

Service Area Plan 2019/20

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.

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	
People (Health, Homes and Communities)	Providing tenants with good housing and reducing 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
People (Effective Staff)	Ongoing training of staff to provide them with the skills to carry out their roles.	
Money (Firm Financial Footing over Long Term)	Regularly review the Housing Revenue account business plan	

2 Managing Service Delivery

2.1 Service Overview

Service Being Delivered	Priorities (with Justification)	Service Demand/Service Requests
Sustaining Tenancies Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letting the majority of Council owned homes on social rents. • Reducing anti-social behaviour by having the Tenancy Enforcement Officers work alongside the Community Safety Team therefore 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. • Working to reduce the distress and ill-health that can be caused by the loss of a home by carrying out regular 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. • 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. • Assisting tenants with claims or changeover onto Universal Credit by providing personal advice 	<p>5402 properties available for rent as of 01/04/19</p> <p>129 ASB cases opened 18/19</p> <p>186 Sheltered Housing units as of 01/04/19</p> <p>343 Universal Claimants</p>

	<p>and support through Income and Financial Inclusion teams.</p> <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 • Engaging with tenants and leaseholders through a variety of approaches. • 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. • Establishing and delivering financial inclusion strategies. • Hosting the Warwick District Priority Families Programme officer. • 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. • Providing financial advice to tenants to maximise their income. 	<p>(Tenants) as of 01/04/19</p>
<p>Housing Strategy & Development Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring options to maximise the delivery of affordable housing including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Working with developers to effectively use resources made available through s106 planning obligations or CIL contributions. o Taking advantage of any public funded investment made available by the Homes and Communities Agency or other Government funding streams. o 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. o Purchasing shared ownership properties e.g. Sayer court , Great Field Drive, 	<p>312 affordable home completions between 01/04/2018 and 31/12/2018 (9 month period)</p>

	<p>Cloister Way, as opportunities present themselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Buying properties in the open market. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Direct provision of affordable council homes in many villages across the district. • 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. • Providing housing with support for vulnerable people. • Improving the quality of the districts existing housing stock, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 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. o Supporting a Landlord Steering Group and a Landlords’ Forum. o Helping people remain healthy and safe in their homes by providing 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. o Maintaining high standards of cleaning of communal areas and grounds maintenance on housing estates where the Council is the majority landlord. 	
<p>Housing Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping people to find, maintain and enjoy a secure home by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Deploying effective homelessness prevention strategies and providing support for those threatened by homelessness at an early stage. o Providing high quality temporary accommodation for anyone whose homelessness cannot be prevented and minimising the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. 	<p>301 homelessness prevention and relief duties accepted between 01/04/2018 and 31/12/2018 (9</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Operating the HomeChoice scheme to ensure affordable housing is allocated in a fair and transparent way. o 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. o Assisting older people to maintain their independence by providing housing support and developing the Council's 24/7 cross-tenure Lifeline Service. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively administering the district-wide HomeChoice scheme. • Reducing 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. • Preventing people from becoming homeless or when that is not possible help them find somewhere new 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. • Preventing 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. • 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>month period)</p>
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2.2 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.

Measure	Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Total void rent loss during the period as a percentage maximum potential rent due	Less than 1%				
Average total relet time in days (Excluding Major Works)	Less than 33 days				
Average days from receipt to authorisation for applications authorised during the period	Less than 28 days				
Percentage of ended prevention or relief duties that were successful - per period approached	70%				
Total Current Rent Arrears as % of rent debit	Less than 2.80%				
Rent Collection Percentage Rate (Current Tenants)	99%				
Average Percentage Increase of UC Claimant arrears in first 12 weeks	Less than 2 weeks				
Percentage of calls to Lifeline answered within 30 seconds	97.5%				
Number of empty homes brought back into use as a consequence of PSH team activity	5 per q				
Average number of days taken to process mandatory HMO licences during the period	6 months				
Average length of each gypsy and traveller encampment	Less than 10 days				
Percentage of new tenants with a settling in visit within 6 weeks	98%				

Percentage of tenancies that failed within 18 months of start	TBC							
Percentage of ASB cases that were closed within 6 months of opening	90%							
End to end times for HEART cases	150 days							
Operational Measures - other (non-customer) measures essential to ensure that "purpose" can be achieved.								
Note: This section will not be used by most service areas 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	Target	Qtr. 1	Qtr. 2	Qtr. 3	Qtr. 4			
Total number of people registered with HomeChoice	n/a							
Total number of void properties at period end	n/a							
Number of households that have been in Temporary Accommodation for longer than 3 months	Zero							
Total income earned by Lifeline	£70k per q							
Total number of affordable homes completions reported during the period	n/a							
Waiting time from telephone enquiry to first visit from HEART services	Less than 45 days							
Asset Management Measures								
Percentage of HRA repair requests completed on time	90%							
Of properties with an in-date EPC Certificate, the percentage at a minimum D standard	100%							
Percentage of HRA properties with a gas safety inspection completed within the last 12 months	100%							
% HRA repair requests which were subject to a recall	<10%							

% HRA blocks with an individual Fire Risk Assessment and is in-date if annual review required*	100%								
% HRA properties with an up to date EPC	50/75/100/100%								
% HRA properties with a stock condition survey updated within the last 5 years	90%								

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 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 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: Housing Stock Asset Management, Housing Repairs and Maintenance, Homelessness and Housing Advice, Affordable Housing Development Programme, Lettings and Void Control, Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults 	
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	To complete a review of the staffing structure of the service area and implement the findings	To be confirmed	Support from HR and Finance	New structure in place by December 31 st 2019
2. Succession Planning (E.g. planning for leavers)	Lisa Barker	Decision on service team manager secondments	None	Support from HR	VARF Recruitment
3. Skills, Training, Competency Needs	Lisa Barker, Ken Bruno	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 Training	Appraisals
4. Service Changes	Lisa Barker, Ken Bruno	Skilling the teams to enable them to be more flexible to change Working differently supporting a	Within existing budgets	HR/IT	Training ICT considered

		work/life balance Deployment of ICT to support flexible working			
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3.1 Staff Resource

Housing Services employ 89.50 FTE as of Mar 2019

3.2 Workforce Planning

Category	Sponsor	Activity	Budget Impact	Impact on Service Areas	Milestones
Workforce Planning	Elaine Wallace	Additional Officers to support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> extension of private sector housing legislation Introduction of Homelessness Reduction Act Rough Sleepers Initiative 	Existing	None	Recruitment Training
Skills, Training, Competency Needs	Lisa Barker & Ken Bruno	Engagement with corporate training framework	Service area and corporate budget	HR	Ongoing
Service Changes	Housing Senior Management	Activities detailed in section 5	Various	Asset HR	In accordance with section 5

Determining the need for additional resource	Housing Senior Management	Review of services	Unknown	HR Finance	Review of: - Neighbourhoods - Tenancy Management - Homelessness - Allocations - Housing Strategy and development

Part 4 BUDGET – Main budgetary pressures and changes

Activity	Budgetary Impact	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Housing Revenue Account				

<p>Social security changes</p>	<p>Tenants aged under 35 are affected by the shared room rate that for some will be below our rent levels and therefore tenants will have a shortfall to pay. 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 the Council charges.</p> <p>The introduction of Universal Credit has now started to impact, although due to the relatively small numbers involved thus far, the anticipated negative impact on rent collection overall has not been fully felt. The full roll out from October 2018, is expected to have a bigger impact and we will monitor the impact as roll out progresses.</p>	<p>HRA bad debt provision (BDP) increased to 2% £524k to reflect increased risk of rent arrears</p>	<p>BDP set at 2% in HRA BP £517k</p>	
<p>Reduction in cost/increase in income for Lifeline Service</p>	<p>Account has been taken of the funding shortfall of £546K identified from July 2017 when Housing Related Support funding from WCC was withdrawn. The service is now required to maintain income levels and increase private work to increase turnover and operations margins.</p>	<p>Current funding shortfall of £819k at 2017/18 values (Pending re-design and income generation programme).</p>		
<p>1% annual rent reduction</p>	<p>Mandatory until 19/20</p>	<p>£243k reduction</p>	<p>£237k reduction</p>	

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

Change/Project	Sponsor/Lead Officer	Budget Impact	Impact on other Services	Milestones	Date
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Appendix F

Fire Safety – including FRA	Caroline Russell		Assets Finance	Westbrook ongoing CLS determine requirements FRA programme developed	31/03/20
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	Ken Bruno Caroline Russell	TBC	Assets Finance Legal Neighbourhood Services	De-designation Exec Report Draft Tenancy Strategy Await green paper outcome	30/05/19 31/12/19 Summer '19
Improve the way we maintain, improve and repair our housing stock	Lisa Barker Ken Bruno Caroline Russell	Existing & Within Housing Capital Budgets	Assets Finance	Planned and Cyclical Programmes	Ongoing
Improvements to our Lifeline Service, increasing its 24/7 concierge role across the district	Caroline Russell	Increased Revenue	None	Analogue switch off Product identification	Spring '19 Autumn '19

Appendix F

Tackle homelessness, including developing strategic and local responses	Elaine Wallace	Estimated 900k	Finance Assets HR	Mid-term RSI strategy Hostel review Night Shelter redevelopment	Spring '19 Ongoing Ongoing
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	TBC	Finance HR ICT	Housing Review Exec Report and consultation Identify system developments	31/12/19 Summer '19
Ensure that our policies and practices are designed to produce optimal results and a good standard of customer care	Ken Bruno Caroline Russell Elaine Wallace	Existing	Legal Media Planning	Establish policies	Ongoing
Developing the role of the Council as a builder of new local homes	Lisa Barker Ken Bruno	TBC	Finance Development Services		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