

Service Area Plan 2017/18

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 Peter Phillips

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, 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
- 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

1.1 Linkages to Sustainable Community Strategy

	Direct	Indirect
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring options to maximise the delivery of affordable housing including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 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 Purchasing shared ownership properties e.g. Great Field Drive, Cloister Way, as opportunities present themselves Helping people to find, maintain and enjoy a secure home by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deploying effective homelessness prevention strategies and providing support for those threatened by homelessness at an early stage Providing high quality temporary accommodation for anyone whose homelessness can not be prevented with as little use of bed and breakfast accommodation as possible Effective administration of the HomeChoice scheme to ensure affordable housing is allocated in a fair and transparent way Helping council tenants to sustain their tenancies by providing advice and tailored people-focussed services that equip people to develop the skills and knowledge they need to maintain their tenancy. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assisting older people to maintain their independence by providing housing support and developing the Council's 24/7 cross-tenure Lifeline Service. ○ Contributing to the effective management of the county-wide HEART 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the quality of the districts existing housing stock, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Raising the standard of homes in the private rented sector by deploying an effective regime for HMO licensing and HHRS inspections, supported by enforcement action when necessary ○ Supporting a Landlord Steering Group and a Landlords' Forum ○ Helping people remain healthy and safe in their homes, we will provide discretionary grants to owner occupiers where the condition of their home is dangerous but they do not have the means or capacity without help to resolve the situation. ○ Maintaining high standards of cleaning of communal areas and grounds maintenance on housing estates where the Council is the majority landlord • Providing high quality Council homes by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 	
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Prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing an effective financial inclusion support service for Council tenants • Contributing to the 'Breathing Space' project, operated in partnership with other housing associations providing homes in the district, to support residents who are struggling financially by offering money advice and signposting services and referrals to Job Clubs • Providing accommodation for the Lillington Job Club • Letting the majority of Council owned homes on social rents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Procurement Strategy gives weighting to organisations who commit to using the local labour force.
Safer Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We reduce anti-social behaviour by having the Tenancy Enforcement Officers work alongside the Community Safety Team and sharing capacity and skills. • Ensuring effective engagement with the county-wide safeguarding structures • Training staff to recognise potential safeguarding issues, incidents of domestic violence and equipping them to make effective referrals to ensure appropriate action is taken 	
Health and Well Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising that a secure home is fundamental to the health and well-being of the district's residents and ensuring that effective people-focussed services are provided that allow tenants to sustain their tenancies. • Improving the quality of living by reducing the risk of damp and poor quality housing within the private rented sector. • Preventing homelessness and providing temporary accommodation and a route into housing in those cases when it can not be prevented • Working to reduce the distress and ill-health that can be caused by the loss of a home by carrying out regular 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council currently offers secure tenancies to all tenants. Secure tenancies offer the security needed by households to invest in their homes and communities, build healthy and sustainable lives and avoid disruption to family life. (NB this may change if the Government proceeds with its current intention of requiring Council's to offer only fixed term tenancies for new tenancies) • Our Housing Advice, Tenancy and Housing Support Officers work in partnership with the NHS, Public Health, the Alcohol and Drug Support Services, to support our tenants to choose healthier lifestyles. We do this by identifying support needs and making referrals where they will help and by working closely with the agencies that can help people live a healthier lifestyle.

	<p>routine tenancy visits to all WDC tenants to help make sure that people get the right support to sustain their tenancy and allowing potential problems to be identified early and solutions deployed to maintain pleasant neighbourhoods and well-kept homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping to reduce the number of admissions to hospitals and care homes and help people return home more quickly after receiving treatment by carrying out aids and adaptations and providing Disabled Facilities Grants so that residents can remain in their homes safely and for longer. • Maintaining and improving the Council's 24/7 Lifeline service which currently has over 3,000 users. • Ensuring our sheltered housing schemes maximise the opportunity for older people to maintain their independence, by providing social activities that improve residents' mental and social wellbeing. • Visiting every illegal gypsy and traveller encampment to identify if there are particular housing needs amongst the occupants that require redress 	
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing financial advice to tenants to maximise their income • Exploring options to enable council tenants to access affordable warmth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing to the corporate financial inclusion agenda
Involving Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with tenants and leaseholders through a variety of approaches • Ensuring tenants are represented on the Housing Advisory Group which assists in the development of housing policy and practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilising HRA properties to provide facilities that benefit the wider community e.g. Packmores Centre, Warwick
Narrowing the Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial inclusion strategies • Direct provision of council homes at social rents in a 	

	district with an unbalanced housing market and high costs of private sector renting or home purchase	
Supporting Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosting the Warwick District Priority Families Programme officer. 	
Rural Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct provision of affordable council homes in many villages across the district. 	

2 Managing Service Delivery

2.1 Service Overview

(NB – Specify main aspects of service delivery during the year)

Service Being Delivered	Priorities (with Justification)	Service Demand	
Sustaining Tenancies Team	<p>Re-designing Housing Support and the Lifeline service to address the £463K shortfall in 2017/18 created by the cessation of Supporting People funding</p> <p>Review the cleaning contract and determining whether the contract should be re-procured</p> <p>Determine plans for cleaning of all our blocks and amend the contracts if necessary</p> <p>Maintain the Service Visit programme to ensure every tenant is visited at least once every 3 years</p> <p>Maintain the Council's ability to continue to provide its landlord service by making sure that all income due to the Council is collected promptly and to see ongoing improvement in performance.</p>	<p>3,500 Lifeline alarm users</p> <p>102 blocks cleaned</p> <p>1,800 visits programmed for year</p> <p>1,900 tenants in arrears</p>	<p>Annual rent debit £26.3m</p>

	<p>Deal effectively with anti-social behaviour ensuring new policies on ASB and Domestic abuse are implemented successfully</p> <p>Deal effectively with breaches of tenancy</p> <p>Review our approach to tenancy management in light of the Housing and Planning Act and specifically fixed term tenancies. This may mean the introduction of a new Tenancy Agreement as well as related procedures</p> <p>Ensure the newly established Neighbourhood Officers team is operating effectively in improving the management of our estates</p> <p>To review the disaggregation of service charges</p>	<p>Value of current, £693K, former £215K and garage rent debt £3K</p> <p>c1.15% bad debt write-offs</p> <p>c2500 NSPs served pa</p> <p>c40 evictions</p>	
Housing Strategy & Development Team	<p>Effectively administer the district-wide HomeChoice scheme</p> <p>Complete the 12 month review of the new Homechoice Policy</p> <p>Reduce the time people have to spend waiting for a new home and reduce income loss to the Council's landlord service by letting empty homes to new tenants as quickly as possible</p>	<p>c2,500 applicants on the Housing Register</p> <p>Average void time 44 days</p>	<p>500 Voids pa</p> <p>700 lettings & nominations pa</p>

	<p>Prevent people from becoming homeless or when that is not possible help them find a new place to live as quickly as possible by providing a homelessness service that is compliant with the legal requirements placed upon the Council to help those who are homeless.</p> <p>To implement the recommendations of the Temporary Accommodation review.</p> <p>Offer an effective, tailored and relevant advice and assistance service.</p> <p>Inspect (or re-inspect) all HMOs requiring a license and issue an up to date license as appropriate.</p> <p>Effectively manage complaints and concerns raised by private sector tenants about the quality of their homes.</p> <p>Respond to reports of Gypsies and Travellers settling on unauthorised sites such as country parks, highway and privately owned land, taking direct action in respect of land owned by the Council and supporting with advice encampments on land owned by other landholders.</p> <p>Maintain effective administration of the service area.</p>	<p>c620 homeless applications pa</p> <p>c140 homeless acceptances pa</p> <p>c5 rent bonds issued</p> <p>c30 homelessness preventions</p> <p>c480 advice and assistance approaches per year</p> <p>335 licensable properties</p> <p>220 inspections undertaken pa</p> <p>c380service requests per year</p> <p>c25 enforcement notices issued</p> <p>c30 illegal encampments</p> <p>580 leaseholder statements issued</p>	
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	<p>Monitor and ensure an effective response to the implementation of the Housing and Planning Act</p> <p>Continuing to manage and respond to incoming consultations for affordable housing development to ensure maximum delivery of varied affordable housing provision.</p> <p>Evaluate options to increase our council stock portfolio via the purchase of clusters of viable properties.</p>	<p>c£19k service charge arrears</p> <p>65 Right-to-Buy applications</p> <p>c200 completions of new affordable housing</p>	
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2.2 Measures

Key Corporate Measures

Customer Measures – those important to the people/organisations who use our services Note: these measures should be used on a daily, weekly or monthly basis to identify the impact of interventions in the system and to plan future interventions. Interventions may be very small adjustments to resources, or may involve transformational change									
	Qtr 4 16/17	Qtr 1		2		3		4	
Number of empty homes brought back into use as a consequence of PSH team activity (Target: 1 per quarter)	8	6	↓	6	→	3	↓	9	↑
The average number of days it took to let each property (Target: 33 days)	34.92	32.08	↑	31.37	↑	33.37	↓	33.83	↓

The percentage of decisions on each homelessness case accepted within 33 days (Target: 75%)	64.00%	70.24%	↑	48.26%	↓	30.91%	↓	31.54%	↑
The average number of weeks each homeless applicant spends in temporary accommodation (Target: 6 months)	6 weeks	5 weeks	↑	7 weeks	↓	7 Weeks	→	9 Weeks	↓
Total number of Service Visits (Bi-Annual Tenancy Update Visit) (Target: 144 per M, 432 per Q)	391	408	↑	369	↓	222	↓	229	↑
Percentage of calls to Lifeline answered within one minute (Target: 97.5%)	98.67%	98.3%	↓	97.0%	↓	96.6%	↓	97.3%	↑
The percentage of private sector housing service requests responded to within target time (Target: 90%)	90%	99%	↑	97%	↓	97%	→	100%	↑
Total Rent Arrears as % of rent debit (Target: 2.8%)	2.78%	2.71%	↑	2.94%	↓	2.97%	↓	2.73%	↑
Tenants seven or more weeks in arrears (Target: 575)	435	419	↑	427	↓	411	↑	390	↑
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.									
	Qtr 4 16/17	Qtr 1		2		3		4	
Commercial Income earned by Lifeline (Target: £60,000)	£33.3k	£41,000	↑						
Total number of affordable homes completions	14	84		98		58		65	
Total number of people registered with HomeChoice	2532	2597		2488		2442		2404	
Number of HMO Licences which were relicensed	12	19		38		69		65	
The average number of days applicants remain in Band 1	42	33		45		25		29	

2.3 Managing Risk

Risk	Planned Actions during year	Comments
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain monthly budget monitoring regime Review HRA budget assumptions when further information on implementation of outstanding Housing & Planning Act proposals and timescale for local implementation of changes to the social security system are known Ensure savings/additional income is planned for reduced income from Supporting People for funding our housing related support 	Maintain close liaison with ARCH, CiH and DWP
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure contracts are managed well. In particular ensure current risk issues with the cleaning contract are mitigated 	
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 scheduled for 2017/18: Housing rent collection Private sector housing regulation Housing related support services Building cleaning services 	Review action plan for previously completed audits at monthly 1-1s
Risk Register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly review of Risk Register by the Housing Management Team 	Full review reported to F&A Committee 4/1/17
Service Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handover of assurance responsibilities to form part of Induction Programme for new Head of Service and process will include an in-year review of assurance arrangements 	
Corporate Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Safety Assessments to be regularly checked and updated Contribution to corporate agenda to be reviewed as part of Risk Register review 	

Part 3 – Managing and Improving People

Workforce Planning

Category	Sponsor	Activity	Budget Impact	Impact on other Service Areas	Milestones
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1. Succession Planning (E.g. planning for leavers)	Bill Hunt	Recruitment of new Head of Service	Assumed to be within existing budget	Support from HR agreed	Advert April
	New Head of Service	Decision on service team manager secondments	None	Support from HR	Appointment May After Head of Service in post
2. Skills, Training, Competency Needs	Bill Hunt/new Head of Service/ Sustaining Tenancy Manager/ Housing Strategy & Development Manager	Develop a service area training plan (training matrix) from appraisal PDPs	Budget for training needs to be adequately resourced to support officers, in particular those doing professional courses	Finance	Sept 2017
3. Service Changes	As above	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	None	Throughout year

Part 4 BUDGET – Main budgetary pressures and changes

Activity	Budgetary Impact	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
General Fund				
Identify savings on discretionary budgets	Ongoing challenge to find savings without impacting upon statutory service delivery	£10,300 Target	TBA	TBA
Housing Revenue Account				

Social security changes	<p>Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates and caps will now apply to social housing tenants beginning from April 2019. Nearly all current council rents are below LHA rates. However, tenants aged under 35 will be affected by the shared room rate that for some will be below our rent levels and therefore tenants will have a shortfall to pay, and some single occupiers of larger/more expensive properties may also be affected and have a shortfall from the one room rate. Occupiers in the private sector are already subject to LHA rates. HA tenants will be more severely affected due to higher rents than we charge.</p> <p>The introduction of Universal Credit has now started to impact upon us, although due to the small numbers involved this is not having a negative impact on rent collection overall, The full roll out from June 2018, will have a bigger impact and we will monitor the impact and measures prior to this time.</p>	Bad debt provision (BDP) set at 1.5% £399k	HRA BDP increased to 2% £524k to reflect increased risk of rent arrears	BDP set at 2% in HRA BP £517k
Reduction in cost/increase in income for Lifeline Service	<p>Funding shortfall of £546K identified from July 2017 when existing transition arrangements for withdrawal of Housing Related Support funding from WCCC cease.</p> <p>Re-design of service to be reported to June Employment Committee</p> <p>Proposal to appoint fixed term Project Manager to support income generation activities taken to March Employment Committee</p>	HRA has agreed budget of up to £546k as per HRA Budget report at February 2017 Executive.	Current funding shortfall of £819k at 2017/18 values (Pending re-design and income generation programme).	TBA
1% annual rent reduction	Mandatory until 19/20	£253k reduction	£243k reduction	£237k reduction

Part 5 – Managing Planned Changes, Major Workstreams and Projects

Change/Project	Sponsor/ Lead Officer	Budget Impact	Impact on other Services	Milestones	Date
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Change/Project	Sponsor/ Lead Officer	Budget Impact	Impact on other Services	Milestones	Date
Agree and implement workplan for Year One actions for the Housing & Homelessness Strategy	Ken Bruno		Development Services	Agree workplan with Portfolio Report to HAG Report to Executive	April 2017 June 2017 March 2018
Review the Allocation Policy	Ken Bruno			Commence review Executive report Implement any changes	June 2017 November 2017 March 2018
Complete re-design of Housing Support & Lifeline service	Simon Brooke	£463k additional budget included for 17/18 – savings proposals will allow an element to be returned to reserves		Complete consultation Report to Employment Committee and Executive	May 2017 June 2017
Promote the Lifeline Service to increase number of users and maximise income	Simon Brooke	£463k additional budget included for 17/18– additional income savings proposals will allow an element to be		Appoint Project Manager	April 2017

Change/Project	Sponsor/ Lead Officer	Budget Impact	Impact on other Services	Milestones	Date
		returned to reserves			
Review approach to Service Charges	Simon Brooke				
Review Tenant Engagement Strategy	Ken Bruno			New strategy	March 2018
Review the effectiveness of the Housing Advisory Group	Ken Bruno				
Review services provided to leaseholders	Ken Bruno			Consultation Proposals	Summer 17 October 17
Review service charges	Simon Brooke				
Offer benefit and income maximisation advice to all sheltered scheme tenants adversely affected by the revised service charges	Simon Brooke			Commencement Completion	April 2017 June 2017
Complete the fire alarm system improvement programme	Simon Brooke				
Review the operation of the cleaning contract and determine if re-procurement required	Simon Brooke				
Complete the re-licensing of existing HMOs and the new licensing required by the revised regulations	Ken Bruno			Commencement Complete the relicensing Plan for new regulations	Sept 2017 April 2018 TBC
Effectively settle and support Syrian refugees	Ken Bruno			First households settled	April 2017
Complete the transition of disabled adaptations to the county-wide HEART service and review the effectiveness of the new arrangements	Ken Bruno			Transfer	April 2017
Eliminate the routine use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation for homeless households	Ken Bruno				May 2017
Effectively manage new temporary accommodation provision e.g. Willes Road and review the level of service provision provided to	Simon Brooke/ Ken Bruno			Complete repairs and bring onstream	May 2017

Change/Project	Sponsor/ Lead Officer	Budget Impact	Impact on other Services	Milestones	Date
households in temporary accommodation					
Complete Rental Exchange project	Simon Brooke				
Make decision on future support for Credit Union	Simon Brooke				
Review the W2 Partnership	Andy Jones/Ken Bruno			Decision as to scope of review Completion	July 2017 Dec 2017
Contribute to the review of options to develop new HRA homes	Bill Hunt/ Head of Housing/ Russell Marsden				
Review HRA Business Plan assumptions in light of budget pressures, social security changes and emerging thinking on the unimplemented provisions of the Housing & Planning Act	Bill Hunt/ Head of Housing/ Andrew Rollins			Report as part of HRA base budget setting report	Dec 2017
Contribute to the feasibility project on the potential regeneration of Lillington	Andy Jones/ Philip Clarke/ Head of Housing				
Let ICT support and development contract for HomeChoice system	Ken Bruno		Frees up ICT resources for other digital work.	Procurement exercise Contract let	June 2017 Nov 2017