

Service Area Plan 2020/21

Part 1 - Service Information/links to policy

Part 2 – Managing Service Delivery

Part 3 – Managing and Improving People

Part 4 – Budget

Part 5 – Managing Planned Changes/Projects

Service Area :	Housing Services
Service Area Manager:	Lisa Barker
Deputy Chief Executive:	Bill Hunt
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Jan Matecki

1 Purpose of the Services Provided

To provide effective, value for money, customer-focussed housing services by:

- Helping people to find and maintain housing appropriate to their needs by providing housing advice and homelessness services
- Managing the HomeChoice scheme on behalf of all affordable housing providers operating within the district.
- Improving standards within the private rented sector by licensing Homes in Multiple Occupation, undertaking Housing Health & Safety Rating System inspections and taking enforcement action if appropriate.
- Providing people-based services, tailored to reflect individual needs, that allow Council tenants and leaseholders to thrive and participate in their community and succeed to the best of their abilities.
- To provide effective management of our Council housing stock including tenancy enforcement, rent collection and estate management.
- Supporting people to live independently by providing high quality sheltered and supported housing, Lifeline services, Disabled Facility Grants, an aids and adaptation service for Council homes, affordable warmth and financial inclusion advice.
- Maintaining a financially viable Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to ensure the provision of a high quality Council housing service through timely collection of income, value for money deployment of management resources and prudent management of costs.
- To ensure that the housing stock is maintained to a satisfactory standard, meets appropriate safety requirements and improvements are made to ensure compliance with decent homes standard.
- Supporting the creation of stable, inclusive communities by managing an effective Housing Strategy for the district.
- Encouraging the development of affordable housing across the district through effective use of s106 funding, deployment of commuted sums and exploration of options to increase the level of Council housing to offset Right to Buy sales.
- Supporting the delivery of key corporate projects or studies.

- To directly deliver affordable housing to meet local needs and increase the housing stock.
- Contribute to the Councils approach to tackling Climate Change including ensuring that all new builds are carbon neutral, existing homes are assessed for energy performance and retrofitting considered. In addition, ensuring that the products we use in our homes are as near to carbon neutral as possible.

1.1 Linkages to Fit For the Future Strategy

External	Direct	Indirect
Service (Green, Clean and Safe)	Maintaining our homes to a good standard of energy efficiency across the district. Ensuring new homes are carbon neutral.	Encouraging suppliers to reduce their carbon footprint by request carbon neutral products.
People (Health, Homes and Communities)	Providing tenants with good housing and reducing all forms of homelessness including rough sleeping in the district.	Enabling the development of affordable housing for sale and to rent.
Money (Infrastructure, Enterprise and Employment)	Provide money advice to Council tenants and ensure that the majority of homes are let at social rents thereby enabling tenants to gain employment.	

Internal	Direct	Indirect
Service (Maintain or Improve Services)	Direct delivery of housing and estate management services, working with contractors to improve services to tenants.	Work with a range of partners across statutory and voluntary sector agencies to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

<p align="center">People (Effective Staff)</p>	<p>Transform Housing Services to provide better customer focus and outcomes and introduce agile ways of working.</p> <p>Ongoing training of staff to provide them with the skills to carry out their roles.</p>	
<p align="center">Money (Firm Financial Footing over Long Term)</p>	<p>Regularly review the Housing Revenue account business plan.</p>	

2 Managing Service Delivery

2.1 Service Overview

Services Delivered	Priorities (with Justification)	Service Demand / Requests
<p>Housing Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Embed the changes from the redesign of the service with an ambition to provide an excellent customer focused service. ▪ To provide safe, secure properties at a consistent and decent standard, for tenants to make their home. The majority of homes will be let at a social rent. ▪ Continue to develop our own stock, letting all new properties at social or affordable rents. ▪ Ensuring all officers are aware of and comply with Warwickshire County Council Safeguarding protocols, by attendance at training event, to protect those that are most vulnerable. ▪ Ensure all activities are GDPR compliant. ▪ Ensure our workforce and services are climate change ready. ▪ Improve the energy efficiency of our homes and to reduce carbon emissions. 	

<p>Landlord Services Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish early intervention and work alongside our customers so they can sustain their tenancy, and signpost to relevant agencies for further support and joint working. ▪ Complete visits to all customers at least every three years (annually for high rise customers) so we ensure that we have a full understanding of who is living in our homes. ▪ Provide an excellent service to our Lifeline Customers so they can remain in their own homes and retain their independence. ▪ Ensuring our sheltered housing schemes maximise the opportunity for older people to maintain their independence, by facilitating activities that improve residents’ mental and social wellbeing. ▪ Establish those customers that require further support for managing their finances by providing an excellent financial inclusion service, working alongside non-profit organisations, such as Citizen’s Advice and Stepchange to assist customers with debt help. ▪ Ensuring we consult effectively and appropriately with our leaseholders regarding all works we intend to carry out to their properties, particularly in relation to those which involves financial contribution from them, in line with Section 20 of L&T Act. ▪ Working alongside the WCC Financial Inclusion Partnership to provide support for those facing financial difficulties. ▪ Work in partnership with WCC Family Support Worker to support and empowers tenants to sustain their tenancy and improve their life skills. ▪ Providing assistance for those people who need help finding a home when they are ready to leave hospital, with the aim of having customers in settled homes with the correct support and from the beginning of their tenancy. ▪ Maintaining high standards of cleaning of communal areas and grounds maintenance on housing estates where the Council is the majority landlord. ▪ Helping tenants to adapt to climate change measures. 	<p>5395 properties available for rent as of 13/02/20</p> <p>1182 visits completed between 01/04/2019 and 13/02/2020</p> <p>187 Sheltered Housing units as of 13/02/20</p> <p>17 Section 20’s completed between 01/04/2019 and 13/02/2020</p> <p>821 Universal Claimants (Tenants) as of 13/02/20</p> <p>7 referrals from hospital A&E between 01/04/2019 and 13/02/2020</p>
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Housing Strategy & Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising the delivery of affordable housing including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To directly develop affordable housing across the District, including rural housing, and reviewing delivery vehicles to increase the Council stock. ○ Working with developers to effectively use resources made available through s106 planning obligations or CIL contributions. ○ Taking advantage of any public funded investment made available by the Homes and Communities Agency or other Government funding streams and also applying for Investment Partner Status. ○ Explore the potential of development sites, both publically and privately owned which can be used to deliver affordable housing for rent, shared ownership or sale. ○ Buy back shared ownership and ex Council houses on the market. ○ Buying properties in the open market. • Providing high quality Council homes by regularly reviewing the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan to ensure the Council can continue to effectively manage and maintain its landlord function and continue to make a proactive contribution to the provision of a range of housing options for the district. • Reviewing the Housing and Homeless Strategy to further inform development and planning of the future strategy, an assessment should be undertaken of actions to be undertaken against remaining objectives, progress against these actions should then be assessed on a monthly basis. • Producing a Housing Development Strategy / policy to guide the delivery of the new housing options. • Promote net zero carbon delivery of Housing and become an exemplar for the standards of new Council stock. ▪ Develop initiatives to enable customers to have a say. 	229 affordable home completions between 01/04/2019 and 30/09/2019
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Housing Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helping people to find, maintain and enjoy a secure home by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing effective homelessness prevention strategies and support for those threatened by homelessness at an early stage. ○ Providing temporary accommodation for persons to whom we have a statutory responsibility under the HRA 2017. ○ Minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. ○ Effectively administering the HomeChoice scheme to ensure affordable housing is allocated in a fair and transparent way, in accordance with policy. ▪ Effective management of void and relet process to reduce void loss, by letting empty homes as quickly as possible. ▪ Provide a homelessness service that is compliant with the legal requirements placed upon the Council to help those who are homeless. ▪ Relieving homelessness and providing temporary accommodation and a route into housing in cases when it cannot be prevented. ▪ Reducing the level of rough sleeping in the district through the provision of a direct access hostel and by providing outreach to those currently sleeping rough. Provision of move on supported accommodation. ▪ Oversight of the management of the county-wide HEART (Home Environment Assessment and Response Team) service to deliver a programme of Disabled Facilities Grants (all tenures) and Aids & Adaptations (Council homes) so that people can continue to enjoy their homes regardless of any disability. 	<p>408 homelessness prevention and relief duties accepted between 01/04/2019 and 13/02/2020</p> <p>134 Temp Accom placements between 01/04/2019 and 13/02/2020</p> <p>1748 households registered on HomeChoice as of 13/02/2020</p> <p>407 relets between 01/04/2019 and 13/02/2020</p> <p>131 relief duties ended through accommodation being secured 01/04/2019 and 13/02/2020</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raising the standard of homes in the private rented sector by providing an effective service of HMO licensing and HHRS inspections, supported by enforcement action when necessary. ▪ Working with homeowners to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions. ▪ Supporting a Landlord Steering Group and a Landlords' Forum. ▪ As part of the Student Housing Strategy employ a student housing enforcement officer, funded by University of Warwick. ▪ Visiting every illegal gypsy and traveller encampment to identify if there are particular housing needs amongst the occupants that need to be addressed before taking enforcement actions. 	<p>45 new HMO licence apps between 01/04/2019 and 31/12/2019</p> <p>1 Landlords' Forum completed between 01/04/2019 and 13/02/2020</p> <p>6 gypsy and traveller encampments dealt with between 01/04/2019 and 31/12/2019</p>
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2.2 Measures

Customer Measures – those important to the people/organisations who use our services				
Measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Total void rent loss during the period as a percentage maximum potential rent due				
Average total relet time in days - Average number of days – termination to new tenancy start – void properties (Excluding major works)				
Average days from receipt to authorisation for housing applications authorised during the period				
Percentage of ended homelessness prevention or relief duties that were successful - per period approached				
Number of homeless applicants provided with temporary accommodation				
Average length of stay within temporary accommodation				
Number of rough sleepers on the street				
Total current tenant rent arrears as a percentage of annual rent debit				
Rent collection percentage rate – current tenants				
Average percentage increase of UC Claimant arrears in first 12 weeks of their claim				
Number of evictions (rent arrears)				
Number of evictions (non-rent arrears)				
Percentage of tenancies that failed within 18 months of starting				
Percentage of ASB cases that were closed within 6 months of opening				

Percentage of calls to Lifeline answered within 30 seconds				
Average length of each gypsy and traveller encampment				
Number of HMO inspections undertaken				
End to end times for HEART cases				
Number of new Council homes completed				
Number of new Council homes built at EPC of A				
Operational Measures - other (non-customer) measures essential to ensure that "purpose" can be achieved.				
Note: <u>This section will not be used by most service areas</u> as their Customer Measures are expected to be sufficient. However, there may be cases where an operational measure is required to ensure the smooth running of a service area.				
Measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Total number of people registered with HomeChoice				
Total number of void properties at period end				
Number of households that have been in temporary accommodation for longer than 3 months				
Total number of affordable homes completions reported during the period				
Total number of affordable homes completed by the Council				
Number of Council homes built to EPC of C or better				
Number of Council homes built to net zero carbon				
Waiting time from telephone enquiry to first visit from HEART services				
Number of customers for Lifeline				

Asset Management Measures Per the Asset Management Team, in the interest of Housing Services.				
Measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Average number of days – termination to new tenancy start – void properties (Joint target with Housing Services)				
Percentage of HRA repair requests completed on time				
Percentage of HRA properties with an up to date EPC				
Of properties with an in-date EPC Certificate, the percentage at a minimum D standard				
Properties with an in-date EPC at C or above				
Properties with an in-date EPC at E or below				
Percentage of HRA properties with a gas safety inspection completed within the last 12 months				
Percentage of HRA repair requests which were subject to a recall				
% HRA properties with a stock condition survey updated within the last 5 years				

2.3 Managing Risk

Risk	Planned Actions during year	Comments
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the monthly budget monitoring regime. Review HRA budget assumptions when further legislation is proposed and timescale for local implementation of changes to the social security system are known. Ensure savings/additional income is planned for funding our housing related support. 	

Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure contracts are managed well. 	
Contract Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly reviews of the Contracts Register at Housing Management Team meetings. 	
Audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audits to be undertaken this year include: Business Applications (Active H), Private Sector Housing regulation, Housing Related Support Services, Tenancy Management, William Wallsgrove House. 	
Risk Register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly review of Risk Register by Housing Services. 	
Service Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assurance responsibilities are regularly reviewed and corporately reported against annually. 	
Corporate Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety Assessments are regularly checked and updated. • Contribution to corporate agenda to be reviewed as part of Risk Register review. 	

Part 3 – Managing and Improving People

Category	Sponsor	Activity	Budget Impact	Impact on Service Areas	Milestones
1.Housing Review	Lisa Barker	Mobilisation of the Service Redesign	£500 000 cost to HRA and minimum of £13 000 to the General Fund	Support from HR and Finance	All posts recruited to New team structure in place Summer 2020
2. Skills, Training, Competency Needs	Lisa Barker Housing Service Management Team	Develop a service area training plan (training matrix) following the redesign and from appraisal PDPs	Budget for training needs to be adequately resourced to support officers in the new teams.	Training	Appraisals Training
3. Service Changes	Lisa Barker,	Skilling the teams to enable them to be more flexible to change Working differently supporting a work/life balance Deployment of ICT to support flexible working	Within existing budgets	HR/IT	Training ICT considered

3.1 Staff Resource

Housing Services employ 90.76 FTE as of Jan 2020

3.2 Workforce Planning

Category	Sponsor	Activity	Budget Impact	Impact on Service Areas	Milestones
Workforce Planning	Housing Services Management Team	Mobilisation of the Housing Review	As above	Provide sufficient resources to manage the demands of the service	Recruitment Training
Skills, Training, Competency Needs	Housing Senior Management Team	Engagement with corporate training framework	Service area and corporate budget	HR	Ongoing
Service Changes	Housing Senior Management Team	Activities detailed in section 5	Various	Asset HR	In accordance with section 5

Part 4 BUDGET – Main budgetary pressures and changes				
Activity	Budgetary Impact	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Housing Revenue Account				
Welfare Reform Changes	HRA Bad debt provision to be increased due to implementation of Universal Credit and changes in way customers receive their income and pay their rent	HRA bad debt provision (BDP) increased to 2% £524k to reflect increased risk of rent arrears	BDP set at 2% in HRA BP £517k	
Council Tenants Rent increases	CPI +1% (£658k increase social rents, £14.5K for affordable), Garages increase by 10% £67K increase.)			
HRA borrowing for delivery of affordable new home	Currently being assessed for the programme of new sites			
Implementing the Councils Climate change commitment	Measures in the Climate Change Plan	£18m		
General Fund				
Tackling Rough Sleeping	Grant available for MHCLG is only approved for a 12 month period			

Part 5 – Managing Planned Changes, Major Work streams and Projects

Change/Project	Sponsor/Lead Officer	Budget Impact	Impact on other Services	Milestones	Date
Fire Safety – including FRA	Caroline Russell		Assets Finance	CLS determine requirements	31/3/2021
Phase 2 of Fire safety in high rise regarding compartmentation between flats.	Caroline Russell	Housing Investment Programme	Assets Finance	Stamford gardens completion	31/12/2020
FRA across all stock.	Caroline Russell	TBC	Assets	Continuing programme	31/03/21
Review fire safety in low/medium rises and sheltered schemes.	Caroline Russell	Nil	Assets HCS		Ongoing
Review our approach to the types of tenancies we offer and the legal agreement with our tenants, as well as the way in which we use our stock and engage / interact with our tenants	Caroline Russell	TBC	Assets Finance Legal Neighbourhood Services	De-designation Exec Report Draft Tenancy Strategy Await green paper outcome	31/03/20 Ongoing 31/03/20
Tenancy strategy.	Caroline Russell	Nil	Legal	New draft	31/12/20
Review service charges.	Caroline Russell	Nil	Neighbourhoods	Determine Approach	31/03/20
Review the operation of the cleaning contract.	Caroline Russell	Nil	Neighbourhood Services Finance	Consultation Review Underway	31/03/20

Revise the Tenancy agreement.	Caroline Russell	TBC	Legal		31/03/20
Resident involvement strategy.	Sally Kelsall	Existing	None	Circulate paper in relation to resident involvement	31/03/20
Improve the way we maintain, improve and repair our housing and other stock.	Lisa Barker Sally Kelsall Caroline Russell	Existing & Within Housing Capital Budgets	Assets Finance	Planned and Cyclical Programmes	Ongoing
Developing relationship with Assets.	Caroline Russell	Nil	Assets	Regular meetings	Ongoing
Environmental works at the high rises - particularly The Crest.	Caroline Russell	TBC – Within housing capital budgets	HRA	Delivery of works at The Crest	31/03/21
Develop a strategy for our garage estate including considering the potential to deliver new Council homes.	Sally Kelsall/Caroline	TBC – Within housing capital budgets	HRA		Ongoing
Review HRA Business Plan assumptions in light of budget pressures, welfare reform changes and emerging thinking on the unimplemented provisions of the Housing & Planning Act.	Lisa Barker	None (for review)	Finance Assets	Undertake in line with budget setting	31/03/20
Stock condition survey programme and improvements.	Lisa Barker	Existing	Assets	Develop planned and cyclical programmes	31/03/20
Improvements to our Lifeline Service, increasing its 24/7 concierge role across the district.	Caroline Russell	Increased Revenue	None	Analogue switch off Product identification	TBC Ongoing

Introduction of concierge service & CCTV arrangements.	Caroline Russell	None	Assets	Hardware in situ Staff trained	Ongoing
Lifeline diversification and development of Assistive technology.	Caroline Russell	TBC	Nil	Products identified Products in test Update members	Ongoing
Promote the Lifeline Service to increase number of users and maximise income.	Caroline Russell	Increased Income	None	None	Ongoing
Replacing Lifeline Tunstall equipment for analogue switch-off.	Caroline Russell	£17k	Nil	Product identified Purchased	Ongoing
Provide Lifeline and out of hours services for other local authorities.	Caroline Russell				
Tackle homelessness, including developing strategic and local responses	Elaine Wallace	Estimated £700k	Finance Assets HR	Hostel review Night Shelter redevelopment	Ongoing Ongoing
Additional bids on rough sleeping including move on and outreach support, and Housing First.	Elaine Wallace		Finance HR	MHCLG programme	
Countywide Homelessness Strategy – Each LA is completing a chapter to be published by March. An action plan for each District will then be required.	Lisa Barker	Existing budgets	HCS	Strategy framework	30/09/2020
RSI strategy & action plan.	Elaine Wallace	Existing	None	Plan drafted	Ongoing

Work to mainstream the hostel or revise the service.	Elaine Wallace	Estimated £400k	Finance HR	Review conducted Exec report written	September 2020
Ensure that our workforce is structured to be able to meet present & future challenges and are sufficiently skilled and equipped to undertake their roles.	Lisa Barker	£100K	Finance HR ICT	Identify system developments New structure and teams in place Training plan delivered	Ongoing
Mobile working solutions. Landlord Service team to pilot further recommendations.	Business Development & Change Manager	TBC	ICT	Actions identified	Ongoing
System developments e.g. web form integration, process integration, task integration.	Business Development & Change Manager	TBC	ICT	Await IT availability	Ongoing
Implement new modules into Active H	Business Development & Change Manager	£26k purchase cost £7k annual maintenance costs	ICT Assets	Files received and uploaded into the test environment Testing Go live	May 2020
Ensure that our policies and practices are designed to produce optimal results and extraordinary customer service.	Housing Services Management Team	Existing	Legal Media Planning	Establish policies	Ongoing

Identify gaps in policies.	Caroline Russell	Existing	Legal	Establish key policies	31/03/21
Review the Housing & Homelessness Strategy in the context of the County wide Homelessness strategy.	Sally Kelsall Elaine Wallace	None	Identify as work progresses	Plan agreed	31/03/21
Work to deliver new SHMA.	Sally Kelsall	None (budget allocated)	Work with development services	New SHMA	31/03/21
Review the Housing Allocations Policy.	Elaine Wallace	Existing	Other housing	Proposed amendments Draft Policy Approvals	30/12/20
Review webpages.	Business Development & Change Manager	Existing	Media ICT	Process and timelines agreed	30/12/20
Private landlord accreditation as part of the Student Housing Strategy.	Elaine Wallace	TBC	Planning Research Report	Student Housing Strategy	Internal report 31/09/20
Monitor HEART service ensuring that the Council interests are embedded.	Elaine Wallace	Existing	None	Independent review	Ongoing
Developing the role of the Council as a builder of new local homes.	Lisa Barker Sally Kelsall	TBC	Finance Development Services		Ongoing

Council house building and preparation of pipeline and schemes.	Sally Kelsall	Under consideration	Work with development services	Pipeline of schemes	Ongoing
Alternative delivery models including Local Authority Housing Company.	Lisa Barker	TBC	Finance	CMT report Legal advice Exec report	Ongoing
Complete the re-licensing of existing HMOs and the new licensing required by the revised regulations.	Elaine Wallace	Existing	None	Legislation Start work	Ongoing
Complete the re-licensing of existing HMOs and the new licensing required by the revised regulations.	Elaine Wallace	Existing	None	Legislation Start work Major works licence application	Ongoing
Respond to the Council's Climate Change plan.	ALL	£18m over the delivery timescale. Possible future GF budgets to be allocated.			
HRA business plan be review and approved – including 18M up to 2030 - properties to EPC C	Lisa Barker	£18m	Finance Assets	Profile identified Business plan reviewed Business plan approved	March 2020
Improvements to properties	Caroline Russell	As above	Assets	Works integrated to the HIP	To 2030
Upgrade fleet to electric	Caroline Russell	Existing	HCP		April 2023
Provide help to householders to upgrade thermal efficiency & renewables	Elaine Wallace	Unknown	HCP	TBC	TBC

