016 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

16/14/HSC Public Questions

There were no public questions.

16/15/HSC Replacement of St. Matthew's Street Garages

This item was chaired by Diana Minns (Vice Chair / Tenant Representative).

Matter for Decision

The report described a deteriorating problem with an underused and increasingly vandalised two storey garage block, comprising 82 separate units, at St. Matthew's Street in Petersfield ward. The report summarised existing problems at the site and included alternative options and a recommendation for demolition and replacement with a reduced number (38) of new ground floor garages which could be delivered within the budget available.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

- i. Approved the proposals, as described in section 3.8.5 – 3.8.7 of the Officer's report to:
 - a) demolish the existing two storey garage structure and,
 - b) provide 38 new pre-cast concrete garages on the same site area;
- ii. Agreed to review, if necessary, the decision to erect new garages (2.1 (b) above) on the cleared site should the final provisions of the 2015/16 Housing and Planning Bill, prove onerous, in respect of payments for "disposal of high value property". In such circumstances, options for disposal, rather than the planned retention of garage site, may have to be re-considered.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Head of Estates & Facilities regarding garages in St Matthews Street.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Sought clarification regarding the cost of demolition and raised concerns regarding possible asbestos contamination.

- ii. Expressed surprise regarding recommendation 2.2, as this committee had previously expressed the view that it was opposed to any sale of Housing Revenue land.
- iii. Suggested that options to develop the site in partnership with a developer should be explored. Cross subsidy might allow this site to generate housing or profit.
- iv. Suggested that the report was addressing two unrelated issues; the problematic garages and the unknown impact of a future levy on high value assets.
- v. Stated that any sale of assets would be regrettable but losing this land would be preferable to selling housing stock.
- vi. Stated that there were currently no funds to build new council houses on this site or other sites.

In response to Members' questions the Head of Estates & Facilities said the following:

- i. Any asbestos contamination would be address when the buildings were demolished.
- ii. Demolition of the run down garages would increase the potential sale value of the land.

The Executive Councillor for Housing stated that this site should not be confused with other, mixed use, redevelopment of garage sites. Recommendation 2.2 was an acknowledgement of the fact that the impact of any future levy, which might be imposed retrospectively, was currently unknown. At present there was a lack of funds for development and considering this site as an option toward payment of a levy was a sensible approach. Loss of an underused garage site was preferable to any loss of housing stock.

The Director of Customer and Community Services stated that it was expected that there would be greater clarity about the levy after the June Housing Bill.

The Committee **resolved** by 11 votes to 0 to endorse the recommendation.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

16/16/HSC Tenant & Leaseholder Survey & Focus Groups Results

This item was chaired by Diana Minns (Vice Chair / Tenant Representative).

Matter for Decision

As housing services continue to adapt to changes, it will become increasingly important to have effective methods for gathering feedback and making sure that services are making best use of available resources.

Recent satisfaction surveys and follow-up focus groups had proved an effective method for gathering customer satisfaction data – the results of which (appendix A of the Officer's reports) had been developed into an Action Plan (appendix B of the Officer's report).

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

- i. Agreed the Action Plan (appendix B of the Officer's report)
- ii. Agreed the suggested methodology for gathering ongoing customer feedback from tenants and leaseholders

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Resident Involvement Facilitator regarding recent satisfaction surveys.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Welcomed the very thorough and professional report.
- ii. Expressed concerns about the future need to prioritise actions as the funding shrinks. How would priorities be agreed?
- iii. Suggested that support services could be under threat at a time when welfare reforms began to impact on tenants.
- iv. Expressed concerns about communication problems experienced by leaseholders. Factual communications regarding repairs and contractors often contained error.

- v. Leaseholders had expressed concerns about a lack of consultation prior to expensive repairs.
- vi. The timing of communications was questioned and it was suggested that information was not shared in a timely fashion. It could be too early to be relevant or too late for proper consultation.

In response to Members' questions the Director of Customer and Community Services stated that:

- i. Initiatives were already in place to improving the tenants and leaseholders experience of the housing service and this would not necessarily increase costs. The action plan was achievable.
- ii. A follow up report later in the year would look at future priorities once more information was available from central government.

In response to Members' questions the Resident Involvement Facilitator acknowledged that response rates in some areas of the survey were low. He outlined the approach now taken to gathering information. On alternate years a survey was carried out and in the intervening year, more targeted work was undertaken. This might include in depth work with hard to reach groups or work targeting new tenants.

The Executive Councillor for Housing stated that in the past leaseholders had enjoyed services that had not been re-charged to them. The Council was duty bound to recover expenditure on leaseholder properties. Such matters were addressed on a case by case basis.

The Committee unanimously **resolved** to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

Notice of Key Decision Not Included on the Forward Plan

The Chair ruled that the following key decision be considered despite not being included on the Forward Plan published on 1 December 2013. It was impractical to defer the decision to allow for its inclusion in the next Forward Plan.

16/17/HSC The Housing Market in Greater Cambridge

This item was chaired by Councillor Todd-Jones

Matter for Decision

- i. Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire district together represented the important economic hub of Greater Cambridge. Housing was an essential contributor to supporting economic growth and the paper showed why this must include a mix of tenures including affordable housing and housing for social rent. The key characteristics of the housing market in Greater Cambridge and the impact of Government legislation were examined using local data and national studies. This supported the asks to Government in the final section of the paper. These asks would enable the City Council to continue to develop housing that is affordable to rent and buy across a range of tenures. This includes new council housing, to address a growing need as access to housing in the Greater Cambridge area moves rapidly out of the reach of many households.
- ii. At the time of writing the paper legislation affecting housing was going through the final stages of the parliamentary process, namely the Welfare Reform and Work Bill and the Housing and Planning Bill. The details of how aspects of the Housing and Planning Bill would work in practice had yet to be finalised. The terms of a potential devolution deal were also under discussion. The asks in this paper contributed to making the case for a better housing deal for Cambridge in our ongoing discussions with Government about the impact of legislation and devolution.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

- i. Agreed to adopt the statement as a summary of the Cambridge Housing Market and the impact of impending legislation.
- ii. Agreed the asks in paragraph 3.5 as the foundations for negotiation with Government

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Director of Customer and Community Services regarding the Housing Market in Greater Cambridgeshire.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Suggested that Cambridge was becoming less viable and increasingly unhealthy.
- ii. Highlighted the work around Healthy Cities.
- iii. Suggested that this report was unlikely to achieve its desired result but agreed that it was worthwhile.
- iv. Suggested that some concessions had been made to the original proposals. For example, pay to stay taper rates had been agreed.

The Director of Customer and Community Services stated that the legislation was currently broad brush stroke and that there might be an opportunity to influence the details.

The Executive Councillor for Housing confirmed that he would continue to put pressure on central government and would endeavour to exert influence with the Housing Minister where possible.

The Committee unanimously **resolved** to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

16/18/HSC Cambs Home Improvement Agency Fees

This item was chaired by Councillor Todd-Jones

Matter for Decision

The report requested approval to increase fees charged by Cambs Home Improvement Agency (HIA) with additional income used to fund additional technical capacity required in respect of changing health and safety requirements.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

- i. Approved that fees charged by Cambs HIA to project manage Disabled Facilities Grant and Repair Assistance funded adaptations and repairs increase from 10% to 12% of the cost of the works.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Head of Strategic Housing regarding the HIA fees.

The Committee expressed support for the service which was valued by users.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

16/19/HSC Record of Urgent Decision taken by the Executive Councillor for Housing

This item was chaired by Councillor Todd-Jones

9a Approval to lease the HRA property known as The Engineer's House to the Cambridge Museum of Technology

The decision was noted.

Thanks for Long Service

The Chair, Councillor Todd-Jones, informed the Committee that this would be last meeting attended by Robert Hollingsworth, who was retiring, and Liz Bisset and Alan Carter who were moving in to new roles. He thanked them for

their support over the years and said that their experience and expertise would be missed.

He also thanked the tenant representatives, Caroline Orikot and Terry Sweeney who were not seeking re-election, for their work on behalf of Tenant and Leaseholders.

Members of the Committee voiced their support for sentiments expressed by the Chair. Terry Sweeney was said to have been the 'voice of the tenant' for many years and would be missed.

The meeting ended at 6.55 pm

CHAIR

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To Executive Councillor for Housing
Report by Business Manager / Principal Accountant (Housing)
Relevant Scrutiny Committee Housing Scrutiny Committee 21 June 2016

2015/16 Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances – Housing Revenue Account

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

1.1 This report presents, for the Housing Revenue Account :

- a) A summary of actual income and expenditure compared to the final budget for 2015/16 (outturn position)
- b) Revenue and capital budget variances with explanations
- c) Specific requests to carry forward funding available from budget underspends into 2016/17.
- d) A summary of housing debt which was written off during 2015/16.

2. Recommendations

Under Part 1 of the Housing Scrutiny Committee Agenda, the Executive Councillor, is recommended, following scrutiny and debate at Housing Scrutiny Committee:

- a) To approve carry forward requests totalling £1,987,000 in revenue funding from 2015/16 to 2016/17, as detailed in **Appendix C**

Under Part 2 of the Housing Scrutiny Committee Agenda, the Executive Councillor for Housing is asked to recommend to Council (following scrutiny and debate at Housing Scrutiny Committee):

- b) Approval of carry forward requests of £2,171,000 in HRA and General Fund Housing capital resources from 2015/16 to 2016/17 to fund rephased net capital spending, as detailed in **Appendix D** and the associated notes to the appendix.

3. Background

Revenue Outturn

3.1 The overall revenue budget outturn position for the Housing Revenue Account is given in the table below.

2014/15 £'000	Housing Revenue Account Summary	2015/16 £'000	% Final Budget
(70)	Original Budget (HRA Use of Reserves)	990	9.5
3,393	Adjustment – Prior Year Carry Forwards	9,272	88.9
0	Adjustment – Service Restructure Costs	270	2.6
0	Adjustment – Increased Interest Receipts	(97)	(1.0)
1,488	Other Adjustments	0	0
4,811	Final Budget	10,435	100.0
(4,771)	Outturn	5,497	52.7
(9,582)	(Under) / Overspend for the year	(4,938)	(47.3)
9,272	Carry Forward Requests	1,987	19.0
(310)	Resulting Variation for the HRA	(2,951)	(28.3)
0	Other variances	0	0
(310)	Variance and reduced use of HRA Reserves	(2,951)	(28.3)

- 3.1 **Appendix A** shows original and final budgets for the year (with the movements summarised in the above table) and compares the final budget with the outturn position for the HRA for 2015/16. The original revenue budget for 2015/16 was approved by the Executive Councillor for Housing on 14 January 2015.
- 3.2 **Appendix B** provides explanations of the main variance.
- 3.3 **Appendix C** lists revenue carry forward requests.
- 3.4 The net underspend across the Housing Revenue Account of £4,938,798 incorporates a number of key areas of underspending.
- 3.5 Slippage and savings in the Housing Capital Investment Plan result in a reduced use of revenue financing of capital expenditure of £3,090,512, non-delivery of much of the 2015/16 revenue planned maintenance programme results in an underspend of £842,369, a reduction in void activity in 2015/16 means that repairs underspending in this area is £312,321 and changes to the Housing Services restructure at implementation stage result in a lower level of exit cost being incurred than provided for as a worst case scenario, with underspending of £210,000.

Capital Outturn

- 3.6 The overall capital budget outturn position for the Housing Capital Investment Plan (HRA and Housing General Fund) is provided in the table below. **Appendix D** shows the outturn position by programme with the associated notes providing explanations of variances.

2014/15 £'000	HRA Capital Summary	2015/16 £'000	% Final Budget
32,839	Original Budget	29,946	81.2
11,733	Adjustments (Rephasing from prior year)	13,758	37.3
(5,315)	Other Adjustments	(6,830)	(18.5)
39,257	Final Budget	36,874	100.0
24,404	Outturn	33,355	90.5
(14,853)	(Under)/Overspend for the year	(3,519)	(9.5)
13,758	Rephasing Requests	2,171	5.9
(1,095)	(Under) / Overspend	(1,348)	(3.6)

- 3.7 Spending in the Housing Capital Investment Plan in 2015/16 has been at a far higher level than has been achieved in previous years, with both decent homes and new build expenditure delivering against the budgets set for the year.
- 3.8 The biggest area of slippage in the programme is in respect of the refurbishment scheme at Ditchburn Place, where work is yet to begin. There have been significant delays in the project, which will ultimately be delivered in a phased manner, with many residents still in occupation, due to the need to obtain planning permission for some of the changes proposed and overcoming some challenges in securing a contractor to undertake the works.
- 3.9 Permission is sought to re-phase the use of £1,686,000 of direct revenue financing of capital expenditure from the Housing Revenue Account and £545,000 of land receipt into 2016/17 and beyond to finance the re-phased capital expenditure identified. The resulting use of direct revenue financing of capital will be a reduction in the use of this resource of £110,000 in 2015/16 and an increase in 2017/18 of £1,796,000. The deferred use of revenue resource to fund capital expenditure also recognises the need to fund £60,000 of expenditure that would otherwise have been met by HCA grant, where the grant was received earlier than anticipated and therefore used to finance expenditure in 2015/16.

HRA Write Offs

- 3.10 In line with the revised process for the writing off of HRA debt, considered by Housing Scrutiny Committee in March 2015, this report also provides an appendix detailing write off of HRA debt during the financial year 2015/16.

Appendix E includes a summary of debt written off by both category of write off and also value banding.

4. Implications

- 4.1 The variance from the final revenue budget (see above), would result in a decreased use of Housing Revenue Account of £4,938,798. After rephasing resource for capital projects financed from revenue, and carry forward of revenue resource to fund deferred revenue expenditure, the overall variance and decreased use of Housing Revenue Account Reserves is £2,951,798.
- 4.2 A decision not to approve a carry forward request may impact on officers' ability to deliver the service or scheme in question and this could have staffing, equality and poverty, environmental, procurement, consultation and communication and/or community safety implications.

5. Background Papers

- Directors Variance Explanations – March 2016
- Budgetary Control Reports to 31 March 2016

6. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

Authors' Names:	Julia Hovells
Authors' Phone Numbers:	01954 - 713071
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Housing Committee - Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Budget 2015/16 - Final Outturn

Service Grouping	Original Budget £'s	Final Budget £'s	Outturn £'s	Variation Increase/ (Decrease) £'s	Carry Forward Requests - see Appendix C £'s	Net Variance £'s
INCOME						
Dwelling Rents	(37,185,810)	(37,185,810)	(37,032,891)	152,919	0	152,919
Rental Income (Other)	(1,096,480)	(1,096,480)	(1,104,609)	(8,129)	0	(8,129)
Service Charges	(2,447,980)	(2,447,980)	(2,572,346)	(124,366)	0	(124,366)
Contributions towards Expenditure	(3,210)	(3,210)	(97,545)	(94,335)	0	(94,335)
Other Income (Incl. RTB Capitalisation)	(455,090)	(455,090)	(432,810)	22,280	0	22,280
Total Income	(41,188,570)	(41,188,570)	(41,240,201)	(51,631)	0	(51,631)
EXPENDITURE						
Supervision & Management (General)	3,441,480	3,268,270	2,930,678	(337,592)	0	(337,592)
Supervision & Management (Special)	2,414,310	2,507,580	2,513,365	5,785	0	5,785
Repairs & Maintenance	6,824,030	6,855,150	5,645,005	(1,210,145)	301,000	(909,145)
Depreciation	10,509,920	11,444,060	8,711,358	(2,732,702)	0	(2,732,702)
Debt Management Expenditure	21,180	21,180	0	(21,180)	0	(21,180)
Other Expenditure	3,038,890	3,406,820	3,343,645	(63,175)	0	(63,175)
Total Expenditure	26,249,810	27,503,060	23,144,051	(4,359,009)	301,000	(4,058,009)
Net Cost of HRA Services	(14,938,760)	(13,685,510)	(18,096,150)	(4,410,640)	301,000	(4,109,640)
Interest Receivable (Interest on Balances)	(228,910)	(326,420)	(466,080)	(139,660)	0	(139,660)
(Surplus) / Deficit on the HRA for the Year	(15,167,670)	(14,011,930)	(18,562,230)	(4,550,300)	301,000	(4,249,300)
Appropriations / Other Movement in the HRA Balance						
Loan Interest	7,541,290	7,541,290	7,541,505	215	0	215
Housing Set-Aside	0	0	0	0	0	0
Depreciation Adjustment (MRA)	(2,351,280)	(3,285,420)	(769,806)	2,515,614	0	2,515,614
Impairment	0	0	186,185	186,185	0	186,185
Direct Revenue Financing of Capital	10,968,440	20,191,440	17,100,928	(3,090,512)	1,686,000	(1,404,512)
(Surplus) / Deficit for year	990,780	10,435,380	5,496,582	(4,938,798)	1,987,000	(2,951,798)
(Surplus) / Deficit b/f	(14,864,833)	(14,864,833)	(14,864,833)			
Transfer to / from Ear-Marked Reserves	0	0	(422,307)			
Balance Carried Forward	(13,874,053)	(4,429,453)	(9,790,558)	0	0	0

Changes between original and final budgets may be made to reflect:

- departmental restructuring
- approved budget carry forwards from the previous financial year
- technical adjustments, including changes to the capital accounting regime
- virements approved under the Council's constitution
- additional external revenue funding not originally budgeted for

and are detailed and approved:

- in the June committee cycle (outturn reporting and carry forward requests)
- in September (as part of the HRA Mid-Year Financial Review)
- in the January committee cycle (as part of the HRA budget setting report)
- and via technical adjustments/virements throughout the year

Housing Committee - Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Budget 2015/16 - Major Variances from Final Revenue Budgets

Service Grouping	Reason for Variance	Amount £
Supervision and Management (General)		
HRA Departmental Overheads	The financial provision made for potential exit costs arising from the Housing Services restructure was higher than the level of funding required once all recruitment had been completed, resulting in an underspend (£210k). HRA maternity provision was not required in 2015/16 (£33k). Employee costs underspent due to vacancies in the team and abortive HRA development fee budget not utilised in the year.	(276,185)
City Homes	Underspending in this area was due predominantly to staff vacancies held pending the outcome of the Housing Services restructure, coupled with general underspending in office based costs.	(73,992)
Provision for Central Costs	The provision held in the HRA for contribution towards the cost of corporate change was insufficient to meet the HRA share of costs incurred in 2015/16.	32,653
Computer Services	IT services underspent, particularly in relation to the Housing Management System, where savings have been realised and development has not been undertaken as anticipated. Budget has been reduced accordingly in 2016/17.	(25,949)
	Minor Variations	5,881
	Total	(337,592)
Supervision and Management (Special)		
Estate Management	Overspending due to the costs of dealing with increased levels of fly-tipping on housing estates across the city coupled with increased electricity costs in communal areas of flatted accommodation.	41,258
Independent Living Service	Support income from the County Council and self-funding tenants was above that anticipated, particularly due to continued County Council funding for staff transferred to the City Council under TUPE for the earlier part of 2015/16.	(32,912)
Temporary Accommodation	Underspending due to staffing vacancies and utility costs being lower than anticipated.	(30,578)
Brandon Court	The cost of gas, electricity and water used at this scheme was significantly higher than anticipated. Both the usage levels and the budgets for utilities will be reviewed as part of the 2017/18 budget process.	15,267

Housing Committee - Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Budget 2015/16 - Major Variances from Final Revenue Budgets

Service Grouping	Reason for Variance	Amount £
Ditchburn Place	Income from the County Council for the use of the Day Centre at Ditchburn Place was under-achieved in 2015/16 as a direct result of the County Council de-commissioning the site for day centre purposes. The impact of this will be ongoing, but is anticipated to be addressed as part of the discussions surrounding the future of care provision on the site and the project to refurbish the scheme.	11,289
	Minor Variations	1,461
	Total	5,785
Repairs and Maintenance		
Planned Repairs	Changes to the specification for cyclical maintenance works have resulted in the need for additional surveying work. This has delayed the work on site and slippage of the work into 2016/17. In order to complete the works outstanding, budget rephasing of £301,000 is required. If this is not carried forward, the programme of works arising for 2016/17 cannot be fully funded. This position still results in a budget saving for 2015/16 of £542,000.	(842,369)
Void Repairs	Underspending in this area is due to an overall reduction in the number of void properties, coupled with a review of the work carried out during the void period.	(312,321)
Gas Servicing	The underspend of £30,000 is a combination of savings against the budget for third party inspections, where fewer than anticipated were required, and gas servicing, where the budget allowed for second servicing in voids, but due to the lower number of void properties arising, savings have been realised. The total underspend was offset to a degree by an increase in the number of repairs carried out during the year. Although this has led to an overspend in this particular area of the contract, there has been a saving in capital spending, as boiler life cycles have been extended and therefore less replacements have been carried out.	(29,807)
Response Repairs	Minor underspend in percentage terms at year end arising due to mild winter weather, which has in turn led to a reduction in demand across the year.	(28,591)
	Minor Variations	2,943
	Total	(1,210,145)

Housing Committee - Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Budget 2015/16 - Major Variances from Final Revenue Budgets

Service Grouping	Reason for Variance	Amount £
Other HRA Expenditure		
Depreciation	The level of depreciation charged to the HRA for 2015/16 was significantly lower than anticipated. This arose from a formal review of the remaining useful lives of the dwelling assets held in the HRA, and an appropriate approach to componentisation. Delays in the new build delivery programme also meant that fewer assets required depreciating in 2015/16 than anticipated.	(2,732,702)
Bad Debt Provision	The contribution to the bad debt provision for 2015/16 was lower than budgeted based upon the opening fund balance, call on the fund in the year and the incidence of both current and former tenant arrears at 31st March 2016.	(64,797)
Debt Management Expenditure	Changes in national housing policy have altered the landscape for new build housing, and therefore the associated need to borrow up to the debt cap. As a direct result of not borrowing, there have been no additional debt management costs incurred in 2015/16.	(21,180)
	Minor Variations	1,622
	Total	(2,817,057)
HRA Income and Other		
Dwelling Rents	Rent income was under-achieved by 0.4% due predominantly to delays in the delivery of much of the new build housing programme in 2015/16.	152,919
Service Charges	Service Charge income was over-achieved due to a combination of the decision to utilise otherwise empty units at Ditchburn Place for emergency move-on accommodation, increased income from temporary housing units due to higher numbers of dwellings being utilised for this purpose in 2015/16 and income from new build units, where the services required on sites, and therefore the levels of charges to be levied are higher than originally anticipated.	(124,366)
Contributions towards Expenditure	Income from the County Council for the provision of support services in temporary housing was received for one final year, as part of a late contract extension and a higher level of receipts for small parcels of HRA land or access rights were received than estimated.	(94,335)
	Minor Variations	14,151
	Total	(51,631)

Housing Committee - Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Budget 2015/16 - Major Variances from Final Revenue Budgets

Service Grouping	Reason for Variance	Amount £
<i>HRA Interest, Premiums and Appropriations</i>		
Direct Revenue Funding of Capital Expenditure (DRF)	A reduced demand on the use of revenue funding of capital was realised in 2015/16, due to slippage in the Housing Capital Investment Programme. This included the impact of delays in the major refurbishment project at Ditchburn Place, coupled with some slippage in decent homes investment, other spend on the housing stock and estate investment. A significant proportion of this resource will instead be required in 2016/17.	(3,090,512)
Depreciation Adjustment	Transfer of funding into the Major Repairs Reserve (the equivalent of depreciation for HRA dwelling assets) can be adjusted under transitional arrangements for a five year period, after which full depreciation will be applicable. The transitional income adjustment for 2015/16 was lower than budgeted as a direct result of the changes in the level of depreciation charged in 2015/16 as described above.	2,515,614
Interest Received	Interest is received in the HRA based upon both revenue and capital balances held. Interest received in respect of HRA balances during 2015/16 was significantly higher than anticipated due to a combination of the level of underspending across the HRA as a whole and the levels of retained right to buy receipts and other capital receipts held. The resulting higher cash balances at 31st March 2016 mean that interest earned was greater than budgeted.	(139,660)
Impairment	This year-end adjustment, following receipt of asset valuations, relates to revaluation losses on non-dwelling assets, particularly garages, which unlike dwelling revaluation movements, are not permitted to be reversed elsewhere in the accounts.	186,185
	Minor Variations	215
	Total	(528,158)
Total for Housing Revenue Account		(4,938,798)

Housing Committee - Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Budget 2015/16 - Carry Forward Requests

Request to Carry Forward Housing Revenue Account Budgets from 2015/16 into 2016/17 and future years

Item		Request £
	<p>Director of Customer and Community Services</p> <p>Supervision and Management General</p> <p>No carry forward requests from 2015/16 into 2016/17</p> <p>Supervision and Management Special</p> <p>No carry forward requests from 2015/16 into 2016/17</p> <p>Repairs and Maintenance</p> <p>The 2015/16 PTR revenue planned maintenance programme was not fully delivered in year. A proportion of the 2015/16 budget (£301,000) is requested as a carry forward into 2016/17 to allow existing commitments to be fulfilled alongside the 2016/17 programme.</p> <p>Appropriations</p> <p>A reduced demand on the use of revenue funding of capital was evident in 2015/16 as a direct result of underspending in the Housing Capital Investment Plan, predominantly relating to a delay in the delivery of the major refurbishment project at Ditchburn Place . This resource, in addition to resource for decent homes and other planned works to the housing stock, estate investment and other HRA capital spend, will instead be required in 2016/17 to fund the deferred expenditure.</p>	<p>301,000</p> <p>1,686,000</p>
		1,987,000

2015/16 Housing Capital Investment Plan - HRA & General Fund Housing

	Original Budget £000's	Current Budget £000's	Outturn £000's	Variance £000's	Re-phase Spend £000's	Notes	Re-Phasing Year				Budget
							2016/17 £000's	2017/18 £000's	2018/19 £000's	Post 2018/19 £000's	2016/17 £000's
General Fund Housing Capital Spend											
Investment in Non-HRA Affordable Housing	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Other General Fund Housing	795	775	782	7	25	1	25	0	0	0	770
Total General Fund Housing Capital Spend	795	775	782	7	25		25	0	0	0	770
HRA Capital Spend											
Decent Homes Programme	7,758	7,603	7,585	(18)	167	2	167	0	0	0	5,517
Other Spend on HRA Stock	3,670	3,453	3,185	(268)	234	3	234	0	0	0	3,530
HRA New Build & Acquisition	13,995	21,049	21,190	141	(163)	4	(163)	0	0	0	22,742
Cambridge Standard Works	200	250	198	(52)	52	5	52	0	0	0	52
Sheltered Housing Capital Investment	1,900	1,900	104	(1,796)	1,796	6	0	1,796	0	0	2,408
Other HRA Capital Spend	353	569	311	(258)	60	7	60	0	0	0	404
Inflation Allowance	1,275	1,275	0	(1,275)	0	8	0	0	0	0	2,223
Total HRA Capital Spend	29,151	36,099	32,573	(3,526)	2,146		350	1,796	0	0	36,876
Total Housing Capital Spend	29,946	36,874	33,355	(3,519)	2,171		375	1,796	0	0	37,646
Housing Capital Resources											
Right to Buy Receipts (General Use)	(516)	(516)	(260)	256	0	9	0	0	0	0	(522)
Right to Buy Receipts (Retained for New Build / Acquisition)	(2,199)	(3,303)	(3,946)	(643)	0	9	0	0	0	0	(5,242)
Right to Buy Receipts (Debt Set-Aside)	0	0	(1,080)	(1,080)	0	9	0	0	0	0	0
Other Capital Receipts (Land and Dwellings)	(3,682)	(3,194)	(4,677)	(1,483)	(545)	10	(545)	0	0	0	(545)
MRA / MRR	(7,432)	(7,499)	(7,499)	0	0		0	0	0	0	(10,292)
Client Contributions	0	0	(145)	(145)	0	11	0	0	0	0	0
Direct Revenue Financing of Capital	(10,968)	(20,191)	(17,101)	3,090	(1,686)	12	110	(1,796)	0	0	(11,129)
Other Capital Resources (Grants / Shared Ownership / Loan Repayments / R&R)	(571)	(2,171)	(1,719)	452	60	13	60	0	0	0	(2,695)
Prudential Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Total Housing Capital Resources	(25,368)	(36,874)	(36,427)	447	(2,171)		(375)	(1,796)	0	0	(30,425)
Net (Surplus) / Deficit of Resources	4,578	0	(3,072)	(3,072)			0	0	0	0	7,221
Capital Balances b/f	(21,090)	(21,090)	(21,090)								(10,146)
Use of / (Contribution to) Balances in Year	4,578	0	(3,072)								7,221
Set-aside for future Debt Redemption	3,999	3,999	5,079			9					
Ear-marked for specific Retained Right to Buy Receipts 1-4-1 Investment	8,457	8,457	8,937			9					
Residual capital resources remaining to fund future Housing Investment Programme	(4,056)	(8,634)	(10,146)								(2,925)

Notes to the Housing Capital Investment Plan

Note	Reason for Variance
1	An apparent overspend in respect of Disabled Facilities and Private Sector Grants of £33,000, is actually more than offset by the receipt of contributions and grant repayments from clients, as detailed in note 11. The underspending in choice based lettings IT implementation due to delays in the go-live date for the new system will necessitate a carry forward of resource to allow completion of the project in early 2016/17.
2	A net underspend of £18,000 in decent homes expenditure during 2015/16 is a combination of under and overspending against the specific decent homes elements. Overspending in wall insulation (£32,000), kitchens (£149,000), bathrooms (£224,000), roof structure works (£446,000), chimneys (£7,000) and contractor overheads (£519,000), was more than offset by underspending in the remainder of decent homes elements, including heating and boilers, electrical rewiring, health and safety works and roof coverings. Re-phasing of underspending in 2015/16 into 2016/17 is requested in respect of energy improvements (£36,000), wall finishes (£30,000), doors (£18,000), major voids (£60,000) and wall structure works (£23,000).
3	A net underspend of £268,000 was evident in 2015/16, combining underspending in a number of areas where work is still required and funds will need to be re-phased into 2016/17, including; fencing (£41,000, with £38,000 to be re-phased), communal area floor coverings (£100,000, with £98,000 to be re-phased), lifts and door entry systems (£38,000) and contractor overheads (£274,000, with £60,000 to be re-phased). Underspending also occurred in asbestos removal works (£42,000), garage improvements (£18,000), tenants initiative scheme (£11,000) and officer fees (£4,000), where no re-phasing is required. Overspending in disabled adaptations (£97,000), communal area uplift (£65,000), fire prevention works (£91,000) and hard surfacing (£8,000), mean that after carry forward of resource into 2016/17, a net overspend will be reported in this area of the programme.
4	The net overspend in the new build programme in 2015/16 relates to a combination of delays in delivery in some areas of the programme, coupled with spending ahead of profile in respect other schemes. Net negative re-phasing of £163,000 is required, recognising earlier than anticipated use of resource for the Clay Farm (£3,884,000), Homerton (£255,000) and Akeman Street (£3,000) sites in 2015/16. Slippage of resource for Roman Court (£6,000), Colville Road (£107,000), Aylesborough Close (£282,000), Water Lane (£854,000), Ekin Road (£268,000), Hawkins Road (£680,000), Fulbourn Road (£1,293,000), Anstey Way (£389,000) and the 2015/16 garage sites (£100,000) is requested into 2016/17. The profile of spending on all of these schemes will be reviewed again as part of the HRA Mid-Year Financial Review process, in light of resources held and the timeframes in which expenditure must be incurred within.
5	Some of the projects identified as part of the last phase of the City Homes Estate Improvement Programme are yet to be completed and resources of £52,000 are requested to be carried forward into 2016/17 to allow these projects to take place.
6	Underspending of £1,796,000 in respect of the budget for work to re-develop Ditchburn Place is requested to be re-phased into 2017/18 to allow this scheme to still be progressed in phases across 2 years from the summer of 2016. This follows further delays in the planning and tender stage of the project, where the authority has been keen to ensure that it makes best use of the site given the proposed level of investment, the mixed use nature of the buildings as a whole and the involvement of third party partner organisations in the services provided there.

7	A net underspend of £258,000 in this area of the programme comprises a lower level of activity in respect of shared ownership re-purchase in 2015/16 (£179,000), coupled with delays in the delivery of IT and office accommodation infrastructure projects during 2015/16. Funding to upgrade aspects of housing IT system has not been utilised in 2015/16, with a request to re-phase the underspend of £23,000 into 2016/17. The balance of funding for projects to introduce the Cambridge Public Sector IT Network (£23,000), to upgrade the air cooling systems in housing administrative buildings (£11,000) and to complete works to HRA commercial premises (£3,000) is requested as a carry forward into 2016/17 to allow completion of all ongoing projects.
8	The sum of money set-aside in 2015/16 to meet the costs of inflation in the capital programme was not utilised in 2015/16 due to a combination of the level of planned maintenance work ordered in the year at target prices and the fixed price nature of the majority of new build contracts which were fulfilled during the year.
9	42 properties were sold in total during 2015/16. £260,000 of the capital receipt is available for general use (after all costs have been deducted from each receipt), while £1,080,000 of the overall capital receipt is identified as set-aside to be offset against the debt associated with the unit no longer owned. A further £3,946,000 of right to buy receipts have been retained by the local authority in 2015/16, but must be re-invested in financing up to 30% of additional social housing units, provided this is done within a 3 year time frame. The authority is required to invest a significant sum during 2016/17 to ensure that it meets its responsibilities under the retention agreement, and this is now likely to mean the acquisition of dwellings on the open market with some of the new build schemes meeting delays which will put the use of the receipts at risk of being returned.
10	Capital receipts totalling £3,194,000 in respect of the value of land transfer for the market housing at the new build / re-developments which had progressed during the year to the point at which the expenditure incurred by the developer in respect of the affordable housing element of the site exceeded the value of the land, were accounted for in 2015/16. These receipts have been used to finance some of the spend in respect of the affordable housing on the same sites. Receipts of £1,483,000 were also received in 2015/16 in respect of the open market sale of three dwellings and the sale of one property to a returning leaseholder on a new build site. The receipts from the three market sales will be used to 70% match fund retained right to buy receipts in 2016/17 and beyond.
11	Income was recovered from leaseholders in 2015/16 in relation to their share of the cost of major improvements undertaken as part of the decent homes programme (£91,000) and was also received from private residents in relation to contributions towards, or repayments of, private sector housing repair grants (£54,000).
12	Due to slippage in the housing capital plan in 2015/16, the use of revenue funding for capital purposes was less than anticipated. A request to adjust the use of revenue funding of capital expenditure in 2016/17 and 2017/18, resulting in the deferred use of a net sum of £1,686,000 of the funding not utilised in 2015/16, will ensure that there is sufficient funding to meet the re-phased expenditure requested above.
13	Homes and Communities Agency Grant of £1,327,000 was received in 2015/16 for 7 schemes which started on site or reached completion. £60,000 of this was grant received earlier than anticipated, and as a result was used to fund expenditure in 2015/16 instead of 2016/17 as originally planned.

HRA Debts Written Off in 2015/16Write Off Cases by Category

Write Off Category	No. of Cases	Value Written Off
Bankruptcy / Insolvency	2	4,648.30
Debt re-instated	3	(3,085.61)
Debt relief order	9	17,829.63
Debtor deceased	56	38,065.50
Debtor untraceable	3	5,616.25
Other special circumstances	4	2,644.50
Recovery procedures exhausted	14	18,639.35
Statute barred	71	100,640.76
Uneconomical to recover	14	791.37
Total Written Off (Net)	176	185,790.05

Write Off Cases by Value Banding

Write Off Value Band	No. of Cases	Value Written Off
Less than £100.00	18	650.06
£100.00 to £199.99	10	1,449.01
£200.00 to £299.99	10	2,573.30
£300.00 to £399.99	8	2,733.38
£400.00 to £499.99	7	3,177.11
£500.00 to £749.99	32	19,827.29
£750.00 to £999.99	21	18,207.29
£1,000.00 to £1,499.99	25	30,717.39
£1,500.00 to £1,999.99	11	19,187.47
£2,000.00 to £2,999.99	20	45,893.46
£3,000.00 to £3,999.99	6	20,411.15
£4,000.00 to £4,999.99	3	12,551.51
Greater than £5,000.00	2	11,497.24
Debt re-instated	3	(3,085.61)
Total Written Off (Net)	176	185,790.05



To Executive Councillor for Housing

Report by Head of Finance

Relevant Scrutiny Committee Housing Scrutiny Committee

21 June 2016

2015/16 Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances – Housing Portfolio

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

1.1 This report presents, for the General Fund Housing Portfolio :

- a) A summary of actual income and expenditure compared to the final budget for 2015/16 (outturn position)
- b) Revenue and capital budget variances with explanations
- c) Specific requests to carry forward funding available from budget underspends into 2016/17.

2. Recommendations

Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider and make known their views on the following proposals for consideration by the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources at the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 4 July 2016:

- a) Proposed carry forward requests in revenue funding from 2015/16 to 2016/17, as detailed in **Appendix C**, noting that none are proposed for this portfolio on this occasion.
- b) Proposed carry forward requests of £210,000 in capital resources from 2015/16 to 2016/17 to fund rephased net capital spending, as detailed in **Appendix D**.

3. Background

Revenue Outturn

3.1 The overall revenue budget outturn position for the General Fund Housing Portfolio is given in the table below. Detail, by service grouping, is presented in **Appendix A**.

2014/15 £'000	General Fund Housing Portfolio Revenue Summary	2015/16 £'000	% Final Budget
3,469	Original Budget	3,330	98.0
-	Adjustment – Prior Year Carry Forwards	67	2.1
-	Adjustment – Service Restructure Costs	(2)	(0.1)
-	Adjustment – Earmarked Reserves	(13)	(0.3)
-	Adjustment – Capital Charges	9	0.3
-	Adjustment – Central & Support reallocations	1	0
6	Other Adjustments	0	0
3,475	Final Budget	3,392	100.0
3,186	Outturn	3,310	97.6
(289)	Variation - (Under)/Overspend for the year	(82)	(2.4)
67	Carry Forward Requests	0	0.0
(222)	Resulting Variance	(82)	(2.4)

- 3.1 **Appendix A** shows original and final budgets for the year (with the movements summarised in the above table) and compares the final budget with the outturn position for this portfolio for 2015/16. The original revenue budget for 2015/16 was considered by the Executive Councillor for Housing on 14 January 2015.
- 3.2 **Appendix B** provides brief explanations of the main variances.
- 3.3 **Appendix C** lists any revenue carry forward requests, with none requested on this occasion.
- 3.4 Net underspending of £82,391 was predominantly due to a lower than anticipated recharge from the HRA for shared amenities and staffing underspends in both the Development and Housing Standards Teams due to vacancies within the teams. There is no request to carry forward any of the underspend into 2016/17.

Capital Outturn

- 3.5 The overall capital budget outturn position for the General Fund Housing Portfolio is given in the table below. **Appendix D** shows the outturn position by scheme and programme with explanations of variances.

2014/15 £'000	General Fund Housing Portfolio Capital Summary	2015/16 £'000	% Final Budget
83	Final Budget	316	100.0
177	Outturn	49	15.5
94	Variation - (Under)/Overspend for the year	(267)	84.5
(2)	Rephasing Requests	210	66.5
92	Variance	(57)	18.0

- 3.6 Resource of £200,000 to create an Empty Homes Loans Fund was not utilised in 2015/16 due to a combination of delays in implementation, with the need to recruit to a post to facilitate the scheme, and the nature of the scheme itself, which intends to recycle the £200,000 in the form of loans awarded and later repaid. The budget is requested as a carry forward into 2016/17 to allow progression of the scheme.
- 3.7 The projects to make improvements to the Buchan Street shops area and to upgrade facilities at 125 Newmarket Road are both complete, bar the need to conclude any residual payments due to or from the authority. A request to carry forward £10,000 of resource into 2016/17, for the final contractual sums due in respect of the works to 125 Newmarket Road, is made.

4. Implications

- 4.1 The net variance from the final budget (see above), would result in a decreased use of General Fund reserves of £82,391.
- 4.2 A decision not to approve a carry forward request may impact on officers' ability to deliver the service or scheme in question and this could have staffing, equality and poverty, environmental, procurement, consultation and communication and/or community safety implications.

5. Background papers

- Closedown Working Files 2015/16
- Directors' Variance Explanations – March 2016
- Capital Monitoring Reports – March 2016
- Budgetary Control Reports to 31 March 2016

6. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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General Fund Housing Portfolio / Housing Committee

Revenue Budget - 2015/16 Outturn

Service Grouping	Original Budget £	Final Budget £	Outturn	Variation Increase / (Decrease) £	Carry Forward Requests - see Appendix C £	Net Variance £
Housing General Fund						
Housing Strategy, Development, Housing Aid/ Needs						
Homelessness Costs	192,500	192,500	197,331	4,831	0	4,831
Housing Advice Service	821,750	821,750	825,822	4,072	0	4,072
Choice Based Lettings (Revenue Running Costs)	35,440	35,440	23,251	(12,189)	0	(12,189)
125 / 451 Newmarket Road - Revenue costs	(19,750)	(11,240)	(527)	10,713	0	10,713
Anti Social Behaviour	64,860	64,860	64,860	0	0	0
Housing Strategy	94,420	94,420	92,993	(1,427)	0	(1,427)
Growth - Community Services	57,290	57,290	58,553	1,263	0	1,263
Development	90,140	90,140	70,359	(19,781)	0	(19,781)
	1,336,650	1,345,160	1,332,642	(12,518)	0	(12,518)
Private Sector Housing Renewal/ Voluntary Sector						
Home Aid / Home Improvement Grants	52,480	52,480	58,446	5,966	0	5,966
Grants to Housing Agencies	735,280	785,280	790,160	4,880	0	4,880
	787,760	837,760	848,606	10,846	0	10,846
Miscellaneous Housing						
Bermuda Road Garages	(7,630)	(7,630)	(6,042)	1,588	0	1,588
Racial Harassment	36,400	36,400	36,615	215	0	215
Supporting People	18,390	18,390	14,690	(3,700)	0	(3,700)
Strategic Housing Direct Overheads	151,860	151,860	143,594	(8,266)	0	(8,266)
Strategic Housing and City Homes GF Recharges	(16,860)	(16,860)	(16,860)	0	0	0
Contribution to / from HRA	353,190	353,190	318,846	(34,344)	0	(34,344)
Ditchburn Place Care Contract Deficit	0	0	0	0	0	0
	535,350	535,350	490,843	(44,507)	0	(44,507)
Total Housing General Fund	2,659,760	2,718,270	2,672,091	(46,179)	0	(46,179)
Environment - Environmental Health						
Housing Standards	485,610	492,610	467,217	(25,393)	0	(25,393)
Property Accreditation	64,690	66,590	62,788	(3,802)	0	(3,802)
Energy Officer	127,920	123,450	110,799	(12,651)	0	(12,651)
Miscellaneous Licensing - Housing	(120)	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Standards - Misc Income	(8,250)	(8,250)	(2,616)	5,634	0	5,634
Total Environment	669,850	674,400	638,188	(36,212)	0	(36,212)
Total Net Budget	3,329,610	3,392,670	3,310,279	(82,391)	0	(82,391)

Changes between original and final budgets may be made to reflect:

- portfolio and departmental restructuring
- approved budget carry forwards from the previous financial year
- technical adjustments, including changes to the capital accounting regime
- virements approved under the Council's constitution
- additional external revenue funding not originally budgeted for

and are detailed and approved:

- in the June/July committee cycle (outturn reporting and carry forward requests)
- in September (as part of the Mid-Year Financial Review, MFR)
- in the January committee cycle (as part of the Budget Setting Report, BSR)
- via technical adjustments/virements throughout the year

General Fund Housing Portfolio / Housing Committee

Revenue Budget 2015/16 - Major Variances from Final Revenue Budgets

Service Grouping	Reason for Variance	Amount £	Contact
Customer & Community Services - Housing Strategy, Development, Housing Advice, Private Sector Housing and Miscellaneous Housing			
Contribution to the HRA	The contribution to the HRA for amenities provided by the HRA, but benefitting the wider population, was lower than budgeted in 2015/16, with more of the estate management expenditure incurred in the HRA being tenant related expenditure.	(34,344)	J Hovells
Development	Underspending in employee costs as a result of a vacancy within the team and also in consultants fees in 2015/16, coupled with a nil contribution to a post intended to be shared with South Cambridgeshire Council due to changes introduced as part of the creation of the HDA. Unders[ending was partially offset by an under-achievement in fee income.	(19,781)	S Walston
Minor Variations		7,946	
Total		(46,179)	

General Fund Housing Portfolio / Housing Committee

Revenue Budget 2015/16 - Major Variances from Final Revenue Budgets

Service Grouping	Reason for Variance	Amount £	Contact
Environment - Environmental Health			
Housing Standards	Underspending in employee costs and associated staff based expenditure due to delays in recruiting to two new posts coupled with no revenue expenditure in relation to CPO's in 2015/16.	(25,393)	R Ray
Energy Officer	Underspend in respect of energy work and software budgets	(12,651)	J Dicks
Minor Variations		1,832	
Total		(36,212)	
Total for Housing Portfolio / Community Services Scrutiny Committee		<u>(82,391)</u>	

General Fund Housing Portfolio / Housing Committee

Revenue Budget 2015/16 - Carry Forward Requests

Request to Carry Forward Budgets from 2015/16 into 2016/17 and future years

Item		Request £	Contact
1	Director of Customer & Community Services		
	No carry forward requests from 2015/16 into 2016/17 from this directorate for this portfolio		
2	Director of Environment		
	No carry forward requests from 2015/16 into 2016/17 from this directorate for this portfolio		
	Total Carry Forward Requests for General Fund Housing Portfolio / Housing Scrutiny Committee		

General Fund Housing Portfolio / Housing Committee

Capital Budget 2015/16 - Outturn

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Capital Ref	Description	Lead Officer	Original Budget £000	Final Budget £000	Outturn £000	Variance - Outturn compared to Final Budget £000	Re-phase Spend £000	Over / (Under) Spend £000	Variance Explanation / Comments
SC597	Empty Homes Loans Fund	Y O'Donnell	200	200	0	(200)	200	0	Scheme slow to start due to the need to recruit to a new post. The nature of the scheme is to recycle funds, so a variance is likely to exist on an ongoing basis. Rephase of budget into 2016/17 is requested.
PV529	Upgrade facilities at 125 Newmarket Road	D Greening	0	88	11	(77)	10	(67)	Work to upgrade the facilities at 125 Newmarket Road were expanded to include some routine maintenance, with additional spend of £80,000 approved. Scheme complete, with the need to carry forward resource only to meet any residual retention costs. Budget in 2015/16 was a budgeting error and should not have been included.
SC599	Buchan Street Shopping Area Improvements	A Preston	0	28	38	10	0	10	Project approved in February 2015, fully funded by County Council contributions. Works completed, but with some reconciliation ongoing in respect of the spend versus the County Council contribution.
Total Provisions			200	316	49	(267)	210	(57)	
Total for Housing			200	316	49	(267)	210	(57)	

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To: Executive Councillor for Housing: Councillor Kevin Price

Report by: Tom Bremner, Head of Housing

Relevant scrutiny committee: Housing 21/6/2016
Scrutiny Committee

Wards affected: Abbey Arbury Castle Cherry Hinton Coleridge
East Chesterton King's Hedges Market Newnham
Petersfield Queen Edith's Romsey Trumpington
West Chesterton

HOMELESSNESS AND STRATEGIC APPROACH TO HOMELESSNESS IN CAMBRIDGE CITY

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

This report outlines the extent of homelessness pressure in Cambridge, set within a national context of rising numbers of homeless households. The report distinguishes between households where the council has a statutory duty under part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act (as amended) and those households to whom the council has no duty. Despite the distinction, the Council commits considerable resources into tackling and preventing homelessness for all of those unfortunate enough to be affected by it.

The report also reflects on the Council's recent performance in attempting to address homelessness in Cambridge and will provide Members with a summary of strategic measures that have been employed or have been identified to tackle the issue.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 1) To note the information on homelessness pressure and service performance as outlined in this report
- 2) To approve the homelessness strategy action plan as detailed at appendix 1

3. Background

- 3.1 Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) outlines local authority duties to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The Act requires authorities to conduct inquiries to determine an applicant's eligibility for assistance, homelessness, 'priority need', whether the homelessness is intentional or unintentional and local connection to the district. The authority must notify the applicant of the decision following inquiries and provide accommodation where applicable
- 3.2 While the Council does not have a statutory duty to single homeless people, where they are not in 'priority need' as defined in the Act, it has a strong tradition of collaborative working with partner agencies in the City to tackle single homelessness and rough sleeping and has increased resource in this area through the inception of the single homelessness service, supported by the Council's social lettings agency, *Town Hall Lettings*. Previous reports have been brought to committee on the single homelessness service at <http://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/g2823/Public%20reports%20pack%2013th-Jan-2016%2017.30%20Housing%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=10> (p203) and *Town Hall Lettings* at <http://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/g2823/Public%20reports%20pack%2013th-Jan-2016%2017.30%20Housing%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=10> (p163)
- 3.3 Both statutory and non-statutory homelessness pressure has risen significantly in recent times. Rough sleeping figures have been revealing sharp rises in the city since November 2015 and these high figures have remained ever since. A briefing on rough sleeping and measures identified to address the issue was provided for the Full Council meeting in April and is attached at appendix 2.
- 3.4 The number of homeless applications (whereby the Council formally assesses whether a household is owed a homelessness duty) has increased significantly over a two year period as the statistics below demonstrate – further detail on the profile of these applicants can be found at appendix 3:

Year	Number of applications	Number of acceptances
2012-13	169	124
2013-14	186	121
2014-15	268	146
2015-16	419	172

- 3.5 However, as the table above demonstrates, the rise in the number of homelessness acceptances has risen less dramatically. This reflects a change in working practices following a number of Local Government Ombudsman decisions against local authorities for not taking homeless applications. It is also reasonable to conclude that homelessness is rising amongst households to whom the Council does not owe a statutory duty – this assertion is also supported by the recent sharp rises in the number of rough sleepers in Cambridge City from 135 individuals in 2014-15 to 152 in 2015-16 – see appendix 2.
- 3.6 The acceptance figures for Cambridge still show an increase of 21% between 2013/14 and 2014/15 and 18% between 2014/15 and 2015/16. By comparison, national figures show an average increase of 5% over the first three quarters of 2015-16. Quarter 4 figures have not yet been published by the Government. National homelessness acceptances have been rising steadily since 2009/10. Further detail can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics#statutory-homelessness>
- 3.7 The Council also has a duty to ensure that advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness are available free of charge to any person in its district
- 3.8. The Council is in the process of reviewing its Housing Strategy but the principles outlined in the homelessness, housing advice and housing options chapter with the 2012-15 Housing Strategy are to:
- Prevent homelessness and rough sleeping
 - Minimise use of temporary accommodation and maximise use of longer term housing solutions
 - Enable people to make informed choices about their housing
 - Promote sustained and settled lifestyles and minimise social exclusion

4. Service Performance

- 4.1 **Homelessness prevention and relief** – according to government guidelines for the submission of quarterly local authority homelessness data returns, a homelessness prevention counts as an intervention by the local authority or funded partner agency, which can reasonably be expected to last for at least 6 months. Homelessness relief occurs when an authority has been unable to prevent homelessness, but helps someone to secure accommodation, even though the authority is under no statutory obligation to do so.
- 4.2 In 2015-16 the Council and its Cambridge City based partner agencies (Jimmy's Cambridge, Centre 33, the street outreach team and the Citizen's Advice Bureau), prevented or relieved homelessness in 787 cases. This compares to 470 cases prevented or relieved in 2014-15. This is a further reflection of the increased pressure on services but also highlights the intensity of effort that is expended by the Council and its partners to ensure that homelessness has not increased by an even greater degree. These measures also avert the potential need to provide temporary accommodation and the considerable concomitant costs involved.
- 4.3 **Rough sleeping** - increases in recent months have raised weekly snapshot figures to levels of rough sleeping to the highest point in over a decade in Cambridge City. There is evidence that these numbers include a number of longer term, entrenched rough sleepers because the total number of individuals sleeping rough across 2015-16, while a matter for concern (a 12.6% increase), reflects a less acute rise than numbers found on the weekly counts. More detail about the methodology for counting the number of rough sleepers and performance against targets can be found at appendix 2. The table below shows the cities of Oxford and Brighton as comparators to Cambridge. They are all outside London but are characterised by high property prices and have traditionally experienced high rough sleeping pressure. Data for all local authority districts can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics#rough-sleeping>

City	Average house prices in 2015*	Number of households in 2015 ('000s)	Autumn 2014 rough sleeping count	Autumn 2015 count	2015 rough sleeping rate per 1000 households
Oxford	£473,854	56.2	26	39	0.69
Brighton	£438,628	126	41	78	0.62
Cambridge	£481,527	47.5	10	18	0.38

* source: Right Move

4.4 **Minimising the use of temporary accommodation** – although this objective applies to both statutory and non-statutory homelessness, the costs to the Council of temporary accommodation for homeless households to whom the Council owes an interim or full housing duty is significant. If all of the Council's temporary accommodation is full the Council is compelled to rely on bed and breakfast accommodation to discharge its duties. Department of Work and Pensions regulations mean that, for households reliant on housing benefit, the Council can only recover about one third of the gross costs of bed and breakfast provision. Therefore, the Council has been pursuing measures to reduce stays in temporary accommodation and reduce the reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation as a form of emergency provision.

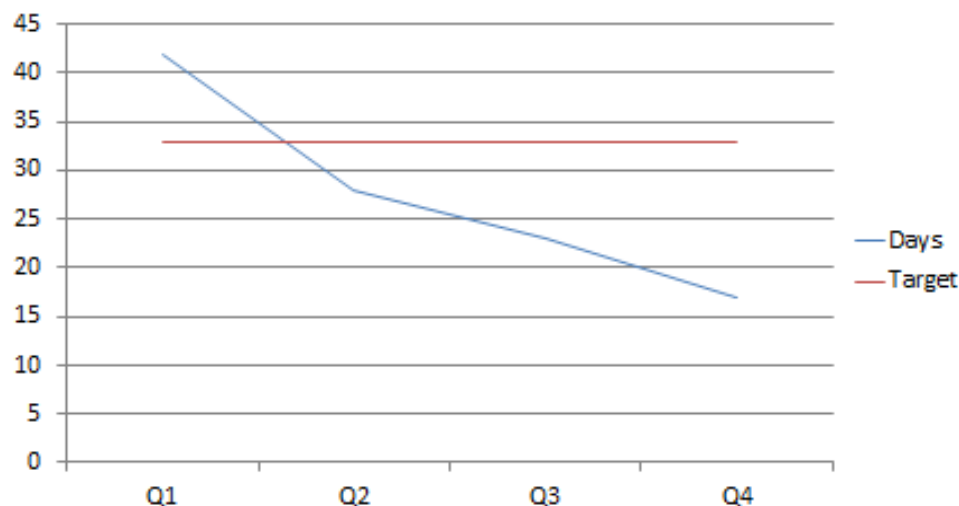
4.5 The initiatives employed to achieve Council objectives in this area are:

1) Improving homelessness decision times

This has been the subject of considerable focus within the Housing Advice Service and significant progress has been made in 2015-16. The recommended target for completing homelessness investigations and issuing a decision is 33 working days (as cited in the Homelessness Code of Guidance). Average decision times in 2013-14 were 42 working days, in 2014-15 they stood at 45 working days, but in 2015-16 average decision times were reduced to an average of 26 working days across the year. The percentage of homelessness cases completed within 33 working days went up from 56% in 2014-15 to 74% in 2015-16. The reduction in the time it

takes to make homeless decisions has a direct impact on lengths of stay in temporary accommodation.

Homeless Decision Times



2) Direct lets to homeless households

The Council has recently revised its Lettings Policy and the changes came into force from 1st April 2016. One of the changes, which is relevant to minimising stays in temporary accommodation, is that when the Council accepts a full homelessness duty to an applicant, a direct let is made at this point. The previous policy allowed for a three month period of bidding before a direct let was made. Although the policy only came into effect last month the Council has been working to put this in to practice with customers on a consensual basis since last Autumn when the policy was first approved by this committee.

3) Standardisation of legal agreements for temporary accommodation

Until recently the Council has used both tenancy and licence agreements for applicants occupying temporary accommodation. The type of accommodation would determine the type of agreement offered. This meant that, where the Council had made an adverse homeless decision and a tenancy agreement existed, it was necessary, in some cases, to take action through the courts to evict applicants who failed to leave the accommodation once the council had discharged its interim homelessness duty. This can also apply to cases where the Council has accepted the full homelessness duty but the applicant has rejected a

‘reasonable’ offer of accommodation. However, in the light of a Supreme Court decision on *R v Newham LBC & Lewisham LBC* 2014, which ruled that applicants are not entitled to a court order when in temporary accommodation provided by the Council to discharge a homelessness duty, this has allowed the Council to offer licences to all those occupying temporary accommodation. In doing so, this provides a consistent approach to all and reduces cost to the Council.

4) Increasing temporary accommodation stock

Although this measure does not reduce stays in temporary accommodation, it does mean that bed and breakfast usage is minimised and, therefore, the overall cost to the Council is reduced. At the start of 2015-16 the Council had 86 units of temporary accommodation. This increased to 97 by September 2015 and now stands at 94. In quarter 1 of 2015-16 emergency accommodation, including bed and breakfast provision, had a net cost to the Council of £81, 408. In the following three quarters the total net costs for emergency provision dropped to £41,139. Further work will be done throughout 2016-17 to assess the net financial benefit of holding a surfeit of temporary accommodation to keep bed and breakfast usage to minimal levels. The average number of households in bed and breakfast accommodation, based on a snapshot taken at the end of each quarter in 2015-16, is 3. This is set in the context of 419 homeless applications across 2015-16.

4.6 Enabling people to make informed choices about their housing

The Council coordinates a sub-regional single homelessness service, which is supported by the Council’s social lettings agency *Town Hall Lettings*. Originally, this involved 7 other local authority partners throughout Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk. From 1st April 2016 the partners are confined to South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils. Since its inception in October 2013 the single homelessness service has provided housing for 191 Cambridge City referrals (83 of these were made in 2015-16). This service has greatly improved the range of housing options for single homeless people, covering private rented shared housing, an employment and training-focused adult foyer, a supported lodgings scheme, direct placements with Registered Providers and support to enter self-contained private rented accommodation with rental deposits and guarantees.

5. Homelessness Strategy

- 5.1 The Council no longer produces a separate Homelessness Strategy but, instead, devotes a chapter to homelessness, housing advice and housing options within its Housing Strategy.

- 5.2 The Housing Strategy is currently being reviewed but has been delayed to give the Council the opportunity to evaluate a series of key policy changes and announcements made by the Government; in particular, those contained within the Housing and Planning Bill, which was published last month.
- 5.3 Despite this, the Council has begun work on the delivery of a Homelessness Strategy action plan, which is attached to this report at appendix 1
- 5.4 The Homelessness Strategy action plan has identified 8 key themes. These are:
- Domestic abuse
 - Access to the private rented sector
 - Rough Sleeping
 - Mental health
 - Homelessness prevention
 - Minimising the use of temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast provision
 - Mitigating the impact of welfare reform
 - Bringing empty homes back into use
- 5.5 As highlighted in this report, current rises in rough sleeping numbers have meant that this area of work needs to be afforded uppermost priority for action within the plan.

6. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

Despite significant challenges in this area of work, there are no additional resources required at present. The Council's success or otherwise at balancing the requirements for temporary accommodation against the need to minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation will determine any positive or negative implications across 2016-17.

The objective within the homelessness strategy action plan to explore the possibility of commissioning Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP)

may have financial implications but these are not known at this point. SWEP is currently coordinated by the Council between November and March each year. It involves the mobilisation of a number of partner agencies and arrangements are re-established each year. It may be that providing a single grant-funded service may prove more efficient from an operational point of view, but may also be more costly. Whether or not this requires additional resource from the General Fund will depend whether a change is approved and whether it is funded from the Council's existing homelessness prevention grant funding programme.

(b) **Staffing Implications** (if not covered in Consultations Section)

There are no City Council staffing implications

(c) **Equality and Poverty Implications**

An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out on the Housing Strategy once published, of which the Homelessness Strategy action plan will form a part.

(d) **Environmental Implications**

None

(e) **Procurement**

There are no immediate procurement implications. Homelessness prevention activity is supported by a grants programme, which is due to be reviewed by this committee in Autumn cycle later this year.

(f) **Consultation and communication**

The Homelessness Strategy action plan has been subject to extensive consultation with the Homelessness Strategy Implementation Partnership (HSIP), which consists of statutory and voluntary sector delivery and commissioning partners, along with service user representation.

(g) **Community Safety**

There are community safety implications from the Council's approach to tackling street based anti- social behaviour, of which rough sleeping and begging forms a part. Objectives on these two areas of work are contained within the Homelessness Strategy action plan.

6. Background papers

None

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

Appendix 2 – Rough Sleeping in Cambridge – briefing for Full Council, April 2016

Appendix 3 - Profile of homelessness applications and acceptances 2012-2016

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

2016-19

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Area of work	Objective	Action required	Progress	Lead & participants	Deadline	RAG
1.Domestic abuse	Achieve better housing outcomes for victims and survivors of domestic abuse	1.1 Improve information available to victims and survivors to support people to stay in their homes	New City Council domestic abuse web page published	Cambridge City Council Cambridge Women's Aid Cambs County Council	April 2016	
		1.2 Review domestic abuse policies, procedures and practices with a view to joint framework for housing providers to consider adopting. Explore funding to manage this project.	Not started	Cambridge City Council Cambridge Women's Aid Cambs County Council	Sept 2017	
		1.3 Develop procedural guidelines covering the Council's approach to known perpetrators of domestic abuse.	Not started	Cambridge City Council Cambridge Women's Aid Cambs County Council	Dec 2016	
2. Access to the private rented sector	Assist more than 50 (per annum) Cambridge City customers in housing need to access the private rented sector	2.1 Update social lettings agency business plan.	Not started	Cambridge City Council	August 2016	
		2.2 Seek long term funding for social lettings agency via Housing Scrutiny Committee	Not started	Cambridge City Council	September 2016	
		2.3 Re-establish the single	Tri-authority partnership	Cambridge City Council	April 2016	

Area of work	Objective	Action required	Progress	Lead & participants	Deadline	RAG
		homelessness service as a tri-authority partnership, revise the Reconnections Policy and local authority Memorandum of Understanding	established. Recons policy complete and distributed.			
3. Rough Sleeping	Reduce the number of individuals sleeping rough in the City from an annual baseline of 135 per annum	3.1 Develop clear recommendations from the rough sleepers' survey.	Recommendations complete. Awaiting confirmation of lead.	Seeking lead from RSWG	July 2016	
		3.2 Develop more targeted work with young people to prevent homelessness – especially those not in employment, education or training (NEET) or those in Pupil Referral Units	Not started	Centre 33	March 2018	
		3.3 Evaluate and address demand for training flats available for people accessing the county council's Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) service	Not started	CEA project	March 2017	
		3.4 Develop a joint approach to tackle begging and busking activity, which is used to support a street-based lifestyle	Preliminary meeting held. 4 year funding agreed for the MEAM service to support this work.	Cambridge City Council	September 2016	
		3.5 Roll out an agreed hospital discharge protocol	Still awaiting sign off and training	Cambridge City Council	July 2016	
		3.6 Investigate, with partners, whether more joined-up support services can be developed to help customers all the way through a	Move-on data collection project instigated.	Cambridge City Council	March 2018	

Area of work	Objective	Action required	Progress	Lead & participants	Deadline	RAG
		housing pathway towards independent living. This will also include improving monitoring of move-on rates from the hostel system, and analysing what more could be done to improve move-on.				
		3.7 Conduct a commissioning review of floating support to assess whether providers can offer longer term and more flexible support	Not started	Housing commissioner (County)	September 2018	
		3.8 Evaluate the case for commissioning severe weather emergency provision (SWEP)	Currently scoping out requirements	Cambridge City Council	November 2016	
		3.9 Change, Grow, Live (CGL) to agree and implement a plan that will strengthen its performance in a range of areas.	CGL has met with the Council and an action plan has been agreed. Arrangements have been made to meet more frequently with key partners in order to strengthen cross-agency working to reduce rough sleeping.	Cambridge City Council CGL CSMHOT	Initial plan of action agreed on 16 May 2016. To be completed by 16 June 2016.	
4. Mental Health	Improve support services for those with mental health issues or a dual diagnosis with mental health as a primary issue	4.1 Work with the county council to monitor the impact of the Mental Health Prevention and Community Services (floating support) team in relation to homelessness support	Not started	Cambs County Council	October 2017	

Area of work	Objective	Action required	Progress	Lead & participants	Deadline	RAG
		4.2 Establish a monitoring system to assess the efficacy of the County Council's dual diagnosis strategy	Not started	Cambs County Council	March 2018	
5. Homelessness Prevention	Introduce new measures to enhance existing homelessness prevention options	5.1 Conduct a review of the Council's homelessness prevention fund	Started but unlikely to complete by deadline – some but not all recommendations will be ready	Cambridge City Council	April 2016	
		5.2 Establish a definition of repeat homelessness and baseline figures.	Potential lead to be discussed at the CHPG	Seeking lead from RSWG	July 2016	
		5.3 Work out causes of repeat homelessness and actions to tackle those	Potential lead to be discussed at the CHPG	Seeking lead from RSWG	March 2017	
		5.4 Agree repeat homelessness monitoring arrangements to assess progress	Not started	Seeking lead from RSWG	March 2017	
		5.5 Continue to pursue shared housing models with Registered Providers	There are current discussions on shared housing models with Metropolitan and Hundred Houses	Housing providers Cambridge City Council	March 2017	
6. Minimising use of temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast	Ensure that average stays in temporary accommodation do not exceed 5 months. Aim to use bed and breakfast accommodation in	6.1 Introduce revised eviction process for s188 & s190 applicants in the light of the Supreme Court decision on R v Newham LBC & Lewisham LBC 2014 and the decision that	Approved by Director. Briefing required for Executive Cllr. To be reported to Housing Scrutiny Committee in June 2016	Cambridge City Council	New process live by April 1 st 2016 Report to committee in June	

Area of work	Objective	Action required	Progress	Lead & participants	Deadline	RAG
	exceptional cases only	applicants are not entitled to a court order when in temporary accommodation.				
		6.2 Improve performance on cases settled within 33 working days. Aim for at least 75% within this figure. Introduce systematic analysis of cases outside 33 days and create an audit trail	2015-16 figures published. 2016-17 targets to be confirmed.	Cambridge City Council	Target assessment March 2017	
		6.3 Aim for 15 2-bed direct lets to homeless households from Registered Provider partners per annum	Agreement reached with Aldwyck for 5. Discussions opened with BPHA	Cambridge City Council	March 2017	
		6.4 Conduct a 6 monthly review of temporary accommodation requirements and act on review recommendations	Last review conducted February 2016. Recommendation that one bedroom properties are replaced by 3 beds to achieve better balance. Next review due	Cambridge City Council	Make some progress on Feb 2016 recommendation by August 2016. Conduct further review at August 2016	
7. Mitigating impact of welfare reform	Develop a multi-agency procedural approach to supporting those affected by the benefit cap in Cambridge	7.1 Procedure agreed and implemented. Full statutory homelessness duties averted where homelessness threat is as a direct consequence of the 'cap'.	Procedure at 1 st draft stage	Cambridge City Council CHS group	October 2016	

Area of work	Objective	Action required	Progress	Lead & participants	Deadline	RAG
8. Bringing empty homes back into use	Implement and monitor the Council's emerging scheme to bring long-term empty homes back into use (30 per annum)	8.1 Introduce an empty homes loan scheme	Started. 30 pa target hit in 2015-16	Cambridge City Council	Draft April 2016 Implement June 2016	
		8.2 Develop and implement one 'partnership scheme' in 2016/17 (an empty home/scheme).	Project started with Jimmy's Cambridge	Cambridge City Council Jimmy's Cambridge	March 31 st 2017	

RAG guide:

Complete	Started and on track for completion within deadline	Will not or unlikely to hit deadline	Not started
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Rough Sleeping in Cambridge

Briefing for Full Council

14th April 2016

Background

Rough sleeping numbers in Cambridge have increased significantly since November 2015. This briefing paper covers trends, causes and potential causes and responses from the Council and its partner agencies to tackle the problem.

Numbers

The Council had a longstanding target to maintain rough sleeping numbers at or below 10 on any single night. Since 2003 when this target was first set this target has been broadly met. There are two ways to assess performance against this target. Firstly, there is the method used by the Government to assess rough sleeping nationally; local authorities are required to conduct a count or estimate based on local intelligence on a designated night in the autumn. These figures are published by the Government at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics#rough-sleeping>. These figures show a 31% increase in rough sleeping from autumn 2015 to autumn 2016. The single night count in Cambridge rose from 10 in autumn 2015 to 18 in autumn 2016.

The street outreach team in Cambridge produces a weekly list of verified rough sleepers and so an alternative way of assessing performance against the target is to take an average of these weekly counts across the year. The figures for the last 3 years based on this method of counting are:

2013-14	9.75
2014-15	7
2015-16	13

In April 2014 the Council amended its formal reporting target and methodology. The above measures have not been abandoned, and the information is available, but counting the number of individuals affected by rough sleeping across the year is currently the preferred method. Figures for the last two years are as follows:

2014-15	135
2015-16	152

The 2015-16 figures represent an increase of 12.6% on the previous year.

Causes and potential causes

1. **Access to long term housing** - the private rented sector in Cambridge is difficult to access for single people on housing benefit. This is due in part to significant rises in rental values in Cambridge and in part to changes in the way the local housing allowance (LHA) is calculated (Since April 2011 LHA rates within Broad Rental Market Areas (BRMAs) have been based on the 30th percentile of local market rents (rather than the median) and the Cambridge BRMA

covers a wide geographical area including areas where rents are much lower than those found in Cambridge City). LHA rates will be frozen for 4 years from this year.

An analysis of LHA rates and average market rents in Cambridge (Source: Right Move) on the 13th April 2016 revealed the following:

Monthly Local Housing Allowance amounts		
Category	Type of property	Monthly amount
A	Shared accommodation	£348.92
B	One-bedroom self-contained	£546.21

Source: Cambridge City Council website

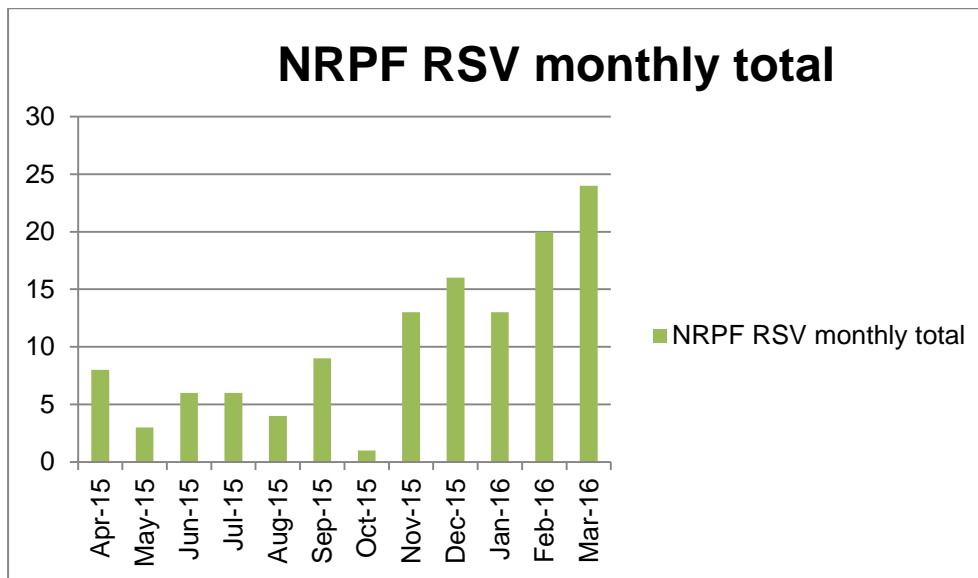
	Room	Self-contained 1 bed flat (including bedsits)
Lowest	£325	£650
Median	£525	£975
Highest	£700	£2730

Source: Analysis of figures on Right Move

This is allied to the fact that demand for one bedroom social or affordable housing in Cambridge far outstrips supply – 55% of the housing register in December 2015 consisted of applicants with a need for a one bedroom property and in the calendar year 2015 only 38% of all lettings to Cambridge City applicants on Home-Link were into one bedroom properties. This compares unfavourably in the same periods, for example, to 2 bedrooms (35% waiting, 44% of lets) and 3 bedrooms (8% waiting, 15% of lets): Source *Strategic Housing Key Facts December 2015* <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/content/housing-research> (Tables HL2b p30 and HL6 (b) p37)

2. **People with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)** – since November 2015 there has been a significant increase in the numbers of verified rough sleepers (RSV) with NRPF on the streets of Cambridge as the tables below demonstrate:

Month	NRPF RSV monthly total
Apr-15	8
May-15	3
Jun-15	6
Jul-15	6
Aug-15	4
Sep-15	9
Oct-15	1
Nov-15	13
Dec-15	16
Jan-16	13
Feb-16	20
Mar-16	24



Source: Street outreach team weekly rough sleeping reports

Securing accommodation options for those with no recourse to public funds is extremely difficult because if the individual is not in 'genuine and effective employment' and, therefore, not economically active they will not be entitled to benefits and will not be able to fund their stay in accommodation.

3. **Rough sleeping and mental health** - There is some evidence that the number of people rough sleeping who have mental health problems has increased. The figures below show a marked increase across 2015-16 in numbers of rough sleepers with mental health problems. These figures have been extracted from street outreach team quarterly reports and are presented as monthly averages:

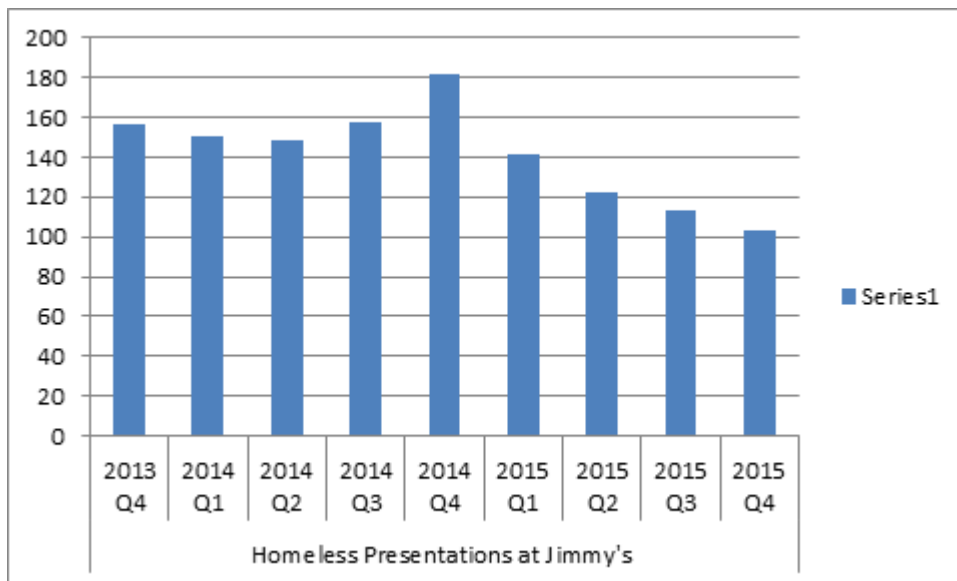
Q1 (April to June 2015)	3.66
Q2 (July to September 2015)	3
Q3 (October to December 2015)	19.66
Q4 (January to March 2016)	7.33

These figures need to be treated with caution as they reflect the position over quite a short period of time and they do not, without further research, lead us to any conclusions about underlying causes.

Responses to rough sleeping

At present the Council has identified a number of potential responses to rough sleeping. This is in addition to the single homelessness service, which since its inception in October 2013 has housed 176 Cambridge City referrals.

1. **Understanding more about the decline in presentations to Jimmy's Cambridge** - Across 2015 overall presentations to Jimmy's Cambridge have been going down (see table below). This may in part be explained by the higher numbers of people who have NRPF but the Council needs to understand more about the reasons driving this trend.



2. **Analysing hostel and supported housing move on performance** – The Council will be working with partners to see what more can be done to improve move on rates through hostels and supported housing and to assess whether there are more people currently within the hostel and supported housing system who would qualify to access the single homelessness service. The Council will be collating data on numbers of residents successfully moved on by housing providers in 2015-16
3. **Developing recommendations from the rough sleepers' survey** – the Council conducted a rough sleepers' survey in 2015 and published the results in January 2016. The purpose of the survey was to identify key themes and common characteristics amongst rough sleepers. The survey report produced some outline recommendations, which the Council and its partners are looking to develop further.
4. **Training flats** – the Council, in partnership with a registered housing provider, has developed a small number of training flats in the city. The County Council provides bespoke support to tenants of these flats through its chronically excluded adults' service. The Council will look to see if there is evidence that expanding provision of this nature could impact positively on rough sleeping numbers
5. **Shared housing** – the Council will be working with partners to identify a shared housing model that may be successful for rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping. There are a number of key considerations to take into account before adopting such a model. For example, ensuring that there is no adverse impact on the immediate neighbourhood and that sharers are carefully selected and are suited to sharing with each other.

Further information

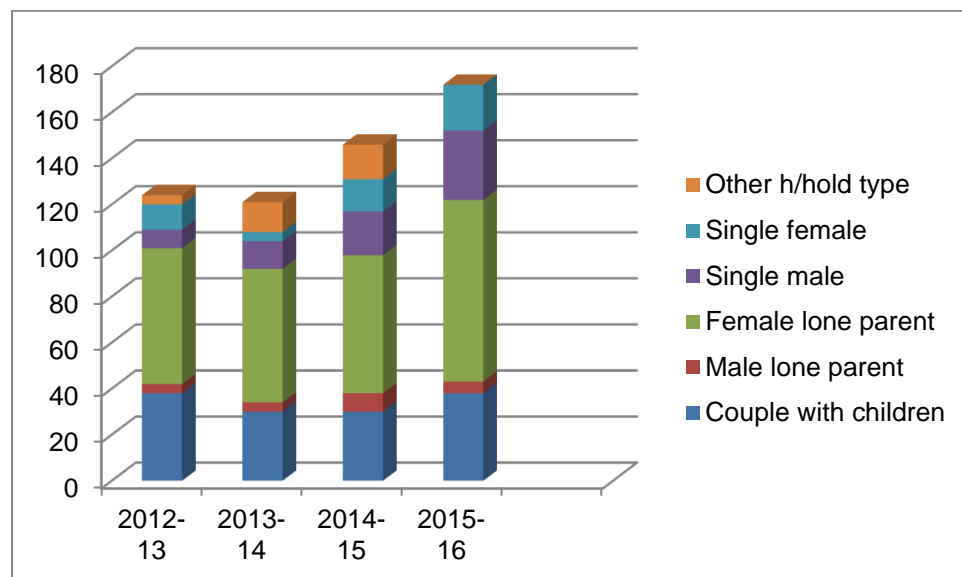
The list of potential responses above is not exhaustive and the Council is working with partners through the Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group (HSIP) to develop a homelessness strategy action plan. This plan will form part of the Council's Housing Strategy and will form part of a wider report on homelessness scheduled for June's Housing Scrutiny Committee.

David Greening
Housing Advice Service Manager
April 2016

Appendix 3

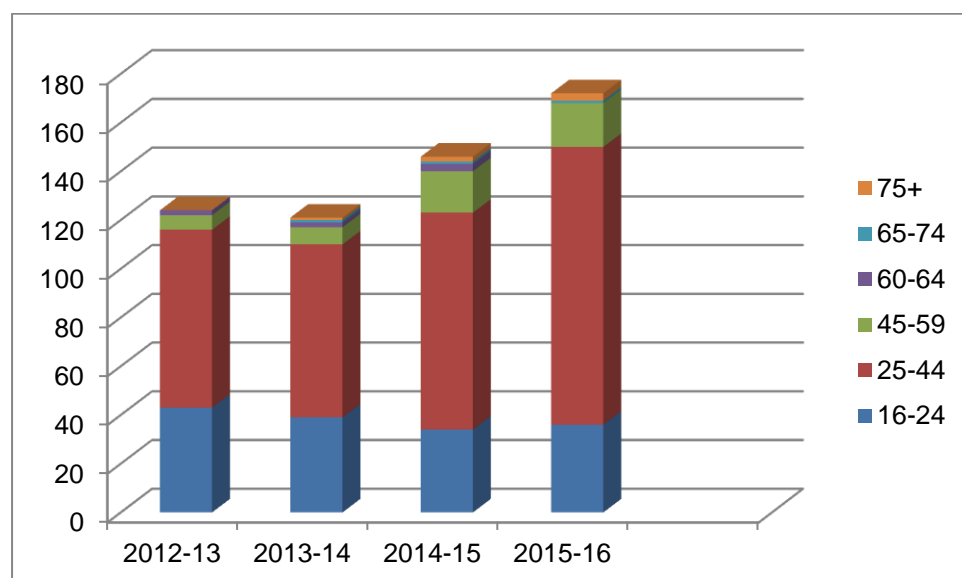
Profile of homelessness applications and acceptances 2012-2016

Table 1: Household types accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need



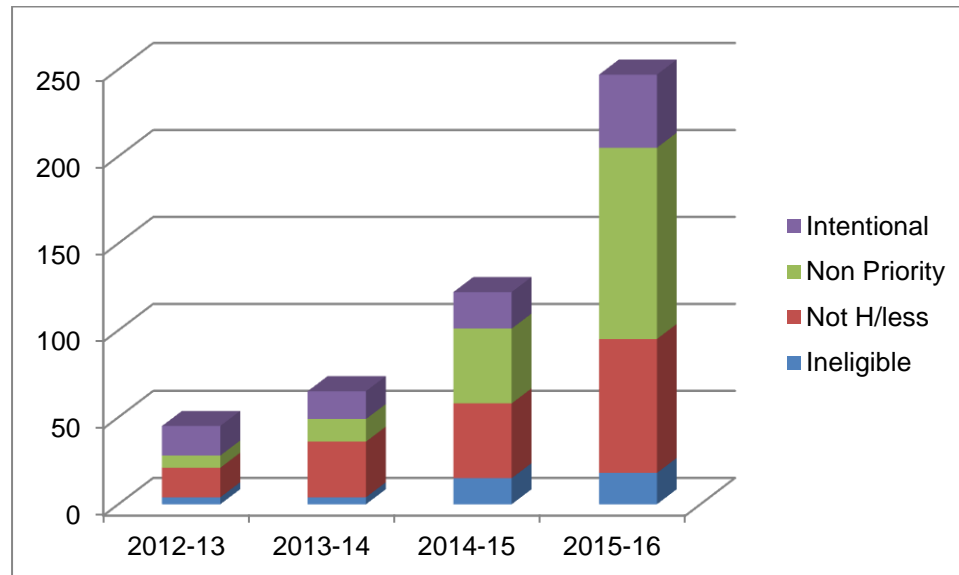
Year	Couple with children	Male lone parent	Female lone parent	Single male	Single female	Other h/hold type	Total
2012-13	38	4	59	8	11	4	124
2013-14	30	4	58	12	4	13	121
2014-15	30	8	60	19	14	15	146
2015-16	38	5	79	30	20	0	172

Table 2: Age profile of main applicant accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need



Year	16-24	25-44	45-59	60-64	65-74	75+	Total
2012-13	43	73	6	2	0	0	124
2013-14	39	71	7	2	1	1	121
2014-15	34	89	17	3	1	2	146
2015-16	36	114	18	0	1	3	172

Table 3: Homeless applications not accepted by decision reasons



Year	Ineligible	Not H/less	Non Priority	Intentional	Total
2012-13	4	17	7	17	45
2013-14	4	32	13	16	65
2014-15	15	43	43	21	122
2015-16	18	77	110	42	247



To: Executive Councillor for Housing: Councillor Kevin Price

Report by: Head of Legal Services and Head of Housing Services

Relevant scrutiny committee: Housing 21/5/2016 Scrutiny Committee

Wards affected: Abbey Arbury Castle Cherry Hinton Coleridge East Chesterton King's Hedges Market Newnham Petersfield Queen Edith's Romsey Trumpington West Chesterton

COMPLAINT UPHELDD BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN RELATING TO TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION Not a Key Decision

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Local Government Ombudsman has upheld a complaint relating to the provision of temporary accommodation.
- 1.2 In these circumstances, the Head of Legal Services, as the Council's Monitoring Officer, has an obligation to report the findings to the Executive. The Executive is obliged to set out what action has already been taken in respect of the findings, what action it intends to take and the reasons for taking the action.
- 1.3 This report summarises the complaint, acknowledges that there were shortcomings in relation to working practices and sets out the action taken in response.
- 1.4 The Executive Councillor is asked to consider the action taken and to decide whether it is adequate or whether further steps should be taken.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

To endorse the actions taken by officers in response to the finding of the Local Government Ombudsman.

3. The Complaint and the Ombudsman's Decision

3.1 The complaint

The complainant stated that the Council moved her at too short notice from temporary accommodation, forcing her to rent a garage from the Council to store her belongings. She complained that the Council charged her too much rent for the garage and miscalculated the rent and arrears payable for it. The Council then paid her £60 to compensate for the contents of her freezer but kept this towards the arrears.

3.2 The Ombudsman's final decision

The Ombudsman's final decision is, in summary:

"The Council moved a vulnerable woman in temporary accommodation at short notice so she had to give away the contents of her freezer, leaving her without food. The Council did not tell her she had to pay for the garage it stored her belongings in and would not give her the key until she agreed to pay. It seriously miscalculated what she owed for the garage causing more distress. The Council should write off any remaining charges for the garage and pay the complainant an extra £310 for her losses and the distress it caused."

The Ombudsman's decision letter is attached to this report. The facts surrounding the complaint are complex but there are two main elements to it:

3.3 Temporary accommodation.

The Council accepted a homeless duty to Ms X and provided her with temporary accommodation until it could house her. The temporary accommodation was a room in a Housing Association managed hostel. Ms X signed a license agreement with the housing association which said that the housing association would not normally give less than 28 days' notice to end the licence.

On the afternoon of 10 February 2015 the Council e-mailed Ms X to say it wanted her to move the next day. It said one of its partner local authorities

needed the room. Ms X said she could not move so quickly. On 11 February the Council said Ms X could stay until 16 February.

The Ombudsman has found the Council at fault for telling Ms X to move so quickly and because it wrongly insisted her licence agreement said it could move her at short notice. The Ombudsman concluded that this led to injustice for Ms X because of the worry the Council caused Ms X that she had to move overnight and to a hotel. The haste in which the Council made arrangements led to further problems for Ms X. She lost her food and did not have the money to replace it. She later found out she had to pay extra money to store her belongings from her limited budget.

3.4 Storage of belongings

The Council had a duty to protect Ms X's belongings, as part of its homelessness duty and could make a reasonable charge for this. The Ombudsman's decision letter sets out what happened in detail but, in summary the Ombudsman has found:

- Fault in not making it clear to Ms X that she would have to pay for storage. He found no evidence the Council told Ms X it would charge her to store her belongings in a garage. A letter of January 2015 only mentions free storage. The Ombudsman considers that the news she had to pay for the garage came as a shock to Ms X. This is fault causing injustice.
- Fault in not providing Ms X with keys to the garage. The Council claimed that its contractor had given keys to Ms X and that she had lost them. The Ombudsman found no evidence that this had happened and that, therefore, the Council was not justified in seeking to charge £95 for a lock change. Even if she had lost the key, the Ombudsman's view is that Council's refusal to give her access to a new set until she agreed to pay for the garage was unreasonable. Ms X's view the Council put her under duress is justified. Whatever the Council's intentions its actions resulted in it appearing to hold a vulnerable woman's goods hostage unless she agreed to sign a tenancy.
- The Council should have carried out an income and expenditure analysis to find out what it is fair and reasonable to charge the homeless for storage after 4 weeks. The Council has already addressed any potential injustice to Ms X as it reduced her weekly rent but found there was still the potential for injustice to others.

- Fault with regard to the Council's poor administration of the garage let. The Council did not make Ms X aware of the terms of the garage tenancy when it told her she had to move and the new accommodation had no storage. It did not send the agreement to Ms X until a month after it put her goods in a garage. It then sent a standard agreement to Ms X asking for rent in advance and a deposit when it does not ask homeless applicants to pay either. When it agreed to reduce the charge to £10, and then £5 it did not give Ms X new agreements. The old agreement did not properly record the contract the Council had with Ms X. This led to the Council wrongly attributing arrears of over £400 to Ms X. The Council terminated the garage tenancy using the wrong arrears figures. It continued to cite inaccurate figures for rent payable and arrears in its dealings with Ms X.
- The Ombudsman concluded that it was too early to consider a complaint about damage to Ms X's goods while in storage. The Council will inspect with Ms X when she moves to her new home. The Council says it will consider an inventory in future. The Ombudsman regards this as sensible. Where the Council has a duty to protect goods, it needs some record of those goods and their condition in case of a future dispute.

3.5 Agreed action

The Council has already written off the garage arrears and will not make any further storage charges until Ms X can move into her new home. It has paid Ms X £100 for the mistake it made over the arrears. The Ombudsman has said he is pleased by the Council's actions but does not consider it provides a full remedy for the injustice caused to Ms X. The Ombudsman therefore put forward the following list of actions, to which the Council has agreed.

To put matters right the Council has agreed that within a month of the Ombudsman's final decision it would:

- Confirm it has written off the garage arrears and will make no further storage charges to Ms X until she moves.
- Confirm Ms X does not owe £95 for a lock change.
- Pay Ms X £100 for the distress caused by the move at short notice leaving Ms X in need of food vouchers and storage facilities.

- Pay Ms X a further £150 for not telling her about the garage costs, withholding the keys when her goods were already in the garage, providing incorrect tenancy agreements, miscalculating her arrears, and taking action based on incorrect arrears.
- Pay Ms X the £60 it agreed for her lost food.
- Confirm it carries out an income and expenditure exercise when storing a homeless person's goods in its garage to work out on an individual basis what is a reasonable charge.
- Confirm in future it will provide the correct terms including rent in a garage tenancy agreement.
- Apologise to Ms X and find out which set of garage keys are the right ones.

4. Response to the Ombudsman's findings

4.1 Asking the applicant to move at unreasonably short notice

The Ombudsman found that the Council had asked the applicant to move from one temporary accommodation placement to another too quickly and that this was in contravention of the licence agreement, which allowed for a much longer notice period. Following the LGO's findings the Council's shared legal service has taken action to review the licence provided by the only remaining third party provider of temporary accommodation. The shared Legal service has also reviewed all of the Council's own tenancy/licence agreements for temporary accommodation and is reviewing notices to leave the accommodation. The Housing Advice Service has also amended its letters to households placed in emergency temporary accommodation under s188 part 7 Housing Act 1996 (as amended) to advise customers that they may be asked to leave the accommodation at short notice but that the Council will endeavour to make the notice period as reasonable as possible.

4.2 Assessing an applicant's ability to pay for storage

The Council has a duty to store and protect the belongings of certain categories of homeless persons and this duty is set out in s211, and supplemented by s211, of the 1996 Housing Act. The Council has revised its own procedures for storing an applicant's belongings. This includes a financial assessment at the outset to determine whether the applicant can afford the Council's standard charges for storing belongings in one of its

garages. The Housing Advice Service has secured two garages to provide for circumstances where the applicant cannot afford the Council's standard charges to store his or her possessions in the garage. These garages will be offered at no charge to the applicant until the s211 duty is discharged.

These revised arrangements for storage serve to simplify matters for the customer and for internal sections within the Council.

4.3 Issuing of keys for garages

City Homes will amend working practices to ensure that keys issued to customers renting garages will be signed for before they are released.

4.4 Inventories

Under the revised procedural arrangements the Council has provided for circumstances where an inventory will be drawn up with the applicant to cover the Council for any liability it may have in safeguarding those possessions.

4.5 Training

Staff from both City Homes and the Housing Advice Service who handle complaints will be attending training on effective complaint handling organised by the Local Government Ombudsman.

4.6 Apology and compensation

The Council has offered the apology and made the payments agreed with the Local Government Ombudsman as set out in paragraph 3.5.

5. Implications

- (a) **Financial Implications.** The total compensation agreed with the Ombudsman, and paid or credited by the Council, is £410.
- (b) **Staffing Implications.** The report identifies a training need for effective complaint handling.
- (c) **Equality and Poverty Implications.** An equality impact assessment has not been carried out in respect of this report. However, it is clearly the case that groups with protected characteristics and those in poverty are going to be significantly represented amongst those seeking assistance with homelessness from the Council.

- (d) **Environmental Implications.** This report has no climate change impact.
- (e) **Procurement.** There are no procurement implications.
- (f) **Consultation and communication.** The Monitoring Officer is obliged to consult the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) and the Chief Finance Officer (Head of Finance) in preparing this report, and has done so.
- (g) **Community Safety.** There are no direct community safety implications, but a failure by the Council to discharge its homelessness responsibilities could give rise to community safety issues, given the vulnerability of some of those seeking assistance.

5. Background papers

The Ombudsman decision letter is appended to this report. There are no other background papers.

6. Appendices

The Local Government Ombudsman's decision letter.

7. Inspection of papers

If you have a query on the report please contact:

Author's Name:	Simon Pugh, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Author's Phone Number:	01223 - 457401
Author's Email:	simon.pugh@cambridge.gov.uk

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Complaint reference:
15 009 916

Complaint against:
Cambridge City Council

The Ombudsman's final decision

Summary: The Council moved a vulnerable woman in temporary accommodation at short notice so she had to give away the contents of her freezer, leaving her without food. The Council did not tell her she had to pay for the garage it stored her belongings in and would not give her the key until she agreed to pay. It seriously miscalculated what she owed for the garage causing more distress. The Council should write off any remaining charges for the garage and pay the complainant an extra £310 for her losses and the distress it caused.

The complaint

1. The complainant, whom I will refer to as Ms X, complains the Council moved her at too short notice from temporary accommodation, forcing her to rent a garage from the Council to store her belongings. Charged her too much rent for the garage and miscalculated the rent and arrears on that garage. The Council then paid her £60 to compensate for the contents of her freezer but kept this towards the arrears.

The Ombudsman's role and powers

2. The Ombudsman investigates complaints about 'maladministration' and 'service failure'. In this statement, I have used the word fault to refer to these. She must also consider whether any fault has had an adverse impact on the person making the complaint. I refer to this as 'injustice'. If there has been fault which has caused an injustice, she may suggest a remedy. (*Local Government Act 1974, sections 26(1) and 26A(1)*)
3. If the Ombudsman is satisfied with a council's actions or proposed actions, she can complete her investigation and issue a decision statement. (*Local Government Act 1974, section 30(1B) and 34H(i)*)

How I considered this complaint

4. I have considered the complaint made by Ms X and information received from the Council.
5. Ms X and the Council had the opportunity to comment on a draft version of my decision before I made a final decision.

What I found

Background

6. The Council has accepted a homeless duty to Ms X and provided temporary accommodation until it can house her. The Council works in partnership with other local councils and social housing agencies to provide temporary accommodation.
7. Ms X has a visual disability and an assistance dog. Ms X has a low income from work and benefits. In late 2014 to early 2015 she says her income was about £63 a week.
8. In December 2014 the Council provided a room in a Housing Association managed hostel in a village about 20 miles from Cambridge. Ms X considered this too far away and wanted to return to Cambridge.

The change of temporary accommodation

9. The Council says it told Ms X she might have to move from the hostel at short notice but it has no evidence of this. Ms X says it did not tell her this.
10. Ms X signed a license agreement with the Housing Association. This gave the grounds on which the Housing Association could end the license. The agreement says the Housing Association will not normally give less than 28 days notice. It will put the notice in writing and give details of the notice period and why it has issued the notice.
11. On the afternoon of 10 February 2015 the Council e-mailed Ms X to say it wanted her to move the next day. It said one of its partner local authorities needed the room. Ms X said she could not move so quickly. On 11 February the Council said Ms X could stay until 16 February.
12. At this point the Council did not have any self-contained accommodation for Ms X and her dog. It told her it would provide a room in a hotel but she could not take her furniture there. The Council has a duty to protect Mr X's belongings and can make a reasonable charge for this. The Council does not have any storage units. It offered Ms X the use of one of its garages. It arranged for a contractor to take Ms X and her belongings to the garage on 14 February.
13. The Council did not take an inventory of Ms X's goods placed in the garage. It says Ms X had the key and was responsible for looking after her belongings.
14. Ms X did not know what to do with the food in her freezer. She asked the Council for advice as she could not cook the food at the hotel. Ms X gave the food away.
15. On 16 February the Council found a hostel in Cambridge that had a place for Ms X and her dog. Ms X moved into the hostel instead of the hotel but her furniture remained in storage. Ms X was happy with the new hostel as the location was much better for her. However, she asked the Council for food vouchers as she no longer had any food.
16. On 17 February the Council arranged for a contractor to move Ms X's belongings to a different garage as the first garage had a leak. Ms X says the leak damaged her mattress.

The storage charge

17. The Council has a policy of variable charges for garage rent. It introduced the policy because it had evidence some commuters and companies used its garages for low cost parking. In 2014 garage rents started at £9.55 a week for council

tenants storing transport. It charged £9.55 or £11.55 plus VAT for other Cambridge residents storing transport. It charged £15.95 plus VAT for public bodies storing transport. It charged £17.99 plus VAT (total £21.59) for people outside the city storing transport and to anyone using the garage for other storage.

18. The Council also has a policy that it does not charge homeless people to store goods in a garage for the first four weeks.
19. Ms X says she did not know the Council intended to charge her for storage. She had not paid storage previously and could not afford to do so from her income. She says the Council put her under duress to sign the agreement and accept the rental charge. She says the Council would not give her the keys for the garage until she did this so she could not get her belongings.
20. The Council did not ask Ms X to sign an agreement for the first garage. It drew up an agreement for the second garage but did not give this to Ms X on the day she moved into the second garage. The Council has an email trail dated 17 February where an officer says the contractor has the keys and will give them to Ms X. Another officer responds to say the paperwork is ready and asks Ms X to confirm when the contractor gives her the keys. The Officer did not send this email to Ms X; she only sent it to other Council officers.
21. The Council says its emails of 17 February demonstrate its contractor gave Ms X the garage key and she lost it. The emails say an Officer asked the contractor to give Ms X the key but contain no evidence he did so. The Council does not have any confirmation from the contractor or Ms X that she received keys for the second garage on the day the contractor moved her goods.
22. On 12 March 2015 Ms X contacted a Case Officer as she did not have a key to the garage and wanted to put a sofa in it. At this point the Council realised Ms X had not signed an agreement for the garage. The Case Officer assumed Ms X had lost the key and should pay for a lock change. The Case Officer asked advice on what rent Ms X had to pay for the garage.
23. The same day the Council sent Ms X a standard offer letter for the garage tenancy at a rent of £21.15 a week. The letter said Ms X had to pay a deposit; four weeks rent in advance and arrange insurance because the Council does not accept responsibility for goods in the garage.
24. Ms X was not happy and spoke to several officers. On 20 March a Manager emailed Ms X to say she had to sign the tenancy before the Council would release the keys. He said while Ms X lived in temporary accommodation the Council would charge £10 a week instead of £21.15. Ms X had to pay £10 in advance before the Council would give her the keys. The Council held Ms X responsible for the £95 cost of a lock change and said it would invoice her for this.
25. Ms X signed the agreement on 23 March. However she wrote on the agreement "I have been made to sign this or refused access to my things".
26. Ms X continued to tell the Council she could not afford the garage rent. In May the Council reduced it to £5 a week, which Ms X then paid. The Council says it did not carry out an income and expenditure analysis to see what Ms X could afford. It says she suggested £5 a week and the Council agreed.
27. The Council ended the garage tenancy in July 2015 because of alleged arrears.
28. In September the Council offered Ms X a permanent property she wants but it is not yet ready. Ms X remained at the hostel until November when she moved into

self-contained temporary accommodation managed by the Council. Her belongings remain in the garage.

29. In October the Council sent Ms X two letters about the garage on the same day. In one it threatened to apply to court for possession because of the arrears. This said the rent is £5 a week. The other is a standard letter offering Ms X a new tenancy at £21.59 a week, plus a deposit, plus rent in advance.
30. The Council's October arrears letter says new keys for the garage are at the office and reminds Ms X "again" to pick them up.

The Council's response to Ms X's complaint

31. Ms X complained to the Council and went through all three stages of its complaint process.
32. The Council said the hostel licence agreement she signed said she might have to move at short notice. However, it apologised for the inconvenience of that short notice.
33. It said Ms X knew about the garage rent, which the Council had reduced to a reasonable amount for her. It had not forced her to sign the agreement; she could have made her own storage arrangements.
34. It said the Council did not make Ms X sign the agreement under duress. It is the Council's normal practice not to give prospective garage tenants keys until they have signed the agreement. If Ms X had decided not to take the garage tenancy officers would have discussed moving her property so she could take it to another storage area of her choice.
35. In September 2015, at stage three the Investigator accepted the short notice meant Ms X did not have enough time to protect the contents of her freezer. The Investigator recommended the Council reimburse Ms X the £60 she estimated as the value of the food she lost. The Investigator said Ms X had only paid £60 towards garage rent and had arrears of £436. The Investigator said the Council could put the £60 repayment towards those arrears.

The Council's response to the Ombudsman's enquiries

36. In response to my enquiries the Council accepts it had no legal right to give Ms X notice on the first hostel as it was not the landlord. It says Ms X did not complain about leaving the hostel as she consistently told the Council she wanted to move back to Cambridge. It says she complained about the short notice and loss of food.
37. The Council still says Ms X knew about the garage charges. It has provided a letter it wrote to Ms X in January 2015 saying it could arrange 4 weeks storage free of charge. It says it had not charged her anything for a garage by 20 March when a Manager fully explained the charges to her. It says if she was unhappy she could have removed her belongings and made her own arrangements. It says it has supported Ms X through several changes of accommodation and paid to transport her belongings. It says Ms X lost the keys. However, it says it could have explained things better and taken more account of Ms X's situation and ability to make her own arrangements. It says because of this it will waive the outstanding garage charges until Ms X moves into her new property. The garage account is now clear.
38. The Council says it charges homeless people the same as anyone else for a garage used for storage. It says it gives concessions to homeless people not allowed to others; it pays the deposit and gives the first four weeks free. It says

for Ms X it reduced the rent to £10 a week, and then £5, a figure suggested by Ms X.

39. The Council accepts the arrears figure of £436 it gave Ms X in response to her complaint, and therefore the figure it ended the garage tenancy on in July, is wrong. It had agreed to reduce the cost to Ms X; its Housing Aid Service was meant to pay the difference between this and the full cost. It says it did not properly apply this internal recharge and the service had not paid its part in full. It included this internal recharge in the arrears figure it said Ms X was responsible for. It says it gave Ms X the correct figure, £75, in its arrears letter in October 2015. It provided the new calculations it carried out to decide Ms X owed £75 in July 2015
40. The Council accepts giving Ms X the wrong arrears figure could have caused her distress. It offers its apologies and has paid £100 into her rent account to acknowledge its mistake.
41. The Council says it reinstated the garage tenancy in October because Ms X could not move into her new property. It says it did not reposess the garage because of the situation and did not charge Ms X any rent for it from July to October to compensate her for the delay.
42. Ms X is still using the garage. The Council says it will consider compensating Ms X if she has evidence of damage to her goods caused by the leak. The Council will carry out a joint inspection with Ms X when she is ready to retrieve her belongings to check the damage. The Council says this case has shown it might be useful in future to have an agreed inventory at the start of a garage let to a person in temporary accommodation.

Was the Council at fault when it told Ms X she had to move at short notice

43. The licence agreement Ms X signed did not say she could be asked to move at short notice, it said she would get 28 days written notice. The Council had no legal right to end that licence, only the Housing Association could. The Council could ask Ms X to move and if she refused ask the Housing Association to end the licence.
44. The reason the Council wanted Ms X to move, and at such short notice, was because another council wanted the room for someone else. I do not know why the Council agreed so readily to this but it did not properly and fairly consider its responsibilities to Ms X and her needs.
45. The Council is at fault for telling Ms X to move so quickly and because it wrongly insisted her licence agreement said it could move her at short notice.
46. I need to consider the injustice the move caused to Ms X. The Council at first intended to move Ms X into a hotel. It gave Ms X a few more days and arranged to store her belongings. The hostel it then found was better for Ms X and she wanted to move back to Cambridge. The injustice is the worry the Council caused Ms X that she had to move overnight and to a hotel. The haste in which the Council made arrangements led to further problems for Ms X. She lost her food and did not have the money to replace it. She later found out she had to pay extra money to store her belongings from her limited budget.

Was the Council at fault for its storage arrangements for Ms X

47. I have seen no evidence the Council told Ms X it would charge her to store her belongings in a garage. The letter of January 2015 only mentions free storage. In March 2015, Ms X's Case Officer did not know what the Council would charge Ms

-
- X. I consider the news she had to pay for the garage came as a shock to Ms X. This is fault causing injustice.
48. The Council says it did not make Ms X sign for the garage under duress. It says it does not give garage keys out until the tenant signs the agreement. If the Council is letting an empty garage this is understandable. In this case the Council put Ms X's goods in the garage and then would not give her the keys.
49. I have seen no evidence the contractor gave Ms X the keys on 17 February and she lost them as alleged by the Council. Without any evidence Ms X lost the keys the Council has no grounds to charge her £95 for a lock change. Even if she had lost the key, the Council's refusal to give her access to a new set until she agreed to pay for the garage was unreasonable. Ms X's view the Council put her under duress is justified. Whatever the Council's intentions its actions resulted in it appearing to hold a vulnerable woman's goods hostage unless she agreed to sign a tenancy.
50. The Council has a duty to protect the belongings of a homeless person and can charge a reasonable amount for this. The Council's policy does not differentiate between a person or company wanting a garage for additional storage and a homeless person who has nowhere to put their belongings. The Council can use its standard rate as a starting point but should then consider the individual circumstances of a homeless person to decide what he or she can afford. The Council does not ask for rent in advance or a deposit from homeless people and allows four weeks free of charge. However, I have seen no evidence the Council carries out an income and expenditure analysis to find out what it is fair and reasonable to charge the homeless for storage after 4 weeks. The Council has already addressed any potential injustice to Ms X as it reduced her weekly rent but there is still the potential for injustice to others.
51. The Council is at fault for its poor administration of the garage let. The Council did not make Ms X aware of the terms of the garage tenancy when it told her she had to move and the new accommodation had no storage. It did not send the agreement to Ms X until a month after it put her goods in a garage. It then sent a standard agreement to Ms X asking for rent in advance and a deposit when it does not ask homeless applicants to pay either. When it agreed to reduce the charge to £10, and then £5 it did not give Ms X new agreements. The old agreement did not properly record the contract the Council had with Ms X. This led to the Council wrongly attributing arrears of over £400 to Ms X.
52. The Council terminated the garage tenancy using the wrong arrears figures.
53. When the Council renewed the garage tenancy in October 2015 it again sent Ms X a standard agreement asking for rent in advance and a deposit. It again put the full weekly charge of £21.59 although it had agreed Ms X would pay £5. The Council's tenancy agreement should be a correct record of the agreed terms.
54. The Council says it recalculated the arrears and decided Ms X owed it £75 in July 2015 not £436. This figure is still wrong.
55. The agreement signed on 23 March 2015 gave the full rent as £21.15. The tenancy conditions say the Council can increase the rent by giving a minimum of four weeks written notice. The Council did not do this. However in its calculations it has assumed the first week's full rent was £21.36 and 15 weeks after that at a full rent of £21.59 making a total of £325.21.
56. The rent the Council agreed with Ms X was 8 weeks at £10 and 8 weeks at £5. A total of £120. Ms X paid £60 of this leaving a balance of £60; not £75. The

Council says the Housing Aid Section agreed to pay £210.21. This is not enough to cover the difference between the full rent and what Ms X had to pay even at £21.15 a week. The difference is greater with the higher rent now alleged by the Council. What the Council has done is take what Housing Aid paid from the total of the higher rent and held Ms X responsible for the balance. It therefore wrongly attributed an extra £15 to her indebtedness even after it said it had properly calculated the arrears.

57. In September 2015, seven months after its actions left Ms X with no food, the Council agreed to reimburse her £60 for the food she lost. However, it intended to keep that £60 towards the arrears it had miscalculated. I have seen all the Council's calculations of rent and arrears for the garage, including those after October 2015. None of the calculations show the £60 the Council said it would pay towards the arrears.
58. In October 2015 the Council asked Ms X "again" to pick up the garage keys. The Council ordered a lock change around 13 March. I have seen no evidence of another lock change ordered after 23 March. Without evidence of a second lock change it appears the lock change it ordered around 13 March was not carried out until after 23 March. In which case the keys in the office on 23 March which it gave to Ms X are the ones the contractor used on 17 February. The Council needs to check which keys work as it may have changed the locks after it gave Ms X the keys on 23 March.
59. It is too early to consider a complaint about damage to Ms X's goods while in storage. The Council will inspect with Ms X when she moves to her new home. The Council says it will consider an inventory in future. This is sensible. Where the Council has a duty to protect goods, it needs some record of those goods and their condition in case of a future dispute.
60. The Council has already written off the garage arrears and will not make any further storage charges until Ms X can move into her new home. It has paid Ms X £100 for the mistake it made over the arrears. I am pleased by the Council's actions but do not consider it provides a full remedy for the injustice caused to Ms X.

Agreed action

61. To put matters right the Council has agreed that within a month of my final decision it will:
- Confirm it has written off the garage arrears and will make no further storage charges to Ms X until she moves.
 - Confirm Ms X does not owe £95 for a lock change.
 - Pay Ms X £100 for the distress caused by the move at short notice leaving Ms X in need of food vouchers and storage facilities.
 - Pay Ms X a further £150 for not telling her about the garage costs, withholding the keys when her goods were already in the garage, providing incorrect tenancy agreements, miscalculating her arrears, and taking action based on incorrect arrears.
 - Pay Ms X the £60 it agreed for her lost food.

-
- Confirm it carries out an income and expenditure exercise when storing a homeless person's goods in its garage to work out on an individual basis what is a reasonable charge.
 - Confirm in future it will provide the correct terms including rent in a garage tenancy agreement.
 - Apologise to Ms X and find out which set of garage keys are the right ones.

Final decision

The Council is at fault for making Ms X move at too short notice. It is at fault for its actions when storing Ms X's goods. It caused unreasonable and unnecessary distress and upset to Ms X. The Council has agreed to the action I recommended which will provide a suitable remedy for Ms X. I have completed my investigation and closed the complaint.

Investigator's decision on behalf of the Ombudsman



To: Executive Councillor for Housing: Councillor Kevin Price
Report by: Nicola Hillier
Relevant scrutiny committee: Housing Scrutiny Committee 21/6/2016
Wards affected: Cherry Hinton Queen Edith's

New Social Housing on Housing Revenue Account Garden and Infill Sites

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

This report provides details of additional sites to be brought forward in the Council's social housing programme, to be included in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) garage and small in-fill sites development.

The report requests approval to a capital budget for the HRA garden and back land development.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- approve the additional three sites to be developed for housing.
- note the indicative unit types and approve that they be progressed for planning approval
- approve the capital budget of £708,630 for the additional development.
- approve that delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director to enter into a legal agreement with building contractors for these sites as part of the HRA Garage and Infill Sites 2015/16 Programme.

3. Background

As the main provider of housing in Cambridge, the reasons why the Council has its own new build housing programme are as follows;

1. Provide additional social housing to meet the shortfall in Cambridge and to replace the loss of social housing through the Right to Buy.
2. Replace some of the Council's existing social housing that no longer meets current day standards and is becoming less popular with residents.
3. Build new house types that will better meet the overall mix of Affordable Housing needed in the future.
4. Improve the energy efficiency of the Council's housing.

The Council has completed 131 new council homes so far with a further 164 to be completed in the coming year. This includes those homes that are significantly progressed on the Quad scheme on the Southern Fringe that will deliver a total of 104 homes and 39 new Council homes on the Homerton site.

Officers have identified sites to provide more social housing and have categorised new schemes opportunities in terms of land ownership as follows;

- a. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land with existing housing
- b. HRA garage and small in-fill sites
- c. General Fund sites
- d. Sites owned by other public sector bodies
- e. Sites in private ownership

As an indication of scale, sites have been identified that could deliver around 250 new social housing units for the Council over the next four years in addition to those already completed or approved.

This report provides details of three small additional sites identified by staff that could be incorporated into the already approved development of HRA garage and small in-fill sites. As each site can only accommodate one or two units, approval is requested to proceed on a programme basis rather than individually. Approval is therefore requested for an additional budget of £708,630 to deliver these three sites.

The proposed project includes those sites previously identified in the 3 Year Rolling Programme. None of the sites require the redevelopment of existing housing. All of the new social housing has been assessed as being for rent at Affordable Rents set at Local Housing Allowance levels.

Two of the additional sites have been separated from large garden plots of existing stock with the third site being vacant back land:

1. 1 Queensmeadow
2. 39 Hills Avenue
3. Wulfstan Way

Appendix 1 provides location plans for these 3 sites.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

The capital budget required for the garden land infill sites is £708,630

As schemes are subject to planning, the costs are indicative, however have been based on recently received budgets on other infill sites.

Based on these indicative viability assessments the budget for the sites is broken down as follows;

Site	Proposed House Type	Number	Indicative Budget
Queensmeadow	2 bed house	1	£184,860
Hills Avenue	2 bed house	1	£184,860
Wulfstan Way	2 bed house	2	£338,910
Total		4	£708,630

The indicative budgets provided above are fully inclusive of works costs and all associated professional fees.

The Housing Revenue Account Mid-Term Financial Review captures the funding available for the ongoing social housing programme. The budget for this scheme will utilise funding of £212,589 (30% of the total indicative scheme costs) from Right to Buy receipts, that must be expended to prevent them from being lost . The HRA budget allows and allocates match funding to the RTB receipts to facilitate this expenditure. This match funding is available through the capital receipts made from the sale of HRA properties during the previous year.

It is possible to bring forward these small sites for development, before previously identified schemes that are currently on hold, due to the relatively small financial resource required for delivery. These small sites also have

the benefit that they do not require any decanting of existing residents or purchase of leasehold properties that impact on the financial costs of the schemes and the timescales for delivery. It is hoped that by including these sites in a package of works with other small infill sites that savings can be made to deliver at costs less than those identified above.

As with all new build schemes as schemes are finalised they will only proceed if they can be funded within borrowing and capital funding parameters in the HRA 30 Business Plan.

(b) Staffing Implications (if not covered in Consultations Section)

The schemes will be managed by the Housing Development Agency following liaison with City Homes; the Estates and Facilities Service and the Legal Services Team.

There are no other significant staff implications.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

A series of EQIAs have been undertaken for the Council House Programme, the Housing Development Service and for individual schemes. The EQIAs mainly highlight the benefits of the Council retaining direct control of new housing development itself to ensure a focus on the delivery of housing that meets a diverse range of housing needs. Part of the assessment underlines the need for Affordable Housing to help those most likely to suffer poverty as well as ways in which new Affordable Housing will directly save money for tenants, such as energy saving measures.

(d) Environmental Implications

The social housing will be built to the equivalent of Level 4 of the Code for sustainable homes or other such sustainable specification as implemented by the City Council.

(e) Procurement

These sites will be tendered in a traditional manner to small/medium sized local contractors as part of a package approach to maximise value for money alongside those sites previously approved for development on the Garage and Infill Sites previously approved in March 2015.

The site at Wulfstan Way also provides an opportunity to purchase additional garden land to facilitate a larger development. As these gardens

are only accessible through CCC owned land the values would not attract high open market plot levels as they are only of use to CCC.

(f) Consultation and communication

This scheme does not involve the redevelopment of existing residential accommodation. Consultation will therefore follow the process required by the planning process.

Internal communication will be structured around the established groups that meet every Committee cycle and oversee the Council's social housing programme, namely; an officer group; a residents consultative group; and the Members Steering Group.

(g) Community Safety

There are no recognised implications on Community Safety with the proposed developments. At Wulfstan Way there is a benefit to undertaking the development on back land that has been the subject of anti-social behaviour in the past.

5. Background papers

None

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 provides location plans for all of the sites.

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

Author's Name:	Nicola Hillier
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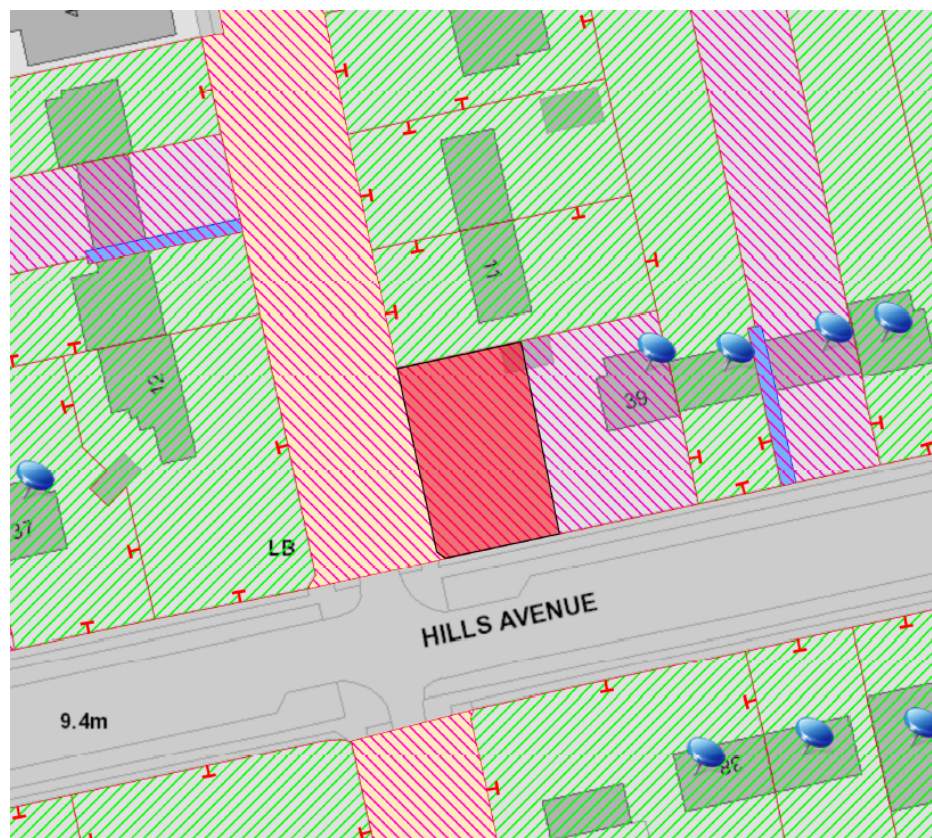
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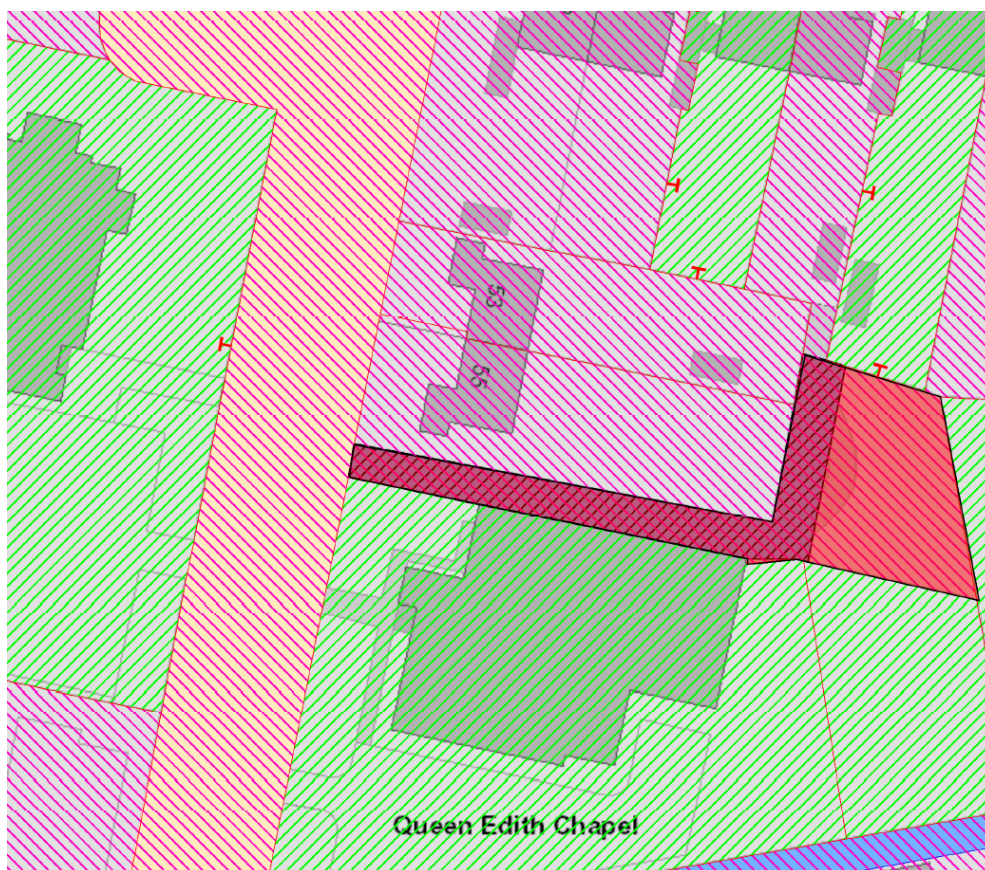
Appendix 1 – Location Plans for Garden Land and Infill Developments

1 Queens Meadow



39 Hills Road







To: Executive Councillor for Housing: Councillor Kevin Price
 Report by: Sabrina Walston
 Relevant scrutiny committee: Housing Scrutiny Committee 21/6/2016
 Wards affected: All

Social Housing Programme Key Decision

1. Executive summary

In July 2014, the Executive Councillor for Housing approved a three year rolling programme of housing sites in the Council's ownership for consideration for development, redevelopment or disposal.

This report provides a review of the programme and specifically seeks approval of a revised Three Year Rolling programme that includes sites to be investigated in 2016/17 to 2018/19.

The report sets this request for approval to the revised three year programme in the context of;

- the new Council Social Housing Programme
- the Housing and Planning Act 2016
 - Starter Homes
 - Vacant High Value Local Authority Housing
- Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016
 - 1% rent reductions

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- To approve revisions made to produce the 3 Year Rolling Programme 2016/17 to 2018/19 in the context of the wider Social Housing Programme.

3. Background

As the main provider of housing in Cambridge, the reasons why the Council has its own programme are as follows;

- Provide additional social housing to meet the shortfall in Cambridge and to replace the loss of social housing through the Right to Buy.
- Replace some of the Council's existing housing that no longer meets current day standards and is becoming less popular with residents.
- Build new house types that will better meet the overall mix of social housing needed in the future.
- Improve the energy efficiency of the Council's housing.

Social Housing Programme

Cambridge City Council has been directly delivering social housing since 2010. This programme has delivered 131 units thus far and is set to deliver another 164 units in the next year alone. This has been achieved through Housing Revenue Account funding, Homes and Communities Agency grant and Right to Buy receipts. More recently the General Fund has bought stock for Cambridge City Housing Company to supply sub market rental properties.

There has been a tremendous amount of change from central Government in the social housing sector over the last 12 months. The 1% rent reduction for four years has severely impacted the HRA and the Social Housing Programme the Council can pursue. Officers are investigating innovative ways of working to enable the delivery of housing that is affordable but the pace of the Social Housing Programme through the HRA has slowed due to the lack of certainty with regards to funding. Therefore the proposed three year rolling programme in Appendix 2 has no further HRA sites added.

The Housing Development Agency (HDA) is project managing the development of some General Fund land, which means social housing will continue to be directly delivered by the Council, but a minority will be on HRA land over the next 4 years.

A separate report to this Committee called 'New Social Housing on Housing Revenue Account Infill Sites' requests approval of the Executive Councillor for Housing to progress a few more small HRA sites. These are sites we are

able to fund with the money committed in the budget to match fund Right To Buy receipts.

Three Year Rolling Programme

This annual review keeps members apprised of progress with sites and offers the opportunity to introduce new sites for investigation.

Appendix 1 provides an update of the schemes within the three year rolling programme that are already under investigation.

Appendix 2 is the revised three year rolling programme that is requested to be re-approved with the only addition being Akeman Street. This site gained Executive Councillor for Housing approval to be included in the three year rolling programme at the January 2016 Committee and therefore residents have previously been notified of its inclusion. A final scheme will be brought to Housing Scrutiny Committee for approval.

When reading Appendix 1, Committee Members may wish to note in particular that for 69-159a Lichfield Road (odd nos.) and Campkin Rd Ph2 (including 1-20 and 81-91 Hawkins Road garages) the existing residential blocks have been removed from the programme but that there is some merit in continuing to review the potential of the redevelopment of any non-residential areas and open spaces at these sites.

Once sites have been investigated and if they are considered feasible and viable, proposed schemes are brought to Committee to gain scheme specific approval to commence the development. The schemes that have gained scheme specific approval will be removed from the three year rolling programme. These are;

- Kendal Way
- Tedder Way
- Cadwin Fields and Nuns Way Garages
- Cameron Road Garages
- Uphall Road Garages (between 11 & 13 Uphall Road)
- Wiles Close Garages
- 9 to 28 Anstey Way

The Committee is reminded that approval has been given to relocate residents living in 9 to 28 Anstey Way but in light of the current funding constraints it is not yet proceeding to planning.

Wulfstan Way, 1 Queensmeadow and 39 Hills Avenue are subject to a separate report, New Social Housing on Housing Revenue Account Infill Sites, coming to this Committee. Therefore these sites have remained in

Appendix 2, the revised three year rolling programme, until such time they do have approval to proceed.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

Financial implications will be assessed and reported when individual schemes considered suitable for development, redevelopment or disposal are brought forward to this Committee for scrutiny and for approval by the Executive Councillor for Housing.

The cost and funding of the Council's new build programme will be continually reviewed as part of the Council's Medium Term Strategy and budget setting and review cycles.

(b) Staffing Implications (if not covered in Consultations Section)

The recently formed Housing Development Agency project manages the delivery of the Social Housing Programme. This is a joint service with South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. HRA projects are monitored by a group of officers that meets quarterly. This includes representatives from the HDA, City Homes, Housing Advice and Housing Strategy, with Procurement, Finance, Internal Audit, and Legal staff as corresponding members. General Fund projects are currently managed by the HDA through project team meetings with key officers. These project teams will need to broaden in the next few months.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

A series of EQIAs have been undertaken for the Social Housing Programme, the Housing Development Service and for individual schemes. The EQIAs mainly highlight the benefits of the Council retaining direct control of new housing development itself to ensure a focus on the delivery of housing that meets a diverse range of housing needs. Part of the assessment underlines the need for social housing to help those most likely to suffer poverty as well as ways in which new social housing will directly save money for tenants, such as energy saving measures.

Each individual scheme will continue be subject to an EQIA at the feasibility stage and prior to scheme approval.

(d) Environmental Implications

All new social housing on the growth sites and in the Council's programme is built to at least Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. Going forward, after the abolition of the Code for Sustainable Homes, the Council will use its own Sustainability Guide, which is currently being produced.

(e) Procurement

To facilitate the development of Council sites the Council has a partnership agreement with a house-builder/developer and four Registered Providers. This contract is coming to an end, therefore another procurement is proposed by the HDA to enable the development of smaller HRA sites as set out in the report New Social Housing on Housing Revenue Account Infill Sites coming to this Committee.

With regards to future developments the HDA is leading on the potential selection of an Investment Partner to help deliver housing on City Council owned land. Legal advice is currently being sought on this and a report will be taken to the Strategy and Resources Committee on the 4th July 2016.

(f) Consultation and communication

The Council's approach to the involvement of residents affected by the Three Year Programme process and the Council's new house-building programme was the subject of a report to the January 2013 Community Services Scrutiny Committee. One major change was that the first collective meeting with residents of an affected scheme will be held at least 4 – 6 weeks prior to a report coming to the scrutiny committee for consideration.

Consultation is also carried out with residents and neighbours once schemes have been proposed by the architects in order to receive any comments on the plans.

Due to the uncertainty of funding for the Social Housing Programme it is proposed that the Council sends a letter to residents affected by the potential redevelopment of their homes to update them on the on-going work to secure funding to advance these sites.

If any sites that are occupied by residents are recommended for redevelopment the Home Loss Policy covers the financial compensation available to residents and how they will be supported to move should the site gain approval.

(g) Community Safety

All new social housing is assessed against Secure by Design criteria.

5. Background papers

EQIA

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: 3 Year Rolling Programme Update

Appendix 2: New Three Year Rolling Programme 2016/17 to 2018/19

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

Author's Name:	Sabrina Walston
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Author's Email:	sabrina.walston@cambridge.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Three Year Social Housing Programme 2015.16 to 2017.18

2015/16	Ward	City Homes	Existing AH Units	Indicative New AH Units	Progress
Kendal Way	East Chest'ton	North	0	1	Scheme taken to pre-application meeting in January 2016. Full planning application to be submitted shortly.
Tedder Way	Kings Hedges	North	0	2	Scheme taken to pre-application meeting in January 2016. Full planning application to be submitted shortly.
Cadwin Fields and Nuns Way Garages	Kings Hedges	North	0	2	Scheme taken to pre-application meeting in January 2016. Full planning application to be submitted shortly.
Cameron Road Garages	Kings Hedges	North	0	7	Scheme taken to pre-application meeting in January 2016. Full planning application to be submitted shortly.
Uphall Road Garages (between 11&13 Uphall Rd)	Romsey	South	0	2	Scheme taken to pre-application meeting in January 2016. Full planning application to be submitted shortly.
Wiles Close Garages	Kings Hedges	North	0	3	Scheme taken to pre-application meeting in January 2016. Full planning application to be submitted shortly.
9 to 28 Anstey Way	Trump'ton	South	23	34	Project is the subject of a report to committee this cycle.
9 to 10a Ventress Close and adjacent	Queen Ediths	South	3	13	Existing consists of three rented flats and a leasehold flat. Scheme to be prioritised to submit

Appendix 1 – Three Year Social Housing Programme 2015.16 to 2017.18

Garages					to Housing Committee by January 2016 at the latest.
Colville Rd Ph 2 (flats 66-80b)	Cherry Hinton	South	20	32	Site includes a public car park with recycling facilities. In addition to the 20 Affordable Housing units there are 4 leasehold flats. Scheme to be prioritised to submit to Housing Committee by January 2016 at the latest.
Aylesborough close Ph 2 (65-75 Verulum Way and 15-34 Aylesborough Close and 2-24 Fordwith Close)	Arbury	North	40	Not known	The existing flats include 4 leaseholders in addition to the 40 Affordable Housing. The design and layout and condition of the properties is poor and they make poor use of the land. Scheme to be prioritised to submit to Housing Committee by January 2016 at the latest.
Land to rear 55 Wulfstan Way	Queen Edith's	South	0	2	This site came forward again as a neighbour has secured planning permission to build a bungalow on their own and Council land. Assessment in the last twelve months suggests that a single three bedroom house could be provided on the site and a scheme will be submitted as part of the 2016 Garage and Infill Programme.
Lichfield Road Infill Sites	Coleridge	South	0	Not known	Feasibility work not yet started.
Davey Road Garages	Coleridge	South	0	6	New Addition.
131 Ditton Fields	Abbey	South	1	6	New Addition. 3 bed house with very large back garden. House currently let as Temporary Housing

Appendix 1 – Three Year Social Housing Programme 2015.16 to 2017.18

					to facilitate investigation of development potential.
1 Queensmeadow	Cherry Hinton	South	0	1	New Addition. Large garden site cordoned off on relet.
39 Hills Avenue	Queen Ediths	South	0	1	New Addition. Large garden site cordoned off on relet.

2016/17	Ward	City Homes	AH Units Loss	AH Units Gross	Comment
Colville Road Garages	Cherry Hinton	South	0	To be confirmed	Currently a garage site. Feasibility work not yet started.
1-20 and 81-91 Hawkins Road garages	Arbury	North	25	30	The existing flats at Campkin Road have been removed from the 3 Year Rolling Programme. However there is considered to be some merit in continuing to review the potential of the redevelopment of any garage area. Feasibility work not yet started.
Northfield Avenue Garages	Kings Hedges	North	0	2	Currently a garage site. Feasibility work not yet started.
Bridewell Road	Cherry Hinton	South	0	1	New Addition. Back-land development. Land assembly constraints may make site problematic.
Tillyard Way Garages	Queens Ediths	South	0	2	New Addition. Land assembly constraints may make site problematic.
Howard Way	Abbey	South	0	1	New Addition. Back-land development. Access constraints.

Appendix 1 – Three Year Social Housing Programme 2015.16 to 2017.18

2017/18	Ward	City Homes	AH Units Loss	AH Units Gross	Comment
Flamsteed Road Garages	Coleridge	South	0	To be confirmed	Currently a garage site. Feasibility work not yet started.

Lower Priority List

	Ward	City Homes	Existing AH Units	Indicative New AH Units	Progress
Walpole Road land (rear of 35-53 Walpole Road)	Cherry Hinton	South	0	12	Assessment in the last twelve months suggests that up to 12 units could be provided on the site but as there are a number of constraints to redevelopment, the site has not be prioritised for further investigation.
Markham Close Garages	Kings Hedges	North	0	2	Assessment in the last twelve months suggests that up to 2 units could be provided on the site but as there are a number of constraints to redevelopment, the site has not be prioritised for further investigation.
Woodhouse Way Garages	Kings Hedges	North	0	2	New Addition. Multiple access rights may constrain development and the site has not be prioritised for further investigation. .

Appendix 2 – Three Year Social Housing Programme 2016.17 to 2018.19

2016/17	Ward	City Homes	Existing AH Units	Indicative New AH Units	Progress
9 to 10a Ventress Close and adjacent Garages	Queen Ediths	South	3	13	Existing consists of three rented flats and a leasehold flat. Scheme was to be prioritised to submit to Housing Scrutiny Committee by January 2016 at the latest but due to changes in funding progression of this scheme is on hold.
Colville Rd Ph 2 (flats 66-80b)	Cherry Hinton	South	20	32	Site includes a public car park with recycling facilities. In addition to the 20 Affordable Housing units there are 4 leasehold flats. Scheme was to be prioritised to submit to Housing Scrutiny Committee by January 2016 at the latest but due to changes in funding progression of this scheme is on hold.
Aylesborough close Ph 2 (65-75 Verulum Way and 15-34 Aylesborough Close and 2-24 Fordwith Close)	Arbury	North	40	Not known	The existing flats include 4 leaseholders in addition to the 40 Affordable Housing. The design and layout and condition of the properties is poor and they make poor use of the land. Scheme was to be prioritised to submit to Housing Scrutiny Committee by January 2016 at the latest but due to changes in funding progression of this scheme is on hold.
Land to rear 55 Wulfstan Way	Queen Edith's	South	0	2	This site came forward again following discussions with the neighbouring chapel about development

Appendix 2 – Three Year Social Housing Programme 2016.17 to 2018.19

					of Council owned land. Suggestions are that the site could accommodate 2nr 2 bedroom units. The scheme is to be prioritised to submit to Housing Scrutiny Committee in June 2016.
Lichfield Road Infill Sites	Coleridge	South	0	Not known	Feasibility work not yet started.
Davey Road Garages	Coleridge	South	0	6	Feasibility work not yet started
131 Ditton Fields	Abbey	South	1	6	3 bed house with very large back garden. House currently let as Temporary Housing to facilitate investigation of development potential.
1 Queensmeadow	Cherry Hinton	South	0	1	Large garden site cordoned off on relet. Site assessment suggests 1 unit could be accommodated on this site. Scheme is to be prioritised to submit to Housing Scrutiny Committee in June 2016.
39 Hills Avenue	Queen Ediths	South	0	1	Large garden site cordoned off on relet. Site assessment suggests 1 unit could be accommodated on this site. Scheme is to be prioritised to submit to Housing Scrutiny Committee in June 2016.
Akeman Street	Arbury	North	5	10	5 Commercial units and 5 flats on site at present, 3 of flats are linked with a commercial unit. Site approved at Housing Scrutiny Committee in January 2016. This site will be brought back to Committee for final approval.

Appendix 2 – Three Year Social Housing Programme 2016.17 to 2018.19

2017/18	Ward	City Homes	AH Units Loss	AH Units Gross	Comment
Colville Road Garages	Cherry Hinton	South	0	To be confirmed	Currently a garage site. Feasibility work not yet started.
1-20 and 81-91 Hawkins Road garages	Arbury	North	25	30	The existing flats at Campkin Road have been removed from the 3 Year Rolling Programme. However there is considered to be some merit in continuing to review the potential of the redevelopment of any garage area. Feasibility work not yet started.
Northfield Avenue Garages	Kings Hedges	North	0	2	Currently a garage site. Feasibility work not yet started.
Bridewell Road	Cherry Hinton	South	0	1	Back-land development. Land assembly constraints may make site problematic.
Tillyard Way Garages	Queens Ediths	South	0	2	Land assembly constraints may make site problematic.
Howard Way	Abbey	South	0	1	Back-land development. Access constraints.

2018/19	Ward	City Homes	AH Units Loss	AH Units Gross	Comment
Flamsteed Road Garages	Coleridge	South	0	To be confirmed	Currently a garage site. Feasibility work not yet started.

Appendix 2 – Three Year Social Housing Programme 2016.17 to 2018.19

Lower Priority List

	Ward	City Homes	Existing AH Units	Indicative New AH Units	Progress
Walpole Road land (rear of 35-53 Walpole Road)	Cherry Hinton	South	0	12	Assessment in the last twelve months suggests that up to 12 units could be provided on the site but as there are a number of constraints to redevelopment, the site has not be prioritised for further investigation.
Markham Close Garages	Kings Hedges	North	0	2	Assessment in the last twelve months suggests that up to 2 units could be provided on the site but as there are a number of constraints to redevelopment, the site has not be prioritised for further investigation.
Woodhouse Way Garages	Kings Hedges	North	0	2	Multiple access rights may constrain development and the site has not be prioritised for further investigation. .



To: Executive Councillor for Housing: Councillor Kevin Price

Report by: Head of Estates and Facilities : Trevor Burdon

Relevant scrutiny committee: Housing 20/06/2016
Scrutiny Committee

Wards affected: Abbey Arbury Castle Cherry Hinton Coleridge
East Chesterton King's Hedges Market Newnham
Petersfield Queen Edith's Romsey Trumpington
West Chesterton

CAMBRIDGESHIRE HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY – ADAPTATIONS PLUS FRAMEWORK PROCUREMENT

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

Cambridge City Council are the lead authority with overall management responsibility for the Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency (CHIA) shared service. In accordance with the City Council's corporate governance, this paper, therefore, seeks approval for the CHIA Board decision to procure a comprehensive contractor framework for delivery of adaptations work managed by the Agency. The procurement value is projected to be between £3.5m to £3.7m/year although there is merit in building in some flexibility in the framework to allow for possible future growth. The contract term is initially three years with an option for a one year extension and procurement will be subject to the full terms of EU Procurement legislation.

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 2.1.1. To approve the CHIA Board decision to proceed with a 3+1 year contractor framework for provision of all adaptations work and specialist equipment.
- 2.1.2. To authorise Cambridge City Council (on behalf of the partners) to invite and evaluate tenders and to appoint contractors for inclusion in a framework for delivery of all types of adaptations work and provision of specialist equipment.

3. Background

- 3.1. CHIA was established in 2012 and delivers adaptations work, as a shared service on behalf of the City Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council
- 3.2. The adaptation and specialist equipment work to be tendered is largely funded from Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) or from Repairs Grants for which the combined budgets for the three authorities, after deduction of Agency fees, is currently (2016/17) just over £2.8m. Additionally, the Agency delivers a small amount of non grant-aided adaptation work as a service to private house owners and the expectation is also that the contractor framework will be used by the City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council to deliver specialist adaptation works to HRA social housing to a maximum value of approximately £0.9m.
- 3.3. The total anticipated value of the proposed framework is therefore £3.7m in the first year, commencing late 2016. Current budgetary allocations suggest this may reduce in later years (to £3.5m/year). However it is conceivable that budgetary allocations and thus spend may increase over the life of the framework and it would be highly desirable to be able to continue to use the framework in the event that budgets increase. It is thus proposed that the potential value of the framework shown in the procurement documents is based on a value range (the upper end of which would exceed current budgets) rather than an exact figure. The procurement documents will explain this to bidders in a transparent manner and the project team have included explanations and safeguards in the documents to ensure bidders understand this and the framework will be contractually robust. This arrangement will provide flexibility to help manage change over the framework duration. Currently, the arrangements for procuring works by the CHIA are derived from a mixture of arrangements in place with the three authorities prior to the establishment of the agency. Multiple tendering exercises for individual projects and working with limited tender lists is time consuming and very inefficient with much duplication of effort, variations in bespoke specifications and inconsistent pricing.
- 3.4. The proposed contractor framework will resolve all of these issues. It will ensure that there is standardisation in specifications and access to pre-tendered and fixed price contractors will be able to deliver all work in much shorter timescales and at more competitive rates. More importantly, the simplified delivery model, made possible with the framework in place, will reduce CHIA officer input and cost/project and ensure that grant applications can be processed and completed much quicker and at lower overall cost. Moreover, the framework

pricing will prove to be extremely useful in contributing to the further service efficiencies expected to be delivered by the comprehensive County wide Review of Disabled Adaptations work which is ongoing and due to be implemented this financial year.

- 3.5. The framework tendering will be designed to include multiple Work Lots allowing companies to tender for only those elements of the work specific to their individual capabilities and resources. This will be particularly important to ensure that local contractors will be encouraged to tender for construction works specific to their operational area which will be important given the large geographical coverage of the three partner authorities. Open day briefings for all potential tenderers proved very successfully when carried out by the Agency in March with high levels of interest shown by small contractors across the CHIA catchment.

3.6. Procurement timetable

Deadline	Activity
June 2016	Procurement report to Housing Committee
July 2016	Issue OJEU Notice
August 2016	Deadline for tender return
Sept – Oct 2016	Tender Evaluation
November 2016	Confirm results and notify tenderers of results
December 2016	EU Standstill (10 days)
December 2016	Contract award confirmed
January 2017	Contract works commence

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Implications

Availability of pre-priced and standardised specifications for all types of disabled adaptation work and installation of equipment will reduce not only the cost of actual construction work but just as importantly this initiative should ensure a reduced overall staff time required to administer and manager each project. This is especially relevant given that fee income to reimburse the cost of CHIA staff time is derived from DFG grant awards and the reduction in CHIA costs will translate into greater funds released for actual adaptation works.

4.2 Staffing Implications

None.

4.3 Equality and Poverty Implications

Potential release of additional DFG funds for actual site works if CHIA overall delivery costs can be reduced as predicted

4.4 Environmental Implications

The proposal has no climate change impact.

4.5 Procurement

Covered elsewhere in the report

4.6 Consultation and communication

4.6.1 There has been extensive consultation by the CHIA team with all three Partner authorities who are all fully represented on the project team responsible for the procurement exercise.

4.6.2 Consultation has also included representatives from all relevant Social Care, Health Management and Occupational Therapy organisations who are closely involved with CHIA in the design and delivery of Disabled Facility Grant approved schemes.

4.7 Community Safety

There are no community safety implications

5. Background papers

None

6. Appendices

None

7. Inspection of papers

If you have a query on the report please contact:

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To: Executive Councillor for Housing
Report by: Julia Hovells, Business Manager / Principal Accountant
Relevant scrutiny committee: Housing Scrutiny Committee
Wards affected: All
Date: 21 June 2016

Disposal of HRA Assets – 23 Magrath Avenue and Approach to Sale of Higher Value Voids

Key Decision

NOT FOR PUBLICATION: The appendix to the report relates to an item during which the public is likely to be excluded from the meeting by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

1. Executive Summary

This report is presented, in line with the existing HRA Acquisition and Disposal Policy, to obtain approval for the disposal of a specific HRA asset on the open market.

Following introduction of the Housing and Planning Act in May 2016, this report also proposes a scheme of delegation for the policy and process changes that will be required in response to the need to dispose of higher value vacant dwellings, in anticipation that the authority will receive detailed guidance imminently, and will need to react with some speed.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 2.1 To approve disposal on the open market, in line with the confidential project appraisal attached at Appendix A, of the HRA asset at 23 Magrath Avenue.
- 2.2 To give delegated authority, to the Strategic Director (or Strategic Housing Advisor in the absence of a Director), in consultation with the Executive Councillor, Chair and Opposition Spokesperson, to approve

a policy and associated process to allow the authority to respond quickly to the need to meet a levy derived from the requirement for all local authorities to dispose of higher value vacant dwellings.

3. Background

Disposal of 23 Magrath Avenue

- 3.1 As detailed in the project appraisal, attached as a confidential appendix to this report, it is recommended that the authority dispose of the vacant HRA dwelling at 23 Magrath Avenue.
- 3.2 The property is a 3-bedroom Victorian terraced house in the Castle Ward, close to the river and to shops and bars in the north of the City.
- 3.3 The vacant property requires investment of approximately £6,500, in the form of damp works, a new kitchen and floor board replacement, before it could be re-let.
- 3.4 In line with the HRA Acquisition and Disposal Policy, the dwelling has been evaluated against the criteria set for potential open market sale, and a number of alternative options for the dwelling have been considered and evaluated.
- 3.5 Due to the location of the property in terms of access for maintenance purposes, the need to invest in the dwelling at a value well above the average per void property and the potential alternative uses for the anticipated capital receipt, it is recommended that the dwelling be marketed for sale.

Disposal of Higher Value Vacant Dwellings

- 3.6 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 requires all stock retaining local authorities to make payment to the Secretary of State based upon an estimate of the value of higher value vacant dwellings which the authority may experience in any one financial year.
- 3.7 The authority expects to receive a determination (annually or alternatively for a number of years in one go), which will set out the formula upon which the authority's levy has been calculated. The determination is likely to arrive at a levy, based upon a series of assumptions, irrespective of whether or not these are borne out in actual terms.
- 3.8 In a manner not dissimilar to the housing subsidy system, it is possible that the determination may take the form of a consultation on a draft

determination, to be followed by a final determination once representations have been made, although the act allows for consultation that took place prior to assent of the bill to satisfy the requirement to consult.

- 3.9 The act imposes a duty on local authorities to consider the sale of higher value vacant homes, but it is not yet clear what scope the local authority will have to meet the levy in other ways, ie; sale of land, other assets, etc.
- 3.10 There are indications that guidance may have been issued by the end of May, with suggestions that the first instalment of the levy could be due as early as January 2017.
- 3.11 To allow the authority to respond quickly to the legislation once the detailed guidance and determination is issued, this report proposes that the decision in respect of approval of the new policy and process for the disposal of HRA assets is delegated to the Strategic Director (or Strategic Housing Advisor in the absence of a Director), in consultation with the Executive Councillor, Chair and Opposition Spokesperson.
- 3.12 In formulating the new policy and process, consultation with Finance, Legal and Property Services will be key, with the need to obtain approval from the Head of Finance as Section 151 Officer and the Head of Property Services before a decision is taken under delegation.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

The financial implications associated with the decision to dispose of 23 Magrath Avenue are included in the confidential appendix (Appendix A).

There will be significant financial implications in respect of the need to meet the government levy in lieu of disposing of vacant dwellings, and these will be identified as part of the report presented for approval under delegation.

(b) Staffing Implications

The staffing implications of the proposal to dispose of 23 Magrath Avenue are included in the confidential appendix, but are expected to met from within existing resources.

There will be staffing implications in respect of the need to dispose of potentially large numbers of vacant dwellings, and these will be identified as part of the report presented for approval under delegation.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

An EqIA has not been completed, as the disposal of a single vacant dwelling is not anticipated to cause a negative impact on any particular equalities group,.

An EqIA in respect of the policy for the disposal of higher value vacant homes will be completed as part of the policy to be presented for approval within the delegated authority outlined in this report.

(d) Environmental Implications

There are no direct environmental implications associated with the decision to dispose of a single vacant dwelling, with the expectation that it will be sold and continue to be used as a dwelling asset.

(e) Procurement

The anticipated value of the services to market the dwelling would not be expected to require formal procurement, with the ability to obtain a direct quote for the services from a single supplier. Good practice in this market though, might indicate that there is benefit to be had from obtaining three independent prices.

(f) Consultation and Communication

Tenant and leaseholders representatives are being consulted in respect of the proposal to dispose of an HRA asset as part of this report.

Communication with residents in respect of the need to meet a levy driven by the assumption that we will dispose of higher value vacant dwellings will be included as part of the summer edition of Open Door.

(g) Community Safety

There are no direct community safety implications associated with the decision to dispose of a single vacant dwelling.

5. Background Papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Valuation Report – 23 Magrath Avenue (confidential background paper)
Housing And Planning Bill - As given parliamentary assent in May 2016

6. Appendices

- Appendix A – Project Appraisal for the disposal of 23 Magrath Avenue (Confidential)

7. Inspection of Papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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