

Thurrock - An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The meeting will be held at 7.00 pm on 16 June 2020

Due to government guidance on social-distancing and COVID-19 virus the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 June 2020 will be held virtually online. The press and public will be able to watch the meeting live online at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/user/thurrockcouncil>

Membership:

Councillors Lynn Worrall (Chair), Chris Baker (Vice-Chair), Qaisar Abbas, Colin Churchman, James Halden and Joycelyn Redsell

Lynn Mansfield, Housing Tenant Representative

Substitutes:

Councillors Daniel Chukwu, Sara Muldowney, Terry Piccolo and Luke Spillman

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 11 February 2020.	
3 Urgent Items	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	

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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

Please contact Wendy Le, Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Agenda published on: **8 June 2020**

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

Helpful Reminders for Members

- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

When should you declare an interest *at a meeting*?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

What is a Non-Pecuniary interest? – this is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest.

Pecuniary

If the interest is not already in the register you must (unless the interest has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive) disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting

If the Interest is not entered in the register and is not the subject of a pending notification you must within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the register

Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:

- **Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;**
- **Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and**
- **leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon**

If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps

Non- pecuniary

Declare the nature and extent of your interest including enough detail to allow a member of the public to understand its nature

You may participate and vote in the usual way but you should seek advice on Predetermination and Bias from the Monitoring Officer.

Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future.

1. **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay
 - High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
 - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
 - Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together

2. **Place** – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future
 - Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places
 - Clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
 - Fewer public buildings with better services

3. **Prosperity** – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations
 - Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
 - Vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all
 - Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services

Minutes of the Meeting of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 February 2020 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Lynn Worrall (Chair), Chris Baker (Vice-Chair), Qaisar Abbas, Colin Churchman, Joycelyn Redsell and Terry Piccolo (substitute for James Halden)

Lynn Mansfield, Housing Tenant Representative

Apologies: Councillor James Halden

In attendance: Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health/Interim Director of Children's Services
David Moore, Interim Assistant Director Place Delivery
Keith Andrews, Housing Development Manager
Chris Seman, Investment Planning & Performance Analyst
Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

27. Minutes

The minutes of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 October 2019, 29 October 2019 and 14 January 2020 were approved as a correct record.

28. Urgent Items

There were no items of urgent business.

29. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

30. Housing Development Options List

The Chair of the Committee Councillor Worrall explained that a number of questions had been put forward by residents and with this in mind, she was going to move that the item be heard first.

She continued to explain that due to the number of questions submitted, there was to be a time limit of 30 minutes; to ensure that as many questions were answered as possible. Should anyone not get to ask their question, Officers would provide a written response.

Question from Alexandru Andonie

Why were 2 sites Culver Fields and Callan Grove deemed suitable for development and put up for tender before the Housing Development Process was agreed?

The Housing Development Manager explained that preparatory work on these sites pre-dated the process agreed at January Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He continued by adding they had not been put out for tender for construction nor had any decision been made on development.

Question from Tricia Campbell

Have Thurrock Council ignored their priorities which resonates to "People" theme in particular "Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together" by not given its residents the power of opinion which involves living space?

The Housing Development Manager advised the Housing Overview and Scrutiny report and the Cabinet report started the process of communication. He continued by saying the report was clear there will be engagement with residents on a site by site basis. This would also be supplemented by the formal consultation process required should applications be submitted for planning approval.

Question from Wayne Joseph

What support packages are in place from Council to enable the local residents to manage their mental health after losing a peaceful tranquil environment?

The Interim Assistant Director Place Delivery commented that the impact of any planning application on the local community would be considered as part of the planning process as individual sites are brought forward. This would include consultation with those responsible for the provision of Mental Health support, as appropriate.

Question from Councillor Shinnick

With 600 new homes already being built in Ockendon along with the 300 vans that were highlighted in Buckles lane that Ockendon has absorbed within its community without any additional schools, doctors dentists etc. What criteria was used to highlight the community spaces that are being used by the community to be built on.

The Interim Assistant Director Place Delivery explained the criteria to identify a range of potential development sites was set out within the Cabinet report "Housing development process" presented on 15 January 2020.

The Interim Assistant Director Place Delivery then addressed the Committee explaining at the 29 October 2019, Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members had been asked to comment on the proposed process and criteria by which Council owned sites were selected for redevelopment for residential purposes. Subsequently, Cabinet had approved the approach set out, on 15 January 2020

He continued to outline that the report followed the criteria established by the Cabinet and set out a list of site options that were recommended to be considered for residential development by the Council (through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)) or by the Council's wholly owned company, Thurrock Regeneration Limited (TRL).

It was explained to Members that the report did not seek approval for individual housing development schemes, or for housing development contracts to be tendered. Members heard that one site had been included in error and that at the February Cabinet meeting the Portfolio Holder for Housing would be removing site 20 – Springhouse Road, Stanford Le Hope.

The Interim Assistant Director Place Delivery stressed that any residents who were not able to attend the Committee to ask their question would receive a written response and a full consultation would be undertaken with complete engagement with residents as individual sites were brought forward.

Councillor Worrall enquired as to the due diligence given to the proposed 20 sites. The Interim Assistant Director Place Delivery commented that a number of tests had been completed across all of the sites included on the options list. These could be tests completed either using a desk-based studies or actual testing of the land itself. He further commented that approved schemes were not in place for the sites on the options list at this time and that further work and studies as well as consultations would take place as or when individual sites were brought forward.

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Worrall stated she felt it would be best to review each site individually as per the recommendation to review and comment on the list of options.

Site 1 - Aveley Library/Hall/Car Park

Councillor Abbas queried as to where the new hall would be built. The Housing Development Manager stated no development had been undertaken as there was still work to be carried out, as the sites were still in the early stages. The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health and Interim Director of Children's Services advised the Committee that the new Aveley Hub was significantly bigger with a larger space. It was hoped that the hub would be used in place of the Aveley Hall.

Councillor Churchman echoed the Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health and Interim Director of Children's Services commenting that the Aveley

Hub was due to be opened in the next few weeks and residents were looking forward to it.

Site 2 - Garron Lane/Humber Ave, South Ockendon

Councillor Baker remarked that the area proposed was causing residents stress, worry and panic. He stated that Officers should look at brown fill sites first before taking residents open spaces.

Sites 3/4 Enborne Green and Derry Avenue, South Ockendon

Councillor Baker commented that Derry Avenue had poor quality access. He followed up seeking how officers were planning to gain access to the site. The Housing Development Manager remarked there was work to be completed as to the quality of the land for all sites, there was also a range of criteria which was to be used.

The Interim Assistant Director Place Delivery advised the report was a list of potential sites at an early stage and that schemes had not been developed for consultation yet and reiterated that the report was not seeking planning approval for the sites.

Site 5 - Culver Centre & Field

Councillor Abbas sought as to the consultation of the Culver Centre already being completed. The Interim Assistant Director Place Delivery explained the initial work process for the Culver Centre was slightly different to the other sites, however was still in the early stages and still did not have any approved or finalised scheme. He added that residents had been in communication with the Council and Officers were preparing to go back out to consultation on the site and that this consultation would include feedback from the first consultation as well as amendments to the scheme resulting from the feedback.

It was commented that most of the proposed sites were located in South Ockendon. Members queried as to why there were no sites in the East of the Borough. It was explained it was difficult as a lot of the land was Green Belt land, Officers were looking at site options in conjunction with the Local Plan. This being said it was still possible for sites to be proposed at a future date.

Members sought as to the process of changing the use of the site, as it was previously used as a school and park. The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health and Interim Director of Children's Services advised the Council had applied to change the use of the site to the Secretary of State and so the matter was with Central Government. The application was submitted in the autumn and Officers were chasing for a response.

Councillor Worrall enquired as to the mix on the site as to social and affordable housing. The Housing Development Manager advised that Council

policy stated 35% of all homes should be affordable housing. It was commented that homes built using the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) would be charged 70% of market rents.

Site 6 - Whiteacre, South Ockendon

Members remarked they felt this site was good for its proposed development. Councillor Baker stated this was the only site he agreed with. He continued to advise the site was an old NHS site.

Site 7 - Prince of Wales Public House, South Ockendon

The Chair stated that the Council owned this property. Councillor Redsell observed it was a shame that local pubs in the borough were being used for other uses as it meant community places were no longer available.

Sites 8/9 - Callan Grove and Broxburn Drive, South Ockendon

Councillor Churchman sought clarity on how residents could get the Callan Grove site pulled from the options list. The Interim Assistant Director Place Delivery explained that the consultation process was still to be carried out and during the process would be discussions with residents on all possible sites.

It was confirmed during discussions that even sites that were Council owned, would still go through the Planning Committee as a matter of process and transparency. Officers further confirmed that the list of sites could be amended with sites being added or removed from the Options list at any time.

Members sought to whether infrastructure was to be included as part of the schemes, when developments were taking place. Examples of children attending schools outside of the borough were raised given that the sites proposed 404 new homes in South Ockendon alone.

Officers highlighted that the project was not part of the local plan and each site would be put through the planning process where it would be highlighted as to needs within each area. The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health and Interim Director of Children's Services further stated that there would soon be the opening of the Integrated Medical Centres across the Borough.

Sites 10/11 Crammervill Street/Fleethall Grove and Darnley & Crown Road

Officers commented these sites had been identified under the HRA, although it was important to note that no decisions had been made for these sites to have homes built being funded by the HRA.

Councillor Redsell commented that the bulk of garages were not used for parking but more often than not for storage.

Sites 13, 14 and 15 Argent Street Thames Road and Manor Way

Councillor Worrall queried as to how Grays Beach car park was on the list. She continued by stating that residents used the car park and had merits to enable them to park. The Housing Development Manager commented a car parking survey would be completed and if it was agreed to process further scrutiny would be required.

The Committee queried how it was possible to list sites which were heavily used by residents.

Councillor Worrall continued on to site 15, she explained this site was known to residents as Elm Park; where the Council had recently planted 300 trees and homed protected species.

Site 16 - Bridge Road (East Side)

Members discussed how this site was the adult college and also a disused Scout hall. Officer stated that it did include the Scout hall and part of the car park to adult college. They confirmed that should the site be put forward for development, then conversations with the different users would be had.

Councillor Redsell commented the photo in the agenda showed that the site didn't look good, and she remarked that if redevelopment enhanced the area, then it could be a good thing.

Site 17 - 13 Loewen Road, Chadwell St Mary

Members discussed the poor condition of the building.

Site 20 - Springhouse Road, Corringham

The Chair commented that this site was to be removed by the Portfolio Holder.

Site 19 - Ridgewell Road, Orsett

Councillor Worrall stated this site had caused unrest for residents who owned their home, having bought them from the Council. She continued by remarking some residents found out over social media and were now living in uncertainty. The Interim Assistant Director Place Delivery commented there was no scheme in place to develop on the site and any such scheme would be consulted on.

The Housing Tenant Representative sought if the homes on Malting Lane would be included as the road was on the boundary of the site. The Housing Development Manager commented that some of the homes on Maltings Lane could be included if the site was taken forward.

Councillor Worrall queried the split between social and affordable housing in relation to the 500 new homes to be built between 2019-2029. The Interim

Assistant Director Place Delivery advised the target of 500 homes had been agreed by Members and as yet the schemes for the sites were not sufficiently advanced to determine the mix of housing that would be built on each site.

The Chair continued to ask why Officers hadn't brought a longer list to the Committee to comment on. The Interim Assistant Director Place Delivery remarked he didn't recognise a "longer list" as the Council has information about sites all across the Borough. The sites included on the Housing Development Options List had been through some due diligence work and were at an early stage, with further work and consultation still needed in all cases. Other sites that weren't on the list had not had enough work completed to even consider bringing them forward for discussion at this stage, but if further sites were brought forward, then an update would be brought to Housing Overview and Scrutiny in due course to ensure Members were updated.

Councillor Worrall sought how Council owned land would be transferred to Thurrock Regeneration Limited (TRL) to ensure that a good value was achieved for the Council. The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health and Interim Director of Children's Services stated that disposal of land would be recommended by Cabinet to be taken to Full Council as per a request of the General Services Committee.

Councillor Worrall requested that the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee be kept up to date at every stage of the development.

Councillor Piccolo offered his thanks to the Portfolio Holder for presenting the report to Overview and Scrutiny so early on in the process and before any decision had been made.

The Chair of the Committee addressed Members of the Committee stating the HRA green spaces were owned by Thurrock residents and once they are gone they were gone. She stated the Committee could be confident that once building had started on the green spaces then a precedent would be set for more to be added to the list.

Councillor Worrall continued to state there were other sites that should be on the list, a long time before green open spaces, parks and people homes. She commented the Council would do well to listen to its residents and go back to the drawing board and look at the vision and priorities which were printed in all agendas. She remarked that with this in mind she could not endorse the list presented to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- 1. Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to review and comment on the list of housing development option sites to be taken forward for further detailed work, involving engagement with stakeholders and communities.**

2. Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note that their comments on this paper will be reported to Cabinet on 12 February 2020.

31. Housing Performance Update 2019/20

The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health and Interim Director of Children's Services presented the report and in doing so, outlined the performance framework for the Housing Department and explained the context of the full range of indicators, which now included the Housing Performance Scorecard as performance measures. It was highlighted the report covered performance between April 2019 to November 2019.

The Investment Planning & Performance Analyst addressed Members explaining that for this municipal year to date there had been a significant improvement in overall tenant satisfaction with Housing services with 74.8% of the 1287 tenants surveyed rating the service as excellent or good. Members heard this equated to an improvement of 8.5% in comparison with the comparable period in 2018/2019.

He continued by highlighting the Key Performance Indicators for Housing Performance of which the following areas had reached or superseded the target of 75%; general satisfaction of tenants with neighbourhoods / services provided, rents collected and average time to turnaround / re-let voids; the latest turnaround of a void was completed in 19 days.

Councillor Redsell enquired as to whether Officers were on top of any rent arrears and queried if Housing Officers were working with Officers in the Council Tax Team. The Committee were advised that the number of evictions had decreased for the year and this was with the help of the Finance Inclusion Officers who were very proactive within the community.

The Housing Tenants Representative enquired as to whether any checks were undertaken before the voids were offered out to residents, as there were still repairs to be completed. Officers explained that any repair work on voids was managed by the voids team.

Members discussed Council Housing being offered to people moving into the borough. The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health and Interim Director of Children's Services advised the Committee that the Council Housing Policy was clear in that residents must have lived in the borough for 6 years, have a family link and have work within the Borough. Should this not be the case and Members knew of any cases where Housing had been offered to anyone moving into the area, then it should be reported to Officers as this was fraud and would be investigated.

Councillor Worrall queried what the percentage of complaints was in figures. Officers commented that complaints upheld remained on target and was consistent with upheld complaint levels in comparison with 2018/2019. It was

agreed that Officers would email the Committee with the complaint figures for the Housing Department.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes and comments on the report.

Councillor Worrall sought the Committees agreement to suspend standing orders; so that all business on the agenda could be discussed. This was agreed by the Committee.

32. Procurement of Housing Capital Programme Delivery

The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health and Interim Director of Children's Services introduced the report informing Members that it set out the proposals for the procurement and contract packages to ensure the successful delivery of the Housing Capital Programme.

He further explained the key priorities for the Housing Capital Programme for next 5 years, was the continuation of the property refurbishment through the Transforming Homes programme and the external refurbishment of nine tower blocks in Grays.

Members heard how the refurbishment of kitchen and bathrooms of Council homes was near to completion. Following this the Council was due to go out to tender for the external refurbishment of tower blocks cladding and windows.

The Chair of the Committee sought as to the type of tender the Council were to complete. It was confirmed that an open procurement exercise would be undertaken, where a number of contractors would be able to apply.

Councillor Worrall further asked how Officers were planning to get the best deal possible when it came to costs for completing the works. The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health and Interim Director of Children's Services commented the Councils existing contractors had a very extensive social value offer for example apprenticeships and working with local schools. He continued by confirming this would continue with the new contract. Councillor Worrall welcomed this and stated that it was the Social Value Programme who cleaned the War Memorials in the borough.

It was remarked by Councillor Redsell that the tower blocks in Blackshots Ward were built in the late 1950s/1960s and it was not just external refurbishment that was needed; she commented the flats had mould issues due to condensation.

RESOLVED the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Members were requested to note and comment upon:

1. The procurement of two major works contract packages for the delivery of the Housing Capital work programme as set out in the report
2. The procurement of two contract packages to provide strategic support and cost management of the Housing Capital Programme as set out in the report
3. Authority being delegated for the awarding of the above contracts to the Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

33. Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/2020

The Committee discussed the work programme ahead of the new municipal year. Members agreed to a number of reports being included on the Work Programme.

RESOLVED:

That the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed for the following reports to be included on the Work Programme for 2020/2021

- **Housing Strategy Update**
- **Social Value Framework**
- **Housing Development Update**

The meeting finished at 9.20 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

16 June 2020		ITEM: 5
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Housing KPI Performance (2019/20)		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Carol Hinvest – Assistant Director of Housing		
Accountable Assistant Director: Carol Hinvest – Assistant Director of Housing		
Accountable Director: Roger Harris – Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health.		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

A summary and narrative of KPI performance for the 2019/20 reporting year is provided.

1. Recommendation

1.1 That the Committee notes and comments on the report.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The key performance indicator suite comprises of a number of service critical performance indicators that measure Housing's performance against key service outputs, compliance with statutory regulations and tenant satisfaction with primary functions of the service.
- 2.2 Performance against the suite of key performance indicators is reported at Housing Management Team meetings and directorate Performance Management Meetings on a monthly basis. Performance is also reported at Performance Board and forms part of the quarterly performance report that is taken to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.3 An independent research contractor who specialise in telephone satisfaction surveys for the Housing sector conducts tenant satisfaction telephone surveys on behalf of the Housing department. Satisfaction levels were measured using a 5-point scale (excellent, good, fair, poor and very poor) and only excellent and good ratings are included in the satisfaction rate as a percentage of all respondents.

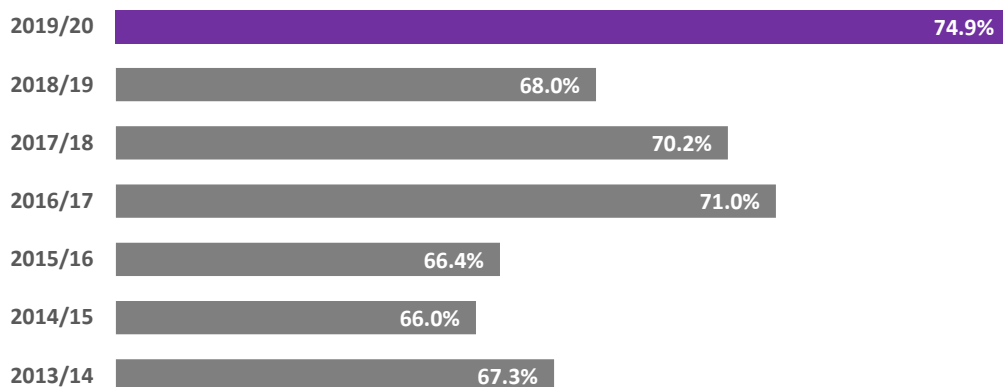
3. Housing Performance – Key Performance Indicators

KPI	Performance Indicators	Target	2018/19	YTD	Polarity
KPI01	% General Satisfaction of Tenants With Neighbourhoods / Services Provided by Housing	75%	68%	74.9%	↑
KPI02	% Satisfaction of Tenants With Transforming Homes (Contractor & Programme)	85%	87.5%	86.9%	↓
KPI03	% of Repairs Completed Within Target	95%	97.7%	98.3%	↑
KPI04	% Rent Collected	98%	98.8%	98.5%	↓
KPI05	Average Time to Turnaround / Re-let Voids (in days)	28	26.64	25.6	↑
KPI06	% of Gas Service Checks Carried out Within Statutory Timescale	100%	100%	100%	↔
KPI07	Number of Applicants with Family Commitments in Bed & Breakfast for Six Weeks or More	0	1	3	↓
KPI08	Number of Category 1 & 2 Hazards Removed as a Direct Result of Private Sector Housing Team Intervention	900	896	1000	↑

3.1 In 2019/20 there has been a significant improvement in overall tenant satisfaction with Housing services. In 2018/19 68% of a sample of 2011 tenants rated the Housing service as excellent or good whereas in 2019/20 74.9% of a sample of 2002 tenants rated the Housing service as excellent or good. This represents a year on year improvement of 6.9% in tenant satisfaction.

2019/20 has been the strongest performing year for overall satisfaction with Housing since the Housing department began measuring tenant satisfaction in 2013/14, exceeding the second strongest performing year (2016/17) by a considerable margin (3.9%).

Overall satisfaction with Housing by reporting year

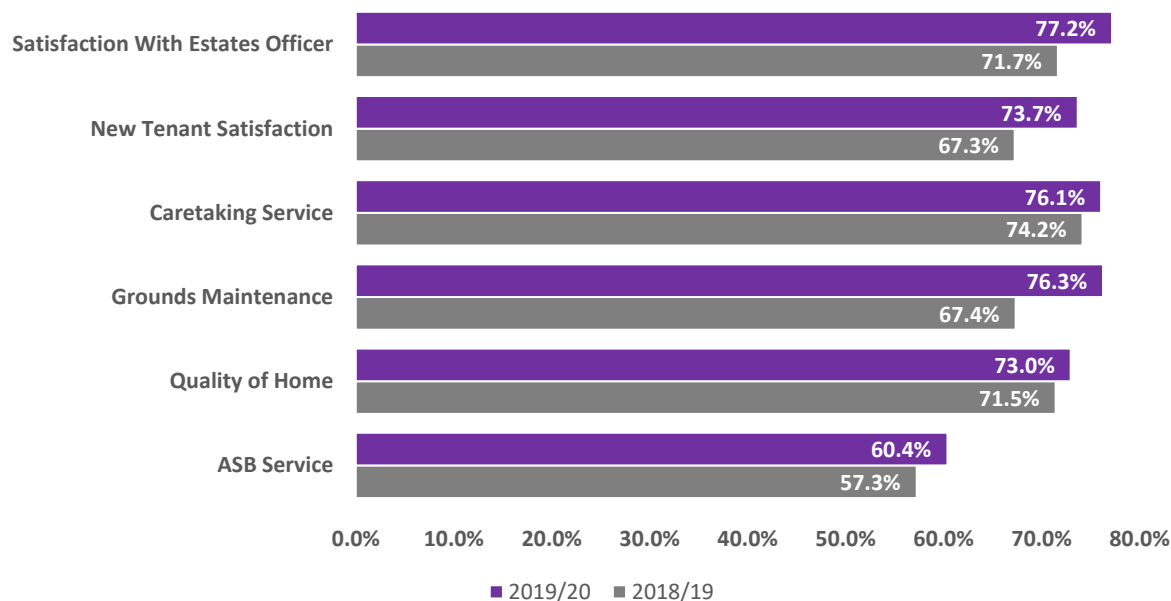


It was reported last year that analysis of feedback from tenants has consistently shown that one of the key drivers for dissatisfaction is a perceived lack of communication and engagement between the Housing department and tenants. As a result, a number of measures have been implemented in order to address this issue including a regular tenants e-newsletter, a formal communication plan, an annual tenants conference, enhancements to the Tenants Excellence Panels involvement in service delivery and mailshots to tenants. Since these measures have been taken, satisfaction has increased which analysis shows is attributed to improved communication and engagement with residents as satisfaction with keeping tenants informed is closely correlated with overall satisfaction.

Maintaining channels of communication with tenants, keeping tenants informed of issues that affect them and listening to tenants' views is something that will remain a priority for the coming year with a new telephone satisfaction survey, a full postal satisfaction survey which will be sent to all tenants and leaseholders and tenant and leaseholder focus groups all planned for 2020/21.

Coinciding with the improvements in overall satisfaction with Housing, a number of measures for individual Housing services or elements of the Housing service have also improved in 2019/20 in comparison with satisfaction levels reported in 2018/19.

Satisfaction with individual services/elements of service (2019/20 vs. 2018/19)



These improvements include satisfaction measures such as tenant satisfaction with their Estates Officers/Tenancy Management Officers (+5.5%), new tenant satisfaction (+6.4%), Caretaking (+1.9%), Grounds Maintenance (+8.9%), quality of home (+1.6%) and satisfaction with the way the Housing department tackles anti social behavior (+3.1%).

3.2 Satisfaction levels with Transforming Homes are down marginally on last year but are still on target at 86.9% for 2019/20 based on a sample of 453 tenants who provided feedback on the works carried out in their homes. 90.1% of tenants who completed a survey were satisfied with the quality of the work and 94.6% of tenants found the operatives completing the works polite and courteous.

The primary focus of the Transforming Homes programme has now moved onto external elements with the replacement of single glazed windows being the first priority. It is anticipated that dissatisfaction levels with external capital elements, in particular windows, will decrease gradually as the programme progresses. This is also expected to positively impact other satisfaction measures such as overall satisfaction with Housing services and quality of home.

3.3 In 2019/20 98.3% of repairs were completed within their respective priority target timeframes improving from 97.7% in 2018/19. Performance was particularly strong in quarter 4 with an average of 99.2% of repairs completed on target.

Satisfaction with repairs remains very high and was 90.5% overall in 2019/20 based on a sample of 2679 tenants who had a repair completed during the reporting period. In addition to this 92.2% of tenants were satisfied with the quality of the repair completed and 99% of tenants were satisfied that the operatives completing repairs treated the tenant and their home respectfully.

- 3.4 The Rents Team have faced some considerable challenges this year in achieving the rent collection target. However despite this the Rents Team surpassed the target of 98%, collecting 98.5% of rent outstanding and supporting a large number of tenants through financial inclusion.

In 2019/20 there was a further reduction in income from Housing Benefit from 38% in 2018/19 to 32% in 2019/20 resulting in an additional £3.5m of rent that needed to be collected by the Rents Team. This follows on from a similar reduction in Housing Benefit income between 2017/18 and 2018/19 which resulted in an additional £3.7m of rent that needed to be collected in 2018/19.

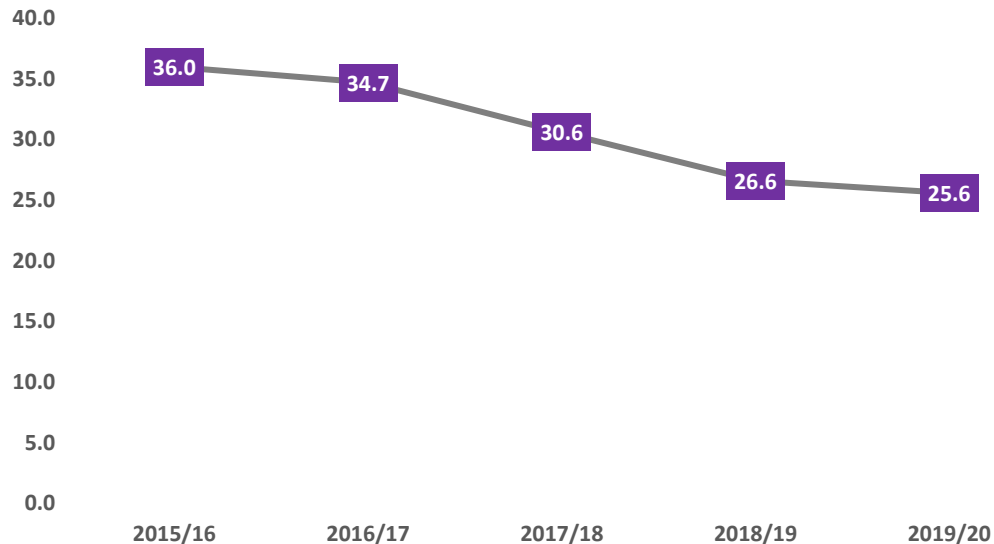
There has also been an increase of 47% in tenants claiming Universal Credit since last year, all of which have been contacted and offered a wide range of support by a Financial Inclusion Officer including support on making their claims and budgeting. 2019/20 was a 53 week rent year but this was not recognised by The Department for Work and Pensions meaning that all tenants receiving Universal Credit would only receive their Housing element for 52 weeks leaving a shortfall of a week. As a result during January and February in 2020, officers visited all 1390 affected tenants at their homes to secure Discretionary Housing Payments for the additional week to ensure that these tenants were not disadvantaged.

Financial Inclusion Officers also look to maximise tenants' income by advising and assisting tenants with any claims they are eligible for such as PIP, Council Tax support, Discretionary Housing Payments and any other grants they may be eligible for. They also offer food vouchers and assist with clothing, furniture and white goods.

The Financial Inclusion Officers won 'Team of the year 2020' in the staff awards as recognition of all the support they have offered Thurrock tenants.

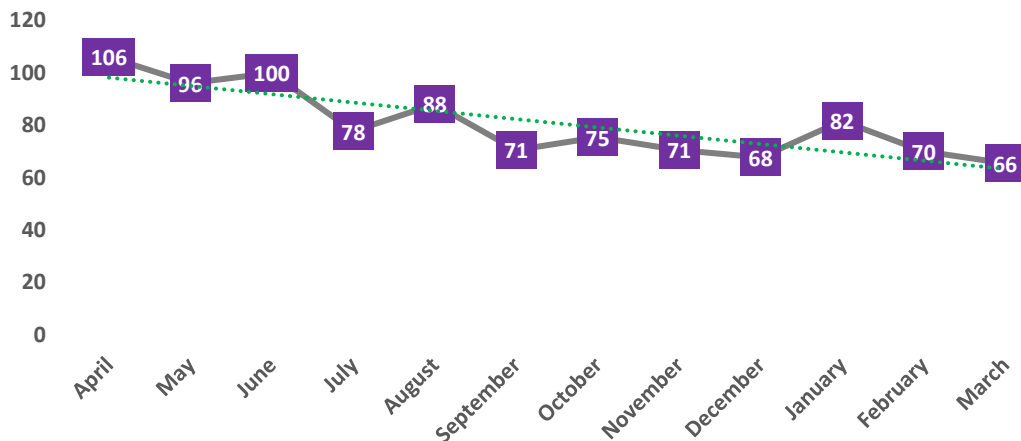
- 3.5 At year end the average time to re-let a standard void in 2019/20 was 25.6 days, reducing from 26.6 days in 2018/19 and continuing the trend of year on year reductions in void re-let times for standard voids.

Standard void re-let times (2015 – 2020)



Re-let times for capital voids have also improved in 2019/20. In April 2019, capital voids took an average of 106 days to re-let. This has steadily improved throughout 2019/20 ending with an average re-let time in March 2020 of 66 days and an overall average re-let time of 83 days for the reporting year.

Capital void re-let times by month (2019/20)



As a result of the reduction in re-let times for both void types, void loss has decreased by £73K in total in comparison with last year.

- 3.6 The Housing service remains 100% compliant with gas service checks carried out within the statutory timescale in 2019/20.
- 3.7 The Housing Solutions Team have worked to ensure that performance against this indicator remains consistent with only 3 applicants with “family commitments” in bed and breakfast accommodation for six weeks or more during 2019/20.
- 3.8 The Private Sector Housing Team has removed 1000 category 1 and 2 Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazards from private sector properties in 2019/20. This represents an increase of 104 (12%) on last

year's outturn and exceeds the target by 100 hazards in total.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 The Committee's comments are sought on the performance of the Housing department in 2019/20.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 None.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 The Housing departments performance against key performance indicators reflects the service's commitment to the Council's corporate priorities.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Hannah Katakwe**
Housing Accountant, Finance and IT

No financial implications arising from this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**
Assistant Director of Law and Governance

No legal implications arising from this report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**
Team Manager - Community Development and Equalities

No diversity and equality implications arising from this report.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder.

Not applicable

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected)

by copyright):

None

9. Appendices to the report

None

Report Author:

Carol Hinvest,
Assistant Director of Housing

16 June 2020	ITEM: 6
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Tenant and Leaseholder Satisfaction Monitoring	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Chris Seman – Intelligence and Performance Manager	
Accountable Assistant Director: Carol Hinvest – Assistant Director of Housing	
Accountable Director: Roger Harris – Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report sets out details on the Housing team’s current approach to measuring tenant and leaseholder satisfaction and includes detail on the current methodology and frameworks used to collect satisfaction data and calculate satisfaction rates. In addition to the current approach and methodology, this report also sets out the current programme of satisfaction monitoring for 2020/21, the first tranche of satisfaction outcomes for 2020/21 as well as the Housing team’s plans to carry out a full postal survey with a much larger question bank to complement the existing, ongoing programme of telephone satisfaction surveys. This will enable the Housing team to gain a much broader understanding of tenants and leaseholders views on services and to better understand their needs.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Committee notes and comments on the report.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Every month the Housing team measures and report on satisfaction with a wide range of Housing services asking our residents to rate and provide us with their feedback on the services we deliver, our staff and our organisational characteristics such as keeping residents informed and treating residents fairly.

2.2 As part of the current programme of satisfaction monitoring, there are two main types of satisfaction survey conducted – transactional satisfaction surveys and perception satisfaction surveys. Transactional satisfaction surveys are undertaken quickly after an event or transaction between the resident and the Housing team, such as a repair, to monitor satisfaction with

that particular transaction. Perception satisfaction surveys are undertaken with a randomly selected, representative and statistically relevant cohort of residents to measure a resident's perception of a range of services delivered by the Housing team, staff, organisational characteristics and other key metrics.

- 2.3 The data used to measure satisfaction is collected on the Council's behalf over the telephone with residents by an independent research contractor, KWEST Research Ltd, who specialise in conducting telephone satisfaction surveys for the Housing sector. KWEST Research Ltd work through a pre-agreed questionnaire with each resident and record their responses to each question, both quantitative data in the form of ratings and qualitative data in the form of free text feedback. All resident responses recorded for each period are then collated into a single dataset which is regularly provided to the Housing team for analysis. In 2019/20, a total of 5766 telephone satisfaction surveys were undertaken across all survey types.
- 2.4 Satisfaction data is regularly and routinely analysed by the Intelligence and Performance team and converted into business intelligence in the form of presentations, reports and dashboards. This assists the Housing team as well as its individual services and partners understand residents' views on services, identify trends which highlight deficiencies in service delivery, measure contractors' performance from a resident's point of view, improve the customer experience when dealing with the Housing team and drive tangible improvements to overall service delivery for the benefit of residents.

3. Current Methodology

- 3.1 Satisfaction surveys undertaken on behalf of the Housing team are conducted in accordance with Housemark STAR methodology which is the leading satisfaction framework for the UK Housing sector.
- 3.2 A review of Housemark STAR methodology was undertaken in 2019 as a result of challenges highlighted by the social housing green paper as well as the changes in data collection and reporting in the sector due to technological advances since the last revision of the methodology in 2011. The review included consultation with and involvement from 300 landlords, including Thurrock, as well as 13,000 tenants and leaseholders. The new methodology was published to the Housing sector in mid-January 2020.
- 3.3 The new STAR methodology includes five core questions covering overall satisfaction with the Housing service, satisfaction with quality of home, satisfaction that the resident's home is safe and secure, satisfaction that the Housing service is easy to deal with and satisfaction with responsive repair transactions. There is also a library of recommended and optional questions we have chosen from to align with the Housing services strategic objectives. The core questions are as follows:

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by Thurrock Housing?

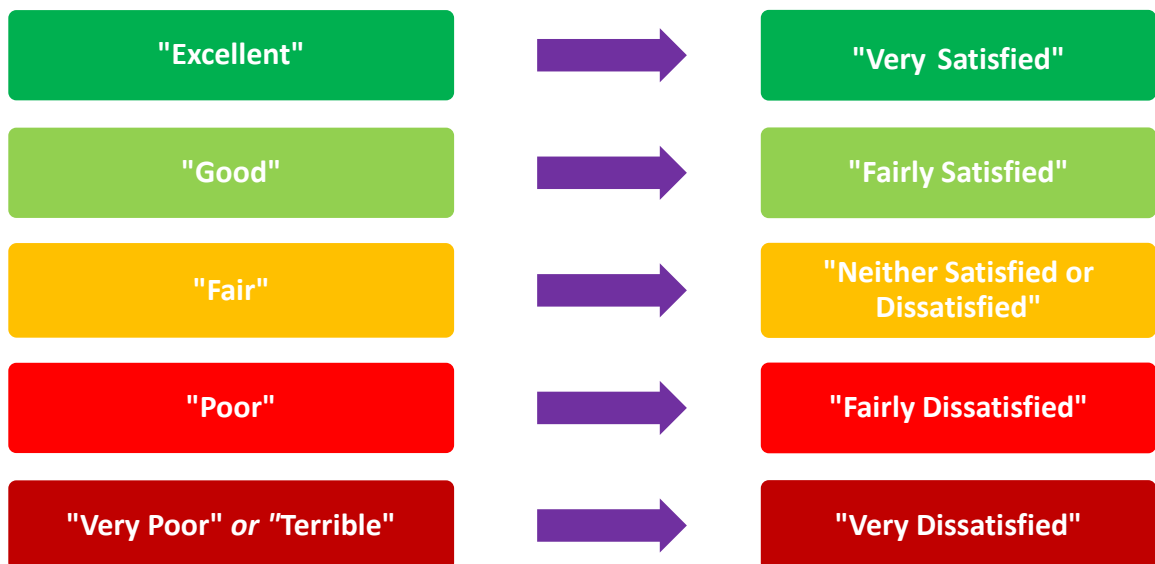
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall quality of your home?

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Thurrock Housing provides a home that is safe and secure?

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Thurrock Housing is easy to deal with?

Thinking about your recent repair, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the overall repairs service provided by Thurrock Housing on this occasion?

3.4 In addition to the new question libraries, the new STAR methodology also included a range of new five or ten point response scales. Our legacy response scales of “excellent”, “good”, “fair”, “poor” and “terrible” or “very poor” have now been replaced as follows:



3.5 Satisfaction rates are calculated using the combined numbers of “very satisfied” and “fairly satisfied ratings” only, divided by the total number of responses overall and multiplied by 100. Satisfaction rates are expressed as a percentage to one decimal point.

3.6 The Housing team adopted the new STAR methodology with effect from April 2020 and our satisfaction surveys are now STAR compliant. As a result, our satisfaction data can now be compared and benchmarked with other social housing providers.

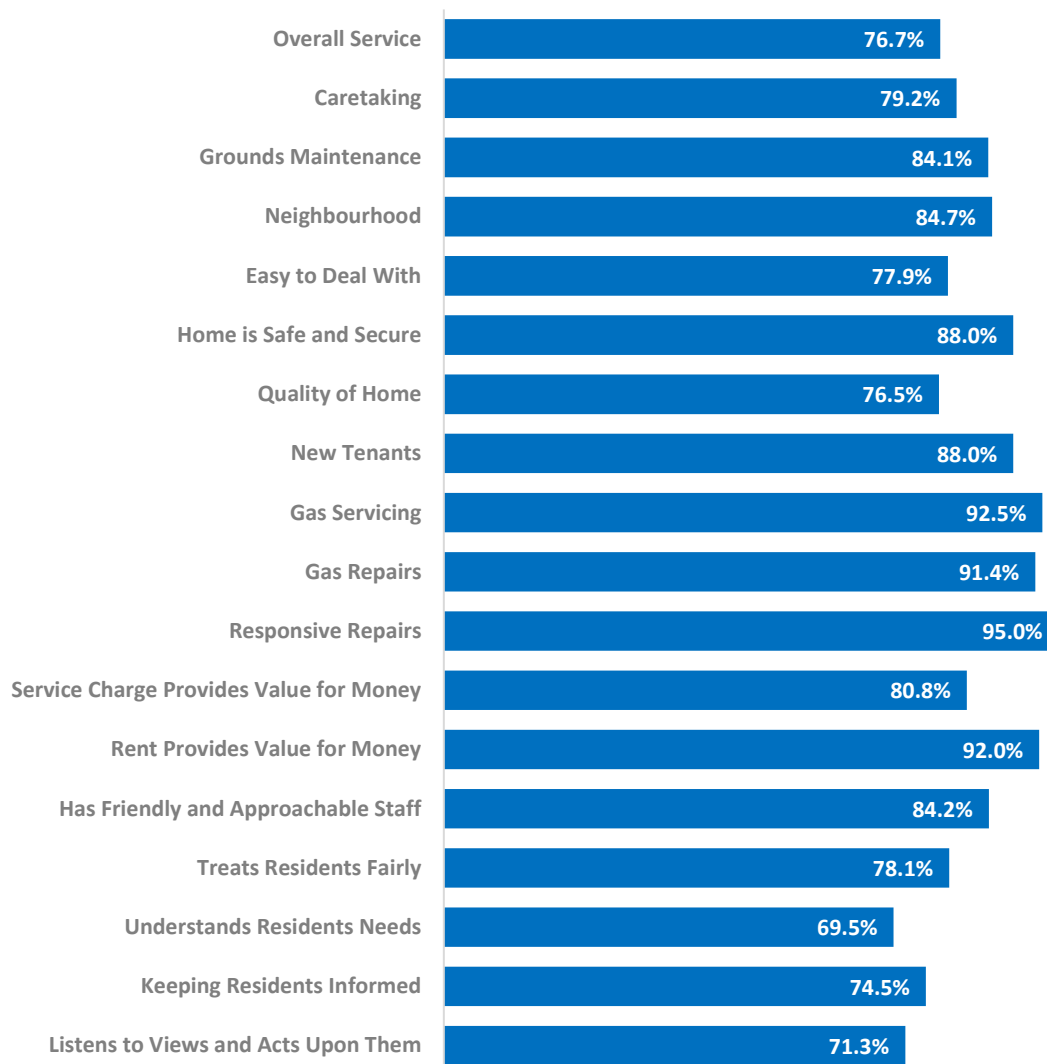
4. 2020/21 Programme of Satisfaction Monitoring and Reporting

4.1 Using the new Housemark STAR methodology, the current programme of satisfaction monitoring for 2020/21 includes seven transactional satisfaction

surveys and two perception surveys at varying frequencies. This has been expanded from last year's programme to include a new survey to enable the Housing team to measure satisfaction with the way the Housing team responds to complaints. The current programme of satisfaction monitoring is as follows:

Survey	Survey Type	Reporting Frequency
General Satisfaction Survey	Perception	Monthly
Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey	Perception	Annually
Responsive Repairs Survey	Transactional	Monthly
Transforming Homes Survey	Transactional	Monthly
Gas Repairs Survey	Transactional	Monthly
Gas Servicing Survey	Transactional	Monthly
New Tenants Survey	Transactional	Monthly
Anti-social Behaviour Survey	Transactional	Quarterly
Complaints Survey	Transactional	Quarterly

- 4.2 So far in 2020/21 as of the end of April, a combined total of 535 tenants have completed a satisfaction survey across all monthly surveys. The satisfaction rates for key measures from each survey will be reported monthly, quarterly or annually depending on the reporting frequency for each respective survey as performance indicators within the Housing Performance Scorecard. The first tranche of satisfaction rates for April 2020 using the new STAR methodology are as follows:



4.3 Following on from a strong satisfaction performance in 2019/20, satisfaction with the overall Housing service in April 2020 was on target at 76.7% with high levels of satisfaction with services such as Caretaking, Grounds Maintenance, Repairs, Gas Repairs and Gas Servicing. A high proportion of residents are also satisfied that their rent and service charges represent value for money and that the Housing team has friendly and approachable staff and treats residents fairly. However, fewer residents feel that the service listens to residents' views and understands residents' needs.

5. Full Postal Survey

5.1 In July 2020, the Housing Team will commission a full postal tenant and leaseholder satisfaction survey to be completed by our service provider, KWEST Research Ltd, which will be sent to every tenant and leaseholder. A postal survey is a highly inclusive and flexible method of collecting satisfaction data as this will allow the Housing team to gain insight from a greater proportion of residents than the current programme of telephone satisfaction surveys, including potentially hard to reach resident groups. It also allows residents to respond in their own time with no time pressure and offers a level

of anonymity for residents who may prefer to give anonymous feedback.

- 5.2 In addition to accessing a greater number of residents for a more representative reflection of residents views, a postal survey will allow the Housing team to collect data on a much larger number of questions than the telephone satisfaction survey currently allows. This will result in broader insight through analysis, will demonstrate the Housing teams willingness to listen to residents views and will allow the Housing team to build a better understanding of residents needs.
- 5.3 The postal survey will be a four page questionnaire comprising of questions from the Housemark STAR question library and will include all of the core questions, most of the recommended questions and a number of the optional questions. The questionnaires will be designed and printed on high quality paper bearing the Thurrock logo and will be posted with a return envelope included. Upon request, the survey can be provided in large print or the survey can be conducted over the telephone.
- 5.4 Housemark STAR guidance requires 2 mailings of the questionnaire to maximise the response rates. In addition, KWEST Research Ltd will provide an online version of the survey, the login details to which will be included in the covering letter, as this may encourage an even broader sample of residents of different age groups to participate and thus a greater likelihood gaining a more representative dataset for analysis.
- 5.5 The resulting data from the postal survey will be provided to the Council in a pre-agreed format and will be analysed by the Intelligence and Performance team and converted into business intelligence which will be used to inform decisions and drive service improvements.

6. Reasons for Recommendation

- 6.1 The Committee's comments are sought on the methodology and current programme of tenant and leaseholder satisfaction monitoring as well as the planned full postal survey.

7. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 7.1 None.

8. Implications

8.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Hannah Katakwe**
Housing Accountant, Finance and IT

No financial implications arising from this report.

8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Natalie Coplen**
Paralegal

No legal implications arising from this report.

8.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project
Monitoring Officer

No diversity and equality implications arising from this report.

8.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder.

None

9. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

10. **Appendices to the report**

None

Report Author:

Chris Seman
Intelligence and Performance Manager
Housing

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16 June 2020	ITEM: 7
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Housing Development Programme Update	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Keith Andrews, Housing Development Manager	
Accountable Assistant Director: David Moore, Interim Assistant Director of Place Delivery	
Accountable Director: Andy Millard, Director of Place	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

On 11 February 2020, Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee were asked to comment on a list of Council owned site options which had been selected as being potentially suitable for redevelopment for residential purposes. This report updates Committee on progress of that Housing Delivery Programme.

1. Recommendation(s)

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

- 1.1 Note progress on the list of housing development sites to be taken forward for further detailed work, involving engagement with stakeholders and communities.**
- 1.2 Comment on the proposal to add the site known as River View to the site options list agreed in February 2020.**
- 1.3 Note the removal of sites at Callan Grove, Ridgwell Avenue, Derry Avenue, Garron Lane/Humber Avenue and Springhouse Road from the sites option list.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 On 11 February 2020 Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed and commented on a list of Council owned housing development option sites to be taken forward for further detailed work, involving engagement with stakeholders and communities. It was noted that additional sites or amendments to the existing programme would be reported back to Housing

Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis.

- 2.2 On 12 February 2020, Cabinet approved the list on the same basis.
- 2.3 The agreed initial list was put together in accordance with the agreed Housing Development Process (as reported to the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 29 October 2019 and agreed by Cabinet on 15 January 2020). A copy of the agreed process is attached at Appendix A.
- 2.4 The aim of the housing sites options list is to provide greater transparency on the sites being considered for potential housing development, and to address the Council's growth aspirations and housing development targets.
- 2.5 The list of development sites also provides a focus for Housing Development activity, leading to greater efficiencies and improved delivery.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

The Sites List

- 3.1 Of the twenty sites originally proposed, the following five sites have now been withdrawn:
 - Callan Grove (Belhus Ward) – withdrawn following resident consultation
 - Ridgwell Avenue (Orsett Ward) – Withdrawn following further consideration of impact on existing owner occupiers within the development red line
 - Springhouse Road (Stanford East & Corringham Town Ward) - included on the original list in error.
 - Derry Avenue (South Ockendon Ward) – Withdrawn following resident petition and comment
 - Garron Lane/Humber Avenue (Belhus Ward) - Withdrawn following resident petition and comment
- 3.2. Progress on the remaining sites are set out in Appendix B. For many of the sites, community engagement on initial proposals would be the next step once the necessary technical preparatory work is complete. A separate report on this agenda sets out the proposed approach to ensure full and proper engagement.
- 3.3. In total, the sites on the list could deliver up to 703 new homes, a reduction of 223 from the list presented to Committee in February. This reflects the deletion of the sites referred to in paragraph 3.1 and adjustments to anticipated site capacity on other sites. It should however be emphasised that

these figures remain largely indicative until schemes have progressed to detailed assessment and community engagement.

- 3.4 A site at River View in Corringham has been identified as a potential addition to the sites option list. This site is a small vacant former clinic within the Council's ownership and falls within the agreed criteria, as it is a site that has been identified as surplus to requirements by the Council's multi-disciplinary Property Board. It has been assessed that this site has capacity for 5 houses. If approved, this would increase the total number of new homes on the options list to 708. A location plan and summary infographic is attached at Appendix C.
- 3.5 As with any other site on the list, it should be noted that Committee's views on the inclusion of the River View site does not constitute any form of planning endorsement; nor does this report seek to create authority for schemes to proceed or construction contracts to be tendered.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The recommendation is informed by previous reports and the agreed Housing Delivery process.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 This paper provides opportunity for Members of this Committee to review progress on the delivery of the Housing Development Programme and the proposed addition of a site to the list.
- 5.2 Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee has previously considered the Housing Development Options List on 11 February 2020.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 The proposed list of housing development sites aligns closely with the Council's Vision and Priorities adopted in 2018. In particular it resonates with the "Place" theme which focuses on houses, places and environments in which residents can take pride.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Jonathan Wilson**
Assistant Director, Finance

The delivery of a housing programme will contribute to the wider objectives of the Council and support the Council's MTFs (where schemes are developed through TRL).

Costs associated with the initial feasibility assessment of schemes will need to be considered depending on the nature of the scheme and whether it is subsequently developed by the HRA or TRL.

The proposal is also likely to reduce the level of capital receipts available to the Council to fund other priorities.

7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Courage Emovon**
Principal Lawyer/Manager Contracts Team

This is an update report which sets out a list of potential sites for development on Council owned sites for residential development via the Council's Housing Delivery Programme. There are no direct legal implications being a progress report. However Legal Services will provide all legal advice (if any) arising from this report, as and when required by the Council.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**
Team Manager – Community Development and Equalities

The service has completed a Community Equality Impact Assessment (CEIA) in line with Equality Act 2010 requirements and to gather an understanding of the impact on protected groups through the implementation of the process set out in this report. The findings from the CEIA established that the implications for each protected group is currently considered neutral. Individual CEIAs will sit alongside development proposals with information gathered in consultation with communities determining potential impacts and mitigation where identified for individuals or groups with protected characteristics. This will ensure more detailed consideration of the impacts of particular developments than is possible within the scope of the overarching CEIA and process set out in this report.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee report 18 June 2019 (New Council HRA Home Building Programme)
- Extraordinary Meeting, Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee report 29 October 2019 (Housing Development Process)
- Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee 11 February 2020
- Cabinet, Housing Development Process 15 January 2020
- Cabinet, Housing Development Options list, 12 February 2020.

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix A – Approved Housing Development Process
- Appendix B - Progress report on the list of proposed residential development sites
- Appendix C –River View Site infographics

Report Author:

Keith Andrews

Housing Development Manager

Place

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Appendix A – Housing Development Process

(Approved at Cabinet 15th January 2020 – extract from Cabinet Paper)

- 3.1 The identification and filtering of potential development sites is a sensitive process that requires the careful consideration of a wide range of factors. By agreeing a range of criteria, this filtering process will be transparent and will also ensure that unsuitable sites, based on the agreed criteria, are not brought forward, thereby maximising the use of time and resource. Once the criteria and sites are agreed, then consideration can be focused on resident engagement regarding the sites, with an increased focus on pace and effectiveness of delivery supported by the views of the local community.
- 3.2 The following are proposed to be key criteria for sites deemed potentially suitable for development. Sites will often fall within more than one criterion. These criteria will be:
- Sites will have been initially identified as suitable for development through the corporate asset review, known as the 3R's (Retain, Release, Reuse)
 - Sites can also be identified as surplus to requirements by the Council's multi-disciplinary Property Board
 - If the site includes Open Space, it will only be brought forward for development if the open space is considered to be of poor quality and no longer required for that purpose (as defined in the 2016 Open Space Assessment or other similar reports)
 - Council owned car parks could also be brought forward if a Council review has concluded that the car park is no longer required for its original or other strategic car parking purpose
 - Sites that are HRA property can also be brought forward if the property is identified as being no longer required or fit for purpose – for example redundant garage sites identified through the HRA garage sites review - or where a more effective use of the asset has been identified and agreed
 - Sites can also be brought forward if there is clear evidence that their development will contribute to the wider regeneration of an area.
- 3.3 Subject to a site falling within one or more of these criteria, each site will then be subjected to a rigorous analysis of available background information about the sites, followed in due course by appropriate on-site assessments once the list of potential sites has been agreed. Examples of the analysis work undertaken would typically include:
- Land ownership and legal constraints reports
 - Flood and air quality assessments
 - Utilities (gas, water, electric, cable) surveys
 - Topographical and geotechnical studies to understand the layout and ground makeup
 - Ecological and arboricultural surveys.
- 3.4 Each site will then have an architecturally-led study to explore the type and quantity of housing that could be developed on the site, ensuring that the

study meet the Council's high quality standards for housing. Various options are then assessed, together with their respective cost plans. The expected costs and receipts are then put into a financial viability analysis model to inform decisions as to whether a site is suitable and financially viable to develop. The study is an exercise to determine how many houses could go onto a site and the study is not expected to be the final design that will be submitted for planning approval.

- 3.5 If the site appears suitable and financially viable to develop, then it will be included on the "Long List" of potential sites for development.
- 3.6 It is important to stress that the inclusion of a site on the "Long List" does not constitute any planning endorsement.
- 3.7 The "Long List" of potential sites for Development will have input from Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then go for approval to Cabinet, with appropriate amendments.
- 3.8 The sites will then go forward for detailed consultation with local communities, in a process that will be supported by the Council's internal Community Development and Equalities Team, with input from other agencies as required. This is to ensure that consultation processes meet the Council's standards and that Members and residents are fully engaged in the process. The views of the community and stakeholders will be reviewed to determine any amendments required and how the scheme should be taken forward.
- 3.9 Any significant changes to the sites on the agreed list (such as changes to the "redline" boundary if neighbouring sites are identified) would be made in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, with significant changes being reported back to Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.10 The process of identifying and agreeing the "Long List" of sites for development is intended to be an annual process, with a list of new sites being reviewed each year by Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and approved by Cabinet. Local Ward Councillors will also be contacted about sites on the 'Long List' of identified site that are within their ward boundary. This annual review process should ensure that new sites are brought forward regularly, thereby sustaining an annual pipeline of new sites to ensure the Council's agreed Housing Delivery targets are achieved

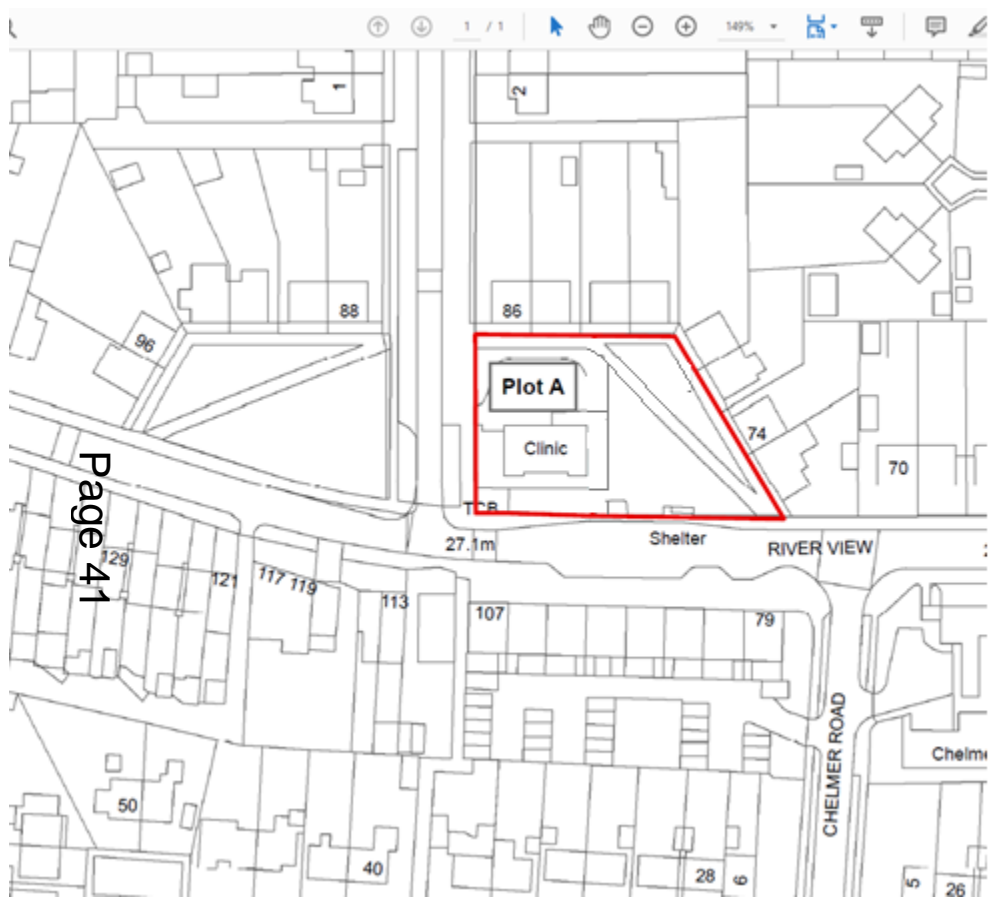
APPENDIX B - SITES OPTION LIST - JUNE 2020

New Site Number	SCHEME NAME	Potential Capacity	Ward	Update
1	Aveley Library/Hall/Car Park	9	Aveley & Uplands	Library re-provided. Future of adjoining hall remains under discussion but could be incorporated if released for development.
2	Enborne Green	11	South Ockendon	Appointment of architects completed. Initial studies of capacity and constraints awaited.
3	Culver Centre & Field	176	Belhus	Second resident consultation event completed. Further survey work underway in advance of planning application.
4	Whiteacre	45	Belhus	Design team appointed and progress to RIBA stage 2. Further surveys underway. Site to be hoarded. Procurement strategy being developed.
5	Prince of Wales Public House	10	South Ockendon	Condition surveys carried out to inform demolition decision.
6	Broxburn Drive	60	Belhus	Appointment of architects completed. Initial studies of capacity and constraints awaited.
7	Crammervill Street/Fleethall Grove	6	Stifford Clays	Appointment of architects completed. Capacity Study completed. Paused, pending need to carry out resident consultation.
8	Darnley & Crown Road	90	Grays Riverside	Appointment of architects completed. Initial studies of capacity and constraints awaited.
9	CO1(Civic Offices).	82	Grays Riverside	Architects appointed and Design at RIBA stage 1 (Capacity study)
10	Argent Street	32	Grays Riverside	Appointment of architects completed. Initial studies of capacity and constraints awaited.
11	Thames Road	89	Grays Riverside	Appointment of architects completed. Initial studies of capacity and constraints awaited.
12	Manor Way	60	Grays Thurrock	Potential development with adjoining private sector led development. Unlikely to progress until private development built out and access road adopted as site is land locked
13	Bridge Road (East Side)	20	Grays Thurrock	Appointment of architects completed. Initial studies of capacity and constraints awaited.
14	13 Loewen Road	5	Chadwell St Mary	Architects appointed and work progressed to RIBA stage 2. Surveys ongoing. Further progress dependent on resident consultation.
15	Vigerons Way	8	Chadwell St Mary	Architects appointed and work progressed to RIBA stage 2. Surveys ongoing. Further progress dependent on resident consultation.

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Appendix C



Name – River View	River View, Chadwell St Mary
Address	Former Clinic, River View, Chadwell St Mary RM16 4DB
Ward	Chadwell St Mary
Site Area	Plots A = 0.16 Hectares / 0.4 Acres
Tenure	Freehold
Existing Use	Disused Clinic & adjoining Amenity Green
Local Plan Designation	Not Designated
Estimated Site Capacity	Houses: 5 Units



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16 June 2020	ITEM: 8
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Housing Development Consultation Process	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Keith Andrews, Housing Development Manager	
Accountable Assistant Director: David Moore, Interim Assistant Director of Place Delivery	
Accountable Director: Andy Millard, Director of Place	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

On 29 October 2019, the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee were asked to comment on a Housing Development Process, which set out how Council-owned sites could be identified and brought forward for further consideration as part of the Council's Housing Development Programme.

That process gave a commitment to comprehensive consultation with Councillors and local residents on sites that were being brought forward. This paper sets out the framework and process for that comprehensive consultation process.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to comment on the proposed consultation process.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 In October 2019, Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed the process by which Council owned sites could be identified as potential locations for new housing development, as part of the Council's Housing Delivery Programme.

2.2 In broad terms it was agreed that, following initial analysis of a site and the development of an architecturally led study to explore the potential type and quantity of housing, each site that is considered potentially suitable to progress will then be subject to a rigorous consultation process. This report sets out the consultation process proposed.

2.3 Once this process is adopted, template consultation documents will be produced to ensure the consultation process is delivered in a consistent manner. This proposed consultation process has been developed in conjunction with the Council's Communications and Community Development and Equalities teams.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The proposed consultation process is split into five main stages:

1. Setting an over-arching Strategic Objectives and Guiding Principles
2. Understanding each Stakeholder Environment
3. Consultation and engagement – pre-planning
4. Consultation and engagement – post planning
5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Strategic Objectives and Guiding Principles

3.2 The Council has clearly stated ambitions to develop new housing, with the aim of enhancing the lives of existing and future residents through providing safe and affordable places to live.

3.3 The Council is equally committed to involving its existing communities in the process to design new housing, to ensure that new developments are sensitive to local considerations. This is an important aspect of the Council's Vision and the commitment to 'collaborative community' and reflects the Council's vision and priorities in the themes of people, place and prosperity.

3.4 With a pipeline of housing sites to deliver, this consultation process defines a consistent approach to engagement on housing development projects, with the aims of:

- Defining a best practice approach to consultation and engagement activity which gives Members and residents confidence that a robust process will be followed for all housing development sites.
- Defining a proportionate approach to consultation and engagement to ensure interested parties are engaged with at the right time and in the right way to make a meaningful contribution to the development of housing projects.

3.5 The guiding principles adopted for this consultation process are:

- A **Member-first approach**, where Members are briefed on a project ahead of each phase of community engagement.
- A **proportionate approach**, with the extent of engagement activity defined by the scale, complexity and sensitivity of the site and the proposals
- A commitment to starting engagement **early in the design development process**, so that community views can influence proposals at a formative stage
- A commitment to make consultation and engagement programmes **easily accessible** for local communities, through a combination of face-to-face events, online tools and direct distribution.
- A commitment to present consultation information in an easy to understand way, in Plain English without technical jargon, to help **encourage participation** for all, including hard to reach groups.
- A commitment to inform communities of the results of consultation activity, with a clear “you said, we did” approach.

Stakeholder Environment

- 3.6 For each site, it is important to understand the stakeholder environment in which the proposed project exists. This will help to define a proportionate approach to consultation and engagement. The two key elements to this are to undertake community and stakeholder mapping and then to risk assess the planned approach from a consultation and engagement perspective.
- 3.7 Stakeholder mapping will be undertaken to identify who may be affected by a project and who will want to be made aware of it and/or actively influence it. The use of a stakeholder matrix will help guide the level of activity to undertake with each stakeholder or group as part of a consultation plan.
- 3.8 This will ensure the full range of stakeholders are identified early on including Councillors, local residents, local business, statutory planning consultees and local community and interest groups. The Council’s Community Development and Equalities service will be well placed to assist in this mapping exercise with their extensive understanding of local groups.
- 3.9 The preparation of an engagement risk register for each new site will give an early indication of the likely areas of concern, to ensure the consultation process recognises and properly addresses these. These risks may include site-specific risks or engagement and consultation risks. For example, the risk register may identify groups who are hard to reach, so the consultation process needs to consider appropriate design and use of different consultation tools. In an environment where face to face contact may be limited and where there is increasing use of digital tools, it might be useful to

think about those who are not digitally engaged as new hard to reach groups. Similarly such process may open up consultation to those groups such as young people who often fail to engage in more traditional consultation exercises.

- 3.10 Decisions on who will be directly consulted are important areas for consideration. Factors to be considered when deciding will include:
- The size and scale of development – understanding who will be directly impacted by the proposal, and this will be one of the factors to determine the geographic distribution of consultation material
 - The current use of the site – must be considered. For instance, if the site is currently public open space, it may be used by people beyond the surrounding properties, who may have expectations of being consulted
 - The engagement risk register – will be used to ensure the consultation is inclusive and appropriate for the proposal
 - The geography of the area - natural barriers will be used when drawing the boundaries of the consultation area. Natural barriers include things such as roads, railway lines or rivers.
- 3.11 At the boundaries of a consultation area, there will be some households that receive direct mail and others (just outside the area) that do not. The use of tools such as social media, the Council's consultation portal and careful design of material placed in areas such as libraries, can help to extend the reach of the consultation process beyond those who receive written material, whilst still maintaining proportionality to the process.

Consultation and engagement – pre-planning

- 3.12 The proposed consultation process enforces a consistent approach to Member and officer briefings in the period leading up to a consultation. The intention is to start this process early – a minimum of 6 weeks ahead of the planned 'go live' date, to ensure internal alignment on the strategy and the consultation material..
- 3.13 At least three weeks ahead of the planned consultation, the Housing Portfolio Holder will be briefed on the detail of the planned activity. Following that, (approximately two weeks ahead of the consultation launch) the appropriate local Ward Councillors and the Chair of Housing Overview and Scrutiny will also be briefed, in line with the Member first approach described earlier.
- 3.14 The resident pre-planning consultation stage will ensure early and comprehensive engagement with local communities. At each stage of activity, the guiding principles are adhered to with the use of a range of consultation media and tools to support the process. For larger projects, consultation will

be in two phases. Firstly, about the principles of a project, and then a second consultation on the detailed proposal. A template for a typical two stage consultation process is attached at Appendix A. For smaller projects, a single stage process is proposed - as attached at Appendix B.

3.15 The range of consultation tools available for selection is extensive and will be tailored on a site by site basis but can include:

- Consultation letters and leaflets
- Press releases
- Social media publicity
- Use of the consultation portal and its different functions
- Other digital tools including video
- Consultation events and meetings
- Exhibitions and drop-in sessions
- Stakeholder workshops
- Pre-arranged telephone discussions
- Use of secure virtual meeting software such as Microsoft Teams

3.16 Each approach will be appropriate to the scale of the event. The current Coronavirus pandemic has changed things and social media has enabled those isolated in their homes to stay in touch with family and friends using tools like Zoom, Skype and FaceTime. rather than just a simple phone call, have found themselves in a virtual world able to see others expressing their views and contribute their own. Careful use in the right time and place of such tools could ensure those less able or confident to speak out in a public forum can have their views heard.

3.17 As we recognise that those without digital access or skills may become harder to reach we also anticipate existing hard to reach groups such as young people who often refrain from engaging in public life have the tools and know how to engage more effectively on a digital platform.

3.18 By combining telephone, postal and web based communications with face to face events, it will be possible to have an effective and inclusive approach to resident and member consultation while maintaining social distancing for as long as necessary.

3.19 The final phase of pre-planning consultation will be feedback and reporting. This is in line with our 'you said, we did' commitment. Using a variety of communication channels feedback will be given to the community on changes made to proposals as a result of consultation activity and a summary document will be prepared in support of any planning applications which captures a record of how the consultation was undertaken, comments made and how they have influenced proposals.

Consultation and engagement – post planning

3.20 Following grant of planning permission a post planning engagement plan will be developed running from planning approval, through to the start on site and then ultimately the completion of the scheme. This sets out the key events and activities necessary to ensure Councillors and local residents are kept up to date on plans. This may include:

- Web based updates on next steps to avoid the drop off in communication to local communities so often experienced immediately post planning decisions
- Communication to residents on planned pre-start site activity such as surveys and clearance or demolition works.
- Meet the contractor events

Monitoring and Evaluation

3.21 Key to successful learning and improvement in any activity is to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of actions. This proposed consultation process should include the final stage of monitoring and evaluation so that we can learn from mistakes and improve what we do.

3.22 At this stage it is proposed we will use the Council's consultation portal to track levels of engagement, and monitor the effectiveness of engagement techniques through assessing the volume and quality of engagement. Learning from each consultation event will be recorded and shared thereby informing future events.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 The recommendation is informed by previous reports and the agreed Housing Delivery process. The proposed engagement strategy will help to ensure that the Council can achieve its Housing Delivery targets in an open and transparent manner and in close liaison with local communities and can then focus on the effective delivery of schemes.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 This paper provides opportunity for Members of this Committee to review the proposed Housing Development Consultation process.

5.2 Housing Overview and Scrutiny committee has also previously considered the Housing Development Process on 29 October 2019, and the Housing Development Options List on 11 February 2020.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 The proposed housing development consultation process aligns closely with the Council's Vision and Priorities adopted in 2018. In particular it resonates with the "Place" theme which focuses on houses, places and environments in which residents can take pride.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Jonathan Wilson**
Assistant Director, Finance

The proposed consultation process will enable the Council and TRL to move forward with delivering a house programme which will contribute to the wider objectives of the Council and support the Council's MTFS (where schemes are developed through TRL).

Costs associated with the consultation process will need to be considered depending on the nature of the scheme and whether it is subsequently developed by the HRA or TRL.

The proposed process is also likely to reduce the level of capital receipts available to the Council to fund other priorities.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Courage Emovon**
Principal Lawyer / Manager Contracts Team

The Council have a duty to consult stakeholders regarding its proposed Housing Development Programme and this report sets out a process for meeting that requirement which is to consult with residents, Councillors and any other applicable stakeholder with respect to any new Housing Development Projects. Legal Services will be on hand to provide any legal advice (if any) arising from this report, as and when required by the Council.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

The service has completed a Community Equality Impact Assessment (CEIA) in line with Equality Act 2010 requirements and to gather an understanding of the impact on protected groups through the implementation of housing development. The findings from that CEIA established that the implications for each protected group is currently considered neutral. Individual CEIAs will sit alongside development proposals with information gathered in consultation with communities determining potential impacts and mitigation where identified for individuals or groups with protected characteristics.

7.4 **Other implications** – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee report 18 June 2019 (New Council HRA Home Building Programme)
- Extraordinary Meeting, Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee report 29 October 2019 (Housing Development Process)
- Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee 11 February 2020

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix A – Two stage Consultation and engagement process
- Appendix B – Single Stage Consultation and engagement process

Report Author:

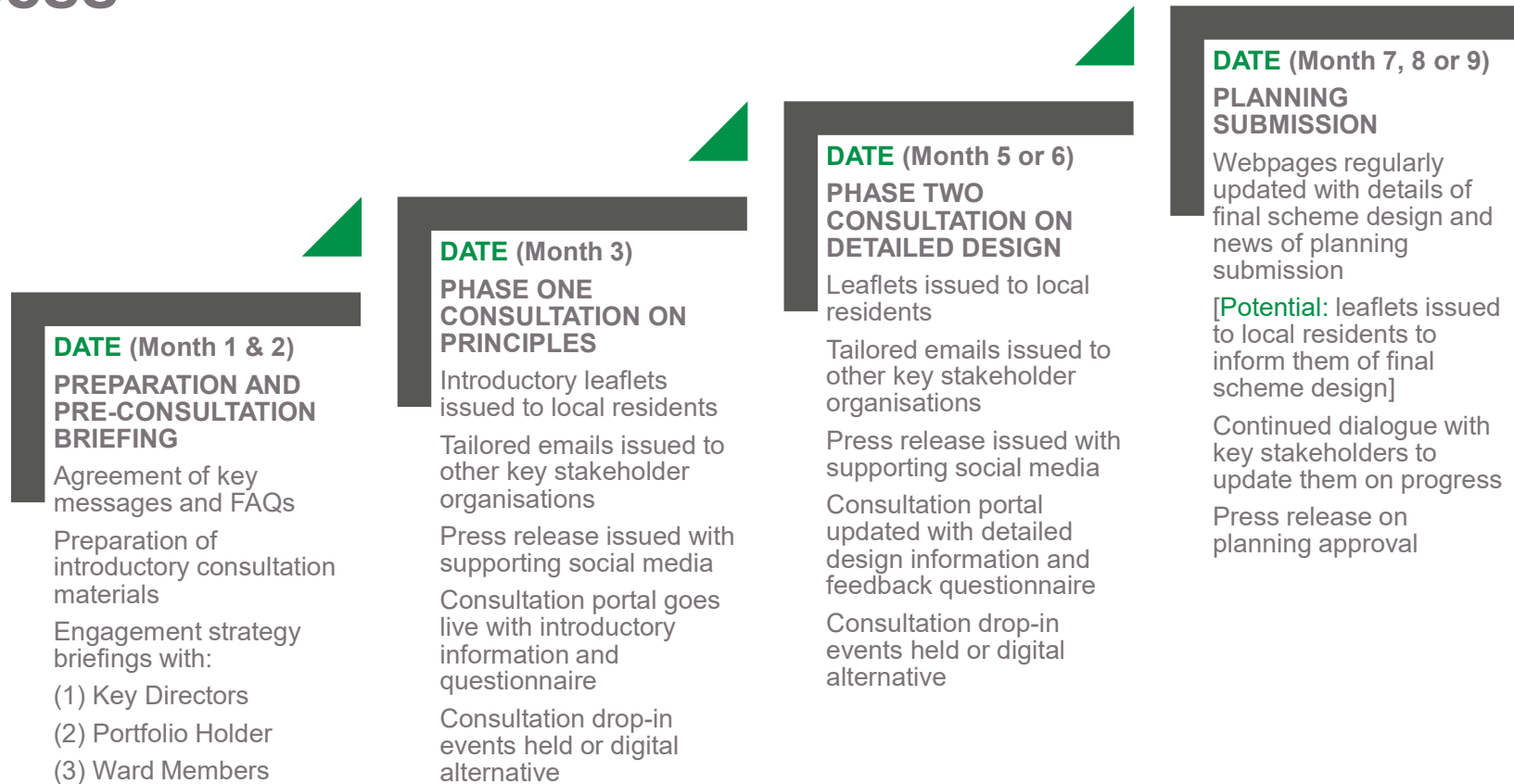
Keith Andrews

Housing Development Manager

Place

Appendix A

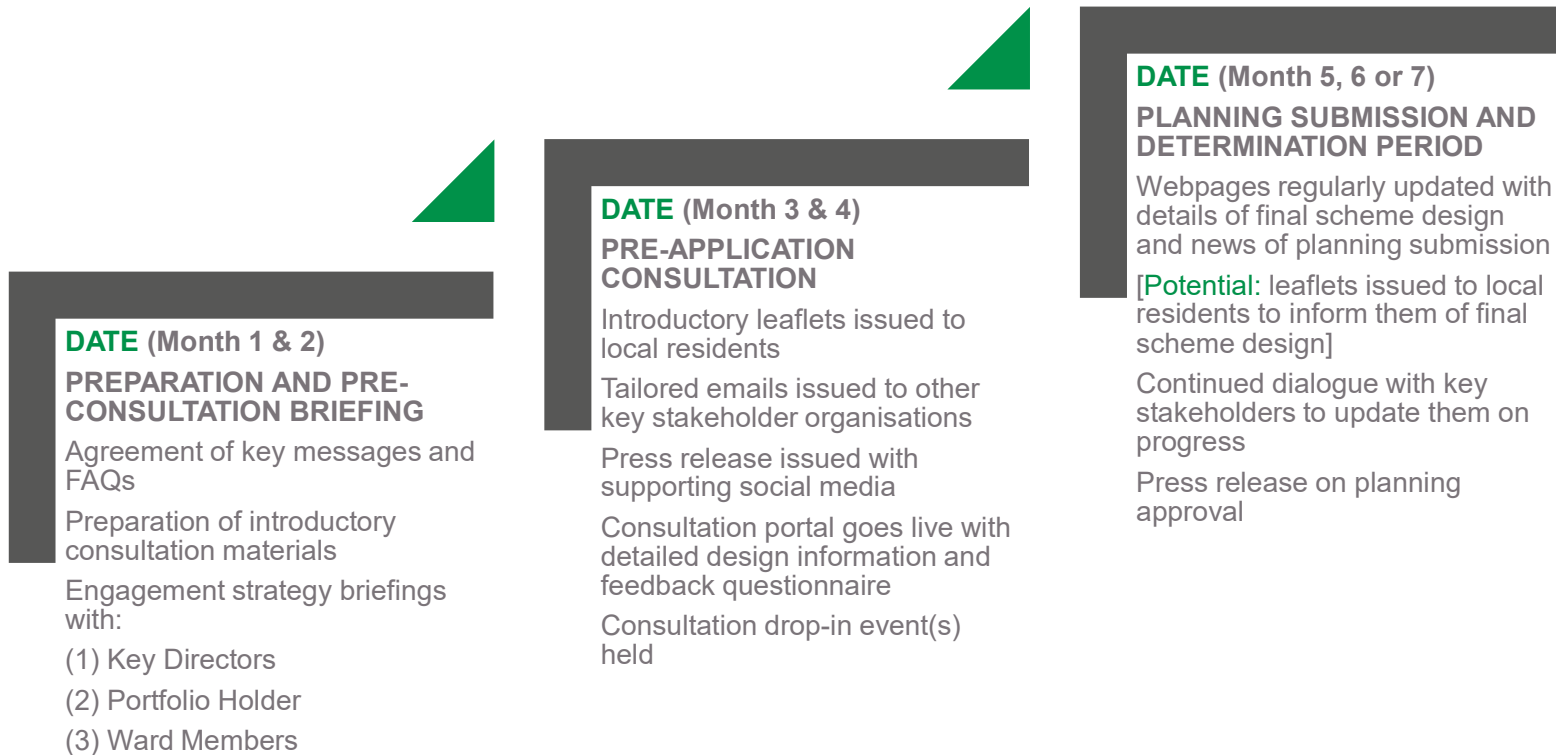
Two stage Consultation and engagement process



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Appendix B

Single Stage Consultation and engagement process



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16 June 2020		ITEM: 9
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Housing Social Value Framework		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Susan Cardozo, Strategic Lead, Assets Repairs and Compliance		
Accountable Assistant Director: Carol Hinvest, Assistant Director of Housing		
Accountable Director: Roger Harris, Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report sets out the principles applied when procuring works or services for Housing.

The Housing repairs, maintenance and major works programmes invest to secure the long-term integrity of the Council's housing assets and bring significant improvements to the health and wellbeing of our local residents through improvement to their living conditions. They also provide an opportunity to support the local economy and provide additional benefits for our local communities.

The tender process for Housing sets out the key performance expectations in social value from successful contractors. Commitments made subsequently form part of the contractual agreement. This approach has secured and delivered considerable local benefits which are detailed in this report.

1. Recommendation(s)

Housing Overview and Scrutiny members are requested to:

- 1.1 Note the approach taken to commissioning the Housing investment contracts to secure social value outcomes.**
- 1.2 Note the recent performance and community benefit projects achieved.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Public Services Social Value Act 2012 requires local authorities to consider social value for every procurement. This means we must consider







how the service being procured might improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area.

- 2.2 There is an ongoing need to invest in our existing council stock to ensure the integrity of the asset is maintained and that the Council fulfils its duty to provide residents with warm homes with modern facilities.
- 2.3 This significant investment represents a real opportunity to provide additional social value to the local communities in the borough. The commissioning and contract management approach operated in Housing supports a framework for social value delivery to provide training and employment opportunities for our communities and maximise spend in the local economy.
- 2.4 When tendering for new housing investment contracts the expectations for social value commitments are specified in relation to the size of the contract. For the larger investment contracts this will include requirements for:
- Percentage of suppliers registered in Thurrock
 - Percentage of workforce resident in Thurrock
 - Number of local apprenticeships
- 2.5 In addition to the above key performance areas, companies tendering are asked to outline additional benefits they can provide for the local communities aligning with the borough's strategic priorities. This will typically include the following:
- Engaging with the local communities in activities that support Thurrock's strategic objectives
 - Involving local communities in shaping where they live to deliver improvements to the local environment
 - Increasing the number and prosperity of local businesses
 - Providing employment opportunities that leave a legacy of skilled local labour
- 2.6 One of the key principles that is central to delivery of the housing programmes is to ensure a mechanism is in place for stringent contract governance. This includes the monitoring of the social value commitments made by contractors at tender stage. These social value commitments from each contractor are then reflected in the contract agreement with the council. The progress with these is subsequently monitored alongside other contractual performance indicators at monthly governance meetings.
- 2.7 In addition to the above monthly governance arrangements a social value monitoring group meets bi-monthly. This group is made up of representatives from the main contractors, Thurrock contract managers and the resident engagement team. The remit of this group is to ensure all partners are working together and we are therefore able to deliver a broad range of opportunities to achieve the best outcomes.

3. **Headline Performance in the last year**

3.1 As noted above the main contracts have key performance indicators for social value outcomes. The performance on these contracts for the last financial year is shown in the table 1 below.

Table 1 – Social Value Performance for 2019/20

	 Apprenticeships Last Year	 Workforce Resident in Thurrock	 Suppliers Based in Thurrock
 Repairs	3	55%	80%
 Transforming Homes	4	50%	60%
 Gas	2	95%	100%

4. **Local Community Projects**

4.1 A broad range of local projects have been delivered through the housing contracts in line with the contract requirements. Local improvement projects are designed in response to consultation with local residents.

4.2 Below are some examples that have been delivered in the last 2 years, many of which have provided education and training opportunities as well as improvements to local facilities.

4.3 **Environmental – Improving the Local Area**

- Improvements to the Grays Beach Park were completed by our Transforming Homes contractor Wates in partnership with The Conservation Volunteers. This improved wheelchair access to the

specialist playground equipment, refurbished a number of planted areas at the entrance and repainted equipment and signage.

- Mears our major repairs contractor are undertaking an ongoing project with a Thurrock community group at Falconwood in Grays. They have built boundary walls, installed railings and gates to secure the site on all sides. They have also participated in three tidy up days on the site and installed a 200m path to allow side access. They are continuing to support projects on this site planned in the coming year.
- Refurbishment at Lime Close Community Hall undertaken by our Transforming Homes contractor United Living, addressing priorities identified by local residents. This included new men's WC facilities and refurbishment of the wood flooring to main hall area
- Installation of bollards in a street in Ockendon to prevent vehicles cutting through a grassed undertaken area by Mears. Improvements included the creation of a garden memorial space in memory of a local resident and an improved paved area by the park play area. All identified as priorities by local residents.
- Pilgrims Lane and Gammonfield Site activity days were supported by Mears who also carried out resident identified repairs at the sites.
- Oakray our Door Entry and Electrical works contractor have carried out improvements to security doors on two blocks in the borough and upgraded control systems of two further blocks as part of their social value commitment.
- Improvements were made to the Grangewaters Outdoor Activity Centre by Wates who improved the path around the lake and in partnership with Essex Wildlife Trust installed signage a for wildlife trail.

4.4 Economic - Providing Training and Skills for the Future:

- Mears have successfully run an award winning trade school in Thurrock for several years as part of their social value commitment. They deliver three programmes per year to students between the ages of 13 and 16 providing basic training in plumbing, carpentry and electrical repairs. 36 students a year have benefitted from this training.
- The Building Futures Programme delivered by Wates provided four unemployed residents with a level 1 BTEC in Construction and the certification needed to take up employment in the sector.
- Mears have been working with the Thurrock Sanctuary Team at the woman's refuge participating in training in life skills and delivering DIY classes

- Wates have worked in partnership with the community interest company 'Volunteer it Yourself' to give young people in the borough the opportunity to learn DIY skills while refurbishing local buildings. Four phases of this project have been completed so far with different target groups one with young offenders, one involving students from the South Essex College and two with candidates from the Princes Trust. The programmes have worked on the Turnaround Centre in Stanford and the Adult Community College. The programmes supports a City and Guilds level 3 in employability skills.
- Our contractors support a number of careers events held at Thurrock schools, the South Essex College and the Opportunity Thurrock event. They encourage students to consider a variety of careers in the construction industry, they help with mock interviews and provide support with CV writing.
- Contractors have also delivered many targeted interventions in local primary schools. Examples include a Maths Day for Year 5 students presented by Wates and Health and Safety talks delivered by Mears.
- Our contractors support the work experience programme. Between 10 and 15 placements every year to local school children.
- Several contractors have been supporting schools in the Thurrock Next Top Boss competition. Mears supported the winning team in 2019 with their design of a Trade School website
- A local Scout Group were supported by United Living to enter a national competition to design a site hoarding.

4.5 **Social – Health and Wellbeing**

- United Living are supporting the MIND charity through volunteering. A member of the team has been trained to volunteer with MIND and has supporting the local branch at their stand in Lakeside providing information and advice to visitors.
- Donations have been made by several contractors to local foodbanks throughout the year with large donations at Christmas.
- Aaron Services our Gas contractor have installed a new gas hob at a Christian Care Home
- A joint project between Mears and Amalgamated Lifts has successfully revamped a former crèche space at the bottom of one of the tower blocks in Chadwell. This adapted all areas to meet fire regulation so it could be used as a community space. It included a painted mural to enhance the space and provision of a gaming table.

- Mitie our decorating contractor have redecorated the communal areas and a guest bedroom at one of our sheltered complexes
- 4.6 In addition both Mears and Wates sponsor the annual Thurrock staff awards. A number of companies who provide services to Housing also provide free training to Thurrock staff in their specialist areas such as Asbestos management and contract administration.
- 4.7 These are just some of the many examples. In 2018 Thurrock Housing won an award jointly with Wates from TPAS the national Tenant Participation Advisory Service for 'Excellence in Contractor Engagement'. The award recognised a project undertaken the previous year achieving improvements in outdoor spaces for our sheltered housing residents.

5. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 5.1 The principles applied in Housing contracts have been demonstrated to deliver positive outcomes for Thurrock local communities.
- 5.2 Looking to the future Housing will continue to apply the same principles in terms of tender stipulations and ensuring the ongoing emphasis at monthly governance meetings to ensure commitments are brought through to fruition.
- 5.3 It is important that the initiatives respond to the different needs of local areas. Engagement with local resident has been and will continue to be at the heart of any improvement projects.
- 5.4 Members of The Excellence panel have been given training in order to participate in the procurement of Housing contracts and assist in the evaluation of the social value offers.
- 5.5 Contractors are regularly invited to The Excellence Panel to update on progress with their contractual commitments.

6. Reasons for the report

- 6.1 This report is submitted to Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide an overview of the social value framework applied when procuring major investment contracts for housing.
- 6.2 This report demonstrates the performance and recent achievements in this respect.

7. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 7.1 Members of the Resident Excellence Panel are invited to participate in the tender evaluation of new housing contracts. Members of the Resident Excellence Panel have been trained in the evaluation process and have provided positive contributions when involved.

8. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

8.1 The improvement of the Council's housing assets supports the Council's key priorities through the provision of quality housing and estates people are proud to live on.

8.2 The Council's strategic priorities have been and will continue to be an integral part of the social value tender documents and bidders will be required demonstrate how they will generate added value for local communities, support the local economy through opportunities for local businesses and provide local job opportunities.

9. Implications

9.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Strategic Lead for Finance

The social value commitments of the housing contracts form part of the tender and are delivered at no additional cost to the Council.

9.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Courage Emovon**
Principal Lawyer / Manager Contracts Team

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 came into force on 31 January 2013. It requires Public Authorities to consider how what is proposed to be procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area and how in conducting such procurement process, it might act with a view to securing that improvement.

The Council have a duty to consider matters relevant to what is proposed to be procured and in doing so to consider the extent to which it is proportionate in the circumstance to take those relevant matters into account and consider whether to undertake any consultation as to what it should consider. These are requirements necessary for the Council to comply with the Public Services (Social Value) Act and secure the wider social, economic and environmental benefits through the services they commission.

9.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**

Team Manager - Community Development and Equalities

A full community equality impact assessment has been undertaken of the implementation of the Housing delivery of the investment programmes.

The significant investment made through the ongoing repair and maintenance of the housing stock represents a real opportunity to provide additional social value to the local communities in the borough. It is therefore important that the commissioning and contract management approach continues to support a framework for social value delivery to support training and employment opportunities for our communities and maximise spend in the local economy.

Housing work closely with the Community Development team to ensure alignment with the corporate framework for social value.

9.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None

10. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright): -

None

11. **Appendices to the report**

None

Report Author:

Susan Cardozo,
Strategic Lead, Assets Repairs and Compliance

16 June 2020	ITEM: 10
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Housing Service COVID-19 Response	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Ryan Farmer – Housing Strategy and Quality Manager	
Accountable Assistant Director: Carol Hinvest – Assistant Director of Housing	
Accountable Director: Roger Harris – Corporate Director, Adults, Housing and Health	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report sets out the action taken by the Housing service due to the challenges which have been faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In its response to the difficulties caused by this virus, and in line with Government guidance and legislation, the Housing service has taken action to suspend, alter and reduce specific aspects of delivery to ensure that key services can be provided and for staff and service users to be best protected from the risks posed by COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has tested the resilience and business continuity planning of the Housing service, and this report records the action which was taken to maintain critical services in the most challenging of times.

1. Recommendation

- 1.1. **Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment on the contents of this report which sets out the response of the Housing service in relation to the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1. The Housing service of Thurrock Council, much like the wider organisation, has implemented a number of measures to address the challenges which are being faced as a result of COVID-19, particularly in response to the announcement of the Government's 'Stay at Home' guidance on 23 March 2020.

Since this time, the Housing service has taken action to protect the health and wellbeing of both its staff and its service users from the risks posed by COVID-19 whilst ensuring that critical services could continue to be delivered for those who are most at need. Close attention has been paid to statutory responsibilities, new legislation and Government guidance which has, on occasion, changed at pace.

In developing the COVID-19 response, all services considered their activities against a broad framework in order to determine whether they:

- needed to be suspended, either for the safety of staff and service users or in line with Government guidance
- could continue to be delivered, but with significant alterations
- could continue to be delivered, but at a greatly reduced rate.

2.1.1 It is important to note that the Housing service has not acted in isolation in developing its response to COVID-19. There has been maintained representation from Housing with the Council's Tactical Coordination Group, Thurrock Stronger Together partnership, Thurrock Coronavirus Community Action (TCCA), and a range of other cross-service, cross-directorate and cross-organisation groups and forums.

2.2. High-level summary of changes to service delivery

2.2.1 Suspended services

A number of services and processes have been suspended across Housing, not only as a result of service-led reviews, but also due to measures which have been implemented nationally by the Government.

The choice based lettings process was suspended, as was all scheduled resident engagement activity, such as resident meetings, events in communal halls at sheltered housing complexes, and the planning for this year's Tenant Conference. All face-to-face interviews which would otherwise have been held at locations such as the Civic Offices, community hubs, children's centres or in residents' homes were cancelled. The delivery of aspects of the Transforming Homes programme was suspended, along with a range of other property inspections and visits, for example Warm Homes.

There have been no arrears court cases or eviction action undertaken, which is a position reflected nationally due to a moratorium on eviction proceedings.

2.2.2 Altered services

As almost all members of Housing staff are working at home, interactions which would ordinarily have taken place face to face are instead being undertaken by telephone. These include, but are not limited to, support calls where rent arrears have increased, financial inclusion interviews, and expanded daily and weekly calls to sheltered housing tenants.

Applicants approaching the homelessness service have been able to complete their assessments online and by telephone, with additional welfare calls being made to all households in temporary accommodation.

In line with Government guidance, the service has greatly expanded its support for those rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping by providing accommodation and food to provide opportunities for self-isolation and prevent the risk of infection in this particularly vulnerable group.

Due to the risks identified in gas safety and water testing, statutory compliancy checks for properties in these areas have continued, however a number have required reprogramming for a future date in cases where access to properties has been impacted by shielding and self-isolating residents.

Many physical inspections of private sector housing have been unable to continue, however changes to ways of working have been made as a result, such as allowing residents to provide video evidence of the condition of their property.

2.2.3 Reduced services

It has been possible, and in some cases vital, for some services to continue, albeit a reduced level. This includes tenancy sign-ups for risk-assessed homeless households and applicants whose safety is at risk where they live.

Estate caretakers have been vital in ensuring that our communal areas remain safe and clean for those who live in and travel through our estates, however priorities have been adjusted to focus more heavily on sanitising.

It has been possible to continue to deliver emergency repairs to properties, with arrangements made to record requests which have been received for routine repairs so that these can be addressed at an appropriate point in the future. Essential health and safety visits in private rented sector properties have also been undertaken.

3. Service area responses

3.1. Allocations

In response to the Government's 'Stay at Home' guidance, steps were taken to suspend all choice based lettings from 23 March 2020. Whilst properties have not been made available for applicants to place bids on through this process, provision was made to ensure that direct offers would continue to be made to risk-assessed homeless households and applicants whose safety was at risk where they live, such as those experiencing domestic abuse.

Work has also been continuing to identify and make offers to a number of applicants for the new properties which will soon be available at the Tops Club development.

3.2. Anti-Social Behaviour and Housing Safeguarding Team

The Anti-Social Behaviour Team has continued to provide a service to tenants remotely. The number of cases reported to the team decreased slightly between February (34) and March (25). In April, 27 cases were reported, and the majority of these were neighbour disputes and noise complaints, with a decrease in complaints regarding more serious criminal activity on estates.

Reports have been received regarding groups of people gathering on estates, both inside and outside their homes, during this period. A process has been established with the Police which allows this intelligence to be reported, which will in turn allow the Police to monitor the reported areas.

The Housing Safeguarding Team experienced higher levels of domestic abuse reports in February (99) and March (89), however there was a significant reduction in April as referrals to the team fell to 50. Of these referrals, approximately half were repeated presentations.

Referrals appear to be increasingly complex in nature, in particular those from partner agencies, and there has been an increase in Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) enquiries.

There have been no overall increases in the number of sanctuary referrals from the police or requests from residents for additional security and, where social distancing has been achievable, sanctuary measures have continued to be installed.

The Housing Safeguarding Team continue to provide a service to all residents of Thurrock by way of welfare calls, text messages and other virtual, secure and safe means.

3.3. CCTV

The CCTV cameras which have been installed across the borough are essential for the prevention and detection of crime, and for maintaining community safety. It has been observed that the range of recent Government guidance has contributed to changed behaviour, and the majority of people are abiding by the rules which have been set out.

When compared with March 2018 to April 2019, local neighbourhood crime captured on camera has fallen by 48%, however, the total number of council incidents, such as fly tipping crimes, increased by 133%.

3.4. Homelessness

Following the Government guidance on 26 March 2020 to 'bring everyone in', good progress has been made to identify and provide accommodation to all known rough sleepers. As at 28 May, accommodation is being provided to 32 individuals who were rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. Three individuals have also been successfully supported into private sector accommodation to date.

Accommodation for 12 individuals has been arranged with a local hotel, with the distribution of food being undertaken in collaboration with a commissioned support service and some local voluntary organisations. A hot meal is provided daily alongside weekly food packs which contain a variety of foods items sufficient for breakfast and lunch.

The remaining 23 individuals have been placed in general temporary accommodation, with arrangements in place for food to be distributed to them. A coordinated response from support services has also been established, including Mental Health, Inclusions and Adult Social Care.

The team are working to ensure that no-one accommodated returns to the street. A comprehensive recovery plan is being developed to meet this aim, to provide settled accommodation that will provide long-term housing for these individuals and to support them to make positive transitions into independent living.

Work towards an integrated housing approach with health and care to secure access to services, comprehensive package of support and continuity of care is also underway, as is work with our support provider to conduct robust care, housing and support assessments in a phased approach.

Each individual will receive an assessment as part of this multi-agency group to ensure that there is a clear picture of their needs and so that a tailored offer of support can be provided. These measures are being implemented to mitigate against the risk of a 'cliff edge' as restrictions are lifted through amended Government guidance.

Regular welfare calls have been made to all rough sleepers, with mental health support provided by the mental health social worker. Any individual with an identified history of substance misuse has been referred to the appropriate service for monitoring and to ensuring that medication is collected.

In general there has been a reduction in the number of households approaching the Council for assistance due to homelessness or the risk of homelessness, but where approaches have been made, assessments and interviews have been undertaken whilst following social distancing guidance.

3.5. Private Sector Housing

Following specific guidance published by the Government for landlords and tenants in both the private and social rented sector, the service and roles within the team were redesigned to address poor housing conditions and enforce against illegal practices by landlords in a different way whilst improving resident outcomes.

These changes included updates to the Private Housing Enforcement Policy to reflect the government guidelines published, a new e-form which allowed photographic evidence to be submitted, telephone support for landlords wishing to apply for an HMO license, and the introduction of a video-conferencing call-back service to review property defects or issues. Where visits have been identified as necessary, but are not urgent, they have been registered and will be undertaken at a time where it is safe to do so.

In certain scenarios, where the safety of residents would be put at significant risk or harm, physical inspections of properties have been unavoidable. In these instances, social distancing in line with published guidance has been adhered to.

3.6. Rent and Welfare

The Rent and Welfare team have faced significant challenges, not least due to the increased number of tenants which have started new Universal Credit claims.

In the week of 16 March 2020 there were 2,252 of the Council's tenants in receipt of Universal Credit, however by 17 May 2020 this number had increased by 12.75% to 2,538. In comparison, in the weeks between 3 February 2020 and 23 March 2020 new Universal Credit claims increased by 4.55%

Continued financial inclusion support has been provided for tenants during this time, with 72 tenants receiving direct support from a financial inclusion officer. Those receiving support have had assistance with completing discretionary housing payment claims, council tax benefit claims, benefit claims (including Universal Credit), and referrals for reductions in water charges.

The total amount of additional income which has been secured by financial inclusion officers from 23 March 2020 until 15 May 2020 is in excess of £27,000, with many tenants whose cases are still in progress and awaiting further information or a final outcome.

3.7. Repairs and Planned Maintenance

Following a review of the range of guidance published by the Government it was determined that emergency repairs would continue to be undertaken, however all other reported repairs would be logged and monitored. These

repairs will then be progressed in line with the Council's Repairs Policy once it is safe to do so.

Since 23 March 2020, over 1100 emergency repairs have been carried out. The most requested trades have been electrical, plumbing, and drainage, which represents the first recorded time that carpentry and joinery has not featured in the top three.

There has been a 31.5% reduction in repair demand overall when comparing figures from April 2020 with April 2019. The vast majority of individual trades have seen reductions in demand in excess of 20%, however drainage repairs has experienced close to normal demand for with a reduction of 4.8%.

Although repair demand has decreased overall and there are a relatively small number of backlogged repairs, it is likely that tenants are not reporting repairs at present, meaning that the repairs which make up this decreased demand will be reported at some point. It is estimated that up to 1100 repairs are required which have not yet been reported due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attempts to undertake planned gas servicing, water testing and other essential communal repairs have been undertaken in line with the Council's statutory obligations as required by law to ensure the continued safety of residents.

In instances where it has not been possible to gain access to carry out an annual gas safety test due to a resident which is self-isolating or shielding, contractors have been delivering carbon monoxide detectors along with simple instructions for use until access can be gained and the service can be completed.

Overall compliance rates have been affected by the number of residents self-isolating or shielding, which is reflective of the national position for compliance, however plans have been established to visit these properties as soon as restrictions are lifted so that obligations can be met.

3.8. Sheltered Housing

Due to the nature of sheltered housing, a significant proportion of tenants had been identified as either clinically extremely vulnerable (required to follow shielding guidance) or clinically vulnerable (advised to follow social distancing guidance closely).

Immediately following 23 March 2020, sheltered housing officers were asked to contact all tenants to obtain updated information to ensure that records were correct. As part of this activity tenants were asked if they required a daily health and wellbeing call, if this was not already established for them.

Officers were asked to attempt to make these calls with all tenants at least twice a week, with additional time for each call to ensure that tenants feel safe and to alleviate any feelings of isolation. From 23 March to 18 May 2020, in excess of 16100 contacts have been made with tenants by the sheltered housing officers.

In addition to the above, the sheltered housing officers were asked to identify any other areas where support or assistance may be required, such as the collection of shopping or medical prescriptions. The service achieved a sustainable weekly shopping and prescription collection provision, meaning that tenants would not have to rely on other areas of the organisation to meet these needs.

The communal halls at the sheltered housing complexes were closed down swiftly, with a letter sent to each tenant to advise them accordingly. Laundry rooms remained open with additional guidance and timetables provided to assist tenants with keeping the area safe during this period. All fire, health and safety legal requirements on site have been maintained weekly across all the sites.

Due to the action taken within sheltered housing which aimed to reduce the likelihood of the virus spreading within complexes, the total number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in sheltered housing have been very low. Sadly, to date three residents have died – two of which died in hospital.

3.9. Tenancy Management

Tenancy Management officers have been taking proactive steps to make contact with their vulnerable tenants by phone and letter, and have made in excess of 5100 such contacts to date. Vulnerable residents on the Council's Travellers sites are also being contacted daily by telephone.

The team have been working alongside other teams in Housing to complete emergency lettings for risk-assess households. These sign-ups have been completed in line with Government guidance and have introduced new ways of working to which has significantly reduced the time spent face-to-face with service users.

Neighbourhood officers have started external inspections of estates to ensure that issues are identified and addressed swiftly, such as reporting fly tipping, repairs requirements and anti-social behaviour.

3.10. Transforming Homes

On 31 March 2020 United Living closed down its site operations across the business as a consequence of government advice relating to COVID-19, however since this time there have been weekly site inspections and an emergency out-of-hours service operating.

Wates have maintained an active presence on site, which has been adjusted to adhere to Government guidance. Activity has been reduced to works within void properties and to external works which can be carried out in accordance to social distancing guidelines.

The Resident Liaison Officers (RLOs) in the Transforming Homes team responded to the above development by undertaking a review of the residents they had been in contact with and identified 64 with additional vulnerabilities.

Assistance to connect with TCCA was given where required, and RLOs were also able to help directly with practical support, such as arranging shopping collection from local supermarkets. In some cases, arrangements made for regular calls to particular individuals as they had little or no contact with people for long periods during isolation.

3.11. New Build Housing Development

Of the Council's three Housing Revenue Account development sites, only the Calcutta Road site was able to continue with site activity following the issuing of the 'Stay at Home' guidance. This was because the project was at groundworks and foundations stage and contractors were able to comply with industry guidelines and social distancing. The number of operatives on site at any one time has been reduced, however the project is still currently expected to complete on schedule in Summer 2021.

The Tops Club and Claudian Way sites were both initially closed, however both contractors have now reopened the sites and are progressively resuming activities following changes to in the way that sites are required to operate to ensure compliance with Government and industry guidance. The Tops Club site is expected to complete around late June 2020 and Claudian Way will handover its completed units in phases from late June 2020, with the last units expected to complete around September 2020.

Both sites have incurred ongoing delays as a result of site closures with the main causes being:

- reduced operation of utility companies where only emergency works were undertaken
- the closure of the biggest UK manufacturer of plaster and plasterboard during lockdown, resulting in a nationwide shortage of these materials
- increased delivery time for other materials from suppliers
- reduced labour levels due to most sub-contractors making a gradual return from periods of furlough.

The Council expects the Contractor to mitigate any potential cost due to delays occasioned by its act or action as they continue to bear the cost of having its staff on site longer than expected and whilst the possibility of a claim by the Council for delays against the original project timetable due directly to the consequences of the Covid-19 outbreak may be remote, there

may be contractual provisions for delays in the contract outside the scope of COVID-19 that the Council may explore or rely on.

Discussions are currently ongoing with both contractors as to how to facilitate safe viewings for prospective tenants which comply with social distancing and government guidance.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1. The COVID-19 pandemic has tested almost every aspect of resilience and business continuity planning. This report serves as a record of the action which was taken to order to achieve the aim of maintaining a Housing service which continued to provide its critical services in the most challenging of times.
- 4.2. This document can be referred to in any upcoming exercises to identify and review the 'lessons learned', and also to assist with establishing future business continuity plans.

5. Consultation

None

6. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

Not applicable

7. Implications

7.1. Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Strategic Lead, Corporate Finance

COVID-19 has had financial impact upon service delivery across the Housing service. Where relevant, namely in relation to financial demands relating to homelessness and rough sleeping, additional costs are being recorded against the central government funding allocations. In relation to rent losses and potential increases in bad debts, this will continue to be monitored as part of the housing revenue accounts forecast budget outturn position, and reported corporately. An continued increase in the number of existing tenants claiming Universal Credit poses significant financial risk to the stability of the Housing Revenue Account.

7.2. Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**

Deputy Head of Law and Deputy Monitoring Officer

This report summarises the actions taken to date by Housing in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. There do not appear to be any direct legal implications arising from this report.

7.3. Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

The action outlined in the report demonstrates the steps which the Housing services took to ensure that support continued to be provided in a safe way to those who were most vulnerable and in need of assistance.

7.4. Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

Not applicable

8. Appendices to the report

None

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Housing Strategy & Quality Manager
Business Improvement - Housing

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**Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme 2020/21**

Dates of Meetings: 16 June 2020, 15 September 2020, 17 November 2020, 19 January 2021 and 16 March 2021

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
16 June 2020		
Housing KPI Performance (2019/2020)	Roger Harris/Carol Hinvest	Officers
Tenant & Leaseholder Satisfaction Monitoring	Chris Seman	Officers
Housing Development Programme Update	David Moore	Members
Housing Development Consultation Process	Keith Andrews	Officers
Housing Social Value Framework	Susan Cardozo	Members
Housing Service COVID-19 Response	Ryan Farmer	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item
15 September 2020		
Garage Project Update	Carol Hinvest	Members
Homelessness Prevention & Rough Sleeping Strategy - Action Plan	Ryan Farmer	Members
Housing Strategy Update	Carol Hinvest	Members
Housing Development Update	David Moore	Members

Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item
17 November 2020		
Tenant & Leasehold Satisfaction Survey Results and Action Plan	Chris Seman	Officers
Rent Setting Process	Roger Harris	Officers
Housing Development Update	David Moore	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item
19 January 2021		
HRA Business Plan	Roger Harris	Officers
Housing Development Update	David Moore	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item
16 March 2021		
Housing Development Update	David Moore	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item