

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 **2 March 2022**

Training Room, The Beehive Community Resource Centre, West Street, Grays, RM17 6XP

Membership:

Councillors Lynn Worrall (Chair), Augustine Ononaji (Vice-Chair), Mike Fletcher, Maureen Pearce, Joycelyn Redsell and David Van Day

Carol Purser, Housing Tenant Representative

Substitutes:

Councillors Adam Carter, John Kent, Georgette Polley, Elizabeth Rigby and Lee Watson

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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1 Apologies for Absence	
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To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 11 January 2022.	
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. To agree any relevant briefing notes submitted to the Committee.	
4 Declaration of Interests	

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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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Agenda published on: **22 February 2022**

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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 January 2022 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Lynn Worrall (Chair), Augustine Ononaji (Vice-Chair), Maureen Pearce, Joycelyn Redsell and David Van Day

Apologies: Councillors Mike Fletcher

In attendance:
Keith Andrews, Housing Development Manager
Peter Doherty, Strategic Lead - Housing Operations
Mike Jones, Strategic Lead, Finance
Ewelina Sorbjan, Assistant Director of Housing
Julian Wain, Strategic Place Advisor
Alastair Wood, Technical Services Delivery Manager, Housing – Technical Services
Grace Le, 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.

The Chair stated that as this meeting was being held in South Essex College instead of the Council Chamber, there was a time limit for the use of this venue which was until 9.30pm. If the items on the agenda were not concluded by 9.30pm, the meeting would be adjourned and recommenced at the next Housing O&S meeting.

25. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2021 were approved as a true and correct record.

26. Urgent Items

The Chair had agreed to one urgent of item business as she had requested an update on the incident that had occurred at Lionel Oxley House on 26 December 2021.

Alastair Wood gave an update on the briefing note provided which can be found online [here](#).

Councillor Pearce questioned how often were electrical safety tests undertaken. Alastair Wood answered that this would be followed up with

UKPN on the regularity of electrical tests prior to the incident and the measures to be in place following the incident.

Members requested that an update be provided to the Committee at the next meeting to include a report from UKPN. Alastair Wood and Ewelina Sorbjan advised that they would seek to provide update from UKPN but would need to wait for their report.

The Chair noted that this was the second fire incident at Lionel Oxley House. Following on from the incident, she asked if the service had identified the lessons to be learnt and if there was a written record of the residents that Officers had spoken to. She mentioned that some residents had informed her that they had not been approached. Officers explained that the service had knocked on all doors to speak with residents and had identified 14 households that were affected by the incident. Not all residents of the affected flats were at home at the time of the incident so was followed up with a phone call. The service had already begun to look at the lessons to be learnt from the incident such as the availability of purchase cards for Officers to use. Officers confirmed that tenancy officers and fire officers had worked together to check on each household. An hour later, the service and Mears contractors knocked on doors again. Officers confirmed that there was a written record of which residents were spoken with.

The Chair questioned whether there was scope in the budget to increase the one off payment of £120 to cover additional costs for residents. She also asked when the cladding would be installed in the building and if fire detectors were checked to ensure that they were working and had batteries in. Alastair Wood answered that the service would work with the Contractors on continuing to review support for the residents. He said that it was anticipated work activity on the project would increase in February. . In regards to the fire detection system in the flats, he said that these would be extended within the flats as part of a current project so there would be full coverage within the flat to increase protection. He confirmed this project was already underway and was not in response to any specific incident. The current fire detectors within flats were hardwired as part of the electrical system and were checked in the affected flats by Mears after the incident.

Noting that the fire system would be upgraded, Councillor Ononaji asked if this would include a fire detector in the communal area as this was where the incident had occurred. Alastair Wood explained that due to safety reasons, a fire alarm could not be installed in a communal area. This could cause a danger to residents as it was a single staircase block. Over the years, the fire system had been upgraded in line with fire safety regulations and residents needed to react to fire alarms within their individual dwellings. There were fire safety measures in place which the fire brigade would manage to ensure the safety of residents.

Councillor Van Day raised concerns over there being no fire detectors in the communal areas. He commented on the fire incident in West London a few years ago and pointed out that the advice had been for residents to stay put

which had resulted in the tragedy that had occurred. Ewelina Sorbjan explained that the doors in the hallways of Lionel Oxley House were held open with magnets at all times as part of safety measures. In the event of a fire, the doors would shut to contain the fire and prevent it from spreading.

Members praised the service for their swift response to the incident and the efforts that were put in to ensure residents safety. Members asked that an initial report be brought back to the next meeting to outline what lessons could be learnt and that residents' feedback should be included in the report.

27. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

28. Housing Development Programme Update

The report was presented by Keith Andrews.

Referring to the Richmond Road site, the Chair stated that departments in the Council needed to work together. She said that residents still had not been informed of the works to be done on the site. She commented that the site also needed to ensure that there was adequate parking.

Referring to the sites in Blackshots and Teviot Avenue, Councillor Pearce sought clarification on what major works were planned for these sites. In response to Teviot Avenue, Keith Andrews said that balconies would be upgraded and restructures to the ground. There would be further engagements with residents.

In regards to Aveley Hall, Councillor Redsell asked whether there were other facilities for residents to use. Referring to Blackshots flats, she stated that she was not pleased to hear that the service planned to extend the lifespan of the flats as it was not fit for purpose. She pointed out that the resident consultation had showed that residents were in favour of demolishing the flats. She also mentioned that affordability in Thurrock needed to be addressed. Keith Andrews replied that he would speak with colleagues to identify what other facilities similar to Aveley Hall was available for residents to use. In regards to Blackshots, he said that the service was assessing the potential for redevelopment and that there was a process to consider. Ewelina Sorbjan added that the Housing Strategy would cover the issue of affordability which should be ready by the early summer.

The Chair mentioned that the figures for affordable housing needed to be consistent as she had seen reports that stated 70% and 80%. She pointed out that social affordable homes were needed. Keith Andrews explained that there was difference in the Council's planning policies and the eligibility for funding which was 80%. If it was a non-council development, then the charge would be up to 80%. The Chair said that she would discuss this further during the Housing Revenue Account - Rent Setting and Budgets 2022-23 report.

Referring to the graph in 2.4, the Chair noted the 337 figure in 2022/23 and asked if this figure indicated that there would be 'spades in the ground'. She sought an update on the White Acre site and whether the Prince of Wales pub site would remain as it was now. She also asked when a new site list would be ready and whether all of the properties in Calcutta Road had been allocated yet. Keith Andrews answered that works were expected to start from the financial year of April 2022. He said that the White Acre site was now led by the Adult Social Care department and confirmed that the Prince of Wales pub site would remain as it was. The service was working on identifying potential new sites for housing development as a number of garage sites had been identified. Ewelina Sorbjan said that there were still some properties in Calcutta Road that had not been allocated yet. These were more sensitive as the properties were located on the upper floor and residents were concerned over the use of lifts.

RESOLVED:

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee were asked to note the updates on sites being considered for housing development.

29. Thurrock Regeneration Ltd - Proposed Development of Culver Centre and Field, South Ockendon

The report was presented by Julian Wain.

Councillor Van Day asked whether health and education facilities had been considered as part of the infrastructure. Officers explained that the Council worked with health and education partners to identify what contributions were needed to mitigate the impact of the development in the area. These matters were addressed as part of the planning application process.

Councillor Redsell commented that no bungalows were included in the scheme. She sought clarification on the size of the open space and its design. Keith Andrews answered that there were no bungalows in the scheme a fair proportion of properties were needed to make the scheme financially viable. It was identified that this site was more appropriate for houses and flats. He said that there were other sites that had the potential for the development of bungalows. In regards to the open space, the design had gone through public consultation and the result was an enhanced open space.

The Chair asked for an update on the status of TRL. Julian Wain explained that TRL was instructed by the Council as shareholder represented by the Corporate Director of Resources, Place and Delivery. TRL now had a full and functioning board of members and was able to take decisions and operate. The names of the board members would be going to the General Services Committee. In regards to operations, there was one staff member and other services were delivered through service level agreements.

The Chair queried how the Council would ensure that the land of the Culver Centre site would get best value for money. Julian Wain explained that an

independent person would be appointed to carry out an independent valuation which would be signed off to demonstrate s123 best consideration under the Local Government Act 1972. This would provide the Council and its residents with assurance that the land got the best value.

The Chair asked if other options had been considered in the disposal of the site such as using private developers. She questioned why private developers were not interested in the site. Julian Wain referred to paragraph 3.1 and took members through the pros and cons listed there. The option of the Council going into a joint venture with private developers was considered and covered in the report. The best option was TRL as it gave the Council a significant degree of control along with a long term investment, generated returns, revenue receipts, certainty of delivery and affordable units.

Councillor Redsell questioned whether TRL faced the same planning constraints as other private developers. Julian Wain answered that specific constraints and conditions relevant to planning applications applied to anyone carrying out the development.

Referring to recommendation 1.2, the Chair stated that she was not supportive of this as full control over the disposal of land was delegated to two people. She referred to minutes from the Housing O&S meeting on 11 February 2020, and read out a paragraph:

“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.”

Referring to the legal implications in the report, the Chair said that she was aware of that Cabinet had the authority as the decision makers. However, she highlighted her concerns over delegating this authority to two Councillors and a Director to make the decision. She stated that she was strongly against this and felt that the decision should be made by Cabinet and ratified at Full Council. She pointed out that this had been highlighted in the 11 February 2020 meeting but she had not seen any changes made where the disposal of land would be recommended by Cabinet to Full Council.

Julian Wain referred to the legal implications and explained that the disposal of land was an executive function that was reserved for Cabinet and not for Full Council. He noted the Chair’s objection to the delegation.

Councillor Ononaji commented that it would be good practice that the disposal of land should be agreed at Full Council instead of two Councillors and the Director. He suggested that a change to this policy could be put forward to Full Council as a motion. The Chair agreed with this suggestion. She asked

that a legal representative give an explanation as to why recommendation 1.2 differed to what was stated and minuted from the 11 February 2020.

The Chair proposed that a new recommendation be put forward as she did not agree with recommendation 1.2. The Committee agreed and supported this. Officers would work with the Chair to agree the wording to reflect the Committee's disagreement with recommendation 1.2 which would be put forward to Cabinet on 12 January 2022 where this report would be considered. The wording would also be shared with Committee Members.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That the Committee commented on the proposal that that Thurrock Regeneration Ltd develop the Culver Centre and Field, South Ockendon site in accordance with the consented planning application.**

UNRESOLVED:

- 1.2 That the Committee noted that authority will be delegated to the Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to agree the transfer value of the land, final funding to TRL, and to enter into legal agreements including appropriation of land, as required to enable this development, subject to the financial parameters as set out in the report.**

(Following on from this meeting, the wording for the recommendation to Cabinet was agreed by the Chair as:

At their meeting on 11th February 2020, Housing Overview and Scrutiny received information that decisions on the disposal of land would be referred to Full Council. Based on this previous information, the Committee does not wish to support the delegation to the Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration to agree the transfer value of the land, final funding to TRL, and to enter into legal agreements including appropriation of land, as required to enable this development, subject to the financial parameters as set out in the report.

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee requests Cabinet to take the decisions in full Cabinet and to refer the matter to Council.)

30. Housing Revenue Account - Rent Setting and Budgets 2022-23

(Due to the time constraint, the Chair moved this item up on the agenda.)

The report was presented by Mike Jones.

Councillor Redsell mentioned that some of the properties in her ward were being charged for services that were not there. She noted that there were no works to be undertaken for garages and raised concerns over what the garage charges were being used for. Ewelina Sorbjan asked that the addresses be emailed over to her in regards to the charges. Mike Jones referred to table 6 and said that half a million had been allocated to garages per year.

Councillor Pearce was concerned that the rent was increasing but repairs and services were being cut. The Chair agreed and referred to table 1 on the repairs and maintenance budget of £12.2 million. She asked if this was in and out of contract and what the split was for this. Mike Jones replied that the budget was split across various revenues that included void repairs, day to day repairs, planned and preventative maintenance and grounds maintenance. He explained that the charges were increased to meet inflation rates and pressures from external companies and that the budget considered these.

The Chair stated that residents did not feel services were getting better and that the service needed to inform the Committee on what services were being cut. She asked that a briefing note be provided on this. Mike Jones explained that there were no proposals to cut the services that was being provided this year in the next year's budget. The increases were to maintain the level of current services.

Councillor Pearce pointed out that tenants were being asked to undertake their own repairs as some repairs were no longer available. The Chair questioned what repairs had changed. Ewelina Sorbjan said that she would circulate the Council's repairs policy.

The Chair asked what efficiencies had been made in the HRA. Mike Jones explained that it was difficult to give a finalised picture of the efficiencies as there were certain issues such as staffing. There were mostly repairs in the HRA with no external funding coming into the HRA and the staffing was not funded in the same way as other general revenues. He went on to say that the only source of income to the HRA was the rent and for the HRA to make efficiencies, there would need to be cuts to repairs, anti-social behaviour workers or any non-frontline staff which could have dire consequences.

Referring to table 6, the Chair sought further detail on the 'Carbon Reduction Requirements (Tower Blocks)' and 'Carbon Reduction Requirements External'. She also asked if other departments had a budget for carbon reduction. Mike Jones explained that the carbon reduction in tower blocks included the use of heat pumps and that a budget was allocated to reduce carbon and what was affordable. He said that the costs were more tangible in the Housing department due to the works needed on the tower blocks. He was uncertain about the costs across other departments under the general fund.

Noting that there was budget for 'Highways and Lighting' in table 6, the Chair asked why this was included in the HRA and thought that this was under the general fund. Mike Jones replied that an asset that was deemed as HRA land would become the responsibility of the HRA to maintain it. He gave the example of Seabrooke Rise and said that the street area was the responsibility of the HRA so any costs associated with the street area such as lighting was for the HRA. This was on the budget due to the Capital Programme priorities which required targeted investment into lighting.

The Chair questioned how many homes could be bought with the 4% rent increase. She commented that 4% was a big increase and questioned why the increase could not be 2% instead as it had been in previous years. Mike Jones explained that a lower increase in rent would require cuts and efficiencies to be made across other services to meet inflationary costs. This would not be beneficial for residents as there would be reduced levels of service. He said that borrowing on the HRA to purchase new homes worked on a side by side basis. He explained that the purchase of a new home which was then leased on affordable rent and the level of income was enough to cover the cost of the borrowing. In effect, this was self-financing.

The Chair pointed out that this information was complex and had requested that a table be provided to explain this to the Committee. She said that the detail provided in the report was little and that the Committee needed a report on the full structure of the purchase of the new homes in regards to the leasing, Right To Buy receipts and who owned the new homes. She asked that a full report be brought to the first meeting of the new municipal year to help Members understand how the RTB receipts were spent and how PHI scheme worked. Ewelina Sorbjan explained that the report outlined the Capital Works Programme and the work that was undertaken to maintain these works.

The Chair commented that the purchase of properties should increase the funds in the HRA and queried this. Mike Jones explained that social rent charges were not enough to cover the cost of the borrowing, acquisition or the lease. The service's strategy was to set the rent at the LHA level plus the £1000 which was the benefit cap. The affordable rent was set with these in mind and following affordable housing rules, the Council would identify what rent could be charged to ensure it was self-financing. With the benefit cap, it was enough to ensure that the properties were not subsidised by the HRA.

Councillor Pearce sought more detail on heat pumps and whether these were cost effective. Alastair Wood replied that the cost modelling had been undertaken which showed that heats would be significantly cheaper in terms of savings per household. This would help to lift some households out of fuel poverty. He highlighted that the technology was new and had proven to be successful in other areas. He said that heat pump project would commence in the Chadwell flats in March.

The Chair queried whether the service charge costs could be reconsidered and raised concerns over bad debt, increase in fuel prices and the cost of

living. She asked if there was a solution to decrease the cost of rent. Mike Jones explained that the cost of services increased the costs of rent. He said that it was prudent to consider bad debt in accounting when costs were increased. There were also the effects of the pandemic to consider and inflation.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That the Committee consider and comment on the proposed base budget for 2022/23 (Table 1)**
- 1.2 That the Committee consider and comment on a proposed increase in domestic rent of 4.1%, in line with the 30-year HRA business plan, to be implemented from 4 April 2022**
- 1.3 That the Committee consider and comment on the proposed increase in service charges to reflect the costs of running each service in line with the budget estimate from 4 April 2022 (detailed in Table 5)**
- 1.4 That the Committee consider and comment on proposed charges for garage rents (para 3.9), to be implemented from 4 April 2022**
- 1.5 That the Committee consider and comment on proposed charges for rents on Travellers sites (para 3.10) to be implemented from 4 April 2022**

31. C01 - Redevelopment Update

Due to the time constraint of the venue, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

32. Animals in Council Properties

Due to the time constraint of the venue, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

33. Work Programme

Due to the time constraint of the venue, this item was not discussed. The Chair and Officers would discuss this outside of Committee.

The meeting finished at 9.30 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

2 March 2022	ITEM: 5
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
C01 - Redevelopment Update	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Keith Andrews, Strategic Lead – Housing Development, Mike Jones Strategic Lead Corporate Finance, Julian Wain – Strategic Place Advisor	
Accountable Assistant Director: Keith Rumsey, Interim Assistant Director – Regeneration and Place Delivery	
Accountable Director: Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Resources & Place Delivery	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This purpose of this note is to give an update on work to date and seek agreement for approximately 82 new homes to be built at the site of C01 to be owned and managed by the Council and held for affordable rent within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

1. Recommendations

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

- 1.1 Comment on the proposed redevelopment of C01 to be 100% funded through the HRA.**
- 1.2 Note that the scheme is to be directly delivered by the Council and the properties to be owned and managed by the Council through the HRA.**
- 1.3 Note that consultants are appointed to take the scheme through to planning submission subject to approval and consultation.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to give an update on work to date and seek agreement for approximately 82 new homes to be built at the site of C01 to be owned and managed by the Council and held for affordable rent within the Housing Revenue Account.**

- 2.2 Cabinet have previously approved a report in December 2018 that recommended development of a residential scheme. A project of approximately 80 units is considered to be the most financially viable and has the best fit with planning requirements.
- 2.3 The existing use of CO1 as office space will be discontinued from early 2022.
- 2.4 The proposed outcome for this scheme needs to meet the place shaping requirements for the Council given its ambitions for Grays, current planning policy and provide an additional £2.8m financial benefit to the general fund in support of the Civic extension project.
- 2.5 The proposal to develop C01 for residential accommodation is consistent with ambitions in the Grays Town Centre Framework with regard to bringing forward new development in this area with the increased residential population supporting the vitality of the shopping centre and local business. Design development through the planning process will recognise the relationship of this proposal to nearby Seabrook Rise estate to ensure the proposal is compatible in overall design, scale and massing.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 A range of options have been considered as below
- 3.2 **Refurbished or new Offices.** The principle of the use of C01 for redevelopment as residential accommodation was established at Cabinet in December 2018. It was noted at that time that the CO1 building had undergone very few modifications and upgrades to its plant and services. It noted that the buildings fabric and services were approaching 'end of life' and that even if refurbishment costs estimated at £5.75m were completed the building would still have an inefficient layout and have unviable floor space. It is considered that replacement of new office accommodation on the CO1 site is not required in the current market.
- 3.3 **Residential Accommodation Options.** The position on redeveloping C01 for residential accommodation and the benefits of providing a new council facility in the Civic Office extension were further agreed at Cabinet in September 2019 with the benefits of developing C01 for residential accommodation being a contributory factor in bringing the Civic Offices Project forward. Options for a market sale or private rented sector development are not financially viable as considered in the section on financial viability
- 3.4 **Design process of residential accommodation to date.**
- 3.5 An initial range of designs and cost plans were developed that considered options from refurbishing the existing accommodation as apartments through to a range of demolition and new build alternatives of differing levels of height and density. Following review the preferred option was for a new build project

of c80 units.

- 3.6 A technical team was then appointed to take the project to RIBA stage 1 which was completed with 3 proposed design options varying in height and layout considered by officers.
- 3.7 The current stage of design has been developed following consultation with the Council's urban design team, taking into account planning policy, to:
- limit design height having regard to the locality.
 - minimise overshadowing and encourage dual aspect to the apartments,
 - Consider ways to activate the street frontage, ideas such as street facing duplex apartments or mixed use space
 - Promote the use of roof garden areas to maximise private amenity space.
 - Consider design of car parking provision
- 3.8 It is recognised that car parking provision is one of the key determinants of design. The Council's planning design team advise that proposals should be based on a requirement for flats with high public transport accessibility of between 0 and 1 spaces per dwelling together with secure cycle storage and electric charging point provision. These requirements meet the proposed Parking Policy and Strategy and Parking Design Development being considered at Cabinet in January 2022. The design currently proposes 0.5 spaces per dwelling given the proximity of the Civic Offices to the rail station and bus station.
- 3.9 Appointments of the Tier 1 consultants of project management, cost consultancy, mechanical, electrical, plumbing & heating engineers (MEPH) and structural and civil engineers have been completed. In addition LSI architects have been appointed who conducted the existing work to RIBA stage 1 and also provided the architectural service for the new Civic Office extension. Their appointment ensures consistency in approach across the Civic estate.
- 3.10 Discussions will continue with the Councils design and planning service and work is underway to review issues and constraints arising.
- 3.11 Design and delivery risks and dependencies associated with this project include.
- As with all development adjacent to rail lines an asset protection agreement will be required with Network Rail to safeguard their assets. The proximity of passenger and goods trains to the building will also require careful consideration of the impact of vibration on foundation design, and acoustic impact on the residents. The impact of this to the project timeline and cost will be dependent on Network Rails assessment given the requirement to negotiate the asset protection agreement with them

- A detailed assessment of works is required to separate C01 and C02 (there is some interdependency) and associated servicing and power strategy. The current cost plan makes provision for the reinstatement of the wall separating C01 and C02 and a full assessment is yet to be made on the current UKPN substation/transformer.
- There are two tenants who have space within C01. The NHS and the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). The NHS have agreed a new lease for space in C02 and are expected to complete that and move in late January 2022. The CRC are now operating on a tenancy at will and are very unlikely to remain within the Civic Offices. The Councils Property team are currently assisting in relocation.
- The land currently remains within the general fund and would need to be appropriated to the HRA with the accompanying debt transfer if that delivery route is agreed.
- The new development will meet all existing building control and planning requirements in relation to sustainability standards. To exceed these standards, such as zero carbon development, would increase cost.

Financial Viability

- 3.12 The key financial objectives of this project are to deliver a financially viable scheme and provide the planned £2.8m financial contribution to the general fund to support the financing of the new Civic Offices building. The projected construction cost is shown in the table below is based on a proposal of 56 one bedroom apartments and 26 two bedroom apartments.
- 3.13 Although the design and cost plan are still at an early stage in its development there are factors that contribute towards costs higher than would be expected for a greenfield site, including:
- The site is technically challenging being adjacent to a rail line and a road bridge – both of which bring cost in relation to sound transmission and air quality and protection of existing assets.
 - It is tightly constrained – so that public amenity space and may need to be on a podium deck.
 - The site location makes demolition complex and costly
 - The current stage of design assumes some undercroft parking and also includes a full sprinkler system for fire safety reasons
 - The approach to design is aspirational given the proximity to the Civic Offices. This includes activation of the street frontage and to foster a sense of place.
 - The current construction cost estimate is based on a RIBA 1 design and will evolve over time until the final design is fixed. Cost and inflation

estimates have responded to construction market nervousness.

- A provisional requirement of £1.7m 'client side' cost has also been estimated in addition in order to take the project through to planning approval, procurement of a main contractor and to manage the development process.

Current Construction Cost Estimate	£m
Land Costs	£ 2.8
Build Contract Costs including Inflation projection and contingency	£ 21.6
Total	£ 24.4

3.14 Financial modelling for the project was initially considered on a mix of sale, private rented and 35% affordable housing to be delivered through Thurrock Regeneration Ltd (TRL). Essentially on a build and sell basis the construction cost per unit is significantly higher than the associated market sales value and hence there is no viable sales scheme. The construction costs which drive the interest costs relating to the scheme mean that a rental period will not bridge the funding gap as the rents will not cover the borrowing costs.

3.15 Market Sales Option

3.16 Under the TRL model with a s.106 planning agreement requiring a policy compliant provision of affordable housing, the sales receipt value would decrease by circa 15% in comparison to a scheme with all units sold at the open market rate. For comparative purposes the modelling for a TRL led development also provides a proxy to a private development option. The costs profile remains relevant but the expectation is this would attract a higher targeted profit margin for the developer which would not be achievable.

3.17 A private developer would typically require a developer's profit margin of 20% for the open market sales element of a residential development and 6% as a constructor's profit on the affordable housing element required under a S106 planning agreement. This delivers a blended profit rate of 15% for a scheme with 35% affordable housing.

3.18 TRL's profit margin is targeted at 8% and consequently it can be seen that if the market sales option for TRL fails to achieve financial viability then a private developer's profit margin in excess of TRL's would only make viability worse. The conclusion is that a private sales option is not viable.

Private Rented Option under TRL

3.19 A market rented option would also not be viable based on assumed rental income. This is because the cost of construction is the driver for the associated interest costs.

- 3.20 As set out in the table below, a rental scheme on this basis would not be financial viable for TRL. Using an estimated income figure, based on 100% market rent, the project would not generate sufficient revenues to be able to service the cost of the borrowing.
- 3.21 Applying the same profit considerations as market sale to a private sector developer would lead to the same outcome that the project would not be viable as a private rented project with an affordable housing element.

Private Sector Rent delivery option under TRL

Market Rents

1 Bed	(588,000)
2 Bed	(296,400)
Rental Income	(884,400)

Annual Interest	1,308,602
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Deficit on Rental Income	424,202
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In light of the assessment above and in recognition of greater funding flexibility within the HRA further consideration has been given to development within the HRA. This uses a different costing model, and considers the project cash flow implications over a 30 year period to assess financial viability.

- 3.22 The other key points where an HRA scheme differs from a private sector / TRL option are as follows:
- There is no requirement in the HRA to make a minimum revenue contribution, as the HRA has a legislative obligation to maintain dwellings through its capital programme, and must make revenue contributions to capital in order to meet the depreciation costs of its stock
 - The HRA can borrow funds using the PWLB, currently estimated using a long term borrowing rate of 2.2%
 - The HRA can contribute up to 40% of the development cost from retained right to buy receipts
- 3.23 On the basis of the considerations above, the financial modelling for an HRA scheme has a positive long term cash flow project. This is detailed below:

HRA long term cash flow projections

Expenditure	£m
Land Costs	£ 2.8
Build Contract Costs including Inflation projection and contingency	£21.6
Project development costs	£ 1.7
Total	£26.1
Funding	
Retained Right to Buy Receipts	£10.5
HRA borrowing	£15.6
Total	£26.1
HRA Borrowing supported by:	
Net rental income	£20.4
Less Maintenance and Management costs	£ 6.0
Pre-Financing Income	£14.4
HRA interest costs against borrowing	£10.7
Net HRA Surplus	£ 3.7

- 3.24 The table above is based on a January 2020 cost plan for RIBA stage 1 development costs, with an inflationary uplift provided to take into account the estimated commencement date of the project. Whilst this 30 year HRA model produces a surplus it should be noted that this is a moderate amount 92,000 per annum.
- 3.25 The HRA income assumptions are using a rent level of 70% Local Housing Allowance + £1000 pa which is within the national definition of affordable housing and is consistent with other Thurrock Council HRA new build financial assumptions. This ensures that the rent level will be lower than the 80% of market rent level, which is the ceiling for a scheme to be classified as affordable housing.
- 3.26 The level of RTB receipts which is applied to the scheme is flexible. This has been allocated at 40% contribution. At this stage, this has been used to illustrate that a positive long term cash flow can be achieved.
- 3.27 In lieu of RTB receipts, it would also be possible to apply for Homes England fund, but this cannot be used in addition. The estimate for Homes England funding could be around £50,000 per unit, which would be generate £4.1m. However, this would not be sufficient to reduce the prudential borrowing requirement to a level where the scheme would be affordable.
- 3.28 Key financial risks using this approach include:

- Risk of increasing borrowing rates from the Public Works Loan Board
- Risk of changes that reduce Local Housing Allowances thereby reducing income
- Risk of reintroduction of a national cap of affordable housing rental inflation
- Impact of Right to Buy (RTB) sales subject to the cost floor rules limiting RTB discount entitlement during the first 15 years after construction
- Accelerating building construction industry inflation
- The current cost plan excluding client side costs shows high individual construction costs of an average of circa £298,000 per unit. This will be continually reviewed as the design progresses and contingency or provisional sums are replaced by more accurate pricing.

Programme and Next Steps

3.29 The table below shows the current indicative programme.

	Start	End
RIBA 2 Design	November 21	May 2022
Planning Application	June 2022	August 2022
RIBA 3 Design	September 2022	December 2022
Main Contractor Procurement	December 2022	August 2023
Construction	September 2023	September 2025

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 This paper proposes C01 is redeveloped as a 100% HRA project delivered by the Council because it is the most financially viable option and resources can be made available through a combination of HRA borrowing and retained Right to Buy Receipts.

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

5.1 This paper provides opportunity for Members of this Committee to review the proposal.

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

6.1 The development of housing 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: **Mike Jones**
Strategic Lead – Corporate Finance

The financial implications are contained within the body of the report. The financing of this scheme is affordable within the HRA 30 year business plan and generates a small surplus for reinvestment.

7.2 Legal

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

This is an update report and the project proposal will be developed as part of the Housing development programme of the Council. The tender proposals for this project must comply with the Council's Contract Procedure rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and Legal services will be on hand to advice on any implications arising from the project proposal

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

Development of this site will have a positive impact on the locality by increasing the amount of affordable housing in the locality. Contractors will be required to follow Council policies in relation to diversity and equality and, in particular, contractors bidding for work will be required to follow the Council's Equality Codes of Practice on Procurement.

Contractors and developer partners will be required to have relevant policies on equal opportunities, be able to demonstrate commitment to equality and diversity and to supporting local labour initiatives that achieve additional social value.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder or Impact on Looked After Children

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):

- Grays South Regeneration: Civic Offices Update, 12 December 2018
- Grays Town Centre Regeneration: Civic Offices Project Statement, September 2019

9. Appendices to the report

None

Report Author:

Keith Andrews

Strategic Lead Housing

2 March 2022	ITEM: 6
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Animals In Council Properties	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Peter Doherty – Operational Strategic Lead	
Accountable Assistant Director: Ewelina Sorbjan, Assistant Director - Housing	
Accountable Director: Ian Wake, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report is being presented to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to: explain Housing’s current approach to managing animals in council properties and to highlight some potential changes in approach in the future taking account of good practice in the area.

1. Recommendation(s)

The Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the contents of this report and comment on the following recommendations:

- 1.1 to review the tenancy agreement terms and conditions relating to pets to better reflect good practice and the health and wellbeing benefits of keeping pets.**
- 1.2 to establish a pet policy to provide further guidance to tenants in keeping pets.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Thurrock Council’s tenancy agreement terms and conditions which govern general needs and sheltered housing establish what permissions a tenant requires and the actions they need to take to keep a pet (Clause 4.4). They also set out what action might be taken should they create a nuisance and/or annoyance (Clause 4.3.3 & 4.3.4) (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 Although there is no separate policy document for managing pets there is a section providing guidance in the Tenancy Policy (Appendix 2).

3. Tenancy Terms and Condition – Enforcement

- 3.1 Most tenants abide by their tenancy terms and conditions but there is a small minority who do not.

Permission:

4.4.2. *You must obtain our permission in writing before keeping any animal, bird or reptile at the Property. The grant or refusal of permission is within our discretion and, if granted, may be subject to conditions and may be withdrawn at any time if we consider that the animal, bird or reptile is causing a nuisance, damaging the Property or is being mistreated by you or any member of your household or visitor. We will give reasonable notice to you giving our reasons for withdrawal of permission.*

4.4.3. *Permission will not normally be given to keep a dog (other than a guide dog, hearing dog or other service dog) if the Property is a flat or maisonette without the sole use of, and direct access to, a garden.*

- 3.2 The fact that a tenant has not sought permission for a pet would amount to a breach of the terms and conditions and the council could seek an injunction to have the pet removed.
However, if the pet is not causing a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours, this could be considered unreasonable by the court and attract adverse publicity.

4.3 Anti-Social Behaviour, Nuisance and Annoyance

4.3.3. *You, your household, lodgers, sub-tenants and your visitors must not do anything in the Property or in the locality which causes or may cause a nuisance, annoyance or inconvenience to other persons residing, visiting, working or otherwise engaging in lawful activity in the locality, or to any of our tenants, agents, employees or contractors.*

4.3.4. *Examples of things which cause nuisance, annoyance and inconvenience include, but are not limited to, the following:*

- *Allowing dogs to bark and foul in the Property or the communal areas.*

- 3.3 That all said the quickest way to resolve a problem relating to a pet may not necessarily be through legal means. By way of example, the Thurrock Council Tenancy Policy Section 2, 14 Looking after the community - Keeping pets in Council properties guidance, enabled officers to work with the RSPCA to remove a monkey from a property where permission had not been sought (Appendix 3 case Study 1) but where its welfare was at risk.
- 3.4 In cases where the pet is causing a nuisance or annoyance, in order for the council to take legal action it must have actual evidence of a nuisance/annoyance – a neighbour complaining that a dog is constantly barking may be sufficient but ideally it would be corroborated, for example, by

a council officer or by another neighbour or by sound recordings. However, unless there has been a serious breach, for example, constant barking, mistreatment or a dog attacking a member of staff, the courts would expect the council to try and resolve matters by exhausting all non-legal means ahead of taking any formal legal action.

4. Good Practice

4.1 Recent studies have shown that there are many benefits to owning and caring for a pet and the service works with tenants to support them in taking these steps through the permission process. For example, pets can increase opportunities to exercise, go outdoors and socialise. Regular walking or playing with pets can decrease blood pressure, cholesterol levels and triglyceride levels. Pets can help manage loneliness and depression by giving companionship.

4.2 These positive impacts have been increasingly noted by government particularly following Lockdown. For example, paragraph 117 in chapter 6 (good quality home and neighbourhood to live in) of the social housing white paper under "Supporting Mental and Physical Health" references the following in relation to pets. *"We recognise that domestic pets also bring joy, happiness and comfort to people's lives, helping their owners through difficult times and improving their mental and physical wellbeing. We know many social landlords normally give permission for tenants to keep pets depending on the location, provided they are well looked after and do not adversely affect the lives of neighbours and those living nearby. We encourage all social landlords to adopt similar policies."*

4.3 This view is further enhanced under the updated model tenancy agreement for the private sector dated January 2021, *"landlords will no longer be able to issue blanket bans on pets. Instead, consent for pets will be the default position, and landlords will have to object in writing within 28 days of a written pet request from a tenant and provide a good reason."*

4.4 In view of the above it is recommended that the council reviews its standard tenancy terms and conditions relating to pets and produces a stand-alone pet policy to reflect these changes.

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

5.1 Any amendments to the tenancy agreement would require extensive engagement with all housing departments and tenants.

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

Implications verified by: **Hannah Katakwe**
Housing Accountant

Any financial cost arising will be contained within the existing HRA budget allocation.

7.2. Legal

Implications verified by: **Gina Clarke**
Corporate Governance Lawyer & Deputy
Monitoring Officer

The recommendations set out in the report would require the Council to vary the terms and conditions of secure tenancy agreements, which can be varied in certain ways. The terms may be unilaterally varied by the Council as landlord in accordance with the provisions of Section 103 of the Housing Act 1985 by serving a notice of variation on tenants. Before serving a notice of variation on tenants the Council must serve a preliminary notice:

- Informing each tenant of its intention to serve a notice of variation.
- Specifying the proposed variation and its effect.
- Inviting tenants to comment on the proposed variation within such time, specified in the notice, as the Council considers reasonable. The Council must consider any comments made by tenants within the specified time.
- A variation notice must be accompanied by any information that the landlord considers necessary to inform the tenant of the nature and effect of the variation. The requirement that the notice of variation must specify a date on which it is to take effect is mandatory and cannot be waived by tenants.

Similarly, the Council's duties in relation to the consultation of tenants on matters of housing management, are set out in Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985. A matter is one of housing management amongst other things includes if, in the opinion of the Council, it relates to the management, of a property let on a secure tenancy. Consultation would need to take place on the proposals and the views of tenants taken into account when Cabinet consider whether to agree the recommendations set out in the report.

7.3. Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**

Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

Section 3 of the report highlights the council's tenancy terms and conditions relating to permissions – Para 4.4.3 reads:

Permission will not normally be given to keep a dog (other than a guide dog, hearing dog or other service dog) if the Property is a flat or maisonette without the sole use of, and direct access to, a garden.

When the Council next revises its tenancy terms and conditions consideration will be given to permitting 'assistance dogs' or other service animals under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This is to ensure no individual with protected characteristics e.g. Disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010, suffers a negative impact through the tenancy terms and conditions relating to pets.

Section 4 of the report highlights good practice and the positive impact that pet ownership can have on one's mental health and wellbeing.

7.4. Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder or Impact on Looked After Children

Not applicable

8. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 - Thurrock Council Tenancy Agreement – January 2014 v2
- Appendix 2 - Thurrock Council Tenancy Policy
- Appendix 3 - Case Study

Report Author:

Peter Doherty

Strategic Lead – Housing Operations

Housing

Appendix 1

Thurrock Council Tenancy Agreement – January 2014 v2

4.3 Anti-Social Behaviour, Nuisance and Annoyance

4.3.3. You, your household, lodgers, sub-tenants and your visitors must not do anything in the Property or in the locality which causes or may cause a nuisance, annoyance or inconvenience to other persons residing, visiting, working or otherwise engaging in lawful activity in the locality, or to any of our tenants, agents, employees or contractors.

4.3.4. Examples of things which cause nuisance, annoyance and inconvenience include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Violence (actual or threatened) or other threatening or abusive behaviour including harassment, intimidation or bullying, domestic abuse or violence, forced marriage and honour based abuse.
- Hate- related incidents (i.e. those based on race, sexual orientation, gender disability, religion or age).
- Drug or alcohol abuse (including being drunk so as to cause a nuisance) or drug dealing, production, cultivation or storage (by 'drugs' we mean substances which are controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 or any other legislation).
- Other criminal activity in the Property or the locality.
- Creating noise in the Property or the locality at a level which is intrusive or annoying to others, for example by playing loud music, having the television on at a loud volume, singing loudly, arguing and shouting, swearing, slamming doors, doing DIY at unsociable times or for prolonged periods.
- Becoming a member of a gang. By 'gang' we mean the definition applied by the Metropolitan Police Authority as amended from time to time which is "a group of individuals involved in persistent criminality from some form of personal gain (this includes profit and/or to gain or demonstrate status) which is causing significant harm to the community and/or is of cross border concern".
- Vandalism, graffiti or damaging property.
- Displaying offensive notices or advertisements.
- Dumping rubbish or discarding litter in the communal areas, or throwing things out of windows or over balconies.
- Allowing dogs to bark and foul in the Property or the communal areas.
- Failing to properly control your children, for example by allowing them to throw stones or play ball games in undesignated areas
- Breaking communal security (for example by providing keys to non-residents or allowing strangers into the communal areas.
- Making false or malicious complaints to us about neighbours
- Abusing, assaulting, threatening, harassing or obstructing our employees, contractors, agents or Council members in person, by telephone, in writing or in any other way while they are carrying out their job, whether at the Property or elsewhere (e.g. our offices).

4.4. PETS

4.4.1. If your tenancy commenced before 6th January 2014, clauses **4.4.2.** and **4.4.3.** do not apply to you and any pets kept in your property as of 6th January 2014. For the avoidance of doubt, the clauses in this section will apply to all tenants who wish to acquire new pets after 6th January 2014.

4.4.2. You must obtain our permission in writing before keeping any animal, bird or reptile at the Property. The grant or refusal of permission is within our discretion and, if granted, may be subject to conditions and may be withdrawn at any time if we consider that the animal, bird or reptile is causing a nuisance, damaging the Property or is being mistreated by you or any member of your household or visitor. We will give reasonable notice to you giving our reasons for withdrawal of permission.

4.4.3. Permission will not normally be given to keep a dog (other than a guide dog, hearing dog or other service dog) if the Property is a flat or maisonette without the sole use of, and direct access to, a garden.

4.4.4. Any dog kept in the Property must be micro chipped regardless of when the dog was acquired.

4.4.5. We will not give permission to keep breeds of dogs which are prohibited under the Dangerous Dogs Act or any subsequent legislation.

4.4.6. Dogs must be kept on a lead in communal areas

Appendix 2

Thurrock Council Tenancy Policy Section 2, 14 Looking after the community

Keeping pets in Council properties

Tenants are normally allowed to keep pets in their Council home, as long as they are well cared for and responsibly kept. The home must be suitable for their needs.

If the tenant fails to adhere to this policy, in accordance with the Tenancy Agreement, or they do not keep the animals in a responsible manner, the relevant tenancy will be terminated due to non-compliance.

Guide dogs and other support dogs will always be allowed.

Permission

Tenants must ask for written permission from the Council if they wish to obtain a pet, indicating the number and breed of animal they would like. The Council will need to know about how many pets tenants have in case there is an emergency, such as a fire or a flood. In addition, this information is important for the general management of the tenancy and estates.

The Council will not refuse permission unless there is a good reason and any reason will be explained clearly to the tenant.

How pets should be kept

Some properties are not suitable for keeping certain types of animals. Tenants should keep dogs or any other animal, except cats, which need outdoor exercise on a lead at all times when they are in a public area on Council land.

Tenants should keep rabbits and guinea pigs in gardens, so a property without a private garden may not be suitable.

If the property is suitable, tenants may keep most domestic animals including cats, dogs, rabbits, rodents, fish, caged birds such as budgies and parrots, and reptiles such as lizards. Pets should be kept securely where they cannot escape, and should have enough room for exercise.

All dogs and cats should be micro chipped and the relevant evidence must be presented to the council with an application to obtain a pet.

Existing tenants must also arrange for their pets to be micro chipped and can liaise with the Council for further information regarding local schemes which may be running.

Pets not allowed

Any animals prohibited by Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 must not be kept. Any prohibited animals found, will need to be re-homed immediately, tenants failing to take immediate action will also be at risk of prosecution.

There are four breeds of dangerous dogs which are illegal – pit bull terriers, Japanese Tosas, the Dogo Argentinos and the Fila Brasileiros. Cross breeds of these dogs are also illegal. Dogs of other breeds, such as Rottweiler's, which have ever attacked a person in public are deemed dangerous dogs and are also illegal.

If a tenant's dog has attacked someone, the dog must be put down without delay. Similarly, if a dog attacks another dog in a public area, the dog must be re-housed immediately since the Council would deem this as a dangerous dog.

Tenants must not keep any wild or dangerous animals such as big cats, wolves, poisonous snakes and spiders etc. Other animals which must not be kept in tenant's property or communal areas include livestock, horses and poultry.

Barking dogs

The Council receives a large number of complaints regarding barking dogs. Barking comes naturally to dogs, but constant barking or whining of a dog can be disturbing or annoying for those around them.

By law, a barking dog can be a noise nuisance; therefore the Council will always try to work with the tenants in reducing the noise problem. The main reasons dogs bark are due to loneliness, boredom, attention seeking and defending their territory.

Simple measures to assist with this problem are

- Training the dog sufficiently
- Regular routine, including regular walks
- Leaving the radio on whilst the house is empty
- Not leaving the dog alone for long periods of time

Number of pets

Tenants should not keep more than two cats, dogs or rabbits. They may keep more small animals such as gerbils, mice, guinea pigs, fish, birds and reptiles as long as they are kept in tanks/ cages which are big enough for them and have enough room for exercise. In addition, they must also not cause a statutory or environmental noise nuisance.

Breeding animals

Tenants must not breed animals within their Council property. Council properties are unsuitable for commercial breeding. All pets should be neutered to help reduce the number of unwanted animals. Small pets such as guinea pigs and gerbils can breed very quickly, so it is important to have them neutered as soon as they are purchased, or only keep pairs of the same sex.

Tenants responsibilities when keeping a pet

- Seek written permission from the council
- Adequately feed and provide clean fresh water to the pets
- Keep the pets safe and warm enough at all times
- Take pets to the vets whenever they are ill, or need any other attention, e.g. for fleas
- Give pets enough exercise, and keep dogs on leads when walking them in public
- Ensure pets are adequately groomed within private areas of the tenant's property. For example brushing dog hairs to minimise them falling within communal areas
- Ensure appropriate arrangements are in place if they are away from their home, and have a nominated person to care for the animal in the case of an emergency
- Make sure all pets in tanks or cages have enough room and are not overcrowded
- Ensure pets are chipped and neutered in line with the policy
- Clean any mess that dogs/ cats make in public or private areas, any fouling must be cleared immediately
- Keep pets under control at all times
- Take into account the pets individual needs. For example very timid animals may need to be kept away from other animals or from children

Tenants must not

- Allow pets to roam or stray, (except cats)
- Allow pets to annoy or frighten anybody else
- Allow pets to cause nuisance to anybody else, e.g. by making too much noise
- Allow pets to damage anybody's property, including their own council property
- Neglect or mistreat pets in any way.

Cruelty to animals is a criminal offence.

Tenants unable to afford/ care for their pets

Organisations which can assist in giving discount for tenants who are on benefits or providing pet care include the RSPCA and the PDSA. The tenant should contact them for further advice.

The tenant is responsible for finding the pet a new home if they can no longer care for them or if they have been asked to have them re-housed or removed by the Council.

Problems with other people's pets

If a tenant reports an illegal dog to the Council, the Council will always investigate the allegation to ensure the safety of all residents.

If a tenant reports their neighbour's dog is causing a nuisance, they should try and discuss this with their neighbour to resolve the matter. If the matter persists, they should contact the Council.

Alternatively if a tenant is aware of a neighbour neglecting their animal, they should report the concern to the RSPCA or the police.

The Environmental Protection Team can take enforcement action against tenants who are responsible for 'any animal kept in such a place or manner as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance' (Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 79(1)(f)).

Noise

Noise is inevitable in any type of property within reason. Tenants must be responsible about the level of noise coming from their property and be considerate to the needs of their neighbours. For example the consistency of noise, level of noise and time of the noise must be taken into account by each tenant and every effort must be made to avoid excessively loud noise at any time of the day and night.

In return tenants must also be tolerant of noise and accept that it is a part of everyday life and cannot be avoided. This can be a particular issue in flats and high rise blocks. For example children will make noise and will be allowed to play in safe open spaces as they are entitled to enjoy their home environment as much as everyone else and should not be confined to their homes. However, they should always be sufficiently supervised to ensure safety.

Appendix 3

Case Study 1

Following a concern that was raised to the attention of the Tenancy Management Service, the Tenancy Management Officer completed a property audit and noted the resident had a very small, baby marmoset monkey in a cage. Seeing how distressed the baby monkey appeared and worried for its welfare, the officer raised her concerns with the RSPCA who attended and agreed that it was in the best interests of the animal for it to be moved.

The Monkey was removed the same day and taken to Monkey World where he was introduced to adoptive parents.

In this instance, and even though the owner had not sought permission to have a monkey, meaning we were unable to assess the monkey's suitability to the property, we would still have had to prove the monkey was creating a nuisance before we could have taken legal action. Nevertheless, we were able to raise our concerns with a third party agency that was able to take appropriate and timely action.

2 March 2022	ITEM: 7
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Update on Incident at Lionel Oxley House	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key
Report of: Ewelina Sorbjan, Assistant Director for Housing	
Accountable Assistant Director: Ewelina Sorbjan, Assistant Director for Housing	
Accountable Director: Ian Wake, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report is being presented to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a further update following the item of urgent business requested and briefing note delivered to this committee during the January 2022 meeting. Members are asked to read this report alongside the January briefing note.

Members of the committee requested that this report be brought back in March 2022 to address the following specific elements:

1. Outcome of the UKPN investigation into the cause of the infrastructure failure
2. Planned and preventative maintenance and inspections of infrastructure in other tower blocks in Thurrock
3. Lessons learnt from the officer group
4. Feedback from residents

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 The Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are invited to comment on the detail contained within this report relating to the incident.

2. Introduction and background

2.1 On 26 December 2021 an incident took place at Lionel Oxley House whereby electrical infrastructure owned and maintained by UK Power Networks (UKPN) failed causing it to ignite and smoulder.

2.2 The damage caused to the building by the actual incident was relatively minor. The fire detection system allowed the Essex Country Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) to be onsite within minutes and the source of ignition and smouldering was extinguished quickly.

2.3 However, the damaged infrastructure meant that power was lost to 14 individual homes within the tower block and therefore, residents could not return to their homes until 28 December 2021.

3. Outcome of the UKPN investigation into the cause of the infrastructure failure

3.1 Since the occurrence of the incident Thurrock Council have been in communication with UKPN to fully investigate and understand the cause of the fault that led to this incident, and to ensure that a similar occurrence in any of our blocks is prevented as far as is reasonably practicable.

3.2 UKPN advised the investigation has been completed by an independent organisation. It has been concluded that the fire probably started as a result of a resistive heating fault on one of the three phase service heads. Specifically, at one of the cut-out fuse assemblies within that service head. However, it has been concluded that the extent of the damage to two of those assemblies is such that the exact physical evidence of the fault has been lost.

3.3 Therefore, based on the remains of the infrastructure after the incident, they are unable to categorically determine what failed within this section of the infrastructure. However, they have confirmed the fault that caused the incident was within the section that caused the ignition and therefore, this was not a wider issue within the building.

3.4 Following the incident this section of infrastructure has been completely replaced by UKPN and none of the defective parts remain in the building.

4. Planned and preventative maintenance and inspections of infrastructure in other tower blocks in Thurrock

4.1 In line with the update delivered in January 2022 to this committee, we remain in conversation with the operational teams within UKPN to discuss the inspections and maintenance of their infrastructure both within Lionel Oxley House and also other high rise buildings in the housing portfolio.

4.2 We can confirm that following the incident at Lionel Oxley House, UKPN have undertaken surveys utilising specialist testing equipment on the incoming mains of all six high rise resident tower blocks in South Grays. These surveys did not identify any defects across any of the six blocks.

4.3 At the time of compiling this report we can advise that we are currently in active communication in regard to continuing this piece of work across other Council owned assets and specifically the remaining high rise resident tower blocks within Thurrock.

- 4.4 Thurrock Council have also raised matters with UKPN regarding the requirement of planned servicing and testing of their infrastructure. UKPN have confirmed that, specifically in respect to Lionel Oxley House, their equipment is designed and maintained to be safe and meets industry regulations and standards. They further stated, these types of incidents are infrequent and relatively isolated across the energy industry, and they are not considered an emerging threat or an increasing trend on electrical infrastructure.
- 4.5 At this stage we are awaiting further communications from UKPN in relation to the planned maintenance approach for their infrastructure both in relation to our high-rise blocks, and more widely, across the Council's housing assets.
- 4.6 Further to this, the Council and UKPN have agreed to jointly review the containment of the main electrical infrastructure within our high-rise blocks. Whilst there is not a specific failing in regard to the infrastructure containment at this point, we recognise the existing arrangement in place can be improved to align to current industry standards to enhance protection against any failures in the future. This will be delivered as part of the Council's planned maintenance programmes over the next 12-18 months and will be completed in all high-rise blocks as applicable.

5. Lessons learnt

- 5.1 Officers from housing involved in the management of the incident on the ground, emergency planning team and colleagues from the communications team held talks and a reflective lessons learnt session. Below are the key agreed takeaways to ensure that future incidents are easier to manage:
- Communications team updated their internal processes to ensure that the Leader, Portfolio Holders and Ward Councillors are to be informed of significant emergency incidents by the Communications Team Out of Hours lead
 - Those dealing with the incident on the ground should focus on the managing the incident first and foremost
 - Emergency Planning rota and Bronze, Silver and Gold processes to be shared with key people in housing to ensure greater visibility and awareness
 - Housing Out of Hours rota to be kept centrally and shared with the Emergency Planning Team
 - Confirmation that meals will be provided when emergency decanting into hotels
 - Company credit cards to be more widely available
 - Civic office available 24/7 for staff in case welfare facilities are required, as well as the possibility of using some of the caretaking facilities across the borough to be explored
 - Processes of Careline and handling of calls by Harty Close office explained

- Keeping a record of contact with residents as well as having calling cards suggested
- Suggestion of emergency “grab bag” to be explored, including a written record of laminated key phone numbers

6. Feedback from residents

- 6.1 We wrote to residents on 4th February inviting them to attend a drop-in event at the Seabrooke Rise Community House on Wednesday 9th February from 1pm to 5pm. The purpose of the drop-in event was to discuss the way that the fire incident was handled, what the council could have done better and to address any other concerns or questions that residents may have wanted to share. Unfortunately, due to an internal miscommunication a housing officer attended the meeting but it was not until much later than the start time advertised on the letter.
- 6.2 This was a significant error on our part, one that we apologised to residents for by taking the following action. We door knocked and telephoned all the residents of Lionel Oxley House on Thursday 10th February 2022 to apologise for our failure and to offer them another opportunity to feedback their experiences and how they thought we had managed the incident.
- 6.3 In addition, we hand delivered a letter to residents offering an apology and giving them the following options to share their views with us; to attend a drop-in event at the Seabrooke Rise Community House on Monday 14th February from 6pm – 8pm, to complete a short online form or to discuss the matter by telephone or in person by appointment.
- 6.4 Up to and including the initial Community House event on Wednesday 9th February we only received one telephone call from a tenant who reported that the incident was acted upon very quickly and that it was well dealt with. She was concerned however there was no audible warning and commented that there should have been an electrical break. We subsequently spoke to this tenant again and have included her in the records below.
- 6.5 The following is a record arising from Thursday 10th February. Of the 36 residents who contacted us from a total of 58 households through each channel – please note that four of the tenants who attended the Community House event and completed the online survey are also included in the face to face and telephone numbers:
- Face to face (door knock) - 14
 - Telephone – 22 (voicemail messages were left with all those that had such a facility)
 - Online survey - 1
 - Attendance at Community House – 4 (one of which was the Resident Association Chair)
 - Home Visit - None
 - No of void properties: 4
 - No. of residents who had no concerns to raise: 20

6.6 The following is a record of the issues which were raised by residents via face to face, telephone or the online survey:

- No. of residents who had no concerns to raise: 20
- No audio alerting to fire: 5
- No of residents staying away from their property due to fear of fires: 3
- Communication: 2
- Smoke in flat: 1
- Pet left in flat: 1

6.7 In attendance at the Seabrooke Rise Community House event were three Lionel Oxley residents along with the Chair of the Residents Association. Also attending were Ewelina Sorbjan (Assistant Director of Housing), Peter Doherty (Strategic Lead – Housing Operations) and officers from tenancy, property services and resident engagement.

6.8 The meeting covered all the issues referenced above and also highlighted a number of issues for the Essex County Fire & Rescue Service which we are to follow up with them:

- Door knocking and reassurance – what is their approach/protocol?
- Access issues – which keys and keypad codes do they require in order to access our buildings/infrastructure? Did they encounter any access issues at the time of the incident?
- Rescue – what's their approach?
- Lifts – why were the lifts still operating for a period after fire fighters had entered the building which resulted in tenants accessing them?
- Smoke screens in the communal areas – how do they create a closed space when running a fire hose through communal doors?

6.9 And similarly for Thurrock Housing we are to confirm:

- Why there are no alarms in the stairwells / communal areas?
- Bin chute fire alarm system – why did it not sense the fire and go into activation? We agreed to consider installing an additional smoke detector placed adjacent to UKPN service heads to pick up any potential fire risk emanating from UKPN's equipment.
- Bin chute door still open – This was damaged to provide access to the fire service at the time of the incident, it is still out of service with yellow and black tape still on. The repair of this roller shutter needs to be pursued.
- Fire Panels – who have the keys?
- Should Thurrock BC have an alert which goes through to them?
- Smoke alarms hard wired but still require batteries. Do we need to re-prioritise replacement response times given some tenants – disabled/elderly may not be able to access and all the time it is beeping?

- Doors
 - Fire doors - need to be checked to ensure properly sealed / closing mechanisms make it difficult for disabled and elderly residents to access
 - Tenant property doors – same as above
 - Drying rooms – keypad and lock – handle is small and difficult to use.
 - Emergency exit doors need to be checked, some of these were reported as being damaged and not closing.

6.10 General Matters

- Expectation around communication – door knock and follow up in writing to say what happened
- Officers to use hi-vis jackets
- Meeting Point – signage missing
- Resident Association – future agenda item

7. Reasons for Recommendation

7.1 The Housing and Overview Scrutiny have requested a further update on the items listed and in line with the discussion of the January 2022 relating to the matter of urgent business.

7.2 This report is providing answers to the discussion points and questions raised.

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

8.1 The Council has engaged with the officers internally and with the residents externally to gather feedback, improve its ways of dealing with incidents of this nature going forward and learn lessons.

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

9.1 The ongoing maintenance and 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.

10. Implications

10.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**

Strategic Lead – Corporate Finance

Any financial cost arising will initially be contained within the existing HRA budget allocation.

10.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Gina Clarke**

**Corporate Governance Lawyer and Deputy
Monitoring Officer**

No specific legal implications from this update report.

10.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**

**Team Manager - Community Development and
Equalities**

No specific diversity and equality implications from this update report.

11 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):

- Briefing Note January 2022

12 Appendices to the report

- N/A

Report Author:

Ewelina Sorbjan

Assistant Director for Housing

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2 March 2022		ITEM: 8
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Right to Buy Receipt and PHI		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Mike Jones, Strategic Lead – Corporate Finance		
Accountable Assistant Director: Ewelina Sorbjan – Assistant Director Housing		
Accountable Director: Ian Wake, Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

In response to Committees request, this report set out the overview and details of the Councils approach to the use of retained Right to Buy (RTB) receipts and the PHI property portfolio growth project.

1. Recommendation(s)

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to comment on:

1.1 the retained right to buy receipts position and the partnership agreement with PHI limited.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 At the previous Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2022, Members requested that a report was brought to this meeting to provide further details on the use of Right to Buy receipts. This report provides that information, and also explains further the PHI project, which is intrinsically linked to the usage of RTB receipts.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

Retained Right to Buy receipts

3.1 In April 2012, the government raised the maximum cash cap on Right to Buy discounts to £75,000 and confirmed that receipts generated by additional sales resulting from the discount increases (against a baseline of sales forecast before the increases) would be used to fund replacement stock on a

one-for-one basis nationally. At the same time, the government offered to enter into an agreement with any local authorities that wished to retain their own receipts from additional RTB sales so that they could reinvest them in new affordable housing themselves.

3.2 At this time, if the authority cannot spend the required amount within three year (since extended to five years), it must send the receipts to MHCLG through a process known as Local Authority Housing Capital Receipts Pooling. The deadline in which the receipts needed to be spent was across quarterly periods, rather than by the end of each financial year.

3.3 **How the level of retainable additional receipts is calculated**

The level of an authority's additional retainable receipts in any year is the total amount of its receipts arising from RTB sales, net of the following elements:

i. Transaction costs (retained by authority unconditionally) a set amount per RTB sale to partially cover the authority's costs of administering the RTB scheme;

ii. Allowable debt (retained by authority unconditionally) calculated to cover that part of the authority's housing debt it is obliged to pay off that is in excess of the debt its 2012 Self-Financing Payment has allowed for;

iii. Local authority share (retained by authority unconditionally) calculated to approximate to what authorities would have retained had the pre-2012 pooling system continued when they retained 25% of all net RTB receipts;

iv. Treasury share (paid to the Secretary of State) calculated to approximate to what authorities would have paid the Secretary of State had the pre-2012 pooling system continued when authorities paid over 75% of all net RTB receipts;

3.4 From 1 April 2021 the rules on spending retained additional receipts have changed:

The changes

- Increasing the time limit for the use of the receipts from three to five years.
- Requiring yearly rather than quarterly pooling returns and payments – this adds to the benefit of the extra two years by removing the complexity of four rolling deadlines each year.
- Increasing the cap on the cost of a replacement home that can be met from RTB receipts from 30 percent to 40 percent
- Setting a percentage cap on the use of RTB receipts for acquisitions – i.e. "a percentage of a local authority's total delivery each year using Right to Buy receipts". This will be phased in: 50 per cent in 2022/23, 40 per cent in 2023/24 and 30 per cent from 2024/25 onwards. The first 20 units each year will be excluded.

3.5 Thurrock Council current right to buy receipt position

Table 1 - Current and planned use of RTB receipts		
	£'s	£'s
Opening Balance 2021/22		(21,072,858)
Actual utilisation 2021/22 - Period 10		
PHI leasing properties	6,824,669	
PHI Direction Acquisition	927,574	
HRA Buy Backs	1,495,204	
		9,247,447
Further Estimated Expenditure 2021/22		
PHI leasing properties	1,775,994	
PHI Direction Acquisition	2,158,380	
HRA Buy Backs	873,185	
		4,807,559
Total planned utilisation		14,055,006
Closing Balance c/f		(7,017,852)
Additional receipts 2021/22		(3,617,168)
Closing Balance		<u>(10,635,020)</u>

Table 2 - Future Use of RTB and projection:	
Opening year 2 position	(10,635,020)
Yr. 2	(3,617,168)
Yr. 3	(3,617,168)
Yr. 4	(3,617,168)
Yr. 5	(3,617,168)
Additional Receipts	(14,468,672)
Total 5 year receipts	(25,103,692)
<u>Development Schemes</u>	
Vigerons Way	977,078
Teviot Avenue	2,657,673
Blackshots	8,678,967
CO1	11,684,280
	23,997,998
Remaining Receipts	(1,105,694)

The profile of the expenditure of the RTB receipts is linked with the development plans. This forms the basis of a five year development programme, and the funding from the RTB elements will be allocated accordingly.

PHI leasing scheme

- 3.6 The PHI leasing scheme was agreed to ensure retained Right to Buy (RTB) receipts which are due to expire during the current financial year were used. Any receipts that cannot be fully spent before the due date must be returned to central government, including a three year compound interest charge.
- 3.7 The leasing model was been reviewed at length including legal and financial due diligence, before agreement. The Council entered into a Process Agreement with Phi Capital Investments (PHI) and their investment partner Topland Olympus Ltd enabling the company to source suitable properties for the Council to use as social housing, under a leasing agreement of 41 years. The model gives the local authority the ability to purchase Topland's property at the end of the Council's lease term (41 years) for a nominal sum of £1. This gives Thurrock Council the opportunity to ultimately own the capital asset for a relatively low up front contribution of RTB receipts. Up to 40% RTB receipts can be applied to the leased properties (including additional works and fees).

- 3.8 The financial viability of this product against outright borrowing, and the lease terms were comparable with long term PWLB, as well as offering a diversified form of borrowing for the Council. In addition, an element of capital works are also included in the lease costs as part of the acquisition process.
- 3.9 PHI are an agent in this transaction. The main financial backing company is Topland Olympic Ltd. (TO). TO becomes the freehold or head leasehold owner of properties, depending on the property type (house v flat). TO forms part of the Topland Group. Topland Group have a wider significant financial and investment portfolio. TO has backing of Topland Group.
- 3.10 Given the amount of RTB receipts, spending timescales and a limited resource capacity internally, Council entered into a partnership arrangement with PHI. This enables the Council to maximise its RTB receipts usage, increase the level of housing stock and avoid interest penalties on the balance of RTB receipts. The service offered by PHI enabled agreed property types to be identified and purchased quickly alongside any associated works required to the property.
- 3.11 Through the PHI scheme, the Council has to date successfully increased the number of units within the HRA by 74. This has been financed through a combination of RTB receipt for 40% of the purchases value and eligible costs, and the remainder through a long-term finance lease. The second part of the project was to directly acquire further additional units, with PHI acting on behalf of the Council as the purchasing agent.
- 3.12 Once a property has been identified, it goes through the full approval, and conveyancing process. A long term lease is entered into between Topland and the Council (2 leases to be precise at 20,5 years each, running consecutively). The Council becomes the leasehold/sub-leasehold owner with leases registered at Land Registry.
- 3.13 PHI Capital are capital investment company backed by TO, that provide working as a property agency services to secure leases on housing properties for the Council.

The key benefits to this scheme are:

- Ability to provide affordable housing supply in short timescales
- No upfront capital cost required from local authorities
- The Council retain full control over use, rent and management of the property
- The Council has the option to purchase the property for a nominal sum at the end of the lease period
- The scheme can be applied to different scenarios from single properties to larger developments
- No costs incurred relating to aborted property purchases

PHI - Direct Acquisition

- 3.14 The purpose of a switch to an outright purchase model for the second phase of the project, was to support residents awaiting secure tenancies who were currently housed in temporary accommodation. This enabled a reduction in the cost of providing this service.
- 3.15 The key benefits to the second phase of the programme is part of the TA enablement scheme are:
- Increasing the number of HRA units presents the opportunity to reduce the amount of temporary accommodation. It also offers the potential to release the stock back to general needs housing or replace it entirely once another property has been purchased or acquired through a different stream.
 - It also enables the council to address the current inflated demand for one-bed property through the use of decommissioned Sheltered Housing stock, with an appropriate exit strategy in place for when this subsidises, and these particular properties become surplus to requirements.
 - The provision of more temporary accommodation within the borough offers the opportunity for better outcomes and experiences for homeless households. By remaining in Thurrock, households remain closer to support networks, their places of education and work, and other locations which are significant in their lives.
 - By directly managing the properties, the council can ensure that properties are maintained to a good standard and are safe for those living in the property.
 - It provides a financial solution for pressures facing the General Fund by transforming the delivery of a key service.
- 3.16 The repairs and maintenance will be undertaken within then current Council contracting arrangements for HRA stock. The assumed maintenance costs have been reflected in the 2022/23 budget setting. The Housing asset and maintenance team will ensure that the properties are maintained at the decent homes standard.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

The report is to provide the Committee with further information on the background and the proposed use of right to buy receipts, and the partnership agreement with PHI.

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

None

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

The management and operation of the HRA strives to support vulnerable residents. Financial decisions are made on the basis of the long term 30 year business plan, set out to ensure there is value for money within the Housing Service. The service is committed to the delivery of decent homes for its tenants, and compliance with legislation.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Jonathan Wilson**
Assistant Director – Corporate Finance

Financial Implications are set out in the body of the report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Gina Clarke**
Corporate Governance Lawyer and Deputy Monitoring Officer

This report is a factual update on the current position of the Councils retained right to buy receipts position and its agreement with PHI. There is no decision to be made.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

The Councils Housing Revenue Account works to reflect the Council's policy in relation to the provision of social housing with particular regard to the use of its own stock. In addition to the provision of general housing, it incorporates a number of budgetary provisions aimed at providing assistance to disadvantaged groups. This included adaptations to the stock for residents

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children

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):

None

- 9. List of Appendices**

None

Report Author

Mike Jones

Strategic Lead – Corporate Finance

**Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme 2021/22**

Dates of Meetings: 22 June 2021, 21 September 2021, 9 November 2021, 11 January 2022 and 2 March 2022

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
22 June 2021		
Damp and Mould in Council Housing Properties	Tracy John	Members
Housing Delivery Approach	Keith Andrews/Colin Black	Officers
Housing Development Programme Update	Keith Andrews/Colin Black	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item
21 September 2021 – Postponed to 14 October 2021		
Housing Strategy 2022-27 - Engagement Programme	Ewelina Sorbjan	Officers
Portfolio Holder for Housing	Cllr L Spillman	Members
Health and Wellbeing Strategy Refresh	Jo Broadbent	Officers
Homelessness Update – Everyone In	Ben Tovey	Chair
Property Audits (aka Tenancy Audits)	Ewelina Sorbjan	Chair
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item

9 November 2021

Housing Development Programme Update	Keith Andrews	Members
Fees & Charges Pricing Strategy 2022/23	Kelly McMillan	Officers
Damp and Mould in Council Housing Properties	Sue Cardozo	Chair
Garage Project Update	Peter Doherty	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item

11 January 2022

Housing Development Programme Update	Keith Andrews/Julian Wain	Members
Thurrock Regeneration Ltd – Proposed Development of Culver Centre and Field, South Ockendon	Keith Andrews	Officers
C01 - Redevelopment Update (<i>deferred to 2 March 2022</i>)	Keith Andrews	Officers
Housing Revenue Account – Rent Setting and Budgets 2022/23	Mike Jones	Chair
Animals in Council Properties (<i>deferred to 2 March 2022</i>)	Peter Doherty	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item

2 March 2022

C01 - Redevelopment Update (<i>deferred from 11 January 2022</i>)	Keith Andrews	Officers
Animals in Council Properties (<i>deferred from 11 January 2022</i>)	Peter Doherty	Members

Update on Incident at Lionel Oxley House	Alastair Wood	Members
Right to Buy Receipt and PHI	Mike Jones	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item
Next municipal year		
Garage Project Update	Peter Doherty	Members (requested November 2021)
Damp and Mould Ombudsman Feedback	Susan Cardozo	Members (requested November 2021)
Council Stock Condition Survey	Susan Cardozo	Members (requested November 2021)
Structure of the HRA	Mike Jones	Members (requested January 2022)
Housing Development Strategy	Julian Wain	Members (requested January 2022)
Briefing Notes		
Private Sector Stock Condition Survey	Ewelina Sorbjan	March 2022

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