



HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting to be held in Civic Hall, Leeds on
Tuesday, 8th April, 2014 at 5.00 pm

MEMBERSHIP

Councillor P Gruen (Chair)

Councillor J Bentley

Councillor B Anderson

Councillor A Lowe

Councillor K Maqsood

Councillor P Truswell

Tenant/ Leaseholder

Madeline Hunter

Ted Wilson

Jo Hourigan

Independent Representative

Timothy Woods

Matthew Walker

Andrew Feldhaus

Co-opted Member

David Glew

A G E N D A

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
1			<p>APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS</p> <p>To consider any appeals in accordance with Procedure Rule 15.2 of the Access to Information Rules (in the event of an Appeal the press and public will be excluded)</p> <p>(*In accordance with Procedure Rule 15.2, written notice of an appeal must be received by the Head of Governance Services at least 24 hours before the meeting)</p>	
2			<p>EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>1 To highlight reports or appendices which officers have identified as containing exempt information, and where officers consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons outlined in the report.</p> <p>2 To consider whether or not to accept the officers recommendation in respect of the above information.</p> <p>3 If so, to formally pass the following resolution:-</p> <p>RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as containing exempt information on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information, as follows:-</p>	

3

LATE ITEMS

To identify any items which have been admitted to the agenda by the Chair for consireation.

(The special circumstances shall be specified in the minutes)

4

DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

To disclose or draw attention to any disclosable pecuniary interests for the purposes of Section 31 of the Localism Act 2011 and paragraphs 13 -16 of the Members' Code of Conduct

5

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence

6

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

1 - 10

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th January 2014

(Copy attached)

7

HOUSING ADVISORY PANELS

11 -
24

To consider a report by the Director of Environment and Housing which provides an update on the creation of HAPs and highlights some of the development areas to be included in an emerging forward work programme.

The report also seeks approval of the terms of reference for both the Housing Advisory Panels (HAPs) and the Cross City Chairs Group (CCCG).

(Report attached)

8	HRA CAPITAL FINANCIAL POSITION PERIOD 11	25 - 26
	<p>To consider a report by the Director of Environment and Housing which provides the financial position statement on the HRA Capital programme at period 11 of the financial year 2013/14.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>	
9	HRA FINANCIAL UPDATE - PERIOD 11 (FEBRUARY 2014)	27 - 30
	<p>To consider a report by the Director of Environment and Housing, which provides an update on the financial position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The report also includes details of Right to Buy sales and arrears.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>	
10	TOWARDS A NEW HOUSING STRATEGY	31 - 38
	<p>To consider a report by the Director of Environment and Housing which provides an overview of the review, production and implementation of the Local Authority's revised Housing Strategy.</p> <p>The report also sets out the timeframe, resources, challenges and actions required to revise and develop a new strategy to enable the authority to fulfill its ambition of being the best city and council in the UK.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>	

11

RIGHT TO BUY - CESSATION AS MORTGAGE LENDER IN LAST RESORT

39 -
44

To consider a report by the Director of Environment and Housing which seeks the Boards agreement/comments for the Council to cease to act as Lender in Last Resort in the provision of voluntary mortgages for tenants wishing to buy their home under the Right to Buy.

(Report attached)

12

AFFORDABLE HOUSING GROWTH AND INVESTMENT THROUGH THE AFFORDABLE HOMES PROGRAMME

45 -
62

To consider a report by the Directors of City Development and Environment and Housing provides an update on the delivery of affordable housing, particularly in the context of the Homes and Communities Agency's Affordable Homes Programme (AHP).

The report provides an overview of how the Council has responded to the 2015-2018 Affordable Homes Programme from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and how the Council aims to maximise development of affordable housing units throughout the programme.

(Report attached)

REVIEW OF TENANCY MANAGEMENT POLICIES ON KEEPING PETS IN COUNCIL HOMES, ELECTRIC MOBILITY SCOOTERS AND INSTALLING SATELLITE DISHES

To consider a report by the Director of Environment and Housing which seeks the Boards approval for three Tenancy Management Policies covering?

- keeping pets in Council homes
- electric mobility scooters
- installing satellite dishes

The report also seeks the Boards approval for the Council to work towards achieving the RSPCA's Gold Standard Community Animal Welfare Footprint award.

(Report attached)

HOUSING LEEDS TENANT SCRUTINY PANEL (SOUTH) RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMPLAINTS INQUIRY

To consider a report by the Director of Environment and Housing which presents the Recommendations from the South's Tenant Scrutiny Panel's inquiry into the way housing related complaints are managed and the extent to which the service focusses on the quality of outcomes for customers.

The report also invites the Board to review and accept the officer action plan in response to the recommendations.

(Report attached)

15		<p>STAR SURVEY 2014/15 - METHOD AND APPROACH</p> <p>To consider a report by the Director of Environment and Housing which provides a summary of what was learnt from STAR survey 2012, and how services had changed as a consequence.</p> <p>The report also proposes a method for carrying out a large city-wide customer perception survey of general needs tenants during 2014/15.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>	127 - 136
16		<p>HOUSING MANAGEMENT REVIEW - UPDATE</p> <p>To receive an update on the delivery of Housing Management Review</p> <p>(Structure attached)</p>	137 - 138
17		<p>HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD - WORK PROGRAMME 2014</p> <p>To note/ amend the contents of the Housing Advisory Board Work Programme 2014</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>	139 - 140
18		<p>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>To note that future meetings of the Board will take place as follows:</p> <p>Tuesday 3rd June 2014 Tuesday 9th September 2014 Tuesday 11th November 2014</p> <p>All meetings to take place at the Civic Hall, Leeds commencing at 5.00pm</p>	

Third Party Recording

Recording of this meeting is allowed to enable those not present to see or hear the proceedings either as they take place (or later) and to enable the reporting of those proceedings. A copy of the recording protocol is available from the contacts named on the front of this agenda.

Use of Recordings by Third Parties– code of practice

- a) Any published recording should be accompanied by a statement of when and where the recording was made, the context of the discussion that took place, and a clear identification of the main speakers and their role or title.

- b) Those making recordings must not edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or comments made by attendees. In particular there should be no internal editing of published extracts; recordings may start at any point and end at any point but the material between those points must be complete.

Agenda Item 6

HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

TUESDAY, 28TH JANUARY, 2014

PRESENT: Councillor P Gruen in the Chair
Councillors B Anderson, J Bentley, A Lowe,
K Maqsood and P Truswell

Tenant / Leaseholder

David Atkinson
Ted Wilson
Jo Hourigan

Independent Representative

Timothy Woods
Andrew Feldhaus

Co-opted Member

David Glew

1 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first formal meeting of the Housing Advisory Board.

Councillor Gruen said the work to be undertaken by the Board would be interesting and challenging. Referring to the Shadow Advisory Board, he said the initial good work carried out by the Shadow Board had created a useful platform on which to move forward.

2 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the refusal of the Inspection of Documents

3 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no items identified where it was considered necessary to exclude the press or public from the meeting due to the confidential nature of business to be considered

4 Late Items

There were no formal late items submitted, however the Chair did accept the inclusions of the following items of business:

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Tuesday, 8th April, 2014

- (i) A schedule of unresolved actions arising from the Shadow Housing Advisory Board – 4th December 2014
- (ii) An addendum to Item No.14 “Implementation of the Review of Housing Management Services” – Details of the Senior Management Structure, Housing Leeds (Minutes No.15 refers)
- (iii) A schedule of future meetings of the Housing Advisory Board (Minutes No.17 refers)

RESOLVED – That in respect of (i) above, any unresolved actions be added to the Board’s Work Programme for 2014

5 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interest

6 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Matthew Walker

7 Minutes

The minutes of the Shadow Housing Advisory Board held on 4th December 2013 were received and noted

8 Matters Arising from the Minutes

To note that any unresolved actions arising from the work of the Shadow Board would be carried forward onto the Board’s Work Programme for 2014 (Minutes No.4 (i) refers)

9 Governance Arrangements - Housing Advisory Board

The Head of Governance Services submitted a report which set out the Governance arrangements for the Housing Advisory Board.

The Director of Environment and Housing reported on the provision of the Board to establish Sub Committees to deal with specific housing issues.

It was also reported that provision existed to appoint additional Members to the Board, selecting up to three non-voting co-optees, with some specialist skill or knowledge who would be of assistance to the Board.

The Chair proposed that Mr David Glew, a specialist in energy conservation at Leeds University, be co-opted onto the Board.

Board Members were supportive of the proposal

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note the governance arrangements approved by full Council for the Housing Advisory Board
- (ii) To note the terms of reference for the Board as set out in Appendix 2 of the submitted report
- (iii) To note that initial appointments for co-optees was for the remainder of this municipal year, and that longer term staggered appointments would be made by full Council at its annual meeting in June.
- (iv) That Mr David Glew be appointed as a Co-opted (non-voting) Member of the Board.
- (v) That a report be brought back in due course setting out proposals for the establishment of a Sub Committee(s)

10 Financial Position Statement 2013/14 Housing Period 8

The Head of Finance, Environments and Housing submitted a report which provided the 2013/14 financial position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Richard Ellis, Head of Finance, Environments and Housing presented the report and responded to Members' comments and queries.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report which included:

- The Housing Revenue Account and the projected surplus of £419K at period 8
- Rent Areas
- Right to Buy Sales
- Capital Programme

Referring to section 3.4 of the submitted report (Right to Buy) Councillor Truswell sought clarification on the amount retained by the City Council following the sale of a property.

In responding Officers confirmed that in accordance with Government formula, 25% was returned to the Treasury.

In making an observation, the Chair reported that the City Council had invested £650m into social housing. Tenants wishing to buy these properties were given up to a 70% discount. For each property sold the Council would retain one third (33%) of the cost of the property. It was the newly refurbished properties which were being sold, the less desirable properties remaining unsold.

Officers reported that they were working closely with Housing Associations to provide a joint coordinated response to social housing.

The Director Environment and Housing reported that Housing Services were looking to supply appropriate housing stock for particular niche markets; e.g. families with disabilities, due to the need across the city.

In responding Councillor Truswell welcomed the targeted resource to address particular needs but there continued to be a need for social housing.

Commenting on rents for Council housing, Councillor Anderson suggested there still remained a question mark over social housing rent – “the model needs to stack up” but it was not yet agreed.

Councillor Anderson asked if he could receive an update on the situation.

The Director Environment and Housing confirmed that appropriate arrangements would be made.

In summing up the Chair welcomed the report, commenting that the projected targets had been achieved

RESOLVED – To note the projected financial position at period 8 of the financial year 2013/14

11 Housing Leeds Capital Programme 2014/15

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which set out the proposed Housing Leeds HRA Capital Programme 2014/ 15.

The report sought Members’ views on revisions to the Leeds Decent Homes Standard and in particular to give thermal efficiency requirements greater prominence

The report also asks the Housing Advisory Board to endorse the programme for approval by the Executive Board at its meeting on 14th February 2014.

Appended to the report was the proposed Capital Programme 2014/15

Steve Hunt, Chief Officer, Property and Contracts, Housing Leeds presented the report and responded to Members queries and comments

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report which included:

- Resources available
- Investment priorities
- Headline spend items (Empty properties, Adaptations, Decency, Fire Safety, Heating upgrades, Sheltered Housing upgrades and Multi storey works)
- How do we spend additional resources?

- Emerging investment needs.

Specific issues raised by Board Members included:

- Energy efficiency schemes in multi storey blocks
- Highway works/ Car parking issues
- Refuse collection issues/ Provision of brown bins

In offering comment, Councillor Bentley welcomed the focus on energy/ thermal efficiency.

Referring to Council Estates in general, Councillor Bentley suggested that individual homes tended to be of a good standard but on occasion were let down by the poor condition of the estate. Could there be a focus on the estate rather than the individual home?

Jo Hourigan (Tenant Representative) welcomed the proposals around energy efficiency schemes.

David Glew (Co-opted Member) also welcomed the focus around energy efficiency. In offering comment he referred to the practice of “piggy backing” i.e. scheduling additional services to be carried out at the same time as a major job e.g. when replacing boilers, draft exclusion measures could also be carried out.

In responding to highway and car parking issues, Steve Hunt said any such works were often expensive with the need to re-position drains, gas/ electric supply which was a considerable addition to the costs.

The Chair confirmed that car parking and highway works were often very expensive and suggested the possibility of Housing Services employing their own contactors to carry out such works which covered large areas.

Commenting on the suggestion to address the poor condition of some estates, the Director of Environment and Housing said this was a useful suggestion and it was for Members of the Board to influence such choices.

In summing up the Chair thanked Mr Hunt for his presentation commenting it had been an informative report and stimulated much discussion.

The Chair acknowledged that Members were generally supportive of including energy efficiency measures and added that Leeds needed to determine its own decency standard

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the Executive Board be recommended to endorse the proposed Housing Leeds HRA Capital Programme 2014/15

- (ii) To recommend to the Executive Board that approval be given to develop a Leeds Decent Homes Standard which gives greater prominence to thermal efficiency requirements
- (iii) That the Director of Environment and Housing be requested to investigate the possibility of using some of the un-committed capital programme resources to address environmental conditions on estates.

12 Proposal for Maximising the Use of Council Homes

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which proposed a new incentive scheme to facilitate moves which enhance use of council stock and deliver improved outcomes for customers.

It was reported that the report was presented to the Executive Board at its meeting on 22nd January 2014 where it was resolved:

- (i) To note the success of the council's under occupation scheme and the mutual exchange incentive scheme.
- (ii) To approve the formal closure of the council's previous under occupation incentive scheme.
- (iii) That the Executive Board earmarks £200,000 from the Housing Revenue Account for 2014/15 to fund a new incentive scheme to operate from April 2014 – March 2015, based on the principles outlined in sections 4.16 – 4.37 of the submitted report.
- (iv) That a new scheme is developed by the Chief Officer, Statutory Housing in conjunction with officers from Housing Leeds Housing Management to be launched from 1 April 2014.

Referring to section 4.28 of the report Councillor Anderson raised the issue of identifying tenants living in one bedroom houses and flats, which were overcrowded, with a view to assisting them with a move to a suitably sized property. Councillor Anderson asked how this would be tested

Officer reported that the information would be gathered using tenancy visits.

Referring to section 4.33 of the submitted report Councillor Anderson asked for clarification about minor rent arrears.

In responding the Chair said it was for Housing Managers to use their discretion through a framework of decision making

In offering comment Councillor Bentley said fixed rules were not necessary, but good reasons would be required.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted

13 Mears - Service Improvement and Modernisation Plan

The Board received a presentation from David Miles and Colin Middlemass representing the Mears Group on the Service Improvement and Modernisation Plan.

In providing background information Mr Miles said that the Mears Group acquired the Morrison's contract in November 2012. A lot of complaints had been received about the level of service delivered by the previous contractor and Housing Leeds was considering termination of the contract.

Mears immediately put in place a Mobilisation Team to gain client confidence, address Trade Union issues and re-brand the company. Twelve months later the level of service was categorised as adequate/ good moving away from the previous poor category. The Mobilisation Team had since withdrawn.

Mr Miles Said the emphasis was now to move to the next level by building a consistent level of good service and continue to build relationships with the trade unions. Good progress had been achieved in year 1 and the company were now looking to align to meet the Council's aspirations for 2014/15.

Board Members questioned Mears on the following

- Use of contractors
- Availability of local skills/ Apprenticeship
- How tenant satisfaction was monitored

In responding Mr Miles said that approximately 15% of the work was undertaken by sub-contractors and in most instances it was the smaller specialised jobs where sub-contractors were used. Commenting on the availability of local skills, it was reported that availability was good but only for single jobs. Often two to three tradesmen may be required to complete the job. Mears did operate their own apprenticeship scheme, 35 apprentices taken on last year all being taught in multiple skills. All would be retained following completion of training. Responding to how tenant satisfaction was monitored, Mr Miles said feedback would be received through the complaints process and Customer Services.

The Chair thanked Mr Miles and Mr Middlemass for their attendance and presentation commenting that good progress had been achieved in the first year.

14 HRA funded Enhanced Street Cleansing Pilot

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which set out some initial outcomes of a pilot project to deliver enhanced street cleansing in

the city, trialling a new approach using temporary staff and a new job description.

Appended to the report was a copy of an Impact Analysis: May –September 2013

Helen Freeman, Chief Officer, Environmental Action, presented the report and responded to Members queries and questions.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report which included:

- Commencement of the pilot scheme in May 2013
- Early indications suggested the pilot was proving to be successful
- Positive feedback from local people
- Development of new job descriptions
- The creation of zonal teams with significant influence on the local area

Commenting on the development of new job descriptions Councillor Truswell ask if the trade unions had been consulted?

In responding Helen Freeman said proposals were currently been shared with Members with a view to looking at the need to change and also challenging it, but in due course the trade unions would be consulted.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted
- (ii) To welcome the success of the pilot scheme
- (iii) To support the approach for going forward in the future

15 Implementation of the Review of Housing Management Services

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which provided an update on progress with the delivery of Housing Management Review outcomes.

Appended to the report was a copy of the Housing Leeds Senior Management Structure.

Circulated at the meeting was an updated version of the Housing Leeds, Senior Management Structure which identified recent appointments.

Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Housing presented the report and responded to Members comments and queries.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report which included:

- The reduction of 11 Senior Management posts representing savings of £600k.
- Release of an additional £4.4m from ALMO funds now incorporated into the Capital Programme
- Savings on running costs of £0.5m as a result of the closure of the companies
- £400k savings arising from vacancies on some support services

RESOLVED – To note the progress being made to deliver the outcomes of the Housing Management Review

16 Any Other Business

There were no items raised under any other business

17 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – That future meetings of the Board be arranged as follows:

Tuesday 8th April 2014
Tuesday 3rd June 2014
Tuesday 9th September 2014
Tuesday 11th November 2014

All meetings to take place at the Civic Hall, Leeds commencing at 5.00pm

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Report of

Report to Housing Advisory Board

Date: 8th April 2014

Subject: Housing Advisory Panels

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

- 1. The Shadow Housing Advisory Board accepted the creation of 11 Housing Advisory Panels (HAPs) in October 2013. Existing Area Panel Chairs were subsequently invited to convene as a city wide group to review a draft Terms of Reference for the HAPs in preparation for their commencement in April 2014.**
- 2. The Terms of Reference has now been considered by the Cross City Chairs Group (CCCG) and a number of amendments and clarifications are proposed for the Housing Advisory Board's approval.**
- 3. The CCCG have also drafted a terms of reference for the CCCG themselves, recognising the special role this forum has in representing the interests of tenants on a city-wide basis.**
- 4. To ensure the effective operation of the HAPs and CCCG, there needs to be in place a number of protocols to ensure an effective level of governance and financial control, as well as to provide clarity and consistency of operation. Officers are currently working on a forward work programme with the CCCG to address a range of issues including the future level of resources available to the panels, financial protocols, marketing and communications, training and development, reporting processes and recruitment etc. to ensure they work productively.**

Recommendations

5. The Housing Advisory Board are requested to:

- **Approve the Terms of Reference of the Housing Advisory Panels.**
- **Approve the Terms of Reference for the Cross City Chairs Group.**
- **Support the creation of a forward work programme, developed and monitored with the CCCG, to ensure consistent working practices and appropriate operational and financial controls.**

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To seek the Housing Advisory Board's approval of the Terms of Reference for both the HAPs and the CCCG. These have been considered in detail by existing Area Panel Chairs and various amendments and further details added.
- 1.2 To update the Housing Advisory Board generally of the creation of HAPs and to highlight some of the development areas to be included in an emerging forward work programme.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The CCCG have met a number of times as a group and are working well together.
- 2.2 The priority for the CCCG has been to review the HAPs terms of reference and to define its own special role as a unified group of 11 local chairs. In going about this task, additional activities were highlighted as being required, for example:
- Following an election within the CCCG, Ted Wilson has been confirmed as the current 'Chair of Chairs', and Jo Hourigan Vice-Chair.
 - Dates have been set for the HAPs Chair (Ted Wilson), Chair of the Housing Advisory Board (Councillor Peter Gruen) and the Director of Environment and Housing (Neil Evans) to meet at key points in the year to exchange points of interest or matters arising wishing to be escalated to the Housing Advisory Board from the HAPs and vice versa.
 - The CCCG undertook a bus tour on the 17th January, to start to work together as a team and to learn more about the diversity of homes and communities across the city.
 - A Marketing and Communications lead officer was invited to a CCCG meeting to outline some communication tasks and to start to develop a media and communications strategy, including the use of social media to interact with a broader range of tenants.
 - The CCCG had previously requested £120k per individual HAP. This has since been raised by the Chair of the CCCG with the Director of Environment

and Housing and, subject to the creation of financial controls, was accepted and announced at the Tenants Conference on the 27th February.

3 Main issues

3.1 Through an inclusive approach, utilising the knowledge and experience of the existing Area Panel Chairs, a number of proposed amendments were made to the terms of reference. Some of the key proposed changes provided further clarity on membership, for example:

- Membership will be open to a maximum of 10 tenants, of which 1 can be a Leaseholder and 2 Elected Members. The Chair of each Panel will always be a tenant or leaseholder.
- Panel members will be re-appointed on a 4 yearly cycle. Retirement will be based on the length of service.
- Previous years of service on Area Panels will be taken into account when calculating the first recruitment cycle post transfer to Housing Leeds.

3.2 The CCCG Terms of Reference provides clarity on the purpose of this forum, i.e.

- Share areas of concern from Housing Advisory Panels and, where appropriate, prepare reports and make recommendations for improvement to the Housing Advisory Board;
- Promote and disseminate good practice on the work of Housing Advisory Panels;
- Escalate areas of concern and good practice initiatives on tenant involvement to Housing Advisory Board; and
- Receive and act upon feedback from the Housing Advisory Board.

3.3 To ensure the effective operation of the HAPs and CCCG, officers will work in partnership with the CCCG to develop a work programme. This will outline the protocols required to ensure an effective level of governance and financial control as well as to provide clarity and consistency of operation. The work programme will clarify the appropriate lead for each task required, depending on the nature of the protocol required – for example, officers leading on developing financial controls (with awareness and understanding amongst CCCG).

4 Corporate Considerations

4.4 Consultation and Engagement

4.4.1 The Terms of Reference have been considered by existing Area Panel Chairs in a number of meetings between October and February 2014. The Chair of the CCCG presented a summary of the work to date and helped raise the profile of the HAPs more widely at 'Better Together', the city wide tenants conference on the 27th February 2014.

4.5 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.5.1 Giving due regard to equality will be evidenced in the following actions as part of the CCCGs and wider HAPs activity throughout the year:

- Equality monitoring of existing panel members to understand the extent to which the diversity of tenants is represented;
- Using the above to target recruitment in any under-represented groups;
- Creating and monitoring neighbourhood profiles for each panel area, as part of the local priority setting process for each HAP;
- The development of a marketing and communications strategy that will consider how key messages are communicated to and from the panels by a diverse range of customers;
- A training and development programme for CCCG and HAP members raising awareness of equality issues; and
- A Code of Conduct to ensure discriminatory or offensive behaviours are challenged.

4.6 Council policies and City Priorities

4.6.1 HAPs help us to deliver the Best Council objective to 'ensure high quality public services- improving quality, efficiency and involving people in shaping their city.'

4.7 Resources and value for money

4.7.1 The HAPs, led by a CCCG, will offer a number of Value for Money advantages. As part of the Housing Leeds service re-design resources can be shared from across the city to support the day to day working of the panels. The level of officer support will be optimised by the creation of consistent processes and practice, for example, standard financial reporting to all 11 panels.

4.7.2 The HAPs, with a CCCG, are now better placed to communicate, share information and work together to achieve city-wide priorities for tenants. Potentially pooling funding from their budgets to invest in high impact initiatives.

4.8 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.8.1 The creation of the HAPs is in line with The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing 2012. In particular: 'Providers are expected to engage meaningfully with their tenants and offer them opportunities to shape the tailoring of services to reflect local priorities. Tenants should have the ability to scrutinise their provider's performance, identify areas for improvement and influence future delivery'.

4.9 Risk Management

- 4.9.1 The HAPs require further guidance, as part of a range of activities outlined in a work programme work programme, that will add effective controls and safeguards (for example, having in place a code of conduct) to reduce financial, reputational and personal tenant risk

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The CCCG have worked well as a group and after detailed consideration are seeking the Housing Advisory Boards approval their work on the two terms of reference and support and any feedback on their future activity.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Housing Advisory Board are requested to:

- Approve the Terms of Reference of the Housing Advisory Panels;
- Approve the Terms of Reference for the Cross City Chairs Group; and
- Support the creation of a forward work programme, developed and monitored with the CCCG, to ensure consistent working practices and appropriate operational and financial controls.

7 Background documents

- 7.1 Appendix 1: Terms of Reference of the Housing Advisory Panels
- 7.2 Appendix 2: Terms of Reference for Cross City Chairs Group

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Council Housing Leeds
Local Housing Advisory Panels
Draft Terms of Reference February 2014

1. Purpose of the Local Housing Advisory Panels.

- 1.1 There will be 11 Local Housing Advisory Panels in Leeds, 4 each in the former ENE and WNW ALMO areas and 3 in the former AVH (SSE) ALMO area.
- 1.2 Each Panel will receive agreed funding through the Director of Environment and Housing's delegated powers to fund community initiatives.
- 1.3 The key aims of the Local Housing Advisory Panels are
 - 1.3.1 To understand the needs of local communities and develop, support and invest appropriately.
 - 1.3.2 to ensure that there are high standards of service delivery within each Panel area through monitoring, reporting and influencing.
 - 1.3.3 to perform an advisory role on the quality of service delivery in their area and act as a consultative group about future service provision and investment in their area.

2. Membership

- 2.1 Membership will be open to a maximum of 10 tenants, of which 1 can be a Leaseholder and 2 Elected Members. The Chair of each Panel will always be a tenant or leaseholder.
- 2.2 Members of the Scrutiny Panel will not be eligible for membership of Housing Advisory Panels
- 2.3 The current membership of the former ALMO Area Panels will become the first membership of the Local Housing Advisory Panels.
- 2.4 Panel members will be re-appointed on a 4 yearly cycle. Retirement will be based on the length of service.
- 2.5 Previous years of service on Area Panels will be taken into account when calculating the first recruitment cycle post transfer to Housing Leeds.
- 2.6 If more than two members are due to retire then those to retire shall be chosen by lot. Members will be able to stand for re-selection.
- 2.7 There will be an approved selection process for new tenant members.
- 2.8 Prospective panel members who are in formal dispute with Housing Leeds will not be eligible for membership

- 2.9 Elected Members will be nominated via the Area Committees.
- 2.10 Other individuals may be co-opted to a Panel where it is relevant and would enhance the work of the Panel on a particular subject. Any co-opted member shall attend meetings for an agreed timescale.
- 2.11 Co-opted members will not have any voting rights.
- 2.12 Relevant training will be made available to all Housing Advisory Panel members.
- 2.13 New Housing Advisory Panel Members will undertake a mandatory induction training session.

3. Accountability

- 3.1 The Local Housing Advisory Panels will be accountable to council tenants in their geographical area. Therefore the Panels, supported by officers from Housing Management, must ensure that they can demonstrate that:
 - tenants on the Panels are representative of tenants within the panel areas where possible.
 - the views of tenants are being represented where practicable.
 - The Housing Advisory Board and the Director of Environment and Housing will consult with Local Housing Advisory Panels via a meeting of the Chairs on matters relevant and appropriate to the running of Housing Leeds

4. Review

- 4.1 Each Local Housing Advisory Panel will conduct an annual review of its programme of work, working methods and terms of reference. The report of the review will be presented to the Housing Advisory Board.

5. Method of Working and Meetings

- 5.1 The Local Housing Advisory Panels will meet at least bi-monthly, sequenced to precede Housing Advisory Board meetings.
- 5.2 Declarations of interest must be disclosed prior to the meeting. The Chair reserves the right to ask any Housing Advisory Panel Member who declares an interest in an item, to leave the meeting whilst said item is being discussed.
- 5.3 A meeting will be quorate with 50% of current membership of the individual Housing Advisory Panel (rounding up when this is an odd number e.g. 2.5 = 3).
- 5.4 All meetings will be minuted.
- 5.5 Where possible papers for a meeting will be sent to Housing Advisory Panel Members five working days before the date of the relevant meeting, for example

if a meeting is to take place on a Wednesday then papers should be sent on the previous Wednesday.

- 5.6 Reasonable expenses will be paid to members on official Housing Advisory Panel business.
- 5.7 Panels will set priorities for the year with local Housing Management Officers. Panels will then receive reports in accordance with the work programme from the Housing Management Officers.
- 5.8 Chairs will serve a 2 year term. Chairs and Vice Chairs will be elected by other Housing Advisory Panel members and a consistent process will be implemented.

6. Disqualification and Removal of Panel Members

- 6.1 A person shall be ineligible for appointment to the Housing Advisory Panel and if already appointed shall immediately cease to be a Panel member if the relevant individual:-

- Resigns his/her office by written notice.
- Is removed from office by a resolution of other Panel Members following a proposal from the Chair resulting from persistent absence from meetings of the Panel without the permission of the Panel; or
- Shall have been absent without permission of the Panel from three consecutive meetings of the Panel and the Panel resolves that his/her office be vacated;
or
- In the case of a Tenant/Leaseholder he/she ceases to be a Tenant/Leaseholder of Leeds City Council; or
- The Tenant/Leaseholder ceases to be a resident within their designated Panel area; or
- Is a Tenant/Leaseholder and is or becomes an elected member of the Local Authority;
- Refuses to sign or is found to have breached the Code of Conduct for Housing Advisory Panel members;
 - NB: if a breach of the Code of Conduct is alleged then the Panel Member will be temporarily suspended until the issue is dealt with and a conclusion reached.

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Housing Leeds

Cross City Chairs Group

Draft Terms of Reference

1.0 Purpose

The Cross City Chairs Group is a group established by the Directorate of Environment and Housing to monitor and encourage greater tenant involvement across the City. The purpose of the Group is to:

- Share areas of concern from Housing Advisory Panels and where appropriate prepare reports and make recommendation for improvement to the Housing Advisory Board.
- Promote and disseminate good practice on the work of Housing Advisory Panels.
- Escalate areas of concern and good practice initiatives on tenant involvement to Housing Advisory Board. .
- Receive and act upon feedback from the Housing Advisory Board.

2.0 Membership

2.1 Membership will be open to the chairs of all Housing Advisory Panels across the City.

2.2 Chairs will remain in membership of the Cross City Chairs Group throughout their term of office on the Housing Advisory Panel.

2.3 Where a Chair is unable to attend a meeting of the Cross City Chairs Group, the Vice-Chair of the Housing Advisory Panels may attend in their place.

2.4 Chairs and Vice-Chairs shall remain in office only so long as they remain tenants of Housing Leeds.

3.0 Method of Working

3.1 Meetings will take place bi-monthly at the mid-point between Housing Advisory Board meetings.

3.2 All meetings of the Cross City Chairs Group and its' sub groups will be minuted and circulated to the group within 7 days of the meeting.

3.3 All papers for Cross City Chairs Group meetings will be circulated 10 working days in advance of meetings.

3.4 The quorum for meetings is that at least 2 members from each geographical area shall be in attendance i.e. East, West and South areas.

3.5 Members will be paid all reasonable out of pocket expenses.

4.0 Officers

4.1 A Chair of the Cross City Chairs Group will be elected bi-annually and serve a maximum period of two years.

4.2 A Vice-Chair will be elected annually and serve a maximum period of one year.

4.3 Election of officers shall be by ballot.

4.4 The Chair will represent the Cross City Chairs Group on the Housing Advisory Board and will take the concerns and recommendations of the Group to those meetings.

4.5 The Chair will ensure the group operates at the highest standard and encourages tenant involvement whenever appropriate.

5.0 Responsibilities of the group

5.1 Members will treat one another with respect, listen to the views of others and abide by the Code of Conduct.

5.2 Make recommendation on the delivery of local services and matters of strategic policy to the Housing Advisory Board.

5.3 Share areas of concern from constituent Housing Advisory Panels and make recommendation for improvement to the Housing Advisory Board.

5.4 Promote and disseminate good practice on the work of Housing Advisory Panels.

5.5 Escalate areas of concern and good practice to Housing Advisory Board.

5.6 Receive feedback from the Housing Advisory Board and act on any requirements.

5.7 Monitor and encourage greater tenant involvement across the City.

5.8 The Group will monitor Housing Advisory Panels spend by panel geographical, equality and for adherence to the objectives stated in individual Housing Advisory Panel business plans.

6.0 Reporting

6.1 The Group will receive an annual business plan from each Housing Advisory Panels setting out their achievements for the previous year and their plans for the forthcoming financial year.

6.2 The Group will produce an annual report for the Housing Advisory Board setting out their progress and plans for the coming financial year.

6.3 The Group will monitor the equality and diversity profiles of Housing Advisory Panels and make recommendations for development. A report of the profile and actions will be presented to the Housing Advisory Board annually in May.

7.0 Other

7.1 In order to equip themselves to undertake their role effectively members of the Cross City Chairs Group will undertake induction and any other relevant training.

7.2 The Cross City Chairs Group will provide information and recommendation as requested to the Lead Councillor for Housing, the Director of Environment and Housing and senior management of Housing Leeds.

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Report of Head of Finance Environments and Housing

Report to Housing Advisory Board

Date: 8th April 2014

Subject: HRA Capital Financial Position Period 11

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. At the request of Housing Advisory Board, the purpose of this report is to provide a financial position statement on the HRA Capital programme at period 11 of the financial year 2013/14.
2. The attached information has been provided by the relevant Head of Finance for the Board's consideration in relation to:-
 - Housing Leeds Capital programme (section 3)
 - Strategic Landlord HRA (section 4)

3.0 HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME

3.1 Housing Leeds Services & BITMO

3.2 Housing Leeds Services are delivering the refurbishment programme for the remainder of 2013/14 and are reporting spend and commitments to date of £43.6m. Projected outturn at period 11 is expected to be delivered within revised available resources of £53m.

3.3 The Housing Leeds Service Capital programme for 2014/15 has been finalised and presented to full council on 26th Feb 2014, this will be given authority to spend in March. The current funding available for the refurbishment programme is now £76m including BITMO taking account of the in year 2014/15 funding of £51m, slippage throughout 2013/14 of £15.9m and additional revenue contributions to resources of £9.4m. This funding will be planned against the councils priorities within the refurbishment programme.

- 3.4** Planned works are running to target across the city in most areas. In the Aire Valley area £3.8m has been slipped to 2014/15, £2.8m on the Malverns and Waverleys refurb and £1m on Manor Park enveloping. In East North East works to Multi Storey Flats £830k, Moorhaven Court conversion £450k and some demolitions work £270k have all slipped to 2013/14.
- 3.5** Responsive works - low levels of spend on voids programmes could equate to an underspend across the city in 2013/14 but we are awaiting more robust projections and will report back at period 11.
- 3.6** Adaptations no issues of concern spend on budget.
- 3.7** Other major areas of spend are staying on revised budgets at period 11.

4.0 Strategic Landlord (HRA)

- 4.1** At period 11 Strategic Landlord actual spend is £456k. Resources available in 2013/14 are £1m.
- 4.2** The Council Housing Growth programme is underway and has a number of strands within it: new build properties; purchase of new properties from developers and the acquisition and refurbishment of long term empty properties to bring them back into use as council housing. The first phase of delivery has commenced - a planning application has been submitted for the first new build site at East End Park which will deliver 30 properties and anticipated to start on site in January and design work has started for a second site at The Garnets in Beeston; the opportunity to acquire new properties "off plan" from a developer is currently being appraised and will deliver 25 new properties at Thorn Walk Gipton which it is anticipated will be ready for occupation in December 2014. Further phases will include the delivery of a purpose built Extra Care scheme providing specialist housing for older residents. £22m of this programme has now been committed.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1** Housing Advisory Board are asked to note the projected financial position at period 11 of the financial year 2013/14.

6.0 Background documents¹

- 6.1** No documents referred to

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.

Report of Director of Environment and Housing

Report to Housing Advisory Board

Date: 8th April 2014

Subject: HRA Financial update – Period 11 (February 2014)

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

At the end of Period 11 the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), incorporating Housing Leeds, is projecting a surplus of £ (2.0) m, key variances from budget are detailed in sections 2. and 3. below.

Right To Buy (RTB) sales are projected to be 450 by the end of the year. This is 316 more than budget. Further details can be found in section 4. below.

Recommendations

Housing Advisory Board members are asked the note the projected year-end financial position of the HRA, RTB sales and arrears.

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members of the Housing Advisory Board on the financial position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). It also includes details of RTB sales and arrears.

2. Key Variances - Income

- 2.1 Income from dwelling rents is projected to be £0.2m less than the budget. Loss of income due to RTB sales (projected to be 316 higher than budgeted) is largely compensated for by additional income due to voids being 0.6% lower than the budget of 1.5%.
- 2.2 Income from service charges and non-dwelling rents is projected to be £0.1m less than budget. This is primarily due to a reduction in income from furniture charges (which are demand led) partially offset by an increase in leaseholder charges and telecom income.
- 2.3 Additional income of £ (0.5) m is anticipated from capitalisation, mainly due to the increase in RTB sales. £ (0.2) m of unbudgeted income is projected from interest on balances and £ (0.2) m will be utilised from reserves earmarked to fund specific expenditure.

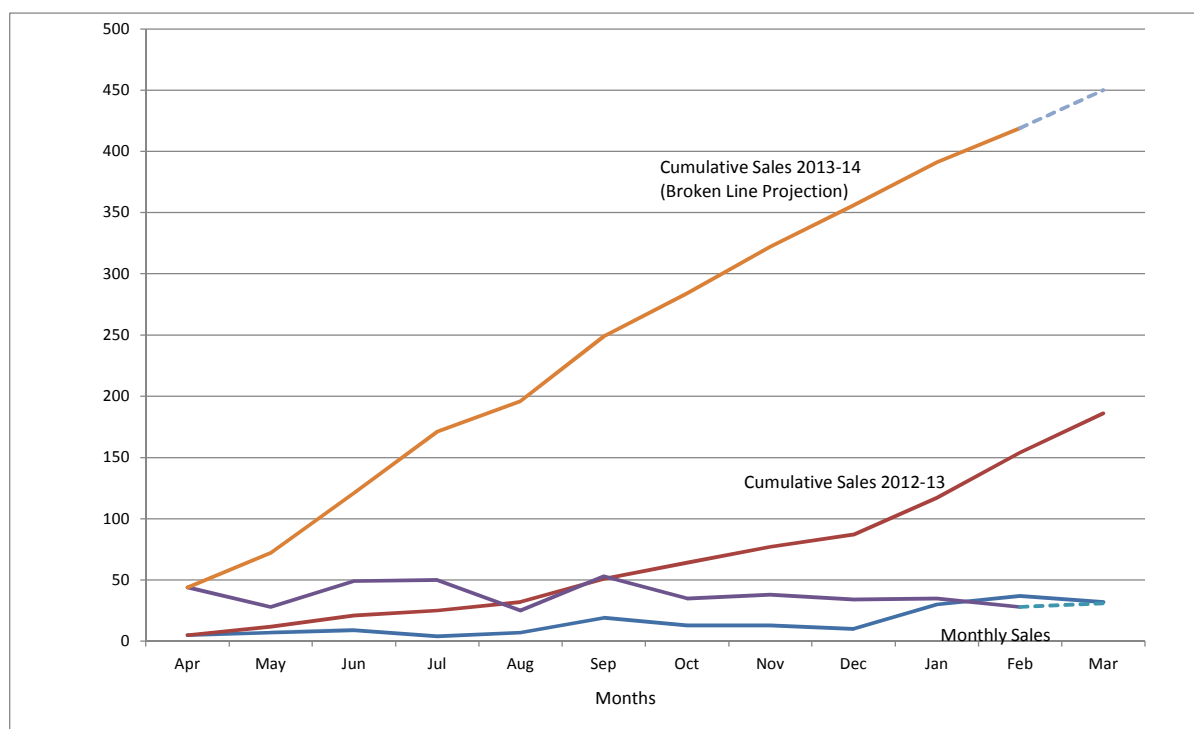
3. Key Variances - Expenditure

- 3.1 Projected savings of £ (0.7) m on employee costs and £ (0.2) m on transport are related to posts within Housing Leeds being held vacant in light of the Housing Management Review. In addition a 1% pay award for JNC posts was budgeted for but not awarded.
- 3.2 Following a full review of repairs expenditure it is anticipated that savings of £ (1.1) m will be achieved. This is largely in connection with demand-led activities such as responsive repairs and repairs to void properties.
- 3.3 Savings of £ (0.7) m are projected from running expenses. These include savings on premises costs, IT, postages and office consumables. A further saving of £ (0.2) m is expected from Council Tax in relation to void properties.
- 3.4 These positive variations are offset by an additional net cost of £0.6m from internal charges. This reflects an additional £1m from Adult Social Care in respect of supporting people to remain in their own homes, partly mitigated by savings of £(0.4)m from other internal charges such as PPPU and Legal Services.
- 3.5 There is a requirement to increase the contribution to the disrepair provision by £0.8m more than the budget. This is due to a high volume of new claims being received following canvassing in the city by two compensation companies.

4. Right to Buy (RTB) Sales

- 4.1 As shown in the graph below there were 419 completed sales to the end of February 2014. Current projections based on live applications are that 450 properties will be sold in 2013/14, generating sales receipts of £20.0m. In accordance with the Government's formula, LCC can retain the sum of £14.7m. Of

this, £6.2m is likely to be passported to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) as a grant. This is to fund 30% of the cost of building new housing stock, and must be match-funded by a 70% contribution from the RSL. A further £6.6m can be retained for 'allowable debt' which can be used either to repay debt or to fund other capital expenditure; current proposals are that this income will be used to fund capital expenditure. The remaining sum of £2.0m will be retained corporately to fund the General Fund's Capital Programme.



Council House Sales - Actual and Projected

5. Arrears

- 5.1 Overall, arrears for current tenants are £5.9m compared to £4m at the end of 2012/13, an increase of £1.9m. Of this approximately £1.0m is due to timing differences between rent being charged on a weekly basis and payments being actually received from tenants who pay monthly by standing order of direct debit. Of the remainder of the increase £0.3m has arisen due to Welfare Change in connection with under-occupancy. Collection rates to the first week in February were 97.4% for dwelling rents, compared to 98% at the end of 2012/13.
- 5.2 There are currently circa 5,600 tenants classified as under-occupied. At the end of 2012/13 approximately 23% of under-occupiers were in arrears, this rose to 56% at the beginning of February. Total dwelling rent arrears for under-occupiers are £0.71m as at the beginning of February, compared to £0.48m at the end of 2012/13, an increase of £0.23m.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 Housing Advisory Board members are asked to note the projected year - end financial position of the HRA, RTB sales and arrears.

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Report author: Megan Godsell
Tel: 2476026

Report of: Environment and Housing
Report to: Housing Advisory Board
Date: April 2014
Subject: Towards a new Housing Strategy

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

This report sets out the proposed process for producing the Local Authority's revised Housing Strategy including the review, research, production and implementation of the Strategy.

Recommendations

- That the Housing Advisory Board agrees the process, timescales and priorities as outlined in this report.
- That the Housing Advisory Board agrees to act as a Project Board to oversee the production and future monitoring of the Housing Strategy

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the review, production and implementation of the Local Authority's revised Housing Strategy.
- 1.2 This report sets out the timeframe, resources, challenges and actions required to revise and develop a new strategy to enable the authority to fulfill its ambition of being the best city and council in the UK.

2 Background information

- 2.1 All Local Authorities are charged with periodically reviewing the housing needs of their area and formulating and publishing a housing strategy to set out their plans to meet housing need, demand and investment in housing and related services. The Housing Strategy is one of Leeds' key strategic plans, enabling the Council and its partners to form a clear understanding of the city's significant housing challenges and identify innovative solutions to meet the needs and aspirations of its communities.
- 2.2 This report will set out how the Housing Policy Team will deal with revising and producing a new Housing Strategy, covering the period from 2014-19, with an annual review, following expiry of the existing strategy in 2012. A number of sub-strategies are contained within the Housing Strategy, including the Tenure Strategy, the Homelessness Strategy, the Adaptations Strategy, and the Children and Young People's and Vulnerable Adults Housing Plans.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The production of the Strategy will include research, development and implementation stages. Initially it will be necessary to start with relevant research and consultation to identify the key themes and challenges facing the city. This will include acquiring a robust understanding of the housing needs and aspirations of local communities, understanding demographic projections and potential implications in terms of health and wellbeing, social care, community safety and other needs, along with having an awareness of the nature and condition of all housing stock and how that correlates with identified need, aspirations and wider links.
- 3.2 Once research is completed, it will be necessary to identify innovative solutions to address gaps and shortfalls and develop appropriate targets and actions. Finally, the strategy will need to be produced, implemented and launched.
- 3.3 Four priorities have been proposed for the Strategy and these are :

Priority 1: Housing Growth

Ensure Leeds has sufficient housing of appropriate quality, type & flexibility to meet the need, aspirations and changing demands of existing and potential residents, whilst minimising environmental impact

Priority 2: Improving Housing Conditions

Achieve and maintain standards across all sectors, with a focus on energy efficiency, fuel poverty, empty homes, and student homes

Priority 3: Enabling Independent Living

Promote independence for as long as possible to meet different needs at different stages; financial independence; safeguarding children and vulnerable adults; care leavers

Priority 4: Housing and Health

Take action to maximise health improvement and reduce inequalities across the city where poor housing contributes to poor health (linking with Leeds Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy).

Priority 5: Creating Sustainable Communities

Housing supply and services will contribute to creating sustainable communities so that every area in the city is a place where people want to live now and in the future. Housing supply and services reflect the diversity of the people and places in Leeds and contributes to environmental sustainability, economic growth and community safety. This priority will cover a range of actions including tackling anti-social behaviour, housing supply and allocation as well as environmental services.

3.4 A Working Group will be established to oversee development, implementation and production of the strategy, with a theme lead for each of its 5 work streams. It will be the role of the Housing Policy Team to co-ordinate and oversee the work streams. The work groups will have cross sector representation.

- **Housing Growth**, (Maggie Gjessing, Housing Regeneration)
- **Improving Housing Conditions** (John Statham, Housing Partnerships)
- **Enabling Independent Living** (Megan Godsell, Housing Support)
- **Housing and Health** (Dawn Bailey, Public Health)
- **Creating Sustainable Communities** (Megan Godsell Housing Support)

3.5 It is proposed that a Project Board oversees the production of the Strategy and that the Housing Advisory Board adopts this role. A series of regular reports and updates will be presented to the Housing Advisory Board.

3.6 The Work Plan

Detailed below is the proposed work plan. It is envisaged that that the planning stage is March 14 and implementation is programmed for October/November 2014.

Planning March /April 2014

Establish Project Board
Establish Project Team
Complete and approve Project Plan

Research April /May 2014

Review existing strategy

Assess current position re: housing market & conditions/land availability/current & projected population growth/equality & diversity

Complete Equality Impact Screening and Assessments

Identify overall timescales and milestones

Consultation (May/June 2014)

Prepare Engagement Communication and Stakeholder Plan

Identify appropriate Stakeholders

Plan and facilitate workshops to identify key priorities and innovative solutions for the Strategy

Consult with wider partners through Talking Point & Challenge Event

Share feedback with service

Development Process (July/August 2014)

Identify theme priorities, wider issues and determine scope

Identify appropriate case studies

Identify key actions and targets

Attend regular progress meetings

Production (August /September 2014)

Collate themes

Draft introduction and full document

Share draft with Housing Advisory Board

Produce and agree a delivery plan to set out actions & responsibilities

Implementation (October 2014)

Launch strategy and share with Housing Advisory Board/partners/stakeholders

Publish on internet/intranet

Post Implementation Monitoring & Review (November 2014)

Monitor delivery through a Partnership Board to encourage wider buy in, ownership and collaborative working (Housing Advisory Board)

Agree monitoring framework and frequency

Feedback on priorities/progress to Stakeholders and consult on changing priorities

Modify/refresh Strategy at mid-point in order to meet changing priorities

3.7 Attached at Appendix A is the outline of the production of the Housing Strategy 2014

4.0 External Dependencies

4.1 Localism Act

4.2 The Localism Act came into effect in October 2011 and has brought specific changes to enable decisions about social housing to be taken by local authorities. This includes local authority control of rental income; the introduction of flexible tenancies for more effective stock management; scope within the allocations policy

to ensure only those in greatest need qualify for social housing waiting lists; the option to discharge homelessness duty through the private rented sector; changes to social housing regulation and the launch of a national home swap scheme.

4.3 Welfare Reform

4.4 Changes to welfare benefits, particularly Housing Benefit, Council Tax and the roll out of Universal Credit, will impact on a number of households and council funding: pro-active measures to minimise the impact on housing and hardship will be necessary.

4.5 Changing Pressures

4.6 Population Growth: Understanding population change is crucial for effective planning of housing and related services. In particular, increasing pressures and demands from a growing elderly and youth population will depend upon focused resources and infrastructure to provide for changing needs.

4.7 Environmental changes: Changes in the housing market, local economy and budgetary pressures will directly impact on housing and affordability across all tenures, not only affecting housing availability and conditions, but having wider social costs affecting local communities

4.8 Corporate Considerations

5.0 Consultation and Engagement

5.1 An Engagement Communication and Stakeholder Plan is being undertaken as part of the planning process and will be completed by April 2014

6.0 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the research work and will be completed by May 2014

7.0 Council Policies and City Priorities

7.1 The Housing Strategy will link with and deliver the aims and objectives of the Authority's *Vision For Leeds, Business Plan* and *City Priority Plans*, achieving not only housing related priorities but, as poor housing so often contributes to poor health, poor educational attainment and limited employment prospects, also impacting significantly on the wider themes of improving health and wellbeing and enabling children to live in safe, supportive families.

8.0 Resources and value for money

8.1 Work is underway to identify the budget and resources required for the production of the Housing Strategy.

9.0 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

9.1 The report is open to call in

9.2 The report does not contain any exempt or confidential information

10.0 Risk Management

10.1 All Local Authorities are charged with reviewing the housing needs of their area and formulating and publishing a housing strategy. There is a risk that if a Housing Strategy is not produced then the housing challenges facing the city may not be recognised and addressed in a holistic manner.

11.0 Conclusions

11.1 The production of the Housing Strategy will cover the stages of research, development and implementation. It will begin with the relevant research and consultation required to identify the key themes and challenges facing the city. This will include acquiring a robust understanding of the housing needs and aspirations of local communities, understanding demographic projections and potential implications in terms of health and wellbeing, social care, community safety and other needs, along with having an awareness of the nature and condition of all housing stock and how that correlates with identified need, aspirations and wider links.

11.2 Following the research stage, it will be necessary to identify innovative solutions to address gaps and shortfalls and develop appropriate targets and actions. Finally, the strategy will need to be produced, implemented and launched. It is then vital that implementation continues to be relevant, therefore continual monitoring and review will need to be maintained throughout the lifetime of the strategy.

12.0 Recommendations

- That the Housing Advisory Board agrees the process, timescales and priorities as outlined in this report.
- That the Housing Advisory Board agrees to act as a Project Board to oversee the production and future monitoring of the Housing Strategy.

APPENDIX A

1 - INTRODUCTION

Cllr Gruen foreword; links with strategic priorities and vision; national context; Leeds scene setting

2 – BACKGROUND

Demographic and census findings; Housing Market Assessment; income; living costs; health/disability

3 - CITY CHALLENGES & KEY ISSUES

Key issues for different groups (housing and financial, including Welfare Change)

4 - PRIORITIES

Including priorities, actions, targets for moving forward and case studies

**PRIORITY 1:
HOUSING
GROWTH**

Ensure Leeds has sufficient housing of appropriate quality, type & flexibility to meet the need, aspirations and changing demands of existing and potential residents, whilst minimising environmental impact

**PRIORITY 2:
IMPROVING
HOUSING
CONDITIONS**

Achieve and maintain standards across all sectors, with a focus on energy efficiency, fuel poverty, empty homes, and student homes

**PRIORITY 3:
ENABLING
INDEPENDENT
LIVING**

Promote independence for as long as possible, to meet different needs at different stages; financial independence; safeguarding children and vulnerable adults; care leavers

**PRIORITY 4:
HOUSING AND
HEALTH**

Take action to maximise health improvement & reduce inequalities across the city where poor housing contributes to poor health (Linking with Leeds Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy)

**PRIORITY 5:
CREATING
SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITIES**

Housing supply and services will contribute to making every area of Leeds a place where people want to live now and in the future.

Locality profiles for each priority

Highlight projects within specific localities across the 10 Area Committees, e.g.: PFI, affordable housing initiatives, indicating which priority they link to

5 – ECONOMIC IMPACT

Opportunities for Leeds generated from housing projects, e.g. businesses, new build apprenticeships, local labour

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Report of Housing Senior Finance Manager

Report to Housing Advisory Board

Date: 8th April 2014

Subject: Right to Buy – Cessation as Mortgage Lender in Last Resort

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	City Wide	
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number:	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

This report seeks the Board’s consideration to revocation of the previous policy whereby the Council would consider providing a voluntary mortgage to a tenant seeking to purchase their home under the statutory provisions of the Right to Buy.

The Council previously established a policy that it would consider acting as “Lender in Last Resort” where a tenant was unable to obtain a mortgage from one of the recognised approved lending institutions to purchase their home. This being where their inability to secure a mortgage was a direct result of the property being of defective construction (e.g. Airey, Myton, REEMA’s etc.), or where the property is a Multi-storey Flat.

This policy was adopted by the Council in the past because it was aware that the main stream lenders would generally not provide mortgages for Council dwellings which have been previously deemed to be of defective construction, or where they are multi storey flats. Advice from legal services at that time was that the Council may be open to challenge on the basis that it may potentially be deemed to be preventing secure tenants from exercising their Right to Buy their homes albeit the Housing legislation provides no entitlement to mortgage for tenants or any obligation on the Council’s part to lend for such purposes.

However, following recent consideration of the Policy it is proposed that the Council should no longer act as Lender in Last Resort. The reasons for this include; that the Council’s aim is to increase its stock of affordable accommodation, the changes in the Right to Buy announced by Government to increase the discount percentage for houses, the extensive works the Council is carrying out on Multi-Storey Flats (MSFs), the difficulty the Council encounters in recovering monies from leaseholders in MSFs, the proposal by government to increase Right to Buy sales by improving applicants’ access to mortgage finance, the

financial loss to the Council through the reduced rent and deferred income from the sale, consultation with other Core Cities and the potential issues which arise for tenants acquiring this type of property.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Housing Advisory Board note the content of this report and agree that the Council cease to act as lender in last resort. Approval to the change in policy will be subject to Environment and Housing Panel decision.

1 Purpose of this report

1.1 To seek the Housing Advisory Board agreement/comments to the Council ceasing to act as Lender in Last Resort in the provision of voluntary mortgages for tenants wishing to buy their home under the Right to Buy.

2. Main Issues

2.1 History: - Until 1993 tenants applying to purchase their home under the Right to Buy had a Right to a Mortgage. However, from October 1993 the Government abolished this right. As a result of the abolition and following legal advice the Council considered that it should act as Lender in Last Resort when a tenant could not obtain a mortgage on the open market and where the property and tenant met specific criteria. This included:-

- a) that a tenant could not secure a mortgage on the open market, and
- b) the property was of defective build type (Airey, REEMA, Myton), under Part XVI of the Housing Act 1985 or was a Multi-storey flat, and
- c) the property represented adequate security for the mortgage, and
- d) the tenant(s) met the Council's financial criteria for a mortgage loan

Members of the then Tenancy Sub Committee considered a report and approved that the policy become effective from December 1994.

2.2 Current Position: there are a number of factors which have resulted in the existing policy being re-considered each of these is considered below:-

2.2.1 The Council's housing waiting list as at the end of December 2013 was 24,489. The Council is currently aiming to increase its stock of affordable accommodation through the acquisition of properties under the Empty Homes Strategy and through a programme of New Build in future years. The existing policy conflicts with the aims of the Council although it has operated to assist and support the prospect of home ownership for tenants of those types of properties affected.

2.2.2 The Council is currently investing substantially in the improvement of Multi Storey dwellings, through programmes for example under the Little London and Beeston Hill PFI. The issues to consider with regard to these properties are twofold:-

- a) the Council will not recover its investment in these properties where there is a sale because the property value will not increase £ for £.
- b) where tenants of these properties have previously acquired under the Right to Buy, the Service Charge for the works being carried out is not being recovered fully due to limitations on service charge contributions set by the Government, there is a statutory requirement to provide loans to specified values (Service Charge Loans Regulations 2003) and the need in some cases to top up these loans due to the limited financial means of some leaseholders. The Council is therefore expending monies which it will only recover over a period of time, or at a

point in the future, dependent upon the loan type provided, or indeed may not recover due to other factors such as default on primary mortgage or other priority charge repayments resulting in possession proceedings by lenders.

The provision of mortgages to facilitate the purchase of these properties may exacerbate the position in the future where the Council carries out works to other multi-storey blocks and is again in conflict with the Council's aims.

2.2.3 The provision by the Council of a mortgage for any property effectively reduces the income to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) because the rental income for that property is lost upon its sale. Whilst there are mortgage repayments received these are required to be pooled under the Capital Receipts Pooling Regulations, which is effectively shared by the Council and Government.

2.3 Future: The Government has announced that it is to introduce revisions of the Right to Buy.

2.3.1 With effect from April/May 2014 there will be an increase in the maximum discount percentage for houses. This will increase from 60% to 70% (the maximum for a flat is already 70%), this will however be subject to the maximum discount value of £75,000. The effect of this is that where a tenant has the necessary tenancy periods to acquire the maximum percentage discount, they are likely to be able to acquire their home at a lower value and the maximum discount value will be achieved on lower value properties.

eg - prevs max disc 60 % on a £125,000 property, generates discount of £75,000
- new max disc 70% on a £107,143 property, generates discount of £75,000

2.3.2 The qualifying period for the Right to Buy is proposed to be reduced from 5 years to 3 years. The Bill is currently going through the various stages of parliament and is anticipated to become law later in 2014 subject to receiving Royal Assent.

2.3.3 There is a further proposal to increase the maximum discount of £75,000 by an allowance for inflation each year (Consumer Price Index). This proposal if applied within a stagnant housing market will effectively further increase the discount on properties.

2.3.4 The effect of both of the above is potentially likely to increase the number of Right to Buy applications received by the Council and reduce the Capital Receipts from those properties sold.

2.3.4 The government is also to provide further support for the Right to Buy by introducing Right to Buy agents to help buyers complete their home purchase, and provide £100 million to increase Right to Buy sales by improving applicants' access to mortgage finance. Details of the scheme and how this will operate are not available yet though some provisional indication from DCLG representatives suggests this funding may be targeted at defective and possibly non-traditional property type lending but this is not certain.

2.3.5 Enquiries undertaken with a number of Core Cities indicates that they are not providing mortgages to allow tenants to acquire their homes.

2.4 Effect on Tenants:

2.4.1 Tenants who acquire properties of defective or non-traditional build are advised of the potential issues which may affect them, however, many proceed to completion. These issues include:

- a) tenants may acquire their home by means of a Council mortgage (the debt is left outstanding and recovered over the term of the mortgage), the Council is not in a position to provide a loan to have improvement/repair works carried out to the property. Therefore they may be unable to secure any additional loans to carry out any necessary remedial works.

- b) Tenants are likely to have difficulty in re-selling their home on the open market because any prospective purchasers will have difficulty obtaining a mortgage for non-repaired/improved properties of the type highlighted.

2.4.2 The number of mortgages currently outstanding is 41. During the current financial year there have been 7 requests for a mortgage with 3 being provided. The remainder are currently in various stages of processing. It is anticipated that with the proposed changes in the Right to Buy this may generate a higher number of applications and a higher demand for mortgages.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 There has been no formal consultation on this policy matter. It is seen as a matter for the Council to determine taking into consideration the effects on the Housing Stock and the effect on the Council's HRA finances.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 This is not a decision-making report and as such there is no need for an EIA screening document to be completed.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 The proposed cessation of the Council acting as Lender in Last Resort is considered to be in line with the Council's current policies, eg provision of affordable accommodation.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 The cessation of the policy will ensure that there is no conflict with the Council's current aims in providing more affordable Council accommodation to meet the growing housing needs within the City.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 It is considered that there are no specific legal implications.

4.5.2 It is not considered that this report will be subject to call in.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 Where future requests for mortgages are refused the Council could be open to challenge on the likely basis as mentioned in the above Summary.

5. Conclusion:

5.1 The Council is under no legal obligation to provide mortgages to tenants who are seeking to purchase their homes under the Right to Buy.

- 5.2** The Council has a waiting list for housing accommodation in excess of 24,000 and is aiming to increase its housing stock through the acquisition of homes and through new build. The continued provision of mortgage to tenants to acquire their homes in conjunction with them wishing to exercise their Right to Buy conflicts with the aim.
- 5.3** The provision of mortgages for purchases under the Right to Buy effectively reduces the rental income to the HRA and creates a deferred loan which the Council is likely to recover over an extended period. In addition the loan repayments are required to be included as part of the governments Capital Receipts Pooling arrangement, part of which is required to be paid to the Government.
- 5.4** The Council is undertaking substantial improvement works to some multi-storey flats at present through the LLBH PPFi scheme. The full value of the works is not recoverable from existing leaseholders due to the contributions payment cap set by the Government . Where works are carried out and there are existing leaseholders they are entitled to loans to a prescribed value. Where the statutory loan is insufficient the Council may have to consider topping up the loans, or potentially deferring repayment to a point in the future. Sales of MSFs may generate similar problems in the future where improvement works are carried out to these blocks.
- 5.5** Requests to repurchase properties are received by the Council. The continued provision of mortgages for “defective” properties and MSFs may generate an increase in such requests, particularly where owner occupiers are unable to sell on the open market.
- 5.67** From a financial aspect each sale under the policy reduces the rental income to the HRA and creates a deferred repayment, which is subject to Capital Receipts Pooling a proportion of which is paid to Government.

6 Recommendation

Members of the Housing Advisory Board are requested to:-

- a) Note the contents of this report
- b) Agree the cessation of the Council acting as Lender in Last Resort, subject to the formal approval of the Environment and Housing Panel.

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Report of Directors of City Development and Environment & Housing

Report to Executive Board

Date: 2nd April 2014

Subject: Affordable Housing Growth and Investment through the Affordable Homes Programme

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): City Wide	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

Further to the approval of the Progress in Delivering Housing on Council Brownfield Land report at 14th February 2014 Executive Board, this report provides Executive Board with an update on the investment approach to affordable housing and in particular the Council's response to the Homes and Communities Agency's 2015-2018 Affordable Housing Programme which has recently been released.

The Council's ambition is to maximise the delivery of affordable housing and secure investment in good quality affordable homes, setting a target for the city of between 800-1000 new affordable housing units through the programme.

The Council will make 31 sites available to deliver c550 units to support development by Registered Providers or through the Council itself. Registered Providers and developers will also bring private sites forward, and so far have indicated that they expect to bring sites forward which will produce around 200-250 units. The balance may need to be secured through securing additional sites either through identifying further Council sites or through acquiring private sites.

This report demonstrates the pro-active approach being taken by the Council in making sites available for investment and to assist and enable partners, particularly Registered Providers of affordable housing, to capture investment for the city and also illustrates how the Council will seek to take advantage of this and other investment sources.

Recommendations

Executive Board is recommended to:

- a) note the content of this report;
- b) declare sites shown at Appendix 1 and 2 as surplus to council requirements;
- c) delegate authority to the Director of City Development to approve the terms of the disposal of sites as listed at Appendix 1 to RPs at a less than best basis;
- d) delegate authority to the Director of City Development to dispose of the sites listed on Appendix 2 at a less than best consideration calculated at £1,000 per plot to the Director of City Development;
- e) approve the identification of the sites listed at Appendix 3 for medium term development for either council housing, disposal to RPs or in conjunction with a developer;.
- f) approve the sites, identified in Appendices 2 and 3 which are additional to those included within the Housing Investment Land Strategy;
- g) delegate authority to the Director of City Development to identify further sites to support the delivery of affordable housing
- h) approve in principle the proposal for the council to acquire privately owned land for the development of affordable housing.
- i) and to note:
 - the stages required to implement the decision as outlined in 3.31 and 3.32
 - proposed timescales for implementation as outlined in 3.33
 - that the Chief Officer Asset Management and Regeneration . will be responsible for implementation

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Executive Board with an update on the delivery of affordable housing, particularly in the context of the Homes and Communities Agency's Affordable Homes Programme (AHP).
- 1.2 The report provides Executive Board with an overview of how the Council has responded to the 2015-2018 Affordable Homes Programme from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and how the Council aims to maximise development of affordable housing units throughout the programme.

- 1.3 The Council has agreed a target of 800-1000 homes via this funding opportunity and the report sets out how it can use its land holdings to help to achieve this figure.
- 1.4 It seeks approval to dispose of the sites listed in appendices 1 and 2 to Registered Providers for affordable housing and to confirm the identification of the sites listed at Appendix 3 for the development of affordable housing, either wholly or in-part.

2 Background information

- 2.1 At its meetings in January and July 2013, Executive Board approved the Brownfield Land Programme and the Housing Investment Land Strategy. These reports identified potential development and disposal routes for council owned residential development sites to support housing growth and investment.
- 2.2 Executive Board, at its meeting of 14th February 2014, was provided with an update "Progress in Delivering Housing on Council Brownfield Land" which also set the context for the designation of further Council owned sites as non-market housing sites in order to support the maximisation of investment via the 2015-2018 AHP. The report indicated that a further report would be brought to Executive Board in April to set out those sites that it is proposed to put forward in support of grant bids, the number of new homes these will support and to indicate the additional land which will need to be acquired to deliver the aspiration. It indicated that a greater amount of grant could be secured for the city through acquisition of third party land, to create new larger or more viable sites for affordable housing.
- 2.3 The prospectus for the 2015-2018 AHP was released in January 2014 by the HCA. The programme provides £1.7b nationally (excluding London) with which to develop approximately 165,000 new homes by March 2018. The deadline for submissions of bids to this programme is 30th April 2014.
- 2.4 At the February meeting, Executive Board agreed an ambitious approach to delivering the affordable housing. It is recognised that the delivery of affordable housing through this route is a key component of housing growth and will contribute to the delivery of the Core Strategy requirement of 4375 units per annum including approximately 1100 affordable units per annum (as set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment).
- 2.5 Executive Board agreed a target for the city of developing 800-1000 units via the AHP with strong consideration to be given to meeting local demand, the quality of housing proposed and the strategic fit of the proposed developments. This will be supplemented by additional affordable housing negotiated via S106 agreements on private sector schemes.
- 2.6 The Council's role as facilitator and enabler is key to delivery and this report describes additional sites which could be brought forward for disposal to further maximise affordable housing growth. The Council has already released 12 sites to Registered Providers (RPs i.e. housing associations) to support the bidding process.

- 2.7 The HCA prospectus advises that where a local authority is pro-active in its approach including the disposal of land at nil or reduced value to an RP, this will have a positive impact when the schemes are assessed for funding. Schemes will also be considered in the context of their strategic fit with local requirements and their deliverability within the timeframe of the AHP (2015-18).
- 2.8 There is an emphasis within the AHP on certainty of delivery and wherever possible for RPs to identify specific sites for development. It is possible that the HCA will not allocate the programme in its entirety immediately so there may be opportunities for bids at a later date. However, the Council should support RPs to confirm their programmes as soon as possible.
- 2.9 From the Council's perspective, in addition to supporting schemes which meet the strategic housing needs of the city in terms of the size and type of units, affordable housing developments will be expected to have an emphasis on excellent design quality with a significant impact upon the surrounding communities by enhancing the local environment and quality of place. The need to deliver low carbon developments is recognised and RPs are encouraged within the context of the AHP criteria to produce units which contribute to broader agendas such as carbon reduction and the reduction of fuel poverty. This is reflected in the Council's own building programme where excellent quality standards and designs which offer low fuel consumption are a key driver

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The AHP provides an opportunity to deliver substantial new investment. RPs, developers and the Council are all able to bid to the programme to support new build affordable housing. The Council has been in extensive dialogue with providers to gauge their intentions and to encourage them to maximise their investment in the city.
- 3.2 Recognising the requirement to develop investment programmes and submit bids for funding before the end of April deadline, a pipeline of sites has been made available for RPs to acquire for affordable housing purposes. It is recognised that given the scale of ambition, whilst Council owned land will make a significant contribution, RPs and developers (and potentially the Council itself) will need to acquire land to achieve the level of delivery aspired to.
- 3.3 The Council has a clear ambition to support additional affordable homes in the city. It also though, is in a position to encourage developments which meet the tenure, size, quality of design and carbon requirements of the city. The Council is in a unique position of being able to provide RP partners with a level of certainty over deliverability due to our land holdings. The Housing Investment Land Strategy approved by Executive Board in July 2013 identified a number of residential sites for the delivery of affordable housing. This provided a strategic basis for the identification of residential sites and this approach has been built on in preparation for the AHP.
- 3.3 The Council has already released 12 of these sites for disposal to RPs to submit Expressions of Interest. Expressions of Interest in relation to 8 of the sites have been received so far and an evaluation process is currently underway to select

the preferred RP to develop each site. The 8 sites, which are listed at Appendix 1 will deliver approximately 80 units.

3.4 In order to facilitate delivery further sites have been identified to help support the achievement of the 800 - 1000 unit target. A second tranche of sites which are available for immediate development is listed at Appendix 2 which have the approximate capacity to deliver a further circa 100 units and which will also be made available to support RPs' bids for grant funding.

3.5 Appendix 3 shows sites which are proposed to be made available for development in the medium term either through the Council Housing Growth Programme or via an RP or in conjunction with a development partner. These include sites in brownfield regeneration areas and provide the opportunity to use the AHP funding strategically to act as a catalyst for development and provide mixed tenure solutions. In each case the tenure mix on site will be the product of discussions with potential development partners and with ward members to ensure the appropriate balance of affordable, social and /or market housing and to deliver a viable development proposition. Sites on this list could deliver circa 161 units although it is estimated that subject to formal approvals other sites with the capacity to deliver another 109 units could form part of this list taking the total to be delivered up to 370.

3.6 RPs have also made the Council aware through discussions that they intend to develop in the region of 200/250 units on sites not in council ownership.

Approved sites made available for RPs	8 sites	80 units
Second tranche sites for RPs	8 sites	100 units
Medium term investment sites	16 sites	370 units
Potential private sites	u/k	250 units
Total		800

3.7 In total then, of the 1000 unit target, land to support approximately 800 new homes has been identified by the Council and partner RPs to date. Subject to all of the bids to the HCA being successful and planning approval being granted on all of the sites, this represents significant investment in Leeds through the AHP. There is however, no guarantee that all of the Leeds based proposals will be successful in the first instance.

3.8 There is an ongoing asset management process for reviewing the Council's brownfield land portfolio and determining the most appropriate and available routes through which sites could be developed for housing. A number of sites have been identified which are not immediately available for development or

bidding purposes but are likely to become so within the longer term. They have the capacity to deliver significant additional units either directly through the Council, including in conjunction with a developer, or Registered Providers, especially if there is the opportunity to bid for AHP funding at a later date. Some of these sites were approved by the Housing Investment Land Strategy in July, 2013 and a number of additional sites have been identified as potential development opportunities for delivery of affordable housing.

- 3.9 It is requested that Executive Board delegate to the Director of Development the authority to identify further sites in discussion with the Executive Member for Development and the Economy to support the delivery of affordable housing through this route so that funding bids can be progressed in a timely manner in line with bidding timescales

Disposal approach to Registered Providers

- 3.10 The sites at Appendix 1 were offered to RPs through a process described in the Housing Investment Land Strategy report in July 2013 which required bids on the basis of: property mix and tenure type, rent levels. As is usual in the case of land disposals to RPs nomination rights are required to ensure that applicants from the housing waiting list are rehoused. A land price based on residual land value was proposed by the Housing Investment Land Strategy report in July 2013 and the process of evaluation of RP proposals in relation to the sites at appendix 1 is currently underway. Executive Board approval is sought for the delegation of authority to the Director of City Development to dispose of these sites at less than best/nil consideration subject to justification for such a transfer being evidenced.
- 3.11 In future to make the disposal of sites simpler it is proposed that the sites listed at Appendix 2 are disposed of on the basis of a fixed land value of £1,000 per plot and that the RPs would therefore compete on the basis of the quality of the new housing offered. This is similar to the model adopted by the Affordable Housing Strategic Partnership in 2008 wherein the Executive Board agreed to delegate responsibility to the Director of City Development for the disposal of sites at less than best consideration based on a fixed rate of £5000 per plot .The £5000 figure being based on the amount of grant the Housing Corporation, (the predecessor body to the HCA) would pay for land. It is recommended that to encourage RPs to maximise housing delivery in Leeds that a comparable disposal route for future affordable housing sites is adopted.
- 3.12 In securing grant funding from the HCA, RPs are required to finance a significant proportion of development costs themselves by raising private finance secured against future rental income streams and by charging Affordable Rents (up to 80% of market rents). Due to build costs and relatively low property/rent values in the areas of Leeds that some of the proposed affordable housing sites are located RPs have advised that a number of sites may be financially unviable to develop if land cost expectations are unrealistic.
- 3.13 Disposals of the land to RPs for affordable housing over the previous AHP period (2011-15), where sites are 100% affordable housing, had land values in the main

between nil and £5k per plot on the basis of viability assessments provided by the RPs and confirmed by valuations carried out by Property Services staff.

- 3.14 The sites identified in the schedule at Appendix 2 are all in similar low to mid-market areas where, on the basis of comparable evidence of the completed sales of similar sites in similar locations, a flat rate of £1000, could be applied. It is therefore proposed that approval to dispose of the sites on a less than best basis of £1,000 per plot be delegated to the Director of City Development for sites listed in Appendix 2.
- 3.15 This model could be used for future standalone sites as they become available with a fixed banded rate based on viability of say £10,000, £5,000 or £1,000 per plot, perhaps on an inner and outer market basis, this approach will be further developed and approval from Executive Board sought at a future point.
- 3.16 As the majority of the sites identified in appendices 1 and 2 are located on former LCC cleared council housing sites, in the current market it is unlikely to be financially viable for a private developer to develop the sites at this time as the total costs of the scheme will exceed the value of the completed development. Development of these sites only becomes viable with the support of grant funding and therefore only a developer with access to HCA funding such as the council or RPs would be able to develop the sites at this time.
- 3.17 It should be noted that the potential loss of a capital receipt value is outweighed by the benefits that completed affordable housing developments would make towards the Council's strategic objectives as well as generating New Homes Bonus, additional Council Tax revenue and annual savings made on maintaining the subject sites on services such as grass cutting & the removal of fly tipped waste. The Council negotiates nominations arrangements for all affordable housing sites it provides.
- 3.18 Further protection is given to the Council by the use of an overage clawback clause which is applied to all disposals at less than best consideration, whereby for a period of 20 years any profits that accrue from development are split 75% to the Council and 25% to the RP.
- 3.19 Executive Board is requested to approve the approach of offering sites in Appendix 2 for the purpose of affordable housing delivery on the basis of a fixed amount of £1,000 per plot as described above.

Council Housing Growth Programme

- 3.20 Members will be aware of the significant programme of investment in new Council Housing which was approved in July 2013.
- 3.21 The £42m programme is underway and will deliver around 400 new units in total over the next 3 years; sites have been identified so far which will produce 160 units. The programme will also fund the acquisition of long term empty properties.
- 3.22 The Council will bid directly for AHP grant funding to match and stretch the Council's own resources, enhancing the funding available to build more new

Council homes. Bids are being worked up currently in time for the AHP deadline. The sites identified at Appendix 3 provide a range of opportunities and these are currently being evaluated.

- 3.23 As indicated at paragraph 2.9, design quality is of paramount importance to the delivery of new affordable homes. Through the Council Housing Growth Programme, technical approaches which deliver properties with very low energy use will be explored, with a view to delivering new homes at rent levels which reflect much reduced running costs.
- 3.24 The Council Housing Growth Programme also provides an opportunity to co-invest on sites with RPs or with developers assisting viability where required and supporting the city's housing growth requirements. RPs and developers have also been encouraged to identify specific, potentially private sites where this joint approach could be delivered as part of the formulation of their bids. Co investment opportunities could also provide support to potential self-builders who otherwise may face difficulties identifying deliverable sites of an appropriate size in some locations.

Remaining requirements

- 3.25 In order to deliver against our target for Leeds via the AHP, land needs to be identified to support a further 200 units approximately, a residual need of around 6 hectares to support the AHP opportunity. As part of the on-going dialogue with developers and RPs, there has been encouragement to acquire private sites recognising the gap in supply for this purpose.
- 3.26 The council will however continue to identify potential development sites for the delivery of affordable housing through ongoing asset management review of the brownfield sites portfolio and pipeline, however consideration will also need to be given to the council potentially looking to acquire privately owned land for the development of affordable housing.
- 3.27 The purchase of suitable private sites could potentially be done in partnership with either large volume house builders or partner RPs to maximise housing growth and other strategic objections.
- 3.28 The Council could either look to acquire sites which are on the open market or alternatively look to enter into partnership with developers to release sites which on hold due to economic or other financial reasons.
- 3.29 Approval is therefore sought to the principle of the Council buying in sites through the HRA to move towards the AHP target and more generally to support the ambition of maximising the delivery of affordable housing including through the Council Housing Growth Programme.
- 3.30 Executive Board will be updated on the progress of this delivery route through subsequent reports.

Next Steps

- 3.31 In order to meet the bidding timescale for the Affordable Homes Programme the sites indicated at Appendix 2 will be made available to Registered Providers immediately following Executive Board approval. Work to identify additional sites to support this funding opportunity is being undertaken including from sites identified at appendix 3 and the approval of the Director of City Development, in line with paragraph 3.9 and recommendation (i) sought for use for this purpose.
- 3.32 The Council will also be developing initial bids including from sites indicated at Appendix 3 for submission to the HCA in line with the bidding timescale.
- 3.33 Bids to the Affordable Homes programme will be required to be submitted to the HCA by the end of April 2014. It is anticipated however that there may be further opportunities for either the Council or RPs to bid within the lifetime of the 2015-18 AHP and the identification of opportunities to bring forward sites to maximise the delivery of affordable homes will be an on-going process

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 The Executive Members have been briefed on the recommended routes for the delivery of new development and is support of the process.
- 4.1.2 Ward Members will be briefed on the recommendation for the sites within their wards prior to them being marketed.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 Due regard has been given to equality through the analysis of the potential impacts of the programme and the completion of a screening form. The main outcomes of the screening were that the delivery of affordable housing through this programme could have positive implications for equality groups who are economically disadvantaged. An Equality Impact Screening (attached as an appendix) has been undertaken and has determined that the proposals have a positive impact in terms of Equality and Diversity and that a full Impact assessment is not required

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 Proposals set out in this report respond to the challenge facing local councils and their partners in stimulating the delivery of homes, jobs and growth presented by the Commission on the Future of Local Government. The Council's role in providing local leadership sees this utilisation of the Councils resources in a way which will facilitate direct investment in the provision of new homes.
- 4.3.2 Proposals will:
- a) increase the provision of new good quality affordable homes in the City
 - b) contribute to the housing growth agenda
 - c) contribute to the place making agenda and regeneration objectives

d) Provide a range of housing which meets the requirements, needs and aspirations of existing or potential residents

- 4.3.3 The Vision for Leeds established the Council's objective of being the Best Council in the country and a strong working relationship with people, businesses and organisations is at the heart of this objective. It also sets out the ambition of being the Best City in the country with a good quality of life for Leeds residents.
- 4.3.4 The Best Council plan sets out the adoption of a new leadership style of civic enterprise, where the council becomes more enterprising, businesses and partners become more civic. The efficient use of Council owned sites in the way described in this report supports this approach. By helping people into jobs, boosting the local economy, providing additional housing and generating income for the Council. The measures set out in this report support the Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Strand of the Best Council Plan.
- 4.3.5 The Sustainable Economy and Culture Partnership Board has assembled a cross-sector group to further clarify actions which will advance the Low Carbon agenda. This group has now held an initial workshop to consider the concept of a Leeds Sustainable Living Lab and the Partnership Board will be considering the group's findings at its next meeting. These will be used to shape the delivery of new housing as they emerge.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.5 It is anticipated that the approach described within this report will result in improved cross service/directorate working, improved efficiency and a more effective use of resources as well as the generation of New Homes Bonus and additional Council Tax receipts. While there is a potential loss of capital receipt it can be argued that this is outweighed by the benefits that completed affordable housing developments would make towards the Council's strategic objectives for example the enhanced nomination rights which the Council negotiates with RPs in relation to disposals of council land helps to reduce the number of applicants on the Leeds Homes Register and the reduction in costs associated with the maintenance of vacant Council land. RPs will be expected to evidence the justification for a site to be sold at a less than best or nil consideration by providing evidence by way of a Financial Viability Assessment of the proposed scheme by a third party to include a valuation of the site in a form approved by the RICS. The market value of the sites will also be assessed by Officers in Asset Management and included in reports to the Director of City Development to demonstrate the level of value foregone when recommending disposals at less than best consideration. Any reports to the Director will be prepared in line with the scheme of delegation approved by Executive Board. In circumstances where the difference in value exceeds the approved levels then reports back to Executive Board may be necessary.**Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 4.5.1 A local authority may, under the General Housing Consents 2013 under Section 32 of the Housing Act 1985, dispose of vacant land at any price determined by the local authority. Vacant land would include cleared sites and sites where dwelling houses are due to be demolished.

- 4.5.2 A local authority may also, under the General Consent under section 25 of the Local Government Act 1988 (2010, as amended), provide financial assistance by way of disposal of dwelling houses at less than best consideration to registered providers of social housing for the purposes of refurbishment. .
- 4.5.3 The General Consent under section 25 of the Local Government Act 1988 (2010, as amended) also permits local authorities to provide financial assistance (subject to a cap of £2,250,000 in any one financial year)
- 4.5.4 If any of the proposed disposals fall outside the scope of the General Consents, it would be necessary to apply to the Secretary of State for specific consent to dispose of those sites at less than best consideration.
- 4.5.5 This decision has not been published on the list of forthcoming key decisions for 28 days as the report originally provided an update only but has now been enhanced to seek approval for the disposal of specific sites for affordable housing and the basis for disposals. It is necessary for the report to be taken to April Executive Board in order to prepare and submit bids to the Affordable Housing Programme by the 30 April deadline.

Risk Management

- 4.6 Disposal of land at less than best consideration is state aid. If a disposal is not compliant with the state aid regime, there is a risk of a challenge, which may have financial and reputational consequences for both the Council and the registered provider. However, the allocation of funding for provision of social housing is a service of general economic interest (SGEI) and this will not be unlawful state aid provided that certain criteria are met. The agreement for disposal must be structured so that the registered provider is required to provide affordable housing and to ensure that there will be no overcompensation, clawback provisions will need to be incorporated.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 It was recognised by the report which sought approval from Executive Board for the Housing Investment Land Strategy that the Council's contribution to housing growth and meeting housing need could be maximised by the implementation of a series of policy positions/approaches including proposals to allocate a range of Council sites for housing purposes. The Housing Investment Land Strategy has existing approval and the proposals contained within this report will consolidate and build upon the approach to housing growth and its associated benefits for the City as part of the overall approach to delivering new housing on previously developed sites in Council ownership
- 5.2 In terms of the use of Council land to support the Housing Growth agenda a further exercise has been undertaken to review additional land in the Council's ownership that has potential for residential development. This exercise has resulted in recommendations relating to site identification for the delivery of additional non market housing.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is recommended to:

- a) note the content of this report;
- b) declare sites shown at Appendix 1 and 2 as surplus to council requirements;
- c) delegate authority to the Director of City Development to dispose of sites as listed at Appendix 1 on a less than best basis subject to justification for such a transfer being evidenced by an RP via a Financial Viability Assessment of the proposed scheme being carried out by a third party;
- d) delegate authority to the Director of City Development to dispose of the sites listed on Appendix 2 at a less than best consideration calculated at £1000 per plot to the Director of City Development;
- e) approve the identification of the sites listed at Appendix 3 for medium term development for either council housing, disposal to RPs or in conjunction with a developer;
- f) approve the sites, identified in Appendices 2 and 3 which are additional to those included within the Housing Investment Land Strategy;
- g) delegate authority to the Director of City Development to identify further sites to support the delivery of affordable housing
- h) approve in principle the proposal for the council to acquire privately owned land for the development of affordable housing.
- i) and to note:
 - the stages required to implement the decision as outlined in 3.31 and 3.32...
 - proposed timescales for implementation as outlined in 3.33
 - that the Chief Officer Asset Management and Regeneration will be responsible for implementation

7.0 Background documents¹

7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Appendix 1

Tranche 1 sites marketed to Registered Providers.



Site Name	Ward	Approximate Number of units	Site Size (Ha)
1 x site at St Hilda's, Cross Green Phase 3,	Burmantofts and Richmond Hill	12	0.26
1 x site at Manor Farm Rise, Belle Isle	Middleton Park	14	0.36
1x site at Newhall Croft Belle Isle	Middleton Park	12	0.15
2x sites at Harley Green and Walk, Swinnow	Pudsey	12	Total 0.29
3x Sites Neville Close and Garth, Osmondthorpe.	Temple Newsam	30	Total 0.66
Total		80	1.72

These sites have been marketed through the process described in the Housing Investment Land Strategy report & expressions of interest have been received.

Approval is being sought to dispose of these at less than best / nil consideration subject to justification for such a transfer being evidenced, in line with recommendation c.

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Appendix 2

Tranche 2 affordable housing sites for disposal to Registered Providers.



Site Name	Ward	Approximate number of units	Site Size (ha)
Parkwood Road	Beeston Hill & Holbeck	15	0.43
Wyther Park Community Centre	Bramley and Stanningley	16	0.32
Rocheford Court	City & Hunslet	10	0.31
Holborn Court	Hyde Park & Woodhouse	10	0.2
Kendal Carr	Hyde Park & Woodhouse	10	0.2
Newhall Gate / Road	Middleton Park	18	0.06
Holdforth Place	Armley	14	0.48
		Total	93
			1.49

It is proposed that these sites be marketed to Registered Providers for the provision of affordable housing at a fixed rate of £5k per plot in line with recommendation d.

The first five sites have been previously approved for development via the Housing Investment Land Strategy in July 2013, the remaining three sites are proposed as additional for development as affordable housing.

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Appendix 3 – Future Affordable Housing Development Sites



Sites for the council to develop independently

Site	Ward	Inner / Outer wards	Approximate number of units	Site Size (ha)	Comments
Mistress Lane	Armley	Inner	35	1.23	Requires revision of site masterplan
Meynell Approach	Beeston & Holbeck	Inner	25	0.45	Site being used as contractor's compound (PFI programme)
The Whinmoor Public House	Crossgates & Whinmoor	Inner	10	0.28	The council owns the freehold and is in the process of acquiring the lease from the tenant
Beech Walk	Gipton & Harehills	Inner	25	0.85	Cleared former housing site
Beech Mount	Gipton & Harehills	Inner	5	0.2	Cleared former housing site
Lovell Park Road	Hyde Park & Woodhouse	Inner	28	0.61	Site being used as contractor's compound (PFI programme)
Manor Farm Road	Middleton Park	Inner	10	0.36	Cleared former housing site
Merlyn Rees Site	Middleton Park	Inner	20	1.08	Site available following resolution of former school pitch
Newhall Chase	Middleton Park	Inner	3	0.6	Cleared former housing site
		Total	161	5.66	

Potential Joint Development Sites

Site	Ward	Inner / Outer Ward	Approximate number of units	Site Size (ha)	Comments
Brooklands Avenue	Seacroft and Killingbeck	Inner	30 (98)	3.25	These sites provide an opportunity for co-investment with an RP or developer and a mixed tenure approach. The figures in brackets indicate total site capacity
Acre Mount	Middleton	Inner	20 (61)	2.02	
Middleton Park Avenue	Middleton	Inner	30 (100)	5.85	
Miles Hill Primary School	Chapel Allerton	Outer	30 (100)	2.78	
		Total	110 (359)	13.9	

All sites have been previously approved for development via the Housing Investment Land Strategy in July 2013, with the addition of Whinmoor Public House, which are proposed as additional for future development



Report author: Kath Bramall
Tel: x43296

Report of Chief Officer, Statutory Housing

Report to Director Environment and Housing

Date: 30 April 2014

Subject: Review of tenancy management policies on keeping pets in council homes, electric mobility scooters and installing satellite dishes

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): All	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The council's Tenancy Agreement outlines tenants' rights and responsibilities. It states that tenants must abide by the policy on keeping pets in council houses and obtain the council's permission before obtaining a pet, an electric mobility scooter or installing a satellite dish. Detailed guidance on implementing these areas is contained in the draft policies which unify current practice.
2. The existing policy on keeping pets was last updated in 2011. The policies on keeping electric mobility scooters and installing satellite dishes are new policies which support the existing Tenancy Agreement.
3. The council has consulted on the policies including with council officers, council tenants and, in the case of the pets policy, animal welfare charities. The policies will also incorporate feedback from consultation with the council's Housing Advisory Board.
4. The council achieved the RSPCA's Bronze Community Animal Welfare Footprint (CAWF) in 2009. This recognises the council has consistently demonstrated a commitment to animal welfare through its housing policies and procedures, and allows the council to display the Bronze CAWF logo. The council is now in a position to work towards achieving a higher standard.

Recommendations

5. That the new policies on keeping pets in council homes, electric mobility scooters and installing satellite dishes in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 are approved and implemented from [insert date].
6. That 'section 2' or Index Exempt Dogs are / are not permitted in council properties.
7. That the council seeks to achieve the RSPCA's Gold Standard CAWF award in 2014/15.
8. That in order for the council to achieve the RSPCA's Gold Standard Award, the Orchard Housing Management system is amended to allow the council to monitor the number and type of animals kept in council homes.
9. That the revised policies are publicised to tenants through tenants' newsletters giving feedback from the consultation.
10. That housing staff are briefed on the revised policy prior to its implementation.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for three tenancy management policies covering:
 - keeping pets in council homes
 - electric mobility scooters
 - installing satellite dishes
- 1.2 The report also seeks approval for the council to work towards achieving the RSPCA's Gold Standard Community Animal Welfare Footprint award.

2. Background information

- 2.1 The council's High Rise Working Group, established to review the management of high rise properties, recommended a number of policies underpinning the Tenancy Agreement were reviewed to ensure consistency in their implementation.
- 2.2 The Tenancy Agreement states council tenants who wish to keep pets must comply with the policy on keeping pets in council homes. This document was last updated in 2011. The council has identified a number of areas which need reviewing, which are outlined in this report.
- 2.3 The Tenancy Agreement also states tenants must obtain permission to keep electric mobility scooters and to install a satellite dish in a council property. The council proposes to introduce two new policies which formalise existing procedures.

2.4 The policies have been reviewed to ensure the council's procedures on these tenancy management areas are clear and applied consistently across the city.

2.5 The new policies are summarised in section 3 below, and available in full in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of this report along with full equality impact assessments. The new policies are supported with an application form, information leaflet, and template permission and refusal letters.

3. Main issues

3.1 Revision of the policy on keeping pets in council homes

3.2 The council recognises the benefits of pet ownership and will generally permit tenants to keep a pet. However, there are circumstances where the council will not grant permission, for example, where a tenant has a history of neglecting animals, allowing them to cause nuisance, or where the property type is not suitable to keep a pet.

3.3 The council's High Rise Working Group made a number of recommendations to the existing policy which were consulted on with tenants and animal welfare agencies. Feedback has highlighted the need for a consistent approach to be taken across the city to reduce complaints about animals being kept in unsuitable conditions and address the issue of tenants who already have pets without permission. The policy has also been discussed at the Pan-Leeds Pets Forum attended by housing management officers and animal welfare charities. The policy incorporates good practice outlined in the Pets Advisory Committee guidance and Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). The revised policy has also taken into account feedback from Legal Services.

3.4 The revised policy sets out:

- that tenants must seek written permission to keep a pet
- when the council will refuse permission to keep pets
- the types of pet that can be kept domestically
- how many pets can be kept in a council property
- the conditions the council will attach to permission to keep pets, and
- how the council will enforce the policy, including applications from tenants who already have a pet

3.5 The council will refuse permission to keep a pet where:

- the animal they want to keep is of a type to which section 1 Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 applies
- the animal has ever caused injury, is illegal or dangerous
- the tenant or member of their household has a history of or convictions for animal cruelty, neglect or abandonment, has had any tenancy enforcement action taken against them in relation to keeping pets in a council property or is disqualified from keeping pets

- the tenant wants to keep more than two cats or dogs (ie a total of 2 animals). More than two smaller animals such as rodents, birds, reptiles or fish may be permitted, provided the numbers kept are reasonable.
- the property they live in is considered unsuitable to keep a pet which requires outdoor exercise (dogs and cats). This refers mainly to properties with a shared communal entrance including high rise accommodation and low rise flats.

3.6 The table below gives a summary of whether properties will be considered suitable for cats and dogs:

Property type	Cats / dogs permitted?
House	Yes – maximum of 2 in total
Bungalow	Yes – maximum of 2 in total
Flat, bedsit, maisonette with their own entrance	Yes – maximum of 2 in total
Flat, multi-story flat, bedsit, maisonette with a shared / communal entrance or walkway	No

3.7 Where the property has a communal garden, the local housing office will decide in consultation with current tenants whether pets which require external access (ie. dogs and cats) can be kept. Tenants will not be permitted to erect housing for pets in communal areas such as hutches and runs.

3.8 Currently, the pets policy states that any dog type which is considered as a dangerous dog will not be allowed in a council property. The police and courts may permit ‘dangerous’ dogs listed on the Index of Exempt Dogs (IED) to be kept on condition that the owner complies with additional restrictions set out in section 1(2) Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

These conditions are:

- the dog must be neutered, tattooed and micro-chipped
- the owner/keeper must take out (and renew each year) third party insurance for the dog
- the dog must only be taken out in public by someone over the age of 16 and kept on a lead and muzzled when in public, and
- the dog must be registered on the Index of Exempt Dogs

3.9 The council has the option to allow dogs on IED to be kept in council properties on condition the tenant complies with the conditions outlined above. Some social landlords permit IED dogs to be kept provided the Court has determined it is satisfied ‘that the dog would not constitute a danger to public safety’.

- 3.10 It should be noted that any breed or type of dog can behave aggressively and cause serious and fatal injuries, and this is not just limited to types listed under the Dangerous Dogs Act. The option of permitting tenants to keep IED dogs on condition they abide by the restrictions would mean the authorities are aware of where the dog is kept.
- 3.11 Where a tenant requests a support dog, the council will give permission provided supporting information is received from a recognised animal charity, ie Guide Dogs for the Blind, Epilepsy Dogs, Hearing Dogs. The council will also seek assurance from the charity which trained the animal that it is happy for the animal to be kept in the current home.
- 3.12 Requests to foster animals on behalf of animal welfare charities will be considered on the same basis as other requests, and must be supported by the charity. The council will not permit tenants to operate businesses from their council home which would breach the policy in terms of number of animals cared for, unsuitable property type or any activity involving animal breeding.
- 3.13 Pet owners have responsibilities under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to ensure their pets have a suitable living environment, are free from pain, suffering, injury or disease, are fed correctly, are able to exhibit normal behaviour and have a suitable living environment. The council expects tenants to keep their pets in a responsible manner.
- 3.14 Animal welfare charities have reported their rehoming centres are often at full capacity, and are unable to respond quickly to requests for rehoming. For this reason, the form for tenants to request written permission to keep a pet includes a checklist to prompt prospective pet owners to consider the long term responsibilities of pet ownership.
- 3.15 To prevent unwanted breeding and keep the number of animals to reasonable numbers, the council strongly recommends pets are either kept in same gender pairs or are neutered.
- 3.16 From 2016 all dogs must be micro-chipped, and tenants will be expected to comply with this legislation. Animal charities such as the Dogs Trust offer a micro-chipping service for free or at a low cost.
- 3.17 The policy requires tenants to ask permission to keep a pet. Tenants who already have pets should request retrospective written permission. Where a tenant moved into their current property and obtained a pet before [insert date policy implemented] the council will grant retrospective permission provided the animal is kept in accordance with the policy in terms of the property type and the number of pets being kept. Requests can be made direct from the tenant or as part of the Annual Tenancy Visit.
- 3.18 In exceptional circumstances where the tenant is keeping excess numbers of animals, or the property type is not deemed to be suitable, the council may grant limited permission to keep the current pets. This permission will be limited to the

lifespan of the pets. Alternatively, the council may seek to assist the tenant with a planned move to a suitable property or to rehome the pets responsibly.

- 3.19 Where the council refuses permission to keep a pet, the council will explain the reasons fully to the tenant in writing.
- 3.20 The policy has been revised to include additional guidance on what action will be taken against a tenant who fails to comply with the policy. The council will take action against tenants if they allow their pet to cause a nuisance, which may range from informal intervention to possession proceedings.
- 3.21 RSPCA's Community Animal Welfare Housing Footprint**
- 3.22 The RSPCA's 'Community Animal Welfare Housing Footprint' award recognises good practice by local authorities and registered social landlords. This includes operating a sound and considered pets policy, ensuring welfare standards and promoting responsible pet ownership.
- 3.23 There are three 'Footprint' awards – Bronze, Silver and Gold. Leeds City Council achieved the Bronze Footprint award in 2009 which was renewed for 2013/14 as a result of successful partnership working with local and national animal welfare organisations, including the RSPCA, Cats Protection and Dogs Trust. This requires the council to demonstrate it has a clear and positive written policy for all housing that is controlled or influenced by the local authority.
- 3.25 In order to achieve the Gold Standard, the council needs to fulfil the following criteria in conjunction with partner agencies:
- written pet care advice/information from a recognised animal welfare source made available to residents on registering their pets in the accommodation
 - the active promotion of discounted permanent identification and neutering of pets to prevent unwanted breeding
 - provision for pet owners in temporary or emergency housing
 - an updated register of all animals kept in each dwelling
 - an established link with a recognised animal welfare organisation that provides residents with advice on pet care on request or by monthly or quarterly visits.
- 3.26 At present, the council has no record of how many pets, or the types of pets being kept in council properties. This will be addressed through developing a register of pets.
- 3.27 Under the new policy, the council will keep a record of the pets it gives permission to keep. The council will need to know if pets are being kept in a property and record details of pets where permission has been granted in case there is an emergency, such as a flood or a fire or the tenant has to go into hospital.
- 3.28 It is the tenant's responsibility to rehome their pet responsibly if they are no longer able to care for it. However, where a tenant is evicted or abandons their property leaving a pet behind, the animal is considered 'property' in law. Cases have arisen where the council was not aware of pets being kept in a council property until the

eviction date, and have had to arrange for animals to be looked after. During the tort period the tenant is liable for any costs, which the council can seek to recoup, however, until the tort notice has expired the council is legally unable to sign over the animals to a welfare charity. For this reason the council will consider reducing the time period a tort notice applies to animals to a reasonable time period of 24 hours.

3.29 Where a tenant abandons a pet, it may be possible for the RSPCA to take action against the tenant under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. The council will keep a record of tenants known to have abandoned or mistreated a pet. Should they reapply for housing the council may find them non-qualifying or apply reduced preference on their new application, and will not normally grant permission to keep a pet in the future.

3.30 **New policy on keeping electric mobility scooters**

3.31 The council's Tenancy Agreement states that tenants must obtain written permission to keep an electric mobility scooter. The new policy provides further guidance on how the council will respond to requests and maintain high standards of health and safety to ensure the council meets its legal obligations.

3.32 The council recognises the benefits to older and disabled tenants of having an electric mobility scooter. However, the storage and charging of scooters have the potential to present health and safety risks to tenants, leaseholders, visitors and staff. This relates primarily to fire risks due to unsafe storage which blocks emergency exits and fires being caused by unsafe charging.

3.33 The new policy has been developed through a joint working group with representatives from housing management, adaptations teams, fire safety and housing policy. Housing Leeds has undertaken consultation with tenants. Good practice from other landlords and has been taken into account in developing the policy. The revised policy has also taken into account feedback from Legal Services.

3.31 The policy sets out:

- when the council will grant permission to keep an electric scooter
- examples of safe storage and charging areas
- the size and number of an electric scooters that can be kept in a council property, and
- how the council will enforce the policy, including applications from tenants for retrospective permission to keep an electric scooter.

3.32 The council will generally only refuse permission to keep a mobility scooter where:

- there is no safe storage or charging space in the tenant or leaseholder's property and no safe area can be provided
- a major physical alteration to the premises is required which the council believes to be unreasonable in terms of cost and/ or disruption to other tenants and residents
- a tenant/ leaseholder fails to take out the necessary insurance cover if required

- the scooter is too large to fit through internal or external entrances, or
- the tenant wishes to keep more than one scooter.

- 3.33 The policy requires tenants who already have scooters to request retrospective written permission to keep them. Requests can be made direct from the tenant or as part of the Annual Tenancy Visit.
- 3.34 Where permission is given it will be granted for a specific size and number of scooters.
- 3.35 Wherever possible the council will seek to identify a safe storage and charging area. Examples of safe storage and charging spaces may include:
- a designated room within the property
 - a designated communal room
 - a designated external space
- 3.36 Where permission is refused, the council will explain the reasons and give details of the appeal process. Where permission is given, this will be conditional, and will outline storage and charging arrangements.
- 3.37 The policy includes additional guidance on what action will be taken if a tenant fails to comply with the policy. Action will only be taken as a last resort after all other options have been exhausted, including the possibility of a move to another property.
- 3.38 **Policy on installing satellite dishes**
- 3.39 The Tenancy Agreement states council tenants who wish to make structural alternations to their property must obtain permission. The council has identified a number of properties, particularly high rise multi story blocks where satellite dishes have been installed in breach of the tenancy agreement.
- 3.40 The council recognises that tenants want to enjoy the benefits of satellite television, but will only give permission to install a dish in certain circumstances.
- 3.41 The new policy has been developed following consultation with officers as part of the High Rise Working Group and with tenants. The revised policy has also taken into account the planning regulations and feedback from Legal Services.
- 3.42 The policy seeks to ensure that requests from tenants to install a satellite dish are dealt with fairly and consistently. It also outlines the action the council will take where tenants have already installed a satellite dish without permission.
- 3.43 The council will refuse permission to install a dish in high rise properties because of the damage caused to the external structure of the property. In other property types, the council will expect the tenant to abide by the relevant planning permission guidance, have the dish erected by a competent contractor and obtain adequate Public Liability Insurance.

- 3.44 The council will conduct regular audits of properties, especially high rise blocks, and take action where a dish has been installed without permission. This could involve granting retrospective permission or ensuring the dish is removed safely. The audits undertaken to date in high rise blocks have shown a number of dishes were installed by a previous tenant and are no longer in use. In future this will be picked up as part of the void process and removed.
- 3.45 In property types other than high rise blocks, the tenant can request retrospective written permission, which will normally be granted where the dish has been installed in accordance with the policy. Requests can be made direct from the tenant or as part of the Annual Tenancy Visit.
- 3.46 The council is providing an enhanced satellite television service to tenants in the seven blocks within the Little London and Beeston Hill and Holbeck regeneration area.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Consultation was undertaken on a revised pets policy and a new policy on satellite dishes with tenants in summer 2013, when an article was included in the Tenants Newsletter delivered to all tenants across the city in the former Aire Valley Homes, East North East Homes and West North West Homes. Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation held a consultation event at a tenant panel.
- 4.1.2 73 responses were received to the newsletter consultation by email and post.
- 4.1.3 In relation to pets, there was broad agreement for the proposals. 52% of respondents agreed that pets should not be kept in high rise properties, with a further 10% who believed that only small animals should be allowed as pets in high rise properties. 92% agreed that illegal pets should not be allowed and 94% agreed that the council should take action against tenants who neglect their pets or allow them to cause a nuisance to others.
- 4.1.4 Respondents expressed concerns that pets currently kept outside of the policy would have to be destroyed (which is not the case), and there was widespread recognition of the benefits of keeping pets, particularly for older and vulnerable customers.
- 4.1.5 A key issue which arose during the consultation process was that dogs are being kept in unsuitable high rise properties, an area of concern also raised by tenants in the council's 2012-13 STAR survey.
- 4.1.6 Feedback from council officers highlighted the need to operate a consistent policy having clearer enforcement for new tenants, and dealing with current tenants who are keeping pets without written permission.

- 4.1.7 The council has also discussed the revised policy with a number of animal welfare charities which attend the council's Pan-Leeds Pets Forum.
- 4.1.8 86% respondents agreed that permission should be obtained to install a satellite dish, 55% agreed planning permission should be obtained and 60% agreed that tenants should obtain public liability cover. 64% respondents agreed that satellite dishes should not be permitted on high rise flats.
- 4.1.9 Housing Management has been consulted through the High Rise Working Group. Feedback from officers was that a consistent approach to dealing with requests to install satellite dishes was needed.
- 4.1.10 Housing Leeds has undertaken consultation on the new mobility scooter policy with tenants. The main issues raised have been from tenants concerned that the council will not give permission, but assurance has been given that the council will only refuse permission where a satisfactory storage area cannot be identified. In this respect the new policy seeks to formalise existing practice and meet the council's health and safety duties.
- 4.1.11 The council has statutory duties in respect of ensuring the health and safety of tenants, leaseholders, visitors and members of staff. The policy has been framed to ensure that wherever possible, tenants are provided with a safe storage and charging area.
- 4.1.12 In drafting the suite of policies the council has aimed to balance the feedback received from tenants with its duty to comply with health and safety duties.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 The council has undertaken an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment on the each of the proposed policies.
- 4.2.2 Positive impacts:
- The revised pets policy allows disabled tenants who require support dogs (ie. Guide Dogs, Epilepsy Dogs, Hearing Dogs) to keep them in a council property.
 - Effective enforcement of the pets policy will benefit all tenants and residents by reducing cases of nuisance and antisocial behaviour.
 - Under the mobility scooter policy the council will seek to identify a safe storage and charging area and will make minor adaptations to facilitate this
 - The council will normally give permission to install a satellite dish, provided the property type is suitable
 - The new satellite dishes policy will maintain the structural integrity of buildings and reduce risks of damage to property and people
- 4.2.3 Negative impacts:
- Pets such as dogs and cats will not be permitted in unsuitable property types, mainly general needs flats with a shared entrance and sheltered properties with communal areas. These properties are generally let to single people or

couples without dependent children. Sheltered properties are generally let to customers aged 60 and over.

- There may be some areas which are deemed unsafe for charging mobility scooters where the council will refuse permission to keep a scooter
- Tenants living in certain property types may be unable to access satellite services. This may have an impact on tenants who wish to receive overseas broadcasts

4.2.4 The following actions have been included in the Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment:

- The revised policies will be publicised through tenant newsletters and officers will be briefed on the policies.
- Information about whether pets are permitted will be included in the Leeds Homes property advert so prospective tenants are aware of any restrictions.
- The policy includes scope to consider requests to keep pets in sheltered schemes where there is a communal garden, provided existing tenants are consulted.
- The implementation of the scooter policy will continue to be monitored through regular health and safety audits and the annual tenancy visit process.
- The council is investing in communal satellite dish provision in a number of high rise blocks to allow tenants to access digital services without the need for individual dishes.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 The introduction of the tenancy management policies will assist in meeting the best council outcomes of:

- Improving the quality of life for residents, particularly those who are vulnerable or in poverty. This will be achieved by encouraging responsible pet ownership, allowing disabled people to keep recognised support animals, and supporting older and disabled people to maintain their independence.
- Achieving the savings and efficiencies required to continue to deliver frontline services. This will be achieved by operating fair and consistent tenancy management policies, reducing complaints and damage to council properties.

4.3.2 The new policies support the following best council objectives for 2013 – 17:

- Ensuring high quality public services – the policies aim to ensure the council provides a high quality service to tenants by managing requests fairly and effectively, and reducing complaints.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 The introduction of the tenancy management policies will have resource implications for the council in terms of dealing with requests to keep pets, mobility

scooters or installing satellite dishes. There may also be costs of taking enforcement action against tenants for breaches of the policy, although the council may seek to recover legal costs, eg for injunctions.

- 4.4.2 Other costs may arise from looking after any animal abandoned by a tenant, although the council can seek to recoup some costs by recharging the tenant.
- 4.4.3 The policies aim to reduce costs overall by ensuring the council operates a consistent policy across the city, reducing complaints and potential damage to property.
- 4.4.4 There are potential costs to the council if it failed to comply with its legal health and safety duties. The council is responsible for ensuring the health and safety of tenants, leaseholders, visitors and members of staff. The policy seeks to reduce fire hazards in council properties by ensuring emergency evacuation routes are clear and the risk of fire caused by charging electric mobility scooters is minimised.
- 4.4.5 The council has developed a separate investment plan to convert and create safe storage and charging areas for mobility scooters.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 Under the council's Tenancy Agreement, tenants must comply with the pets policy, and ask permission to keep an electric mobility scooter or install a satellite dish. Failure to do so may result in tenancy enforcement action being taken against the tenant.
- 4.5.2 Enforcing the pets policy is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate policy objective, namely to prevent nuisance and problems arising from keeping pets in unsuitable properties. The policies on mobility scooters and satellite dishes relate to the council's duties to maintain health and safety standards in council properties.
- 4.5.3 Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 pet owners have responsibilities to ensure their pets have a suitable living environment, are free from pain, suffering, injury or disease, are fed correctly, are able to exhibit normal behaviour and have a suitable living environment. Specific legislation applies to tenants who keep dogs on the Index of Exempt Dogs under Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. [decision required on whether to permit s2 dogs]
- 4.5.4 The European Courts have held that keeping a domestic pet does not fall within the sphere of the owner's private life for the purposes of Article 8 of the Human Rights Act. The policy takes into account Article 14 Human Rights Act (the Prohibition of Discrimination) and the Equality Act 2010 by allowing for disabled tenants to keep a guide dog, a hearing dog or assistance dog.
- 4.5.5 Under the satellite dish policy, the council will consider any reasons for the tenant's request which relate to Articles 9 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, for example, a disabled tenant may only be able to engage in his

or her particular religious community if they can receive transmissions of specific religious services held overseas which are exclusively available by satellite. However, simply wanting to have access to more channels for entertainment is unlikely to be a breach of a tenant's human rights in itself. Consideration will be given to alternative ways of accessing television stations, for example, accessing via the internet or through digital channels. Permission will be refused if installation would breach planning law or if installing a dish is dangerous. This would outweigh the human rights issue.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 The council's Tenancy Agreement sets out the council's and tenants' rights and responsibilities.
- 4.6.2 Failure to adopt clear policies could result in the damage to the council's reputation, for example, if prosecutions are taken against tenants who neglect pets, if mobility scooters are charged in unsafe areas or if improperly installed dishes cause damage to the external condition of a council property. The attainment of the RSPCA's CAWF award recognises the council takes animal welfare seriously in its policies and procedures.

5 Conclusions

- 11. In order to ensure the council's Tenancy Agreement is applied consistently and fairly, the council has consulted on changes to the policies on keeping pets in council homes, obtaining an electric mobility scooter and installing satellite dishes in council homes.
- 12. The council has taken account of responses from tenants, animal welfare charities, officers and Legal Services in developing the policies.
- 13. The council achieved the RSPCA's Bronze Community Animal Welfare Footprint (CAWF) in 2009. This recognises the council has consistently demonstrated a commitment to animal welfare through its housing policies and procedures, and allows the council to display the Bronze CAWF logo. The council is now in a position to work towards achieving a higher standard.

6 Recommendations

- 1. That the new policies on keeping pets in council homes, electric mobility scooters and installing satellite dishes in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 are approved and implemented from [insert date].
- 2. That 'section 2' or Index Exempt Dogs are / are not permitted in council properties.

3. That the council seeks to achieve the RSPCA's Gold Standard CAWF award in 2014/15.
4. That in order for the council to achieve the RSPCA's Gold Standard Award, the Orchard Housing Management system is amended to allow the council to monitor the number and type of animals kept in council homes.
5. That the revised policies are publicised to tenants through tenants' newsletters giving feedback from the consultation.
6. That housing staff are briefed on the revised policy prior to its implementation.

7 Background documents¹

1. None

Appendices

Appendix 1: Policy on keeping pets in council houses

Appendix 2: Policy on electric mobility scooters

Appendix 3: Policy on installing satellite dishes

Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment – pets policy

Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment – electric mobility scooters policy

Appendix 6: Equality Impact Assessment – installing satellite dishes policy

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Leeds City Council recognises the benefits to tenants of keeping pets. Generally the council will allow its tenants to keep pets where the property type is suitable, the Tenancy Agreement is complied with and the animal's welfare will be assured.
- 1.2 Under the council's Tenancy Agreement, tenants and anyone living with the tenant or visiting the property must not keep or bring any animal in or near the property unless they have written permission to do so under the Council's Policy on Pets in Council Houses. This policy gives further details about keeping pets in council homes for new and existing tenants.
- 1.3 The council will take action against tenants where they do not have written permission to keep a pet and or, there is a breach of the policy and in cases where tenants allow animals to cause nuisance. This includes causing injury to others through biting, noise nuisance or smells, fouling, or small mammals chewing wiring or pets damaging property.
- 1.4 This policy has been developed following consultation with tenants and feedback from animal welfare agencies, and incorporates good practice outlined in the Pets Advisory Committee guidance and Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).

2. Permission

- 2.1 Pets are generally allowed in council properties, but tenants must obtain **written** permission from the council if they want to keep an animal or animals using the form in **Appendix 1**. This form should be used by all tenants, including those who already have a pet.

3. When permission should be refused

- 3.1 The council will not usually give permission to keep a pet in the following circumstances (this list is not exhaustive and permission may also be refused for other reasons not listed):

- 3.1.1 If the animal the tenant wants to keep is of a type to which Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 applies. This list is subject to change by legislation and the current list of types under this section are:
- Pit Bull Terrier
 - Dogo Argentino
 - Fila Brasileiro
 - Japanese Tosa
- 3.1.2 If the animal has ever caused injury to a person, or if it is dangerous in any other way, for example, a poisonous snake. This includes all animals prescribed under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976. This also includes a dog which has been found to be dangerously out of control in a public place under Section 3 Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.
- 3.1.3 If the tenant wants to keep an animal which is not a domestic animal, such as wild animals, primates, livestock, poultry or horses because these are not suitable animals to keep in a domestic property and/or garden. If the tenant wants to keep racing pigeons then they must be a member of the Royal Racing Pigeon Society and provide adequate accommodation for them. Generally the council will not give permission to keep an exotic pet because of the difficulties in meeting their welfare needs.
- 3.1.4 If the tenant or another household member has any convictions for, or past history of abandonment, cruelty, neglect or mistreatment of animals, or convictions for any offences under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, or has been disqualified from keeping animals or a particular type of animal due to a conviction.
- 3.1.5 When the tenant or another member of the household has previously left a pet behind when the tenant/household member moved out of a council owned property.
- 3.1.6 When the tenant or another member of the household has previously had any tenancy enforcement action taken against them in relation to their previous ownership of pets in a council owned property. The council may consider giving permission to keep pets with additional conditions placed on the tenant in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.1.7 If the tenant wants to keep too many animals for the type of property. See section 8 for information about what pets can be kept in which property type. Tenants should not keep more than two cats **or** dogs (ie a total of 2 animals). They may keep more than two smaller animals such as rodents, birds, reptiles or fish, but the council will only give permission to keep a reasonable number of pets. The housing office staff should use their discretion based on the number of animals the tenant wants to keep, the type of animal and the type of accommodation needed for the small pet,

the size of the property and the number of people living in the property when deciding whether to give permission or not. In order to keep the number of animals kept to a reasonable number, the council stresses the importance of neutering animals or, where appropriate, keeping them in same sex combinations.

3.1.8 If the request is to keep an animal in a property type which is unsuitable for that animal. See section 8 for details of this. A dog or a cat should not be kept in a property with a communal entrance and/or garden because it is not suitable for a pet that requires outside access, this includes multi story flats (see 3.2 for limited exceptions). Dogs and cats are not permitted in such properties because:

- a flat is not suitable to keep a pet which requires regular outdoor exercise for the animal's own welfare
- there is a general problem with animals soiling the communal areas both inside and outside of flats/maisonettes, and
- the risk of noise nuisance caused by barking in a high density living arrangement such as blocks of flats/maisonettes.

3.1.9 In all cases, where the council refuses permission to keep a pet, the council will explain the reasons fully to the tenant in writing. A copy of a template letter refusing permission is attached in **Appendix 2**.

3.2 Giving permission to keep pets where the property has a communal garden

3.2.1 Communal gardens and cats and dogs

3.2.2 When a property has its own external entrance and a communal garden then permission may be given to keep a cat or a dog in some cases. Each application in relation to such a property will be considered on a case by case basis taking into account the following considerations (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Who else shares the garden, for example, if there are small children, elderly tenants or vulnerable tenants who may be frightened by the animal.
- Whether there is enough open space nearby for any dogs to be exercised outside the garden.
- Whether there are any other animals in the other properties which share the communal garden, for example, if there are already two dogs, it might not be appropriate to allow any more in that block.
- The views of the current tenants and whether there have been cases of animal nuisance in the block.

3.2.3 If permission is granted to keep a pet in a property with a communal garden, the tenant must be advised that dogs must not be exercised in or given free access to the garden and must be kept on a lead while walking through the communal garden. If permission is granted, but the animal causes nuisance to other people in the locality of the property, the council will ask the tenant to deal with the situation, for example, by training the pet, seeking rehousing or rehoming the animal in a responsible manner.

3.2.4 Communal gardens and small pets

3.2.5 Where the animal would be kept in the garden all the time (for example animals in outdoor hutches or which need an outdoor run) permission will not be granted, because other tenants and visitors will also be using the garden.

4. Granting permission

4.1 Where the council gives permission to keep a pet, the council will write to the tenant outlining the conditions attached to the permission using the template letter in **Appendix 3** and give the tenant a copy of the leaflet in **Appendix 4** - 'Keeping pets in Council houses – Council policy and guidelines for tenants'.

4.2 Permission will be conditional on a number of factors, including on the type of pet being kept. Tenants will also be given information on keeping animals responsibly, see section 12 for details.

4.3 All permission is conditional on the tenant making sure that their pets do not:

- stray or roam
- damage anybody's property, including their own council home
- injure, annoy or frighten anybody else
- cause nuisance to anybody else, e.g. by making too much noise or causing a smell, or
- breed in the property.

4.4 All permission is also conditional on the tenant:

- making proper arrangements for the animal's care if they go away overnight, or for longer, and providing the council with details of an emergency contact
- making sure that litter trays are cleaned frequently and pet faeces are cleared frequently from the house and/or garden and no smell is caused by the pets
- making sure that hutches/cages are frequently cleaned and no smell is caused by the pets, and

- keeping the pets under control at all times, including where visitors such as housing officers, contractors and postal workers come to their property.
- 4.5 Permission will only be granted to keep the animals specified by the council and at the tenant's current address. The tenant must ask for permission if they move to another property or wish to keep more animals.
- 4.6 Additional conditions may be imposed where appropriate; these will not be imposed unreasonably and will be detailed in writing in the permission letter. Conditions may also be imposed after permission has been granted if they are necessary to deal with any issues that have arisen. The tenant should be advised of any additional conditions and the reasons for imposing them in writing. Permission to keep a pet can be withdrawn if a pet is not being kept in accordance with this policy.
- 4.7 The council strongly encourages tenants to have their pets microchipped where appropriate. This will be a legal requirement for dogs from 2016.

5. Dangerous dogs and Index of Exempt Dogs – decision required on whether to permit section 2 dogs

- 5.1 Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 prescribes four types of dogs that are prohibited from being in possession or under control of people in the UK unless they are exempt and on the Index of Exempt Dogs (IED). These four types include any dog that has a '*substantial number of the characteristics*' of the following:
- Pit Bull Terrier
 - Dogo Argentino
 - Fila Brasileiro
 - Japanese Tosa
- 5.2 Section 1(2) prohibits the breeding, sale, exchange, advertising, or gift or offer of any dog listed in section 1(1) of the Act. It also prohibits such dogs from being in a public place without being muzzled, being abandoned or allowed to stray, and must be kept on a lead.
- 5.3 Where a suspected prohibited type of dog has come to the notice of the police they can either decide to commence a prosecution of the owner for being in possession of an illegal type of dog or make an application on behalf of the owner to ask a Court for a decision as to whether to exempt the dog and have it registered on the IED. In the majority of police forces in England and Wales, this is done by specially trained officers, known as Dog Legislation Officers (DLOs).

- 5.4 The DLO will look at the behaviour and characteristics of the dog as well as giving the Court the antecedence of the owner, the home environment and their suitability (and safety) for having such a dog. The Court determines whether it is satisfied 'that the dog would not constitute a danger to public safety'.
- 5.5 If the Court is satisfied of this, then the owner must comply for the lifetime of the dog with a stringent set of conditions to keep the dog exempt from the prohibition under section 1. Where a tenant has a dog on the IED, they must abide by these conditions at all times. These conditions are:
- the dog must be neutered, tattooed and micro-chipped
 - the owner/keeper must take out (and renew each year) third party insurance for the dog
 - the dog must only be taken out in public by someone over the age of 16 and kept on a lead and muzzled when in public, and
 - the dog must be registered on the Index of Exempt Dogs

6. Where a tenant already has a pet at [insert date policy implemented]

- 6.1 Tenants who already have existing pets without written permission can use the form in Appendix 1 to apply for retrospective permission. Where a tenant moved into their current property and obtained the pet before [insert date policy implemented] the council will grant retrospective permission in the following circumstances:
- where the animal is being kept in accordance with this policy, namely, provided the property type is suitable for keeping that number and type of pets (see section 8), and where no more than two cats or dogs are kept, and
 - the existing pets are not causing any problems within the property, the communal area or to others in the locality of the property
- 6.2 The council works closely with animal welfare charities, and will aim to avoid animals being referred to animal charities and sanctuaries for rehoming. For this reason, in very exceptional circumstances where the tenant is keeping excess numbers of animals or is keeping a pet in a property which is not usually considered suitable for that type of pet under this policy (see section 8), the council may grant limited permission to keep the current pets. This permission will be limited to the lifespan of the pets. Permission to keep pets outside the general policy under this section will be considered by a senior officer and will only be granted in writing.
- 6.3 Where the property type is not deemed suitable for keeping the animal, the council may seek to assist the tenant with a planned move to a suitable property within a reasonable timescale.

- 6.4 This exception does not apply to tenants who obtained their pets after [insert date policy implemented], or who were clearly advised when they moved into their property or before they obtained their pet, that they would not be given permission for such a pet to be kept in that type of property.

7. Special requests to keep pets

7.1 Support dogs

- 7.1.1 Permission to keep a support dog should be granted where a disabled tenant requests it and the animal has been provided by a recognised agency, such as Guide Dogs for the Blind, Support Dogs or Dogs for the Disabled.
- 7.1.2 The council will require evidence from the relevant agency to support the application, and be satisfied that the property type is suitable for keeping a dog. Where the property is not usually suitable for keeping a dog a transfer to an appropriate property may be offered. In some circumstances a tenant may be given permission to keep a support dog in a property which would not usually be suitable for keeping dogs.

7.2 Tenants fostering on behalf of animal charities

- 7.2.1 The council will consider requests from tenants who wish to foster pets on behalf of animal charities (or to look after pets belonging to friends, family etc as a temporary measure) on the same basis as other requests for permission, in terms of numbers of animals, animal type(s) and property type. Tenants should apply for written permission using the application form in Appendix 1. They will be expected to provide supporting information from a recognised charity.

7.3 Running a pet-related business from home or breeding animals

- 7.3.1 Some tenants may wish to run a pet-related business from home. It is the policy of Leeds City Council to give permission to run a business from home unless there is a good reason not to. See also the council's policy on 'Running a business from a council home'.
- 7.3.2 Clause 2.14 of the Tenancy Agreement states that tenants must obtain the Council's written permission to run a business from their council home:

'You (or anyone living with you or visiting the property) must not run a business from the property without getting the Council's written permission

first. We will not normally refuse permission unless the business would cause a nuisance or annoyance or might damage the property.'

- 7.3.3 If a tenant makes an application to run a pet-related business from home, the council must also give regard to the policy on pets, in particular in particular whether the type of property is suitable for the proposed business.
- 7.3.4 Permission will not be granted to run a business or any activity which involves breeding or selling animals, or any business which is likely to create a nuisance due to the number of animals being taken to a property.
- 7.3.5 If the tenant wishes to run an animal boarding business then they are legally required to have an Animal Boarding Establishment Licence which is issued by the Local Authority. A tenant would not be given permission to keep more pets at the property than would ordinarily be allowed by this policy.

7.4 Visiting pets

- 7.4.1 Council tenants are responsible for visitors to their property, and should not permit people to visit with pets if their property has a communal entrance, such as a multi-story flat. The exception to this is visitors who have a recognised support dog from an approved agency as outlined in section 7.1 above. This is to avoid the problems reported by tenants of animals causing noise nuisance, damage or fouling in communal areas.
- 7.4.2 Any pets visiting the property must not cause a nuisance while they are at the property. The tenant is equally liable for any nuisance being caused at the property even if it is from a visiting pet.

8. Property Type and Pets

- 8.1 All properties should be flagged on the Orchard system to indicate whether they are suitable for keeping pets such as cats or dogs. Generally this will be:

Property type	Cats / dogs permitted?
House	Yes – maximum of 2 cats or dogs in total.
Bungalow with their own external entrance and private garden.	Yes – maximum of 2 cats or dogs in total
Flat, bedsit, maisonette with their own external entrance and their	Yes – maximum of 2 cats or dogs in total

own private garden.	
Flat, bedsit, maisonette, bungalow with their own external entrance and a communal garden/outside area.	To be considered on a case by case basis up to a maximum of 2 cats or dogs in total. See section 3.2
Flat, multi-story flat, bedsit, maisonette with a shared / communal entrance or walkway.	No cats or dogs allowed

- 8.2 Tenants can request permission to keep more than two smaller animals such as rodents, birds, reptiles or fish, but the council will only give permission to keep a reasonable number of pets. The housing office staff should use their discretion based on the number of animals the tenant wants to keep, the type of animal and the type of accommodation needed for the small pet, the size of the property and the number of people living in the property when deciding whether to give permission or not. In order to keep the number of animals kept to a reasonable number, the council stresses the importance of neutering animals or, where appropriate, keeping them in same sex combinations.
- 8.3 The Housing Office may decide cats and dogs will not be permitted in some properties even where the property does not have shared access. This information should be entered on the Orchard housing system.
- 8.4 When available properties are advertised through the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme the property advert should include details of whether pets are permitted and any restrictions which will apply in relation to the property type. This will enable customers to maximise the use of their bids.
- 8.5 When an offer is being made, either through CBL or as a direct offer, the customer should be advised again of whether pets are permitted in the property, and if there are restrictions because of property type, what those restrictions are. This should be done at the earliest opportunity:
- during the pre-offer telephone call
 - in the offer letter
 - at the accompanied viewing
- 8.6 Customers who wish to keep a pet should request permission as outlined above by completing the form in Appendix 1.

9. Recording information about pets

- 9.1 Where permission to keep a pet is granted, the council will take details of all the pets the tenant wants to keep, including their breed and age. The council will also take details of the vet and an emergency contact.
- 9.2 The council will need to know if pets are being kept in the property and emergency contact details in case there is an emergency, such as a flood or a fire or the tenant has to go to hospital. Holding these details will also ensure the council is aware of any animals being kept in the property in the event of any eviction procedures being taken.
- 9.3 Details should be held on the house file and computer system and updated with any changes.

10. Tenancy Management issues

- 10.1 The council will investigate complaints about breaches of the pets' policy and any issues which arise from annual tenancy visits.
- 10.2 The council will contact the tenant to discuss complaints. Where possible a visit to the property will be made to establish whether and how a pet is being kept. The condition of the property may indicate whether an animal is being kept, for example, feeding bowls, fouling or chewed fixtures. There may also be evidence that the pet has been seen entering the premises.
- 10.3 The council will take the appropriate action, ranging from informal interventions and mediation to formal tenancy action. This must be clearly documented in writing and explained to the tenant. Verbal permission to keep a pet must not be given, and council officers must not ignore the unauthorised keeping of pets or any nuisance problems.
- 10.4 If the council believes a tenant is keeping a dog of an **illegal type** in their property, unless the dog is exempted, this is a criminal offence and you should contact the police immediately. Action can also be taken for breach of the Tenancy Agreement. **The same applies if a tenant has a dog on the IED but is not complying with the legal requirements.**
- 10.5 If a tenant is **keeping a pet without permission**, they should apply for retrospective permission using the form in Appendix 1 (see section 6).
- 10.6 However, if the tenant lives in an **unsuitable property type**, action should still be taken regardless of whether the animal is causing a nuisance. In exceptional circumstances, permission may be granted outside the policy on the condition that no further pets are obtained, and the pet will not be replaced when it dies. In these circumstances the decision to grant permission must be authorised in writing by a senior manager using the template letter in Appendix 3.

- 10.7 If the tenant is keeping their pet in a way that is **causing a nuisance**, options include (this is not an exhaustive list):
- Writing to the tenant to remind them of their responsibilities and explaining the potential consequences of their actions. The situation should be monitored closely and if there is no improvement formal tenancy action may be taken.
 - Providing information from animal welfare charities about how to look after the pet, for example, the RSPCA 'Learning to be left alone' information leaflet gives advice on how to prevent dogs becoming bored when left alone
 - Advising the tenant to seek the help of a certified clinical behaviourist – more information can be found at:
www.rspca.org.uk/findabehaviourexpert
 - Advising the tenant that they must rehome the animal in a responsible manner within a given time period (tenants may need support to rehome a pet)
 - Taking action for ASB or breach of the Tenancy Agreement, i.e. warning letters or mediation as appropriate.
 - Issuing an injunction
 - Proceedings to extend an introductory tenancy or demote a secure one, or possession proceedings for a secure tenancy.
 - In cases of neglect or cruelty, the council can report the matter to the RSPCA or the police.
- 10.8 The council reserves the right to seek legal costs against the tenant if legal proceedings are required. Copies of template letters are available in **Appendix 5**.

11. Abandoned pets

- 11.1 It is the tenant's responsibility to rehome their pet responsibly if they are no longer able to care for it.
- 11.2 If a tenant moves out of the property, abandons or is evicted and leaves a pet behind, the animal is considered 'property' in law, and the council will take action as with other items left in the property. The animal will be removed from the property. Any costs incurred by the Council in dealing with the animals left behind will be recharged to the tenant.
- 11.3 In cases of abandonment, where an animal is left behind, the council should take appropriate measures to look after the animal. It may be possible to take action against the tenant under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 in which case the council can contact the RSPCA for advice.
- 11.4 A record should be kept if a tenant abandons or mistreats a pet. Should they reapply for housing the council may find them non-qualifying or apply

reduced preference to their housing application, and will normally not grant permission to keep a pet in the future.

12. Good practice guidance on responsible pet keeping and specific animal breeds

- 12.1 When tenants apply for permission to keep a pet the council will provide information about responsible pet ownership, animal welfare and on keeping specific animal breeds. More detailed guidance is provided on the application form and information leaflet, and tenants are signposted to relevant animal welfare websites.
- 12.2 In all cases, before making a decision to have a pet, the council recommends tenants consider the long term implications of pet ownership, and whether they are able to meet the animal's needs. See information in Appendix 1: Application to keep a pet in a council property and Appendix 4: The council's policy on keeping pets in council houses – information for tenants.
- 12.3 Pet owners have responsibilities under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to ensure their pets have a suitable living environment, are free from pain, suffering, injury or disease, are fed correctly, are able to exhibit normal behaviour and have a suitable living environment.
- 12.4 In cases of neglect or cruelty, the council can report the matter to the RSPCA or the police.

13. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Application to keep a pet

Appendix 2 – Copy of a template letter refusing permission

Appendix 3 – Copy of template letter granting conditional permission

Appendix 4 – Keeping pets in Council houses – Council policy and guidelines for tenants

Appendix 5 – Copy of template letters advising tenant in breach of Tenancy Agreement

1. Policy statement

- 1.1 This policy sets out how the council will consider requests from tenants and leaseholders to keep electric mobility scooters, and the factors it will take into account when granting or refusing permission.
- 1.2 Leeds City Council is committed to maximising choice and independence, and recognises the value of mobility aids such as mobility scooters to tenants in maintaining their independence.
- 1.3 At the same time, the council has duties to ensure high standards of health and safety within blocks of flats, maisonettes and sheltered schemes for tenants, leaseholders, staff and visitors. The council has limited storage facilities for mobility scooters which are becoming more common, especially in sheltered accommodation.
- 1.4 This policy aims to balance the needs and aspirations of tenants and leaseholders to keep mobility scooters with its duties to maintain a safe living environment for tenants, particularly in relation to potential fire risks.
- 1.5 This policy will be implemented from [Date].

2. Scope and definitions

- 2.1 A mobility scooter is defined for the purpose of this policy as an electric scooter or electric wheelchair designed specifically for outdoor use. This does not apply to lightweight wheelchairs suitable for indoor use.
- 2.2 Powered scooters are defined as 'Invalid Carriages' under the Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988. The regulations divide these machines into three classes:

Class 1 - manual wheelchair (not covered by the policy).

Class 2 - applies to motorised wheelchairs, designed for use on the pavement travelling at speed of up to 4mph. They may also be used to cross the road or where there is no pavement.

Class 3 - applies to machines that can be used both on the pavement where, like class 2 vehicles they are limited to 4 mph, and on the road where they can travel at up to 8 mph. These vehicles are required by law to be registered with the DVLA for road use. These vehicles will be licensed in the disabled taxation class and must display a nil duty tax disc. Insurance is not a legal requirement but is essential if the vehicle is to be used and stored in a Sheltered Housing Scheme or communal area.

3. Aims

3.1 The aim of the policy is to:

- ensure the council takes a consistent approach to granting permission to tenants and leaseholders to keep a scooter
- ensure tenants ask for written permission before obtaining a new scooter
- accommodate all requests for permission to keep a scooter where practicable, and not to refuse permission unreasonably
- carry out a full assessment prior to a decision on whether or not to grant permission
- ensure that where permission is granted that the tenant has adequate insurance and understands and commits to the terms and conditions they are required to adhere to
- provide clear information on the terms permission is granted on
- provide a clear explanation in writing of the reason(s) for refusing permission
- manage the number of scooters in any one site so as not to compromise the safety of residents or other users of the site, and
- ensure that tenants and residents are aware of their responsibilities to others.

4. Requesting permission

4.1 Leeds City Council's Tenancy Agreement sets out the rights and responsibilities of tenants and the council.

Section 2.13 Tenancy Agreement states:

If you wish to keep a mobility aid such as a scooter or motorised wheelchair you must get written permission first. This will normally be granted.

4.2 This policy sets out the circumstances in which the council will grant permission to keep a mobility scooter or motorised wheelchair. The council will generally grant permission, provided the aid can be stored and charged safely.

- 4.3 This policy will apply to all new requests to keep a scooter, to customers considering moving into a council property and retrospectively to existing tenants who already have a scooter without permission.
- 4.4 Tenants and residents who wish to obtain a mobility scooter must apply in writing to their Local Area Office for permission using the form in **Appendix 1**. The decision will be made in conjunction with the Fire Safety Officer following a property inspection. This can be carried out prior to the tenant obtaining a scooter provided the tenant can provide details of the model they are planning to get.
- 4.5 The council will respond to requests within 28 days of receipt. The terms and procedures in force at the time of applying for permission will determine whether permission is granted.
- 4.6 Requests to keep a mobility scooter will be considered by the local housing office in conjunction with the Fire Safety Officer who will carry out a risk assessment prior to permission being granted or refused.
- 4.7 In considering whether permission should be granted, account will be taken of the potential impact on other people and permission will only be granted where the needs and wellbeing of other tenants, residents and other users of the building are not adversely put at risk.
- 4.8 The council will consider requests based on the information received from the tenant or leaseholder. The council will assess whether there is an approved safe area to store and charge the scooter.
- 4.9 Permission will be refused where:
- there is no safe storage in the tenant or leaseholders flat and no alternative safe storage and charging space can be provided
 - a major physical alteration to the premises is required which the council believes to be unreasonable in terms of cost and/ or disruption to other service users
 - a tenant/ leaseholder fails to take out the necessary insurance cover
 - if the scooter is too large to fit through internal or external entrances, or
 - if the tenant wishes to keep more than one scooter.
- 4.10 Examples of safe storage and charging spaces may include:
- a designated room within the property
 - a designated communal room
 - a designated external space
- 4.11 Where permission is refused, the council will explain the reasons and give details of the appeal process. Where permission is given, this will be conditional, and will outline the storage and charging arrangements available.

5. Terms and conditions of the permission

- 5.1 Where permission is granted, this will be based on certain conditions. The letter granting permission will specify the size and type of scooter that can be kept, and will state that permission is conditional on the tenant having relevant insurance, tax registration etc. It is the tenant/leaseholder's responsibility to ensure that their mobility scooter will fit in the external doors, lifts, and internal doors.
- 5.4 Tenants must ensure that they have appropriate public liability insurance cover against accidents or other injury, to third parties or themselves, as well as any damage to the internal or external parts of the building.
- 5.5 Tenants who apply for permission will be expected to produce their insurance certificate for inspection. Absence of adequate insurance cover may result in the permission granted being refused or withdrawn.
- 5.6 Permission may be withdrawn if the conditions are not adhered to, if the tenant purchases an additional or larger scooter or if the policy is updated to meet new regulatory requirements.
- 5.7 The council will undertake periodic checks, including at the Annual Tenancy Visit to ensure the policy is complied with.

6. Storage and charging

- 6.1 Mobility scooters must not be stored or charged in communal hallways or stairwells at any time because they could increase the risk of fire or obstruct a fire escape route.
- 6.2 If a mobility scooter is stored within a tenant / leaseholder's property they must ensure that there is sufficient space within the home to store the scooter safely. An inspection should be arranged by the Fire Safety Officer to assess for additional smoke detection/ internal fire doors.
- 6.3 As part of this assessment, the council may provide minor adaptations such as small fillet ramps, smoke alarms, electrical charging sockets and an internal fire door as required to flats to enable the mobility scooter to be stored safely when it was not in use.
- 6.4 Tenants / leaseholders will need to gain permission for any alterations, for example the provision of storage facilities, ramp, access path or hardstanding. The council will not unreasonably withhold permission for alterations, however, there may be instances where it is not feasible to provide adequate facilities due to the layout of the property. Leaseholders may be recharged for the cost of any such alterations.

- 6.5 In some sheltered schemes there will be designated storage facilities for mobility scooters. The storage areas for scooters will normally be allocated on a first come first served basis and permission for the scooter is still required.
- 6.6 Service charges may apply for the use of the scooter store provided. These charges would cover the use of the provision of an electricity supply for charging the scooter.
- 6.7 Tenants are responsible for ensuring their scooter is serviced and maintained regularly, and for having an annual PAT (Portable Appliance Test). If any charging equipment fails the PAT, it is the tenant's responsibility to repair or replace it before using it.

7. Breach of mobility scooter policy

- 7.1 The Council understands the positive difference to quality of life a scooter can make. However, the council's Tenancy Agreement requires tenants obtain written permission to keep a mobility scooter. Where there is a breach of the agreement the council will take the appropriate action.
- 7.2 The council will endeavour to identify a safe and secure storage and charging area as set out in section 4.10 above. Where this is not possible, the council will consider alternative options including assisting with a move. Wherever possible the council will seek to negotiate a satisfactory outcome with the tenant.
- 7.3 Where a scooter is stored or charged on council premises without permission, or outside the terms of permission granted, the council reserves the right to remove the scooter to ensure health and safety and may recharge the tenant for any removal costs.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Mobility scooter permission form
- Appendix 2 – Customer information leaflet
- Appendix 3 – Letter granting permission with conditions
- Appendix 4 – Letter refusing permission giving reasons and right of appeal
- Appendix 5 – Letter where tenant has mobility scooter without permission

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1. Policy statement

- 1.1 The council recognises that tenants want to enjoy the benefits of digital satellite television. However, the council may refuse permission to install a satellite dish in certain circumstances. For example, due to health and safety reasons, or where installation would cause damage to the fabric and structure of a building. In addition, planning authorities set out restrictions on the installation of dishes.
- 1.2 In addition to obtaining the council's permission to install a satellite dish, the tenant must also obtain the relevant planning permission to install a dish. The planning guidance covers the positioning of satellite dishes and the size of dishes permitted etc.
- 1.3 The policy will be implemented from [Date].

2. Scope and definitions

- 2.1 This policy applies to the installation of external satellite dishes designed to receive television and radio broadcasts.

3. Aims

- 3.1 The aim of the policy is to outline:
 - the circumstances in which the council will grant permission to tenants to install a satellite dish
 - planning permission requirements
 - the conditions on which the council will grant permission
 - equality and human rights issues, and
 - removal of satellite dishes

4. Permission from the council

- 4.1 Council tenants must seek permission in writing from their local Neighbourhood Housing Office prior to installing a satellite dish, as set out in the Tenancy Agreement.

Section 2.42 Tenancy Agreement states:

You must not make improvements, additions or structural alterations to the property without getting the Council's written permission first. See section 3.3 for details of a tenant's right to make improvements. We will not refuse permission unless there is a good reason.

You must not make any installations which may be unsafe or dangerous to anyone. This might include deep ponds or earth removal.

If you make an improvement, additions or structural alteration to the property without getting our written permission first we can tell you to return the property to how it was before or to do works to a satisfactory standard or to do works to make the property safe. If you do not, the Council will do the work and charge you for it.

You must not make any improvements, additions or structural alterations to communal areas (such as stairs, lifts, landings, walkways, entrance halls, drying areas, bin stores, paved areas, shared gardens or parking areas).

- 4.2 Each application will be considered on its own merits, but the council will not normally give permission to install a satellite dish in high rise blocks. This is because of the danger of the dish or mounting becoming loose and damage being caused to the structure of the building by the installation. In addition, there are alternatives in multi storey flats which have digital satellite reception via a communal aerial system. [Please see Appendix 1 for a sample detail request letter and Appendix 2 for sample permission letter].

5. Planning Permission

- 5.1 Where permission is granted in principle by the council, the installation must also be completed in accordance with Planning Permission - refer to Planning Portal for further detail:
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/commonprojects/antenna/>.
Note that 'antenna' refers to satellite dishes.
- 5.2 In summary, permitted development regulations state (current as of February 2014): * check the Planning Portal webpage for updates *
- 5.3 Planning permission is not required **on houses and buildings up to 15m high**, provided:
- there will be no more than two antennas on the property overall. (These may be on the front or back of the building, on the roof, attached to the chimney, or in the garden);

- if you are installing a single antenna, it is not more than 100 centimetres in any linear dimension (not including any projecting feed element, reinforcing rim, mounting and brackets);
 - if you are installing two antennas, one is not more than 100 centimetres in any linear dimension, and the other is not more than 60 centimetres in any linear dimension (not including any projecting feed element, reinforcing rim, mounting and brackets);
 - the cubic capacity of each individual antenna is not more than 35 litres;
 - an antenna fitted onto a chimney stack is not more than 60 centimetres in any linear dimension; and
 - an antenna mounted on the roof only sticks out above the roof when there is a chimney-stack. In this case, the antenna should not stick out more than 60 centimetres above the highest part of the roof, or above the highest part of the chimney stack, whichever is lower.
- 5.4 For buildings **15 metres high or more** planning permission is not required to install a dish or other antenna on your property, provided:
- there will be no more than four antennas on the building overall;
 - the size of any antenna is not more than 130 centimetres in any linear dimension (not including any projecting feed element, reinforcing rim, mounting and brackets);
 - the cubic capacity of each individual antenna is not more than 35 litres;
 - an antenna fitted onto a chimney stack is not more than 60 centimetres in any linear dimension; and
 - an antenna mounted on the roof does not stick out above the roof more than 300 centimetres above the highest part of the roof.
- 5.5 The council will request details of the proposed fixing arrangements, for example, the satellite dish must not be fixed to any chimney stacks, roof coverings, barge boards and eaves, i.e. fascias, soffits and rainwater goods.
- 5.6 Some property types have specific installation requirements. For example, properties built of non-traditional construction and/or with a cladding finish fixed to the external walls. Examples include Cornish Units, Reemas, Woolaways, Sweedale Timber Frame, BISFs and Laings Easiforms. The cladding finishes can comprise of traditional vertical tiling, timber or UPVC boarding, coloroc tiling and stenni panels. Due to the special nature of these constructions, tenants will be asked to supply details of the proposed fixing arrangements with your application.
- 5.7 In all cases, the dish must be erected by a competent contractor and securely fixed. Should any damage to the structure result from the initial fixing or appear subsequently, the tenant will be liable for making good. Failure to carry out the necessary remedial works will result in the Council undertaking the work for and recharging the tenant for the cost.

6. Tenant's obligations where permission is granted

Applicants should ensure that they have adequate Public Liability cover for any damage caused to persons and property by the installation. This may be included in the tenant's household contents policy but if this is not the case, the tenant should have a separate policy giving Public Liability cover.

7. Equality and Human rights issues

- 7.1 In making a decision to grant permission, the council will consider the reasons for the request which relate to Articles 9 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, for example, a disabled tenant may only be able to engage in his or her particular religious community if they can receive transmissions of specific religious services held overseas which are exclusively available by satellite.
- 7.2 However, simply wanting to have access to more channels for entertainment is unlikely to be a breach of a tenant's human rights in itself.
- 7.3 Consideration will be given to alternative ways of accessing television stations, for example, accessing via the internet or through digital channels.
- 7.4 Permission will also be refused if installation would breach planning law or if installing a dish is dangerous. This would outweigh the human rights issue.

8. Removal of dishes - Revoking permission

- 8.1 The council may revoke permission where it is necessary to remove a satellite dish temporarily, in order to allow the Council to carry out works including repairs, improvements or decorations, the tenant will be responsible for the costs associated with the removal and refixing of the dish.
- 8.2 The council may revoke permission if the satellite dish causes interference to other residents' televisions, radios, etc and this fault cannot be corrected. In this case the Council reserves the right to insist that the equipment is dismantled. Satellite dishes should not be erected on the front elevation of a property unless it is technically necessary to do so.
- 8.3 The council may also revoke permission in other circumstances where this is reasonable, for example, if there is a change in planning legislation or guidance, or if the dish becomes unsafe.

9. Removal of dishes - when the tenancy ends

- 9.1 When a tenant leaves the property, they are responsible for arranging and paying for the safe removal of the dish.
- 9.2 If a satellite dish is left in situ after a tenant leaves the property, the dish will be removed by the council as part of the void process. The outgoing tenant will be recharged for the costs of removing the dish and making good the external structure.

10. Satellite dishes installed without permission

- 10.1 Legal action will be taken against tenants who have installed dishes without permission from the council, or where the dish or fixings become unsafe. In an emergency where health and safety considerations mean urgent action is required, the council will remove the dish.
- 10.2 Where a dish has been installed in **low rise flats and houses**, the council will follow the process to deal with improvements carried out without permission.
- 10.3 For dishes installed in **high rise and multi storey flats**, the council will contact tenants and leaseholders and advise they are in breach of their tenancy or leasehold agreement for not requesting permission. The tenant / leaseholder must be advised that permission would not be granted and that the council will normally make arrangements to remove the satellite dish. The council would not generally expect the tenant to remove the dish themselves due to health and safety risks. The council reserves the right to charge the tenant for the cost of removing the dish. It may also be appropriate to notify Leeds City Council's Planning Department of any breach of planning regulations.

11. Audits

- 11.1 Appendix 4 is a checklist to confirm whether the current tenant installed the satellite dish themselves, and where appropriate, what arrangements will be made to remove it.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Sample request letter
- Appendix 2: Sample permission letter
- Appendix 3: Flowchart
- Appendix 4: Audit form

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Report of Housing Leeds

Report to Housing Advisory Board

Date: 8 April 2014

Subject: Housing Leeds Tenant Scrutiny Panel (South) Recommendations from the Complaints Inquiry

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes x No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes x No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes x No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes x No

Summary of main issues

1. This purpose of this report is to present the South's Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) report about complaints, following their enquiry. The resulting recommendations have both relevance to the housing service and other services council wide.

2. In their report the TSP have summarised that the quality of a complaints response and overall complaints service is determined by the consistency with which we are able to:
 - Accurately record data;
 - Empathise with the complainant and 'where the complainant is coming from';
 - Communicate with the customer and between ourselves in Leeds City Council and, where appropriate, Mears staff; and
 - Feedback to the customer at every stage of the process.

3. The TSP concluded that the housing service is meeting the National Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard in relation to complaints, and thus is meeting regulatory expectation, but could deliver an improved service if their recommendations are implemented. The housing specific complaints function can benefit from these recommendations, as can other complaints teams from within the wider council.

Recommendations

1. That the Housing Advisory Board acknowledge the work of the Scrutiny Panel and their positive contribution to service improvement and delivering better outcomes for tenants.
2. The Housing Advisory Board is asked to review and accept the officer action plan in response to the TSP's recommendations.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the Recommendations from the South's Tenant Scrutiny Panel's inquiry into the way housing related complaints are managed and the extent to which the service focusses on the quality of outcomes for customers.
- 1.2 The Board is also being invited to review and accept the officer action plan in response to the recommendations.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Tenant Scrutiny Panels (TSP) were established in response to the Homes and Communities Agency's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard. This standard says that housing providers "*shall ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in(...) the scrutiny of their landlord's performance and the making of recommendations to their landlord about how performance might be improved.*"
- 2.2 As with any tenant scrutiny exercise the panel examined a wide range of evidence for the whole service, including performance data, customer complaints and customer satisfaction data before deciding which area of the service to investigate. They chose complaints because:
 - Performance in this area could have been improved;
 - The evidence they examined suggested that some information did not always provide the true picture; and
 - The TSP felt that the complaints handling process was fundamental to tenants' experience of all services.
- 2.3 The inquiry involved a variety of methods of investigation, including a desk top review of relevant literature; a review of performance information; a review of the website; benchmarking with other landlords (including local authorities); mystery shopping exercises; staff and contractor interviews and focus groups; and telephone interviews with tenants who had been through the complaints procedure. This adds considerable validity to the report as the findings and resulting recommendations are based on evidence.
- 2.4 The TSP presented their findings and recommendations at a meeting of interested stakeholders which included, LCC's Executive Officer (Client and Customer

Relations); Customer Relations Managers; Chief Officers for Housing and for Strategy and Commissioning; Departmental Customer Relations Officers from across Environments and Housing and Housing Leeds.

- 2.5 The TSP also took this opportunity to invite Tenant Scrutiny Panel members from across the city; and representatives from Leeds Tenants Federation. It was at this meeting that the next step was supported to bring the report and recommendations to the Housing Advisory Board for formal consideration.
- 2.6 The level of commitment and scale of undertaking by volunteer tenants in this exercise (and indeed tenant scrutiny in general) is not to be under-estimated. In total, the complaints inquiry took 242 hours of tenants time.
- 2.7 The focus for Tenant Scrutiny is to now establish a single Tenant Scrutiny Board, independent to, but working alongside the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board. At a meeting on the 10th March, initial membership of this new panel was agreed, a process for selecting a Chair and Vice-Chair was put in place and a future agenda items agreed to enable the creation of a work programme for future inquiries.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 In their report the TSP have summarised that the quality of a complaints response and overall complaints service is determined by the consistency with which we are able to:
- Accurately record data;
 - Empathise with the complainant and ‘where the complainant is coming from’;
 - Communicate with the customer and between ourselves in Leeds City Council and, where appropriate, Mears staff; and
 - Feedback to the customer at every stage of the process.
- 3.2 The TSP concluded that the housing service is meeting the National Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard in relation to complaints, and thus is meeting regulatory expectation, but could deliver an improved service if their recommendations are implemented. The housing specific complaints function can benefit from these recommendations, as can other complaints teams from within the wider council. The recommendations report can be found in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 Following the presentation of the report to key stakeholders, officers of Housing Leeds have attended the cross-service Departmental Customer Relations Officer meeting and worked with them to identify and implement key actions and next steps in response to the recommendations. In the same way officers have also worked with Mears to respond to the contractor areas of responsibility. Please refer to Appendix 2 for the proposed actions.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 The TSP is made up of only tenants and they have led on this inquiry; from deciding what the inquiry should be about, who to speak to and what information to request and review. Appendix 1 and the recommendations which we are asking HAB members to approve have been identified and written up by TSP members themselves.
- 4.1.2 We will report back to tenants on our progress against these recommendations via the website and the tenants' magazine due to be delivered in June 2014.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 The nature of a TSP inquiry is for tenants themselves to identify how services can be improved by taking time to investigate a particular service area and then make recommendations for improvement. The lead officer for each of the recommendation actions will need to consider due regard for equality and use an Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening to ensure due regard to equality has been shown.

4.2.2 The following recommendations are examples of where the service is likely to advance equality of opportunity:

- Senior Managers in Housing Leeds to request that their investigating officers adopt the approach of making informal contact early in the process and work with the DCRO to monitor its impact on preventing complaints from escalation. This would provide a good opportunity for investigating officers at a very early stage if the customer has any individual needs which need to be taken into account during that particular investigation.
- Develop a 'checklist' to guide Stage 1 and Stage 2 investigating officers and that this is included in the 'checklist'. This could include a reminder to check for any individual customer needs in order for the response to be tailored accordingly.
- Implement review of how complaints analysis feeds into service improvement, including how these improvements are communicated to tenants. This can include equality analysis which will help services to identify where they good be better promoting access to their services for people across different protected characteristics

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 Tenant Scrutiny supports the Best Council objective to 'ensure high quality public services- improving quality, efficiency and involving people in shaping their city.'

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 Value for Money is one of the key drivers for the TSP. Each of the recommendations lends itself to more efficient and effective ways of working. Specifically, by improving the complaints process and encouraging early resolution at first point of contact, this will reduce the amount of avoidable contact and thus cost to Leeds City Council. Adopting a 'lessons learnt' approach will also

result in improved communication and relationship with our contractors and Customer Services, which should result in fewer complaints in future.

- 4.4.2 This report coincides with the requirement to offer a consistent and high quality complaints service across the whole city as part of the implementation of Housing Leeds. As far as possible, the recommendations will be implemented as part of the creation of a single complaints team, resource and pooling of appropriate skills and knowledge that this entails.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 As a landlord we are required to promote and support tenant scrutiny in line with the Homes and Communities Agency's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard. This is known as co-regulation and is how landlords are now regulated. Failure to comply with this standard could result in intervention from the regulator and put at risk the reputation of the service.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 The more effectively we manage our customer complaints, the less likely it is that issues will escalate and customer satisfaction decrease. Escalation can often result in tenants' issues worsening, such as property damage or rent arrears, which can be much more costly to the Council.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 For the complaints inquiry, the proposed actions once addressed will offer an improved service to tenants. It will also allow the service the opportunity to feedback to tenants the difference their involvement has made. Where recommendations are not solely related to housing i.e. there could be implications or opportunities for improvement across other service areas within the council, we will be sharing and monitoring these recommendations at the Customer Strategy Board.
- 5.2 Going forward the Tenant Scrutiny Panel will now work with the other tenant scrutiny panel members from across the city to set up a single city-wide Tenant Scrutiny Board. As part of the development of this new process, future scrutiny inquiries are likely to link much more widely into other areas of the tenant engagement structures, for example drawing on estate walkabouts, tenant inspectors and customer sounding boards, to enable tenants themselves to monitor and test that recommendations have been implemented and improvements have been made.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That the Housing Advisory Board acknowledge the work of the Scrutiny Panel and their positive contribution to service improvement and delivering better outcomes for tenants.
- 6.2 The Housing Advisory Board is asked to review and accept the officer action plan in response to the TSP's recommendations.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 Appendix 1: Tenant Scrutiny Panel Report- Complaints Inquiry

Appendix 2: Leeds City Council proposed actions in response to TSP's recommendations

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Housing Leeds response to Tenant Scrutiny Panel Complaints Inquiry Recommendations

Recommendation	Response	Action	Owner	Timescale
<p>Make 'informal' contact to appease complainants early in the process</p>	<p>1. This is something that works very well in Adult Social Care. In this service, personal contact is promoted to investigating officers (either telephone contact or, preferably, face to face) at the earliest point possible in the complaint investigation. Evaluation in this service shows that investigating officers applying this approach are those who have escalations to Stage 1, and more complaints converted to enquiries.</p> <p>In this service this approach happens 'in practice' as it is a message that has been communicated by senior officers, as a way of reducing the number of complaints that are escalated.</p> <p>2. The Ombudsman Liaison Officer suggested circulating a 'Dispute Resolution' document produced by the Housing Ombudsman, to be cascaded to investigating officers. This promotes a customer driven approach, rather than a 'tick box' process to dealing with complaints.</p>	<p>1. Senior Managers in Housing Leeds to request that their investigating officers adopt the approach of making informal contact early in the process and work with the DCRO to monitor its impact on preventing complaints from escalation</p> <p>2. Julie Davidson to send to Housing Ombudsman guidance to cross Service DCOs who are then required to cascade to their investigating officers and monitor its impact</p>	<p>1. Jason Kirk, Jill Wildman and David Longthorpe</p> <p>2. Julie Davison and DCROs</p>	<p>1. As part of service review (approx. April 2014)</p> <p>2. January 2014</p>
<p>Consider having a different team dealing with Stage 1 and 2 complaints to introduce a level of independence.</p>	<p>3. There is a mixed approach to this across the different LCC services. This is an approach that was previously adopted by Adult Social Care but did not prove to be effective. This was largely down to the reluctance from other managers to commit their time to taking on an investigation not involving their own service area.</p> <p>In this service now a large proportion of the Stage 2 complaints are 'commissioned' out for a third party to investigate. There is a budget of £30k available to accommodate this.</p> <p>In the waste management service the complaint is escalated upwards through the tiered structure however in the</p>	<p>3. Where a DCRO or investigating officer identifies there is potential for the customer to view a Stage 2 response from the same team as subjective, request that a Stage 2 investigating officer from a different part of the city but from within the same service area investigates at Stage 2.</p>	<p>3. DCROs and Investigating Officers</p>	<p>3. As part of service review (approx. April 2014)</p>

Housing Leeds response to Tenant Scrutiny Panel Complaints Inquiry Recommendations

	<p>Environmental Action Service, Stage 2 is often dealt with by a different locality, thus raining the service knowledge, but making it more independent in terms of the relationships of staff involved in the investigation. It was suggest that this approach could more easily be adopted in Housing, as the former ALMOs come together.</p> <p>It was suggested that there needs to be a flexible approach to this according to the nature of the complaint. For example, if it is a complaint following a decision being made relating to policy or permissions, e.g. a customer not happy that they have been declined a new boiler, it is more likely that the customer would be reassured at stage 2 if their response was investigated by somebody independent of the initial decision maker (i.e. avoid using their line manager as the Stage 2 investigating officer in this instance).</p>			
<p>Apologise for a service failure/failure to remedy at Stage 1</p>		<p>3. Develop a 'checklist' to guide Stage 1 and Stage 2 investigating officers and that this is included in the 'checklist'</p>	<p>4. DCROs</p>	<p>4. As part of service review (approx. April 2014)</p>
<p>Share incidents between Mears/Morrison and LCC where complaints are made direct to contractor</p>				

Housing Leeds response to Tenant Scrutiny Panel Complaints Inquiry Recommendations

<p>LCC and Mears/Morrison need a clearer reporting structure. The onus is on LCC to ensure they get this as the customer and they need to be clearer in their expectations.</p>				
<p>Ensure policy of telephoning complainants is adhered to</p>		<p>Ensure this is incorporated into the checklist for Stage 1 and Stage 2 Investigating Officers</p>	<p>DCROs</p>	<p>As part of service review (approx. April 2014)</p>
<p>Wording of feedback needs to be Plain English and have the 'personal touch'- consider introducing a checklist of points that must be covered by officers dealing with complaint responses with associated training rather than cutting and pasting from</p>		<p>Ensure this is incorporated into the checklist for Stage 1 and Stage 2 Investigating Officers</p>	<p>DCROs</p>	<p>As part of service review (approx. April 2014)</p>

Housing Leeds response to Tenant Scrutiny Panel Complaints Inquiry Recommendations

model letters				
Provide One Stop Centre Staff with an overview of the new complaints arrangements arising from the Localism Act		Guidance to be circulated to Customer Services Officers via team leader briefings to ensure that frontline CSOs basic knowledge of the procedure	Julie Davison	April 2014
Clarify procedure for written complaints accessed through One Stop Centres and other outlets and provide a form for complainants to fill in based on the online form	This has already been actioned	N/A	N/A	N/A
The 10 working day response time should not be lost and consider extending this deadline to all Council services	Some services including Environmental Action Service and Environments and Housing, felt that this is unachievable at this stage based on current challenges to meet performance against the 15 day timescale. In particular this is challenging for services in which the investigating officers work shifts, or job share with other staff, as this limits the DCRO's 'access' time to that particular officer. Other instances where DCROs envisage this would be difficult with dual issue complaints. Services are concerned that this change in timescale is likely to result in an increased number of holding responses. All services agreed that they could aspire to a 10 day timescale	Housing Leeds to maintain their 10 day performance target	Jason Kirk, Jill Wildman and David Longthorpe	As part of service review (approx. April 2014)

Housing Leeds response to Tenant Scrutiny Panel Complaints Inquiry Recommendations

	and there is no reason why internally Housing Leeds cannot retain this internal performance indicator to maintain their performance, with the Council's 15 day indicator as a 'back stop'.			
Evidence of how complaints contribute to service improvement requires review		Implement review of how complaints analysis feeds into service improvement, including how these improvements are communicated to tenants	Jason Kirk, Jill Wildman and David Longthorpe	As part of service review (approx. April 2014)
Existing systems for recording how complaints have contributed to service improvement need to be shared generally with tenants (e.g. through the newsletter)		See above	See above	See above
Internal communication around how AVH/Housing Leeds learn from complaints needs improvement		See above	See above	See above
While response		Ensure that all literature	Andrew	March 2014

Housing Leeds response to Tenant Scrutiny Panel Complaints Inquiry Recommendations

<p>letters contain information about the new system, written advice on how to complain is out of date in this aspect.</p>		<p>regarding the complaints process for housing is up to date at all customer access points, including the website</p>	<p>White/Julie Davison</p>	
<p>Protocols need to be clear and consistent especially where a number of service areas are involved, with a view to having the fewest number of officers involved as possible</p>		<p>Review protocol for dealing with complaints that span more than one team and provide specific training on this for Investigating Officers</p>	<p>DCROs</p>	<p>April 2014</p>
<p>Focus needs to consistently be on solving matters at as early a stage as possible, which may require a review of how they are handled at One Stop Centres</p>		<p>Training for OSC staff regarding when enquiries should be dealt with as a complaint and when there may be an opportunity to resolve as an enquiry</p>	<p>Andrew White</p>	<p>April 2014</p>

Housing Leeds response to Tenant Scrutiny Panel Complaints Inquiry Recommendations

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November 2013

Report Of The Tenant Scrutiny Panel - Complaints Process





Introduction

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) is an independent tenant-led body that scrutinises individual areas of the business using appropriate evidence, challenges Aire Valley Homes (AVH)/Housing Leeds on performance, advises and influences performance management and helps drive positive change.

It undertook its first pilot scrutiny inquiry between May and September 2012, having chosen to look at the sign up process. It made a series of recommendations that have contributed to significant change in the way this vital service is handled within the old AVH area. Since the Scrutiny Panel delivered its report, no complaints have been received from tenants about the sign up process.

The TSP met regularly during the inquiry to plan, allot tasks and table and consider evidence. They chose to appoint one of their number as Project Manager who chaired Panel

meetings, liaised with AVH staff and contacted members between meetings to keep the project on track.

This Project

The TSP chose complaints handling as a topic for scrutiny having examined performance information that indicated performance could be better in this area and suggested some information did not always reflect the true picture. The Panel felt Complaints was fundamental to tenants' experience of other services so should be the first full topic for the Panel.

The aim of the TSP was not to go on a fault-finding mission or look to apportion blame, but to compliment good practice and help improve complaints handling for both tenants and the organisation.

This report has been developed by the TSP with assistance from Rachel Vernelle, Independent Advisor.

Thanks

The TSP would like to thank the following for their support in developing this enquiry report:

- Everyone who contributed to this inquiry from Mears/Morrison, AVH/Housing Leeds
- Leeds City Council Customer Services Centre
- Sarah Lockwood
- Ian Montgomery

What we did

The TSP undertook the following activities to gather evidence for the inquiry:

1. Carried out a desk-top review of relevant literature-
 - 1.1. Performance information on complaints- number, categories, targets met, etc.
 - 1.2. Policy and procedure
 - 1.3. Information leaflets advising customers on how to complain.
 - 1.4. Letters sent to complainants at all stages in the process
2. Reviewed the website and benchmarked it against other council's websites
3. Benchmarked procedures with other local authorities
4. Conducted mystery shopping of Leeds and other council's telephone response to complaints
5. Had an information session on how the complaints database and process operates.
6. Undertook staff interviews/focus groups with Customer Services Officer, Complaints stage 1 and 2 investigating officers, Customer Involvement Manager, Customer Relations Manager
7. Undertook interviews with staff of Mears/Morrison- Customer Services Manager and Resident Liaison Officer
8. Undertook a briefing session on the new arrangements for handling complaints under the Localism Act 2011
9. Emailed follow-up questionnaires with Mears/Morrison and Housing Leeds Staff in relation to the introduction of a new IT system which occurred during the inquiry

10. Undertook telephone interviews with tenants who had taken out complaints
11. Spoke to tenants leaving a One Stop Centre
12. Listened in to calls received at the Leeds City Council Customer Service Centre
13. Visited Mears/Morrison and observed how they handle in-coming complaints.

Overall judgment

In the panel's view, issues around complaints come down to:

- 1.1. Accurate recording of data
- 1.2. Empathy with where the complainant is coming from
- 1.3. Communication between customer, Leeds City Council staff and, where appropriate, Mears/Morrison
- 1.4. Feedback to the customer at every stage of the process

Observations and Conclusions

The National Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard states that “Registered providers shall have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible that ensures complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly.”

1. A new IT system, MCM, at Mears/Morrison has resulted in fewer Stage 1 complaints since it was introduced. This emphasises that where communication improves, complaints reduce but should not be a cause for complacency. They have tightened up how they handle complaints but LCC still needs to be clear about what information it wants from Mears/Morrison so that it can monitor incidents and respond to customers. The MCM system is not being used to its full capacity in relation to the handling of complaints. The Panel recognises that the MCM system has only been fully operational since June, which the Panel has taken into consideration in the development of this report.

2. A general observation of the Panel is that if repairs processes were more consistently adhered to there would be fewer complaints for Mears/Morrison and AVH/Housing Leeds staff to be diverted into.
3. Some good and swift responses to complaints were identified and there was no complacency amongst staff that improvements could not be found.
4. The Panel recognises that some complaints – such as grounds maintenance- are easier to deal with swiftly than others.
5. LCC's website clearly sign-posts people to Complaints and the system is accessible and clear, in comparison with other councils' websites.
6. The Panel's experience of the service from Morley One Stop Centre was exceptional – data recorded was thorough and customer experience good.
7. The Panel identified good practice around both AVH/LCC and Mears/Morrison identifying support needs and the meeting of these through referrals to LCC teams or outside agencies.
8. In general, the TSP is of the opinion that AVH/Housing Leeds is meeting the National Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard in relation to complaints but can deliver a massively improved service if the recommendations made in this report are implemented.

Scrutiny Panel Judgement	Evidence	Recommendations	Expected benefit for customers
<p>Understand how AVH/Housing Leeds manage it's complaints process, taking into account the quality of the process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When is a complaint a complaint? Not always clear about what is a service request and what is a complaint. • Things are not routinely 'nipped in the bud' at an early stage, before they becomes a complaint in the first place or at Stage 1. • Stage 2 complaints in other councils may be handled by teams other than those that have dealt with Stage 1. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interview with Customer Services Officer 2. Desk-top review of complaint letters 3. Focus Group with Stage 1 and 2 officers 4. Telephone survey of tenants 5. Visit to Contact Centre 6. Interview LCC Customer Relations Manager 7. Review of Performance Information 8. Interview/s with Customer Involvement Manager 9. Benchmarking with other councils. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make 'informal' contact to appease complainants early in the process 2. Deliver promises made at Stage 1 3. Apologise for a service failure/failure to remedy at Stage 1 4. Consider having a different team dealing with Stage 1 and 2 complaints to introduce a level of independence. 	<p>Less need to escalate complaints through the formal stages.</p> <p>More satisfactory outcomes from complaints.</p> <p>Complaints less likely to escalate to Designated Persons and/or Ombudsman Service where complainants can see an element of independence introduced at Stage 2.</p>

Scrutiny Panel Judgement	Evidence	Recommendations	Expected benefit for customers
<p>Interface with Mears/Morrison complaints handling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harder for AVH/LCC to deliver on promises as it has less control of the response when it is delivered by Mears/Morrison • AVH/LCC doesn't have access to information from Morrison on the number of complaints outstanding complaints made direct to Mears/Morrison 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Study visit to Mears/Morrison 2. Interview with Mears/Morrison Customer Services Manager 3. Interviews with AVH/LCC officers who are lead officers for responsive repairs and gas services 4. Email questions raised with LCC officers and Mears/Morrison 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Share incidents between Mears/Morrison and LCC where complaints are made direct to contractor 6. LCC and Mears/Morrison need a clearer reporting structure. The onus is on LCC to ensure they get this as the customer and they need to be clearer in their expectations. We have seen this is possible – it just needs to happen! 7. Operatives need to be on making fuller notes on MCM to enable effective and speedy responses to complaints. This may be a training issue for Mears/Morrison. 8. Each party should be fully aware of the impact of actions taken on the customer. 9. Methods of measuring customer satisfaction with repairs requires significant improvement. 	<p>Fewer complaints from tenants.</p> <p>Early resolution of complaints.</p> <p>Accurate tenant satisfaction rates established to guide service improvement.</p>

Scrutiny Panel Judgement	Evidence	Recommendations	Expected benefit for customers
<p>Feedback to tenants-quality of communication through the investigation and in delivering conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How tenants are told how to make complaints in the first place. • Complaint response letters can be a mixture of template and personal comments. Sometimes they appear impersonal and disjointed. • Not all complaints are routinely telephoned, as required by the policy. • Posters do not refer to 'complaints', rather they invite 'views on the service'. • Confusion exists over how a visitor to a One Stop Centre makes a written rather than verbal, complaint, perhaps for a relative or neighbour, should they wish to. • Leeds Housing has a 10 working day response, the rest of the council, 15 working days. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Looked at a website and leaflets available in One Stop Shops and Housing Offices 2. Looked at complaint letters 3. Telephone survey of tenants 4. Interview with One Stop Centre Staff. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Ensure policy of telephoning complainants is adhered to. 11. Wording of feedback needs to be Plain English and have the 'personal touch'- consider introducing a checklist of points that must be covered by officers dealing with complaint responses with associated training rather than cutting and pasting from model letters. 12. Provide One Stop Centre Staff with an overview of the new complaints arrangements arising from the Localism Act. 13. Clarify procedure for written complaints accessed through One Stop Centres and other outlets and provide a form for complainants to fill in based on the on-line form. 14. The 10 working day response time should not be lost. 15. Consider extending this deadline to all Council services. 	<p>Higher tenant satisfaction .</p> <p>Less escalation of complaints.</p>

Scrutiny Panel Judgement	Evidence	Recommendations	Expected benefit for customers
<p>How do service teams learn from complaints?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How complaints contribute to service improvement • Issues around who takes ownership of complaints and how they respond • Issues around where more than one issue is contained in a complaint, who takes ownership? • Issues around inputting of information into the MCM system so all parties can learn from matters that arise. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interviews with Stage 1 and 2 officers. 2. Email questions following the implementation of MCM. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Evidence of how complaints contribute to service improvement requires review. 17. Existing systems for recording how complaints have contributed to service improvement need to be shared generally with tenants (e.g. through the newsletter) . 18. Internal communication around how AVH/Housing Leeds learn from complaints needs improvement. 	<p>Greater confidence from tenants in LCC's willingness to learn from complaints.</p> <p>Tenants benefit from service improvements.</p>
<p>How is LCC responding to the new complaints regime that commenced in April 2013?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the Ombudsman Service and access to it enshrined in the Localism Act 2011 • Leeds Tennant Federation is establishing a Designated Tenant Panel for Complaints 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation by Independent Mentor. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 19. While response letters contain information about the new system, written advice on how to complain is out of date in this aspect. 20. Leeds Tenants Federation's Designated Panel for Complaints should focus on advocacy for tenants, aimed at helping tenants understand the process and acting as an 'honest broker' between tenants and the Council. 	<p>Clarify for tenants about the new system.</p> <p>An effective Designated Tenant Panel helping to reduce escalation of complaints to the Ombudsman Service.</p>

Scrutiny Panel Judgement	Evidence	Recommendations	Expected benefit for customers
<p>Capacity of staff to deal with the specialist nature of complaints' response, including training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large number of staff are involved in complaints- are they all equipped to deal with them? • When complaints are complex and/or cover more than one area of service, problems can arise especially around who takes ownership • On occasions, staff at One Stop Centres are known to escalate complaints at busy times which may not be warranted. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus group of Stage 2 Officers. 2. Observation at LCC Customer Services Centre. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Protocols need to be clear and consistent especially where a number of service areas are involved, with a view to having the fewest number of officers involved as possible. 22. Focus needs to consistently be on solving matters at as early a stage as possible, which may require a review of how they are handled at One Stop Centres. 	<p>Early resolution of complaints so increased tenant satisfaction.</p>

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Report of Director of Environment and Housing

Report to: Housing Advisory Board

Date: 8th April 2014

Subject: STAR survey 2014/15 – Method & Approach

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes x No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	x Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes x No

Summary of main issues

1. Although there is no longer a regulatory requirement to carry out a large tenant perception survey, Housing Leeds needs to understand current tenant concerns and priorities to continue to develop and improve services.
2. The approach used for STAR was suitable, effective and low cost. Following the same method and carrying out the survey at the same time of year, will enable robust tracking of trends.
3. Planning the survey to be accurate to Ward level would be beneficial to the new service, whilst not costing a significant amount extra.
4. Offering translated surveys incurred a fair amount of additional cost and staff time, but the number of tenants that used the service (10) was so small as to be statistically insignificant.
5. Following the review of housing services, there is now an opportunity for service improvements to be coordinated and monitored by a central function, which would be better-positioned to support with the development of strategic improvements.

Recommendations

6. A large scale tenant perception survey is carried out in 2014/15, by the internal Research Team who carried out the previous survey, repeating the same approach as STAR 2012 and at the same time of year.

7. To only produce an English language version of the survey (and versions for sight impaired customers), potentially saving over £1000.
8. For the survey to again be accurate to each management areas (and BITMO), but to improve reliability at WARD level, at an additional cost of up to £1500.
9. During the project planning phase a central function is agreed, through consultation with service managers, to coordinate and monitor planned service improvements across the city.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide a summary of what was learnt from STAR survey 2012, and how services have changed as a consequence.
- 1.2 To propose a method for carrying out a large city-wide customer perception survey of general needs tenants during 2014/15.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Until 2010 social housing providers were required to carry out tenant perception surveys following the STATUS survey methodology. Since then, HouseMark developed the STAR survey, following many of the key principles of STATUS and with similar questions, so that providers can track trends over time and benchmark with other similar organisations.
- 2.2 In 2012 the ABCL Research team carried out a STAR survey entirely in house, using council resources including the Print and Mail Room, and completed the project at a cost of £13,888 (less than half of what it had cost to out-source STATUS surveys in previous years).

2.3 Key findings from STAR 2012 survey:

In general the results were positive with increased satisfaction in many areas including the key question - overall satisfaction with services:

2.3.1 Successes:

- Increase in overall tenant satisfaction rising by 5% city wide to 74%,
- Dealing with enquiries generally (+9%),
- Neighbourhood as a place to live (+4%),
- Dealing with anti-social behaviour (+8%), and
- Landlord listening to tenants views and acting upon them (+5%).

2.3.2 Areas of concern:

- Repairs - decreases in satisfaction with **speed of repair** (-10%) and **quality of repair work** (-6%), and **repair right first time** was low at 61% - although **overall satisfaction with repairs** up slightly (+1%).
- Neighbourhood issues – responses showed low levels of satisfaction with **communal cleaning** and **overall estate services**. **Car parking & rubbish and litter** reported as major issues across the city.
- Advice and support - satisfaction with all advice and support questions was low, in particular **paying rent and managing finances** (-15% - although inclusion of extra element 'managing finances' this year) and advice and support to **vulnerable tenants** (-5%).

- Reputation of the landlord - agreement that the landlord has a **good reputation** was arguably low at 60%.

2.3.3 Key drivers identified that affect overall tenant satisfaction were:

- Satisfaction with **repairs and maintenance** – and tenants reported this was by far their most important priority.
- Satisfaction with **listening and acting upon views** – underlining the importance of feeding back to tenants after consultation and informing them of any actions taken.
- Tenant **age** - with the highest levels of dissatisfaction in the younger population.

2.4 Further research and analysis was carried out to consider the areas with the highest and lowest levels of satisfaction alongside a number of other information sources. This 'Insight Report' was shared with local housing services to inform discussion on 'what might be the reasons for greater or lesser satisfaction?', and so inform the development of future services.

Areas with the most satisfied tenants	Areas with the most dissatisfied tenants
1.Wetherby	1.Kirkstall
2.BITMO	2.Armley
3.Meanwood	3.Wortley
4.Harehills and Chapeltown	4.Halton Moor and Osmondthorpe
5.Swarcliffe	5.Seacroft South

2.5 **Key Service Improvements:**

The ALMOs produced local action plans using the findings of the survey, which included many planned improvements. Listed below are some of the key improvements that link to the survey findings.

2.5.4 Addressing **repairs and maintenance** concerns from the findings, including speed of repair and getting it right first time:

- On-going city-wide review of repair scripts and additional training provided to staff, with a view to reduce misdiagnosis - a key factor affecting repairs getting done right first time.
- The repairs policy has been reviewed city-wide and a new tenants' handbook produced, which sets out the service parameters and customer responsibilities, to enable the service to better focus resources where they are needed.
- Coordinating planned works city-wide in such a way as to pre-empt future responsive repairs and create a more efficient service.

- 2.5.5 Addressing **neighbourhood** issues from the findings including rubbish and litter, anti-social behaviour, drugs, and car-parking:
- EASAP project accessed £250k funding to carry out works to improve the appearance and the cleanliness of targeted estates.
 - In SSE Leeds, £150k set aside for environmental works, resulting in improvements to fencing and open spaces, parking, and to the council buildings within estates.
 - Working in partnership with LASBT and the Police, Operation Champion targeted hot spots in Seacroft South with increased officer presence, and resulted in tenancy action being taken against problem tenants.
- 2.5.6 Addressing issues from the findings around **advice and support with managing finances** and for **vulnerable tenants**:
- Across the city 19 additional officers brought in to support tenants affected by welfare reform.
 - In SSE Leeds, winter 'survival packs' containing food, warm clothing and blankets given to vulnerable people.
 - In ENE Leeds, Operation Champion assisted a number of vulnerable tenants, rehousing some due to safeguarding issues.
- 2.5.7 Addressing low satisfaction with **moving and swapping home** and with advice and support for this service:
- Changed procedures in ENE Leeds to ensure mutual exchange website kept up to date and carried out 'swap shops' in Seacroft and Halton.
- 2.5.8 Continuing to improve how we **listen to and act on tenants views**, and improving **landlord reputation**:
- Development of Social Media as a communication channel city-wide including Facebook, Twitter, and through Youtube videos that highlighted estate improvements. Targeted emails and text messages used to contact hard to reach groups including younger people.
 - In WNW Leeds, internal systems set up to identify and report positive stories.

3 **Main issues**

- 3.1 Although there is no longer a regulatory requirement to carry out a large tenant perception survey, Housing Leeds needs to understand current tenant concerns and priorities to continue to develop and improve services. The local service surveys currently in use neither provide overall satisfaction figures or the insight across all services that a tenant perception survey would provide.
- 3.2 Housemark's STAR survey framework is the industry standard tenant perception survey, providing accurate results that can be compared with other similar

organisations. Following the STAR approach again would enable tracking of trends over time - particularly useful during this period of change.

- 3.3 STAR 2012 was carried out through the post, supplemented by emailed web surveys. Postal surveys are generally more cost effective than other methods, such as phone surveys, and aren't restricted to a small number of questions.

Results can be skewed by a preference of certain demographic groups to complete surveys, however they can (as previously) be weighted to ensure they represent the views of all tenant groups. To help with this we could again supplement the returns with emailed web surveys to attract responses from younger tenants.

Different survey methods can affect overall satisfaction results. Repeating a postal method would ensure like-for-like comparison with previous results.

- 3.4 Research has shown that tenant satisfaction levels can differ slightly depending on the time of year. For this reason surveys should be sent out at the same time as previous surveys (October and November), so that results are comparable. Other times of year have been shown to negatively affect levels of satisfaction. This would be the result in the following project timeline:

Month	Activity	Phase
Apr	Agree high level method and approach	Project planning, preparation and design
May	Plan project. Collaborate with Service Managers to develop survey questionnaire from optional STAR questions.	
June		
July	Complete first draft of survey. Work with internal teams/external partners to get quotes for print/mail and schedule work.	
Aug		
Sept	Complete mail sample and send to printers with final draft of survey.	Field work
Oct	1 st mail out	
Nov	2 nd mail out	Data entry, cleansing and weighting
Dec	Complete data entry	
Jan15	Initial top line findings	
Feb15	Present findings to key stakeholders.	
Mar15	Publish detailed city-wide report.	

- 3.5 The previous surveys were designed to be highly reliable to the 3 ALMO areas (and BITMO). Following the same approach, would enable us to track trends and compare satisfaction in these areas, by which many services will continue to be managed.

In order to report by local governance areas, the survey could be planned to be reliable at Ward level. This would provide a more detailed picture than the Neighbourhood Office level previously used, but would consequently require 10% more surveys to be sent out, at an additional cost of up to £1500.

- 3.6 For STAR 2012 we offered translated versions of surveys, at a cost of £725 (plus incurring staff time and printing a further side of A4). We only received around 10 completed non English language returns, which will have made no effect on the figures and would not have affected the survey's validity in terms of being able to obtain a representative sample.
- 3.7 Working with a number of separate organisations in 2012 made it difficult to monitor that findings were used effectively to inform service improvement. Following the review of housing services, there is now an opportunity for this to be coordinated by a central function, which would be better-positioned to support with the development of strategic improvements. How best to do this could be considered in consultation with service managers during the project planning phase.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 The STAR survey is a key consultation tool, which collect tenant feedback around services provided and consults on their priorities.
- 4.1.2 We have previously used these surveys as an opportunity to ask tenants if they want to get involved – providing engagement teams with lists of interested tenants.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 Using a combination of survey questions and what we already know about tenants from the tenant profile, it is possible using the STAR method to gain a wealth of insight around the opinions and priorities of different social and demographic groups, which can be used to support future service development.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 The Best Council Plan includes the objective of ensuring high quality public services, with a focus on improving customer satisfaction. The STAR survey is a key tool for assessing whether this best council objective has been met.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 STAR 2012 was carried out by the ABCL Research Team using internal print and mail services at a cost of £13,888. It would cost around £30,000 to have this work

carried out by an external market research organisation. The team would be able to carry out STAR 2014 for a similar amount.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 The STAR survey is a confidential survey, subject to data protection laws around the use of market research.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 A key risk would be that the survey doesn't gain the insight needed to drive further service development in 2015/16. To reduce this the questionnaire will be created in consultation with service managers across Housing Leeds.

4.6.2 A Risk Register will be developed before May 2014 as part of the project management process.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Housing Leeds needs to carry out a large scale tenant perception survey in 2014/15 and if we again follow the STAR approach this would enable tracking trends over time and benchmarking with other similar organisations.

5.2 The approach used for STAR was suitable and effective and low cost. Following the same method and carrying out the survey at the same time of year will enable robust tracking of trends.

5.3 Planning the survey to be accurate to Ward level would be beneficial to the new service, whilst not costing a significant amount extra.

5.4 Offering translated surveys incurred a fair amount of additional cost and staff time, but the number of tenants that used the service was so small as to be statistically insignificant.

5.5 Following the review of housing services, there is now an opportunity for service improvements to be coordinated and monitored by a central function, which would be better-positioned to support with the development of strategic improvements.

6 Recommendations

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6.2 To only produce an English language version of the survey (and versions for sight impaired customers), potentially saving over £1000.

6.3 For the survey to again be accurate to each management areas (and BITMO), but to improve reliability at WARD level, at an additional cost of up to £1500.

6.4 During the project planning phase a central function is agreed, through consultation with service managers, to coordinate and monitor planned service improvements across the city.

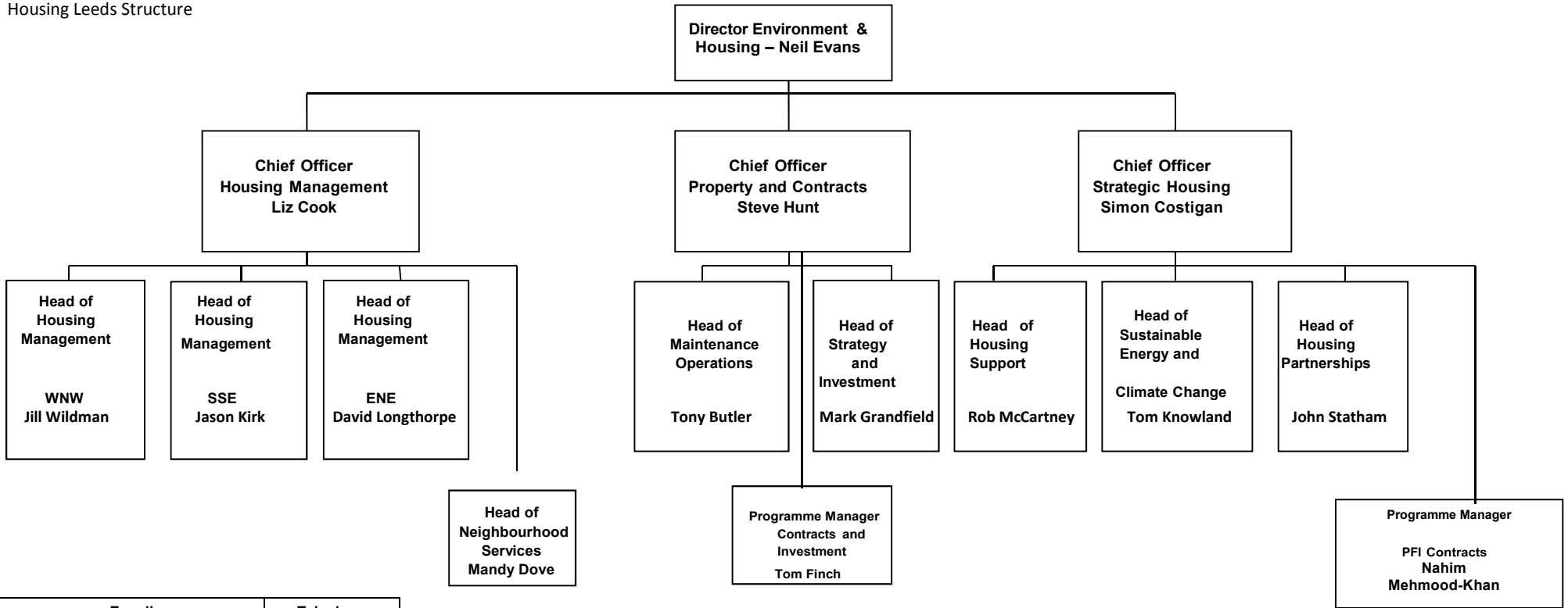
7 Background documents¹

7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

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Housing Leeds Structure



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Meeting Date	Minute ref no.	Action	Responsible for Output	Others involved	(last updated 28 March 2014)	Status
04/12/13	6.	<u>Housing and the Jobs and Skills Agenda</u> Officers work with Cllr Maqsood who is employment lead and for a further paper to be brought back to a future meeting of the Board.	Chris Simpson	Phil Rees Jane Hopkins	Work continues to develop closer working with the Council's Employment and Skills Services and will involve Cllr Maqsood as employment lead Member. A meeting is also scheduled to take place on 28 March with Sue Wynne to look at opportunities for collaboration with both Housing Leeds and Waste Management services. A paper will be brought back to a future meeting of the Board	Open
	7.	<u>Tenant Involvement</u> To take account of the comments of the board as this work is carried forward.	Simon Costigan (now Liz Cook)		Future arrangements for strengthening Tenant Involvement is now being picked up by Liz Cook who will be taking account of the Board's comments. Related papers are included on 8/4 HAB agenda. A summary report will be brought to June HAB Board, setting out all the tenant involvement arrangements that are in place/being planned	Open
	8.	<u>Multi-storey tenant working group</u> Following the approval by the board of the recommendations: to develop plan for taking	Chris Simpson		Chris is pursuing the development of a Strategic Umbrella Group comprising max 6 tenants plus	Open

		<p>this work forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively involve members in the workstream • In developing support for tenant involvement, to factor in the need for support and training of Chairs of Local Housing Advisory Panels with regards maximise their time and focus on coherent, strategic issues to best represent tenants at Housing Advisory Board • Provision of training and support to enable the Chairs to represent the views of tenants. • Provision of training and support for tenants to encourage active engagement.. • To propose innovative ways of reaching and engaging a greater proportion of tenants using a wider range of media and other activity to do so. 	Chris Simpson	All members	<p>officers from repairs, LASBAT and housing management. One tenant from the Group will be invited to serve on the Housing Advisory Board.</p> <p>An update report will be brought to the June HAB Board.</p>	
28/01/14	9.	That a report be brought back in due course setting out proposals for the establishment of a Sub-Committee(s)	Debra Scott/John Grieve		A number of related groups and forums are already in place and are feeding into the HAB. A report will be brought to a future Board to review the position and consider the need for other working groups to be established.	Open
	11. (ii)	Development of a Leeds Decent Homes Standard which gives greater prominence to thermal efficiency requirements	Steve Hunt		Work is being done to develop a new Standard for Leeds Homes and a report will be scheduled for a future Board.	Open
	11. (iii)	That the Director of Environment and Housing be requested to investigate the possibility of using some of the un-committed capital programme resources to address environmental conditions on estates	Steve Hunt		Additional funds have now been made available to Housing Advisory Panels to address this issue	Close