

To: MEMBERS OF THE HOUSING COMMITTEE
Councillors Pursehouse (Chair), Lockwood (Vice-Chair),
Evans, Gaffney, Groves, Hammond, Montgomery,
Robinson, Shiner, Stamp and Swann

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Substitute Councillors: Lee, Moore, O'Driscoll and Pinard

C.C. All Other Members of the Council

13 June 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

HOUSING COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 21ST JUNE, 2022 AT 7.30 PM

The agenda for this meeting of the Committee to be held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station Road East, Oxted is set out below. If a member of the Committee is unable to attend the meeting, please notify officers accordingly.

Should members require clarification about any item of business, they are urged to contact officers before the meeting. In this respect, reports contain authors' names and contact details.

If a Member of the Council, not being a member of the Committee, proposes to attend the meeting, please let the officers know by no later than noon on the day of the meeting.

Yours faithfully,

David Ford
Chief Executive

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence (if any)**
- 2. Declarations of interest**

All Members present are required to declare, at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter:

- (i) any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) and / or
- (ii) other interests arising under the Code of Conduct

in respect of any item(s) of business being considered at the meeting. Anyone with a DPI must, unless a dispensation has been granted, withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the relevant item of business. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer or her staff prior to the meeting.

- 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2022 (Pages 3 - 12)**

To confirm as a correct record.

- 4. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2022 (Pages 13 - 14)**

To confirm as a correct record.

5. **To deal with any questions submitted under Standing Order 30**
6. **Council House Building Programme - Warren Lane / The Depot** (Pages 15 - 20)
7. **Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy** (Pages 21 - 72)
8. **Tenants Incentive Scheme** (Pages 73 - 82)
9. **Housing Committee Quarter 4 2021/22 Performance Report** (Pages 83 - 98)
10. **Any other business which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered as a matter of urgency**

To consider any other item(s) which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered as a matter of urgency – Local Government Act 1972, Section 100B(4)(b).

TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE

Minutes and report to Council of the meeting of the Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station Road East, Oxted on the 24 March 2022 at 7:30pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Pursehouse (Chair), Lockwood (Vice-Chair), Gaffney, Gillman, Mills, Morrow, Ridge, Shiner, Steeds, Swann and Connolly (Substitute) (In place of Hammond)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Duck

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Groves and Hammond

298. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 25TH JANUARY 2022

These minutes were approved and signed as a correct record.

299. HOUSING COMMITTEE - 2022/23 BUDGET – TRANCHE 2 PRESSURE AND SAVINGS DISTRIBUTION

As explained during the previous cycle of meetings, the following approach had been taken to the allocation of pressures and savings to the respective policy committees as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process:

Tranche 1 – savings and pressures which were straightforward to allocate (these had been agreed by the respective policy committees during the previous cycle of meetings)

Tranche 2 – pressures regarding inflation (£174k), salary increments / National Insurance staffing costs (£193k) which were being held as 'corporate items', pending allocation to policy committees during the March / April 2022 cycle of meetings

Tranche 3 – the more complex cross-cutting savings (also being held as 'corporate items') which would require service reviews and business cases to ensure accurate distribution to policy committees during the June 2022 cycle of meetings.

A report was submitted which proposed that this Committee's:

- share of Tranche 2 pressures be £8k as per Appendix A; and
- fees and charges be as per Appendix B.

The recommended fees and charges had, where appropriate, been uplifted by inflation.

It was noted that paragraph 3.1 should have read 'Housing' instead of 'Community Service's'.

In response to Members' question, it was confirmed that:

- uncertainty existed around future funding from Central Government, due to the delay of a Government Funding Review, which affected future budget years. There was no impact on 2022/23.

- following the Committee's decision in June 2021 to set an application fee for Mobile Home Sites, this fee had been split up in the proposed fees and charges. These were calculated in line with other local authorities and had been set on a cost basis.
- usually the fees and charges would have been brought to Committee during the setting of the budget in January and February. Capacity constraints made that difficult to achieve this year. However, the budget had been set on finite funding and relied upon the proposed fees and charges.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. subject to further consideration by the Strategy & Resources Committee on the 7th April 2022 regarding the overall allocation of Tranche 2 pressures and savings, the revised 2022/23 net budget for the Housing General Fund Committee at **Appendix A** be approved; and
- B. the uplifted Fees & Charges for the Housing General Fund Committee (**Appendix B**) be approved.

In accordance with Standing Order 25, Councillors Connolly, Gaffney, Morrow, Ridge and Steeds wished it recorded that they abstained from voting on resolution B above.

300. HOUSING COMMITTEE Q3 2021-2022 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Members were presented with an analysis of progress against the Committee's key performance indicators, together with an updated risk register for the third quarter of 2021/22 and an update on the Council's House Building programme.

Officers drew the Committee's attention to:

- the omission of KPIs HO7 – HO10 relating to the repairs service. This was due to a systems issue which meant it had not been possible to extract the data. This issue had been resolved with a permanent fix and officers were working through the data to update the systems. An update would be circulated to Members in April and full details would be included in the Quarter 4 update in June.
- a new risk, H4, relating to the Council's gas contract with Gazprom.

In answer to Member's questions about the Council's gas contract, it was confirmed that:

- the contract was set to expire in September 2024. There was no immediate mechanism to end the contract earlier than this date. If the Council were to terminate the contract in advance, it would be in breach of contract and would be liable for the full fixed term costs.
- if the Government were to terminate all Gazprom contracts, the Council would incur costs through an emergency procurement exercise to source an alternative provider.
- the budget set aside for the gas contract was £148,000 for 2021/22. Not all of that related to the Housing General Fund. The budget set aside for electricity was £460,000. This covered central and communal facilities and residencies which had one central heating system.

- a report would be brought to the September meeting of the Committee to give Members an opportunity to look in more detail at the Council's gas and electricity contracts.

In response to Member's observations, it was confirmed that:

- the high RAG rating for risk H1 (overspend on housing repairs) was related to the systems issue. Officers were able to monitor the bottom line spend on housing repairs, but not allocate these to budget heads. Following comments from Members, the RAG rating would be reviewed and reduced prior to the next meeting.
- in relation to the mitigating actions for risk H1, external contractors supplemented the work of Council staff, but it was not felt that there was an over reliance on third party contractors.
- in relation to the affordable rented scheme at Dormansland station, a decision was due from the Planning Authority over whether the change of tenure from rented to low cost home ownership would satisfy the test for very special circumstances. The proposals did meet the definition for affordable housing.
- the Council is on track to deliver the Council's current house building programme.

Councillor Morrow proposed an additional resolution to confirm that the Committee had considered risk H3 and noted that a solution to the issue was being worked on that would resolve the issue imminently.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. the Quarter 3 2021-2022 performance and risks for the Housing Committee be noted; and
- B. the Committee had considered risk H3 and notes that a solution to the issue was being worked on that would resolve the issue imminently.

301. INCOME MANAGEMENT POLICY REVIEW

A report was presented to the Committee to consider updates to the income management policy. The report highlighted areas that were recently reviewed, along with recommendations made to maximise income to the Housing Revenue Account. During the review, new legislation and supporting processes had been assessed to ensure they were fit for purpose.

The updated policy would prevent the build-up of rent arrears over a prolonged period of time, allowing officers to focus on proactive income management.

In response to a question from a Member it was confirmed that there would be no extra work for officers in relation to the requirement to issue a different notice when seeking possession of a property for flexible tenancies.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. the content of the report be noted; and
- B. the updates to the income management policy be agreed.

302. COUNCIL HOUSE BUILDING PROGRAMME - NEW SCHEME UPDATE

A report was presented which recommended Officers prepare proposals for a new scheme at Pelham House, Caterham. The report also sought approval for land appropriation at Pelham House and an increase in budget for the proposed Featherstone, Blindley Heath development due to increasing construction costs.

Officers explained that, to facilitate the re-development of Pelham House, it was proposed that Pelham House residents be re-housed and those with a sheltered housing need would be moved to Wadey Court, the new sheltered housing scheme at the Bronzeoak site, which was due for completion in the autumn.

Members welcomed the proposal to redevelop Pelham House and noted that Wadey Court would provide modern accommodation better suited to the needs of sheltered housing residents.

In response to a question from a Member, Officers explained that Lingfield and Dormansland had been grouped together in the Housing Strategy to identify a sheltered housing scheme to serve both areas.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. officers prepare proposals for and seek pre-application planning advice for the redevelopment of Pelham House, Caterham for a mix of 1, 2 and 3-bedroom dwellings making best use of the site; and approve a budget for the pre-application stage of £50,000.
- B. the approved budget for the proposed Featherstone development be increased by £350,000 from £4,759,030 to £5,109,030 to reflect the increase in build costs since the original approval following advice by the Council's external building surveyor.
- C. in the case of recommendation A, approval to proceed includes the appointment of an architect, Employers Agent and other specialist consultants and surveyors to act for, or advise, the Council and commissioning of necessary reports to take the proposal to pre-application advice stage, all subject to the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- D. in the case of recommendation A, authority also be given for Officers to commence the process of appropriating the land from housing to planning purposes in accordance with Section 122 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

303. HOUSING STRATEGY 2019-2023 - ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Committee considered a progress report against the Housing Strategy action plan agreed in 2019. In working towards the agreed actions, there had been cross departmental working and collaboration between Officers. Officers highlighted that the Strategy is for a 5 year period and some of the actions had not been progressed since the last update. Members would continue to be informed of progress annually.

In response to Members' questions, Officers commented on particular action points as follows:

No. 1 – Monitor the number of new homes, affordable homes, size of new homes (number of bedrooms), type of new homes and specialist units through the Authority's Monitoring Report.

It was noted that the targets in the action plan were set by planning and monitoring was in response to planning applications. The outcome wasn't balanced, but it showed the importance of the Council's house building programme. Officers would seek further advice from the Planning department and report back directly to Members.

No. 7 – Support Registered Providers to reduce rents below Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels (and/or including social rented housing) and consider reflecting the additional cost through a reduction in the percentage of affordable units for rent required on a site. In addition (and where applicable) seek funds from Homes England to support development.

Officers confirmed that rents relating to new housing association properties were within the LHA levels. This requirement was secured within Section 106 applications. Registered Providers were aware of the financial circumstances of tenants and kept their rents at a level which meant that if a resident was made redundant, assistance would ensure their rent could be continued to be paid.

No. 17 – Explore opportunities to develop/improve the database recording facility and review the data capture processes relating to private sector.

Officers confirmed that the new platform for monitoring stock condition across the private sector was run by Mole Valley District Council as part of the shared environmental health service. It was hoped that Officers would have use of that system in the future. Officers would clarify the data that had been captured on the system so far and would circulate it to Members following the meeting.

No. 20 – Develop an Empty Homes Strategy and targeted action plan.

Officers confirmed that a draft Strategy would be presented to the Committee for consideration no later than September 2022. The Committee were informed that 3 owners had recently confirmed they would be interested in renting their empty properties, which had bolstered the private sector landlord stock.

No. 23 – Explore the introduction of an accredited property scheme, and;

No. 24 – Explore ways to reach out to private landlord fora and groups to make even stronger connections with them. This could include the Council setting up a lettings agency.

Officers confirmed that resource and in-house expertise had delayed actions 23 and 24. Officers had been diverted to other projects and priorities but it was hoped that progress would be made within the next year. This would include consideration of how the Council's housing company could be utilised to progress these actions. The Council was working well with private landlords.

It was noted that it was necessary for the Committee to ensure attention was paid to stock condition due to increasing financial challenges. Officers confirmed that a new Community Surveyor would be starting employment in April, with new posts also being recruited to.

RESOLVED – that the Committee notes the contents of the report and progress made to date.

Rising 8.42 pm

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Appendix A - Revenue Budget 2022/23

Housing General Fund Budget

	2021/22 Updated Annual Budget £k	2022/23 Tranche 1 Budget £k	Movement £k	2022/23 Tranche 2 Budget £k
Meadowside Mobile Homes	(117)	(127)	(4)	(131)
Westway	100	50	0	50
Private Sector Enabling	111	111	10	121
Housing of the Homeless	110	110	4	114
Other Housing Renewal Functions	65	65	0	65
Syrian Refugees	15	15	0	15
Afghan Refugees	0	10	0	10
Redstone House	(49)	0	0	0
Housing Benefits	233	233	(2)	231
Care In The Community	1	1	0	1
Other Variances less than £10k	0	0	0	0
Alarm Systems	0	0	0	0
Housing General Fund	469	468	8	476

	Tranche 2:			
	Pay £k	Non Pay £k	Income £k	Net Budget £k
<u>Organisational:</u>				
Meadowside Mobile Homes	3	44	(178)	(131)
Westway		50		50
Private Sector Enabling	37	215	(131)	121
Housing of the Homeless	174	201	(261)	114
Other Housing Renewal Functions	13	55	(3)	65
Syrian Refugees		15		15
Afghan Refugees		10		10
Redstone House				0
Housing Benefits	300	18,041	(18,110)	231
Care In The Community		1		1
Other Variances less than £10k				0
Alarm Systems				0
Housing General Fund	527	18,632	(18,683)	476

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Appendix B: Fees & Charges

Housing Services - Fees & Charges	Gross Charges (incl VAT if applicable) Current Charges 2021-22 £	Proposed Gross Charges (incl VAT if applicable) 2022-23 £	Percentage Increase 2022-23 %	Budgeted Income 2021-22 £	Proposed Budget 2022-23 £	Statutory /Discretionary Service
Meadowside Plot Fees (per week)	32.43	33.76	4.1%	120,600	125,500	D
Meadowside Garages (per week)	7.53	7.84	4.1%	11,000	11,500	D
Total Budgeted Income Meadowside				131,600	137,000	
HMO Licence Fee (Private Sector Housing)	450.00	700.00	55.6%	0	0	D
Caravan Site Licensing Fees	386.00			0	0	D
Change of charge Method						
New Site Licence Application		486.75	n/a	n/a		
New Site Licence Application - Additional Fee per unit		2.87	n/a	n/a		
Annual Licence Fee		294.42	n/a	n/a		
Annual Licence Fee - Additional Fee per unit		2.15	n/a	n/a		
Variation of the Licence Conditions		264.92	n/a	n/a		
Variation of the Licence Conditions - Additional Fee per Unit		1.08	n/a	n/a		
Transfer of Licence to a New Owner		150.00	n/a	n/a		
Deposit of Site Rules		34.00	n/a	n/a		
Total Housing Services Fees and Charges				131,600	137,000	

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TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE

Minutes and report to Council of the meeting of the Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station Road East, Oxted on the 26th May 2022 at 8.53 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Evans, Gaffney, Groves, Hammond, Lockwood, Montgomery, Pursehouse, Robinson, Shiner, Stamp and Swann

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR 2022/23

RESOLVED – that Councillor Pursehouse be elected Chair of the Committee for the 2022/23 municipal year.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR 2022/23

RESOLVED – that Councillor Lockwood be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2022/23 municipal year

Rising 8.54 pm

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Council House Building Programme - Warren Lane / The Depot

Housing Committee Tuesday, 21 June 2022

Report of: Executive Head of Communities

Purpose: For decision

Publication status: Unrestricted

Wards affected: Oxted South

Executive summary:

This report seeks approval for a potential new scheme at the Warren Lane depot site, Hurst Green. This will involve re-designing the existing depot site to rationalise it and free up approximately half of the space to develop up to 22 homes for families on the Council's housing register.

This report supports the Council's priority of: Creating the homes, infrastructure and environment we need

Contact officer Carol Snowden – Housing Development Specialist
csnowden@tandridge.gov.uk

Recommendation to Committee:

It is recommended that:

- A. Officers prepare proposals for and seek pre-application planning advice for the redevelopment of part of the Warren Lane depot site for up to 22 new affordable dwellings; the rationalisation of the depot site and to approve a budget for the pre-application stage of £80,000. This budget will cover the appointment of an architect, Employers Agent and other specialist consultants, surveyors to act for, or advise, the Council and the commissioning of any necessary surveys. These are necessary to take the proposal to pre-application advice stage, all subject to the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- B. That in the case of recommendation A, authority also be given for Officers to commence the process of appropriating the land for planning purposes in accordance with Section 122 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Reason for recommendation:

The recommendations support one of the Council's key strategic objectives and seeks to address in part the district's need for affordable rented housing.

Introduction and background

- 1 The Warren Lane depot site would be an allocated site under the Local Plan 2033 with an estimated yield of 50 homes once the depot and its operations had been relocated. In 2018 a review was carried out by Asset Management to relocate the depot and an alternative site was not found.
- 2 A property adjacent to the depot site, 122 Mill Lane, was purchased on the open market in 2021 to provide an alternative access point (once demolished) to the depot. This means that part of the site can be redeveloped whilst the depot can still operate on the other part.
- 3 The depot is currently used by:-
 - Biffa, who has been granted a lease, for refuse/recycling truck parking, refuelling and cleaning;
 - the East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership (ESRTP), who has been granted a lease, for parking and office space.
 - TDC Officers (depot, building maintenance, street cleansing staff etc) who use some of the office space and meeting/welfare space.

In order to free up approximately half the site for housing the depot site will need to be rationalised and redesigned to make better use of the space. This will involve some demolition of buildings, an alternative office space for TDC Officers (either from conversion of an existing building or temporary/modular provision) and ESRTP who will be provided other accommodation onsite to ensure adequate parking and truck manoeuvres. Biffa and ESRTP will be consulted as part of the process and the conditions of their leases will be taken into account to ensure that they are not inadvertently broken.

- 4 If and when an alternative site for the depot can be secured the remainder of the site will be developed for housing (phase 2).
- 5 An architect's feasibility suggests that 22 family houses can be built on the phase 1 of the site with associated parking and landscaping.
- 6 This is a complex site and we will be working with an employer's agent and architect to assess which surveys and consultants will be needed. They will also assist us in the redesign and reprovision of the depot with input from colleagues to ensure that the design meets services needs going forward. Detailed proposals for the housing would also be drawn

up. This would then be submitted for pre-application planning advice. We aim for this to be considered towards the end of 2022.

- 7 The pre-application process allows our employer's agent to advise the Council on the expected costs of a scheme, based on detailed surveys and design; in preparation for Committee and briefing on the full budget.
- 8 Following the outcome of the planning pre-application advice Officers will return to Committee to seek approval for a full budget for the scheme and approval to submit a full planning application. In addition, Committee will be provided details of the proposal to transfer land from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account.
- 9 Property and land that is already held in the general fund can be appropriated for planning purposes and then held by the Council under the statutory provisions of Part 9 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The practical consequence (by virtue of section 237 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Schedule 9 of the Planning Act 2008) is that the demolition, erection, construction or carrying out of any maintenance of any building or work on the land and subsequent use of the land is authorised under those planning powers, if the works are done in accordance with planning permission, even if they interfere with third party rights. On completion of any development the land would need to be appropriated to housing land.

Other options considered

- 9 Officers will need this Committee's approval to seek full planning consent for an application for Warren Lane depot and Officers will return to a future Committee with that request.
- 10 If the Council decided not to appropriate the land there is the potential that third parties (who may have rights over the land) could bring injunction proceedings which could stop the construction of a future development or delay its delivery. By exercising appropriation powers, the threat of injunction proceedings for the infringement of third parties rights would be extinguished. Affected parties would still receive compensation but they will not be able to delay or stop the development.

Consultation

- 11 Ward members have been consulted.
- 12 Following a pre-application planning meeting and before the full planning submission we will hold a public consultation meeting to gather feedback from local residents and make any changes as necessary.
- 13 We will be consulting with users of the depot as the project progresses and with colleagues in Asset Management, Localities, IT and Housing.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

- 14** The £80,000 cost of the proposal contained within this report will be funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and not impact General Fund budgets. Should the scheme go ahead, the General Fund would need to be appropriately recompensed by the HRA for the site acquisition, remodelling the depot and any associated costs.

The independent valuation, coupled with consideration of the cost of remodelling the site, will ensure that both the HRA and General Fund will achieve value for money from the transfer.

Once a value for the land has been obtained, a further assessment should be made of whether the costs of acquiring the land, remodelling the depot and constructing the scheme compares favourably with alternate options for the site, to ensure that the scheme offers value for money for the Council as a whole.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

- 15** Owners of buildings that benefit from Rights of Light or other easements can apply to the Courts for an injunction if their Rights to Light or other easements are negatively impacted by development proposals. The Court would then decide the appropriate remedy, which may include a temporary injunction, followed by a permanent injunction or an award for damages. In the private sector parties normally negotiate claims and the amount of compensation largely depends on the commercial bargaining position of the parties and can be related to the value of the development being undertaken.

Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers councils to 'appropriate' land. The effect of appropriation (via section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016) is to remove the threat of an injunction and to ensure that compensation paid to the affected neighbouring owners is a reasonable compensatory sum for the interference caused to the right of light or other easement.

Under section 204 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016, compensation is payable for such interference, but it is limited to diminution in value of the land caused by the interference with the owners' rights.

For the reasons stated in the report, the exercise by the Council of its statutory powers of appropriation in the circumstances is reasonable and proportionate. The significant public benefits to be derived from the proposed redevelopment are of sufficient magnitude to justify the appropriation. An outline planning application submission and commissioning initial consultants should confirm the principle of re-developing the site is acceptable.

Strategy and Resources Committee – Land Transfer

16. As the scheme would require the disposal of land from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account a paper will be submitted to Strategy and Resources Committee around the time that a request for approval of full budget/submission of planning application is bought back to Housing Committee. This will be subject to an independent valuation but should provide a capital receipt for the General Fund.

Equality

The letting rather than the development of housing for sale is key to issues of equality. New housing developed reflects the housing priorities at the time it is conceived, is designed to mitigate against fuel poverty, be mobility friendly and be of a size sufficient to promote working from home.

Climate change

The new housing will be designed to achieve the Council's adopted target of Net Zero Carbon (operational) and any essential tree removals will be replaced in accordance with the Compensatory Tree Planting scheme together with a commitment to deliver bio-diversity net gain on each development.

Appendices

None

Background papers

None

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Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

Housing Committee Tuesday 21 June 2022

Report of: Executive Head of Communities

Purpose: For approval

Publication status: Unrestricted

Wards affected: ALL

Executive summary:

The Council's Home Adaptation and Improvement Policy – Disabled Facilities Grants and Financial Assistance for Private Housing Sector was last updated in 2018 and needs to be kept under review to ensure that it continues to provide an appropriate targeted response to housing issues in the District. This policy now needs significant revision and updating.

A draft Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy has been composed to replace the existing Home Adaptation and Improvement Policy in place which better reflects current priorities in the District and also new guidance issued in March 2022.

The key changes to the policy are set out in the main body of this report but the draft policy offers more help to more residents than the Council was able to support previously.

The draft policy proposed needs to be subject to review by the Council's Legal Team and may also benefit from a period of public consultation.

It is proposed that subject to consideration and appropriate inclusion of Member comments on this draft policy, Members agreement is obtained to move to the next stage of policy development. This would include a legal review of the final proposals and may include entering a four-week period of public consultation for this new policy. Once this has been concluded, a final version of the Policy will be presented to Members to adopt in September 2022.

This report supports the Council's priority of: Creating the homes, infrastructure and environment we need

Contact officer Jane Ellis – Resident Support Specialist
jellis@tandridge.gov.uk

Recommendation to Committee:

That:

- A. Members are invited to provide feedback on the proposed policy between the 21st June and 8th July 2022;
- B. the Committee determine whether they wish to subject the draft Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy to a period of public consultation;
- C. if public consultation is agreed, subject to the consideration and appropriate inclusion of Member comments received by the 8th July 2022, the Committee approve the publication of the draft Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy for public consultation.

Reason for recommendation:

The current policy has not been reviewed since 2018 and needs to be updated to ensure that best practice is adopted, to ensure funding decisions are made lawfully, transparently and consistently and that the support available is targeted effectively to meet the needs of vulnerable and disabled residents.

There is no statutory duty to consult on this Policy, but it is considered good practice to consult on any major policy developments that impact on vulnerable people across the whole District.

Introduction and background

- 1 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are funded by the government and administered by local authorities in England and Wales. They are a mandatory grant, issued subject to a means test, and are available for essential adaptations to give disabled people better freedom of movement into and around their homes, and to give access to essential facilities within the home. The legislation governing DFGs is the Housing Grants, Construction, and Regeneration Act 1996.
- 2 Funding for DFGs is now channelled through the Better Care Fund (BCF) which consists of resources including that of NHS England.
- 3 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) introduced mechanisms by which local authorities could implement changes to the administration of DFGs at a local level and these changes, combined with the increase in this Council's BCF allocation from £460,000 to £520,000 in 2021/22, has allowed the Council to

consider providing funding for additional types of assistance under the RRO. It is widely recognised that the quality of housing is a key determinant of health and so one of the primary aims behind the additional Better Care Funding awarded to the Council is to ensure integration of services. For example, preventing accidents in the home which would otherwise adversely impact upon NHS resources and hospital admissions. Another purpose is to enable vulnerable and disabled people to live safely in their own homes and be independent for as long as they want to, avoiding early admission to residential care. It is accepted that particularly the elderly and the most vulnerable, do not always have the necessary resources to keep their homes in good repair or to provide adaptations to assist with daily living.

- 4 Revising the existing policy and bringing it up to date is part of a wider programme of measures being implemented to enable the Council to better meet the needs of disabled and vulnerable residents. Other measures being undertaken are a wider promotion of the help available, which includes updating the information available on the Council's website relating to the financial support available through this policy.

5 Draft Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

- 5.1 The existing policy has been substantially redrafted and provides clearer and more tightly defined policy detail.

Key changes are:

Mandatory DFGs

- 5.2 A proposal is included to negotiate with Housing Associations that they provide a financial contribution towards the cost of adaptation works in their properties. At present, Housing Associations operating in the Tandridge District are not required to contribute financially to works even though the grant funding provided to their tenants for major works improves their housing stock and increases the supply of adapted homes within their stock.
- 5.3 Securing a contribution from Housing Associations will enable our funding to assist more people in future as demand increases because of the new policy.
- 5.4 It is not known whether it will be possible to secure agreement with Housing Associations for them to contribute financially in the structured way proposed. This element would be resolved either via direct discussion with the Housing Associations operating in the District before the report is finalised for the September Committee or during the public consultation period, if Members decided that public consultation was appropriate. If agreement cannot be reached, this section may be removed from the final policy document.

Means test

- 5.5 This includes a new section which updates the current policy regarding the ability of the Council to write off the first £1,000 of any applicant contribution.
- 5.6 Mandatory DFGs are means tested and often applicants need to contribute towards the cost of works. Those who are just over the benefit threshold can often be worse off financially than those on full benefits as they cannot access any financial support at all, making paying a relatively small contribution very difficult. This prevents much needed works going forward.
- 5.7 It is proposed to change the wording for this award and make it a discretionary grant, assessed on a case by case basis, rather than an automatic award, with the criteria set out more clearly the Policy. The usual award will remain at £1,000, with the option to increase the value, to a maximum of £2,000 in exceptional circumstances to enable more people to qualify for assistance.
- 5.8 Awarding this payment as a discretionary grant, will also prevent confusion as the current policy wording suggests that if an applicant has a contribution to make which is equal to the total cost of works, the Council will provide them with a £1,000 contribution. This was not the intention of the policy. Those who have sufficient income to be required to pay for all the works, are not entitled to a grant and should not receive £1,000 towards the cost.
- 5.9 It is proposed to include Council Tax Relief as a passported benefit to increase the number of households on a low income who qualify for financial assistance. Historically, Council Tax Relief was included as a passported benefit for DFGs, but this was discontinued when Local Tax Relief schemes were introduced.

Supervision and payment of works

- 5.10 A new section has been introduced to explain how works should be managed and how problems such as errors in construction are handled for clarity.

Repeat applications

- 5.11 While there is no limit to the number of repeat DFG applicants that an individual can make, a new section setting out the factors the Council will consider if a repeat application is made has been included for clarity.

Discretionary Grants and Loans

DFG relocation grant

- 5.12 A relocation grant was available in the previous policy but the criteria for award was not clearly defined so it was not clear in which circumstances it could be awarded and how much funding could be granted. The new policy contains a detailed clarification of the criteria and maximum value for the award.

DFG home repair assistance grant

- 5.13 A DFG can only be awarded if the age and condition of the property to be improved is satisfactory. There are instances where some additional works are needed to make a DFG for adaptations viable. This new grant provides a pragmatic approach by enabling other repair works to be completed in order make the DFG for adaptations viable and will enable more mandatory grants to go forward.

DFG contribution grant

- 5.14 This discretionary grant was previously referred to in paragraphs 5.5 – 5.8 above: Means Test.
- 5.15 As explained, the current policy enables the Council to write off the first £1,000 of any applicant contribution. It is proposed to change the wording for this award to make it a discretionary grant, assessed on a case by case basis, rather than an automatic award and also to increase the value, to a maximum of £2,000 in exceptional circumstances to enable more people to qualify for assistance.
- 5.16 It is also proposed to tighten the wording to make it clear that only those who are entitled to a DFG qualify for this discretionary grant.

DFG top up grant

- 5.17 Top up funding was available under the previous policy, but the wording has been clarified around the award of top up funding to demonstrate that top up funding must be provided as a last resort and that all other sources of funding, such as that provided by statutory partners must be explored first.
- 5.18 Additional wording has also been provided to clarify how the means test is applied to top up funding. The wording in the current policy indicates that the means test is applied twice, first at the point of application and then again if top up needs to be considered. This was not the intention as applicants on low incomes would be paying two lots of contribution, one for the mandatory grant and one for the top up award, which would be unaffordable.

- 5.19 The intention is that one means test will be applied for adults, at the point of application and one for adaptations for children at the point top up funding is needed. DFGs for children are not able to be means tested at the point of application. This means that it is possible for wealthy households to be awarded a maximum grant of £30,000 without a means test. However, such households may have sufficient income and savings to afford to top up the extra costs of the works above the £30,000 ceiling themselves without support from the Council and so it is proposed that it is at the point top up funding is requested that the means test is applied to DFGs for children.

Stairlift/ramp grant

- 5.20 The previous policy allowed for a grant to be provided for these items without means test but did not set a limit on the amount that could be provided. Large ramps can be very expensive, as can curved stair lifts and an application can be made requesting both items. The current policy has no ceiling limit on doing these works free of charge, but the intention of the policy is that where these works are relatively simple and smaller scale, they are undertaken for free and installed as quickly as possible as they make a big difference to an individual's safety and independence. Funding for larger scale works above the £15,000 threshold needs to be targeted towards those who qualify for a DFG so that the funding is spent where it is most needed and so that as many people as possible can be helped.

Winter warmth grant

- 5.21 This is a proposed new grant to support those who have health issues or disabilities that are exacerbated by lack of heating. It has been found that the ECO funding available does not provide a cost-effective way of assisting people with replacement heating as the carbon savings are too small. ECO funding is better placed to support first time installations. Despite its rural nature, and lower population numbers, the Tandridge District has the third highest level of excess deaths due to cold in Surrey and so needs to provide a targeted response to this issue.

Home owner repair loans

- 5.22 The availability of Home Owner Loans was set out in the previous policy. The proposal is to increase the value of this discretionary grant to reflect inflation and the high cost of building materials and to also set out the loan structure.
- 5.23 Previously, the Council was unable to charge interest on loans and as a result the value of any loan given diminished over time. The intention is not for the Council to profit from loans but to provide some limited protection of our investment so that when it is repaid in years to come, it has not been totally diminished by inflation.

- 5.24 The wording has also been clarified to set out the circumstances when repayment of the loan is triggered.

Funding for the Community Equipment Service

- 5.25 The Council has used its discretionary powers to spend BCF funding to support Surrey County Council deliver the Community Equipment Service (CES) for many years. However, it was not included in the Council's policy that we will spend BCF in this way.

Funding for Handyperson Service

- 5.26 The Council has for many years used its discretionary powers to spend BCF to provide free minor works (grabrails, keysafes and ramps) through the Council's popular Handyperson service. However, it was not included in our policy that the Council will spend BCF in this way.

Repeat requests for discretionary grants and loans

- 5.27 The previous policy did not provide officers with any guidance on handling repeat requests for financial assistance and this new section provides clarity on this point.

Maintenance of equipment funded by grants

- 5.28 The previous policy did not provide officers with any guidance on handling requests to fund maintenance and servicing warranties and funding for these items is frequently requested. Funding extended warranties is expensive and takes funding away from helping as many people as possible with adaptation works. The new policy clarifies that once an item is installed it belongs to the homeowner and therefore they must maintain it. Advice and clarification is also provided for tenants, so they can speak to their landlord in advance of permission being given for the installation, so they can understand who will take on the maintenance of the item and whether their rent will increase to cover the cost of maintenance.

Grant conditions and repayment of grants

- 5.29 While grant conditions were included in the previous policy, the new policy makes it clearer that the Council will recover costs whenever possible and reasonable to do so and that grant conditions will usually last for 10 years Discretionary grants (with the exception of the Discretionary Contribution Grant) last until the property is sold or otherwise disposed of.

Conclusion

- 6 This draft policy aims to set out the Council's approach to responding to referrals for major adaptations and regarding disrepair in the homes of vulnerable residents.

- 7 Members are invited to review and comment on the draft policy by 8th July 2022.
- 8 Members are also asked to provide Officers with guidance as to whether the Policy should be subject to public and stakeholder consultation.
- 9 A final Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy will be prepared and presented to this Committee and considered for adoption on 15th September 2022.

Other options considered

- 10 Consideration was given to not reviewing this policy at this time but that would have left the Council operating under a policy that was out of date and does not reflect best practice.

Consultation

- 11 While there is no statutory duty to consult on this policy, Members may wish to consider doing so and officers seek guidance as to Member's wishes on this point. Meaningful engagement with members, tenant and resident's groups and key partners could help to develop a policy that better meets the expectations and aspirations of vulnerable residents living in the District, in turn helping to achieve better satisfaction with the Council. Other benefits could be that any justifiable challenges to the policy are identified at an early stage, prior to implementation. In relation to the discretionary grants proposed, if the prevailing view is that these ideas are reasonable, consultation would provide a greater legitimacy to the strategic direction and priorities the Council has set in this policy.
- 12 It is proposed that all Members are invited to review this draft policy and provide comments between 21st June 2022 and 8th July 2022. Feedback from Members will be used to inform and develop the draft of the policy further.
- 13 Should Members wish to subject the Policy to a period of public consultation, a period of public consultation could be scheduled to run between 18th July 2022 and 12th August 2022. After which an analysis of the feedback provided would be undertaken and used to prepare a final Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy.
- 14 The final version of the Policy would still be presented and considered for adoption by this Committee on 15th September 2022.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

Although the funding of the projects come from Better Care Funding we still must ensure that we get value for money and distribute funding in a fair, transparent and robust way that stands up to external scrutiny.

It is important to ensure that the Council only undertake adaptations and works which they are responsible for and that they are targeted towards households with greatest need.

Given the constrained financial environment in which the Council operates, adaption spending must be kept within the available amount. This is achieved by managing in-year variances through grant-funded reserves ring-fenced for the purpose and by careful monitoring of grants against the available budget.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, supported by amendments through the Housing Renewal Grants (Services and Charges) Order 1996 and the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002 prescribed for the provision of mandatory disabled facilities grants and for discretionary financial assistance. The proposed policy provides a formal framework against which the Council can deliver mandatory grants and exercise its discretion in providing financial assistance under the increased powers provided for by the legislation.

Article 4 of the Order prohibits the giving of assistance unless the local housing authority has adopted a policy for the provision of such assistance and they have given the public notice of such adoption. Once adopted, the power to provide financial assistance must be exercised in accordance with the policy.

The adoption of a revised policy allows both the efficient use of the budget and improves the outcomes for disabled residents, tenants, and owner occupiers alike. Offering a wider range of discretionary assistance will enable the Council to assist a greater number of disabled people, their families, and carers and to help people remain as well as possible at home.

Equality

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Disability is a "protected characteristic" within the meaning of that Act. Section 149 of the Act imposes upon public authorities a duty (the "Public Sector Equality Duty") to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (such as disability) and persons who do not share it, and also to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.

A Preliminary Equality Impact Assessment has been completed which will be updated following the conclusion of the consultation period. A copy of this assessment is available as Appendix 'C' of the background papers to this report.

The Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy is specifically aimed at vulnerable and disabled people with a clinical need for adaptations and repair works to their home. The service promotes independent living for disabled people, improving their quality of life.

The policy ensures that the Council fulfils its duties to promote equality and eliminate discrimination.

Climate change

The Council will where possible ensure that materials used are sourced from sustainable materials and work with its contractors to ensure materials are recycled

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

Appendix B – Adopted Home Adaptation and Improvement Policy – Disabled Facilities Grants and Financial Assistance for Private Housing Sector.

Background papers

A Preliminary Equality Impact Assessment (attached at appendix C) has been completed which will be updated following the finalisation of the Policy.

----- end of report -----

Tandridge District Council
DRAFT Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is committed to supporting the availability of good quality private sector housing stock in the District so that all residents have choice and opportunity to access housing that best meets their needs.
- 1.2 It is well understood that poor quality housing negatively influences health, independence and wellbeing outcomes and by ensuring the availability of good quality and safe housing, the Council can contribute towards the generation of savings for the wider public purse. Providing financial support for works that enable people to live independently in their own home for longer and which reduce accidents helps alleviate pressure on other acute services and care.
- 1.3 The support available through this policy will help prevent those who are vulnerable through age, disability or ill health and who are on low incomes from having to live in the worst maintained and unsafe housing and as a result, achieving the poorest health outcomes.
- 1.4 While this policy promotes the Council's ability to help achieve these important outcomes, primarily it remains the home owner's responsibility to maintain their property. The aim of this Policy is to provide support in a targeted way to those homeowners and qualifying tenants who are disabled or vulnerable, are on low incomes and in the greatest need, who are unable to make their properties safe without assistance.
- 1.5 This policy sets out the types of financial assistance available from the Council in the form of grants or loans to undertake essential works as follows:
- Mandatory Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs), which are provided under the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
 - Discretionary financial assistance (which can be given either in the form of a grant or a loan), given under Article 4 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) order, may be available to carry out repairs, improvements and adaptations, along with the conditions attached to any discretionary award made.

2.0 Policy Aims and Framework

- 2.1 This policy has been developed to meet local priorities in the District having had regards to local housing conditions in the District, the Better Care Fund: policy framework guidance 2014 and Circular 05/03 "Housing Renewal" issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in June 2003. The link

between health and housing has also been reinforced through the housing health and safety rating system which came into force in April 2006 and now forms part 1 of the Decent Homes Standard.

2.2 This Policy has also been developed with regards to the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 which sets out the framework for the delivery of disabled facility grants (DFGs) and also the DFG delivery guidance published in March 2022: Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) Delivery: Guidance for Local Authorities in England.

2.3 This policy aims to:

- To reduce the number of homes with serious hazards as identified by Health and Housing Safety Ratings System;
- To ensure the Council complies with statutory duties in relation to the award of mandatory DFGs and where budget allows, to enable effective use of discretionary DFGs to promote the health, wellbeing and independence of people who are disabled or who have a long-term health condition;
- To assist Health to achieve safe discharge from hospital to home for residents of the District where the fast installation of adaptations and minor works can ease “bed blocking”;
- To provide support to help those who are elderly, disabled or who have a long-term health condition to continue to live safely in their home.
- The Council also aims to maximise the use of any financial assistance given under this policy and to this end will seek repayment of any grants or loans awarded under this policy. This is to enable the money repaid to the Council to be re-used to assist as many others, who fall within the scope of this policy, as possible.

3.0 Mandatory Disabled Facility Grants

3.1 Eligibility to apply

The eligibility criteria and conditions for a DFG are set out in statute and the Council must adhere to these. If the conditions for a DFG are met, the Council must award the grant.

A DFG can be applied for if you, or someone living in your property is disabled.

3.2 DFGs are available, irrespective of tenure and so are available to owner occupiers, privately rented and social housing tenants, licensees and occupiers. A landlord can also apply if they have a disabled tenant.

3.3 While the entitlement to apply for a DFG is open to all tenures, major adaptation works for Tandridge District Council tenants are handled via the

Council's adopted Aids and Adaptations Policy for Council homes and are wholly funded using the Council's own Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital budget as DFG grant funding cannot be used for works in Council homes. The Council's Aids and Adaptations Policy for Council Homes has been developed to mirror the provisions of mandatory DFGs with some additional flexibilities to enable the Council to best manage its housing stock.

- 3.4 Where a Tandridge District Council tenant has been refused works under the Aids and Adaptation Policy for Council homes, they are able to access the mandatory DFG application process set out under the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and in line with this policy. If the conditions for a mandatory DFG are met, the "grant" will be awarded but Council cannot use DFG funding to pay for the works and must still fund all the agreed eligible works from its own HRA capital budgets.
- 3.5 Due to the increasing use of DFG funding for Housing Association properties, the Council seeks to work collaboratively with Housing Associations operating in the District to provide major adaptations quickly. Housing Associations have equality duties towards their tenants and can access funding from their own internal adaptation budgets to meet the needs of disabled people living in their homes. To make the best use of the public funds available so that as many people as possible can be assisted with grant funded major adaptations, Housing Associations will be asked to contribute funding towards the cost of major adaptation work in their homes as follows:
- Cost up to £1,000 – housing associations to fund 100%;
 - Cost between £1,000 and £10,000 –housing associations to fund 40% and Tandridge District Council to fund 60% via DFG (where mandatory DFG eligible);
 - Cost over £10,000 – Tandridge District Council to fund 100% via DFG (where DFG eligible).
- 3.6 Not every applicant will qualify for a DFG. Those who are not eligible for DFG assistance still require access to reputable contractors of good quality and so may still use the Council's Home Improvement Agency (HIA), to progress the work to their property privately (subject to the HIA having adequate capacity to take on private works).
- 3.7 Eligible Works**
- Tandridge District Council will decide what works are eligible to be included in a DFG application by confirming that the works are necessary and appropriate. This will be confirmed by consulting with the Adult Social Care department at Surrey County Council following a referral from an Occupational Therapist.
- 3.8 Tandridge District Council will then assess whether the works are reasonable and practicable considering the age and condition of the property.

3.9 It is the policy of this Council to only fund works that are mandatory as prescribed by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

3.10 Mandatory DFG funding can be awarded for the following purposes:

- For works to aid entry and exit from a building e.g., installation of ramps;
- For works to aid access into and around living areas e.g., installation of stair lifts;
- Provision of accessible kitchen and bathroom facilities;
- Improvement of access into and around the home;
- Access to suitable sleeping facilities;
- Facilitating access by the disabled occupant:
 - To and from the dwelling;
 - To a room used or usable as the principal family room;
 - To a room used for or usable for sleeping;
 - To a room where there is a lavatory;
 - To a room in which there is a bath or shower;
 - To a room with a wash hand basin and;
 - To enable the disabled person to give care.

3.11 The maximum amount of grant allowed will be £30,000, or other such amount determined by the Secretary of State and the grant award will include funding to cover the cost of works, any professional fees and VAT where payable.

Where the cost of the agreed eligible works exceeds the £30,000 threshold, top up funding of up to £10,000 can be applied for under this policy.

3.12 Applications for grant aided work will not normally be considered where works have started but have not been completed or where work has been completed before applying for a grant.

3.13. Works outside the curtilage of the property are not eligible for assistance unless they relate to the provision of essential services such as water, gas or electricity or access for a disabled person.

3.14 Should the applicant wish to slightly enhance the recommended adaptation over and above the referral recommendations then they may do so at their own expense and should discuss this with the contractor directly as a private arrangement.

3.15 If the applicant's preferred scheme is more extensive than the Council's accepted scheme, the Council may consider providing an offset grant. An offset grant is where the mandatory DFG is provided as a financial contribution towards the applicant's preferred scheme. This must be discussed at the outset of making an application for grant funded works and there will be additional conditions on the grant notice to protect public funds and ensure that what is delivered on site meets the needs of the disabled person.

- 3.16 Tandridge District Council will consider a minimum of two contractors to quote for the recommended adaptation works unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as the works are only delivered by one specialist provider.
- 3.17 The Council will always choose the most cost-effective quote, and should the applicant wish to approve a more expensive quotation the additional cost must be met by the applicant directly.
- 3.18 Works funded by DFG monies will be the simplest and most cost-effective adaptations that will meet the clients assessed needs. For example, facilities will be provided on the ground floor unless the council judges that to be impractical or more costly. Wherever the Council judges it to be a practicable and realistic option, the re-ordering and/or change of use of existing rooms will be the preferred solution and will take precedence over both the construction of extensions and the installation of equipment.
- 3.19 Where adaptations are deemed not reasonable practical by the Council a Disabled Relocation Grant as set out under this policy at 4.10 may be offered to help the applicant obtain a more suitable property that can be adapted.

3.20 Means Testing

A mandatory DFG is subject to a means-test set out in regulations (unless the application is for a child and then no means test is applied).

- 3.21 The amount of grant awarded is reduced by any client contribution calculated under the means test. This means that in some cases, an applicant will have to pay the cost of some or of all of the works, depending on their level of assessed contribution.
- 3.22 The Council offers a discretionary grant of £1,000 to cover an applicant's contribution towards the cost of adaptations, which can in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Resident Support Specialist responsible for this policy, be increased to a maximum of £2,000.
- 3.23 If an applicant is found to have a contribution that exceeds the cost of the adaptation works, the Council will be unable to offer any grant funding.
- 3.24 In these circumstances, the applicant will be advised they may proceed with a NIL grant.

This means that the applicant may make a DFG application and if eligible, a NIL grant will be awarded, and the applicant will have to cover the cost of the work themselves. The benefits of proceeding with a NIL grant are that if an applicant's health or mobility deteriorates (within five years for tenants or 10 years for owners), any further mandatory DFG application would not be subject to any means test and could be awarded in full.

- 3.25 To ease hardship further on low-income households, the Council will also include Council Tax Relief as a passported benefit under this policy. This will

enable any household in receipt of Council Tax Relief to receive a non-means tested mandatory grant.

3.26 Supervision and payment of Works

Applicants are advised to use a suitably qualified person or Agent to supervise and arrange the works. This can be the Council's Home Improvement Agency, Millbrook Healthcare Ltd or another approved surveyor to assist with their application and take forward the works.

- 3.27 Relevant fees can be paid to the Home Improvement Agency or any other approved managing agent and included as part of the eligible works up to a maximum of 15% of the eligible costs. Building Regulations or Planning approval, or any other agreed professional fees, can also be paid out of the DFG award.
- 3.28 The Council will specify the maximum amount for assistance. These maximum amounts are inclusive of all costs including Value Added Tax and fees. If the final cost of the works is less than the maximum amount specified in the grants notice, the applicant is not due the balance of costs. The remaining funding that has been committed in the grant notice will be returned to budget to be reallocated.
- 3.29 The building works contract will be between the applicant and their chosen contractor. The Council facilitates the grant process only and is not party to any contract for works.
- 3.30 The Council (or the Council's Home Improvement Agency) will check the quality of all works installed to ensure they are carried out according to the specification of works and in accordance with good building practice. The Council and its officers are not liable for any poor workmanship and do not provide any guarantee of work. Any faults with the works will be a matter between the applicant and their contractor and must be discussed directly between these two parties.
- 3.31 Where eligible works are not of an acceptable standard, the Council may withhold grant monies and will require the applicant to discuss with their Agent or the contractor directly the correction of any issues at their own cost. There can be no additional grant money to rectify problems and to ensure that the standard of works installed are to the satisfaction of the Council.
- 3.32 If the Council is satisfied that owing to circumstances beyond the control of the applicant, the work has increased in cost due to unforeseen works, it may increase the assistance subject to the maximum limits allowed. The Council must give its approval of any increase in assistance before the additional cost is incurred.
- 3.33 Interim payments can be made if necessary at the discretion of the Council.
- 3.34 The applicant's contribution (if any) will be taken into account in any payment. Any assessed contribution must be paid to the contractor first before any

grant monies can be released and evidence of payment provided to the Council.

- 3.35 Payments can only be paid for work completed and not for materials not yet used or installed.
- 3.36 Eligible works must be carried out to the satisfaction of the Council and an acceptable invoice supplied.
- 3.37 Normally all payments for works are paid direct to the builder and fees are paid directly to the Agent or surveyor supervising the works but in appropriate situations (such as for fees), payment may be made to the applicant or another third party directly where the applicant has already paid such costs.
- 3.38 Where an escrow agreement exists, payment may be made to such a scheme at the agreement of both parties.
- 3.39 Payment of a mandatory DFG may be delayed at the discretion of the Council by up to six months where existing budgets have already been committed.

3.40 Repeat mandatory DFG applications

Should an applicant have previously received a DFG, in consultation with the Occupational Therapist, their eligibility for a further grant will initially take into account any decline in their physical or mental health or change in need followed by the application of the eligibility criteria described in this section.

4.0 Discretionary Financial Assistance (Grants and Loans)

- 4.1 The Council's discretionary financial assistance provides targeted support for works that do not fall within the provisions of a mandatory DFG and which promotes the health, wellbeing and independence of residents, prevents admissions to hospital and supports successful and safe hospital discharge.
- 4.2 Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) have a prescriptive duty of care towards their tenants and can access other sources of funding due to their RSL status to ensure their homes meet certain standards and targets relating to the condition of their properties. This being the case, RSL tenants are only able to access mandatory DFG funding under this policy. RSL tenants are also unable to be considered for any type of discretionary funding, with the exception of the discretionary contribution grant.
- 4.3 Adaptations and minor works for Council tenants are handled via the Council's Aids and Adaptations Policy for Council Homes and this being the case Tandridge District Council tenants are also unable to be considered for any type of discretionary funding under this policy. However, where a Council tenant has been refused assistance under the Aids and Adaptations Policy for Council homes, they may apply for a mandatory DFG only.
- 4.4 The Council seeks to encourage private landlords who are willing to make their properties available to those rent privately for at least 5 years, thereby increasing the supply of affordable housing in the District. This being the case, discretionary funding, which is means tested, will only be available to tenants in the private rented sector, where the landlord is willing to let to the tenant for at least the next 5 years.
- 4.5 Any request for discretionary grant or loan assistance must be supported by a recommendation from an Occupational Therapist, either working for Surrey County Council or working independently in the private sector or by a member of the Council's Private Sector Housing Team. Should an applicant provide an independent Occupational Therapist's recommendation the Council will consult with the Occupational Therapy Service at Surrey County Council before processing any application.
- 4.6 Not all properties can qualify for discretionary assistance under this policy. Houseboats and caravans are excluded from the discretionary support available but can apply for a mandatory grant as set out in the Housing Grants Construction Regeneration Act 1996. Sheds, outhouses and extensions such as conservatories that do not have Building Regulations approval cannot be considered and neither can non-residential buildings.
- 4.7 Cases requesting discretionary assistance will be considered on a case by case basis and help is only available subject to budget. Therefore, the discretionary assistance set out in this policy can be withdrawn temporarily and without notice at any time. Once the budget has been committed, it is not possible to consider any further discretionary awards under this policy.
- 4.8 Discretionary funding can be made available in the form of a grant or a loan, or a combination of both if applicable.

4.9 The types of discretionary assistance available under this policy are below:

4.10 Discretionary DFG Relocation grant

This grant is only available to those who are eligible for a mandatory DFG and who own their home.

4.11 It is not always possible to adapt every property to meet the needs of the disabled occupant. The Council will consult with Social Services regarding the needs of the disabled person and will reach a decision whether adaptation works are reasonable or practicable or are not possible on grounds of expense in each case. Where works are not reasonable and practicable, the Council may offer a DFG relocation grant to homeowners to enable the disabled person to move to another property that would be more suitable to adapt.

4.12 The maximum DFG Relocation Grant offered is a maximum of £5,000 if the disabled person is moving to a new property outside the District and a maximum of £10,000 if moving within the Tandridge District.

4.13 A land charge is registered on the new property to the value of the grant given for a 10-year period from the date the grant was agreed. During the 10-year grant condition period, the grant is repayable if the property is sold or otherwise disposed of, or if the applicant dies or no longer occupies the property.

4.14 Eligible moving costs include:

- Legal fees;
- Estate Agent's fees;
- Stamp duty;
- Removal costs;
- Survey and valuation costs;
- Reconnection of services, for example, electricity, gas and telephone;

4.15 The grant is to assist with moving costs and not the cost of additional capital needed to purchase a property. The disabled person (in case of a child, the parent) must provide agreement in writing that they are in agreement to move.

4.16 Financial eligibility for a relocation grant is determined on the same basis as eligibility for a Disabled Facility Grant. A cost benefit analysis will also be undertaken by the Council to justify the award which will consider information provided by the referring Occupational Therapist and the Council's Home Improvement Agency. The Council and Occupational Therapist must also agree the suitability of the new property the disabled person is moving to.

- 4.17 A further DFG could potentially be awarded at the new property (providing all the usual qualifying conditions for a DFG are met) but if they the disabled person moves to an alternative home out of District, the application would need to be made to the appropriate Council for the area in which the property is located and be considered under their policy. Other Local Authorities may have more demand than they can fulfil and so may hold a waiting list.

4.18 DFG Home Repair Assistance Grant

In some circumstances, a disabled persons home may need additional repairs undertaken to make any adaptations identified as being eligible for funding via a mandatory DFG, viable.

- 4.19 This grant is only available to applicants who are eligible for a mandatory DFG and the application must be made by the homeowner (or for a tenant's application, the landlord).
- 4.20 This grant can be used to fund repairs to enable the adaptation to function properly, such as repairs to walls or ceilings, small upgrades to electrical wiring or small drainage works.
- 4.21 The maximum grant that can be awarded is £7,000 and the Resident Support Specialist responsible for this policy has the discretion to increase this amount in exceptional circumstances.
- 4.22 A land charge is registered on the property to the value of the grant given for a 10-year period from the date the works are agreed as being complete (the certified date). During the 10-year grant condition period, the grant is repayable if the property is sold or otherwise disposed of, or if the applicant dies or no longer occupies the property.

4.23 DFG Contribution Grant

Mandatory DFGs for adults are subject to a means test to determine whether the applicant is required to contribute financially towards the cost of the works.

- 4.24 The means test is set out in regulations and the Council has no discretion in applying it. *[footnote – If a second DFG application is submitted within five years of the first application for a tenant's application or within ten years for an owner's application, the applicant's contribution paid towards the cost of the first DFG is offset against the new grant application and so a further means test is not applied, giving a free mandatory grant.]*
- 4.25 However, the Council recognises that there are cases where an applicant may have a contribution to make towards the cost of works when their income and savings are just over the benefit threshold and that in these circumstances paying a financial contribution towards the cost of the works can cause hardship.
- 4.26 Where an applicant qualifies for a DFG and has a financial contribution, the Council will consider awarding a discretionary grant of £1,000 to cover the first £1,000 of any financially assessed contribution towards a DFG.

- 4.27 The Council also recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where an applicant will have an assessed contribution of over £1,000 but funding their contribution will cause financial hardship: perhaps for example, due to having to pay for private care. In such cases, this may prevent much needed adaptations being installed and all the preventative benefits of a DFG lost. Where paying the assessed contribution would cause hardship, at the discretion of the Resident Support Specialist responsible for this policy, a discretionary contribution grant which exceeds up to a maximum of £2,000 can be awarded to cover all or some of the costs of an applicant's assessed contribution.
- 4.28 If an applicant is found to have a contribution that exceeds the cost of the adaptation works, the Council will be unable to offer any discretionary grant funding under this policy.

4.29 DFG Discretionary Top-Up Grant

The maximum amount of mandatory DFG that can be awarded was set out in legislation in 2008 [*footnote – legislation details*] as being £30,000.

- 4.30 Since this time, there has been an increase in building costs for major adaptations, plus due to developments in medical treatments, more people are living longer, with more complex and chronic conditions and so require more complex and higher-level support.
- 4.31 As a result, in some instances, the mandatory ceiling of £30,000 has proved insufficient to meet the needs of the disabled person; this is particularly the case in relation to applications for major adaptations for children.
- 4.32 The Council will consult with Surrey County Council on developing schemes that meet the needs of the disabled person and every effort will be made to design a scheme of works that falls below the mandatory threshold.
- 4.33 Where it is not possible to contain costs below the £30,000 threshold, the Council will consult with Surrey County Council to ensure that the total cost of works is both reasonable and practicable and necessary and appropriate.

Where this is agreed, the Council will consider whether it is possible to exercise discretion and award top up funding for the balance of the cost of works.

- 4.34 The maximum top up funding that can be awarded is £10,000.
- 4.35 Factors the Council will consider before awarding top up funding are as follows:
- The applicant must meet the criteria for a mandatory DFG;
 - Does any other agency have a statutory duty to provide funding to meet the eligible needs of the disabled person [*footnote – County's duties to children under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act and Childrens Act and Health National Framework for Continuing Health Care to meet the needs of an identified health need*];

- Is the applicant able to raise their own finance to pay the top up;
- Is there any charitable funding that can be accessed to cover the costs;
- The budget available to the Council at the time of the request;

4.36 The standard financial means test will be applied to top up funding requests as follows:

- The means tests for adult mandatory DFGs will be applied once at the point of the initial DFG application. If the applicant/disabled person has an assessed financial contribution to make towards a mandatory DFG of £30,000, the means test will not be reapplied for a second time to the request for top up funding. This is to avoid the applicant paying two amounts of financial contribution;
- Children's mandatory DFG applications are not subject to any means test. Therefore, the standard DFG means test will be applied to any top up amount identified only and will need to be paid directly to the contractor first. Where the assessed contribution is larger than the maximum top up funding award, no discretionary funding will be awarded.

4.37 A land charge is registered on the property to the value of the top up grant at the point the date the works are agreed as being completed (the certified date). If the property is sold or otherwise disposed of, or if the applicant dies or no longer occupies the property the top up funding charge is repayable. This will be in addition to any land charge relating to the mandatory DFG the top up grant supports, although any land charge relating to a mandatory DFG will expire after 10 years, after which time it will not need to be repaid.

4.38 Stairlift/Ramp Discretionary Grant

Where an Occupational Therapist has identified a need for a stairlift and or a ramp in a disabled persons home, a discretionary grant up to £15,000 can be provided to install either a stairlift or a ramp or both.

- 4.39 This grant has no conditions and no means test is applied to enable these works, which are a quick and simple way to promote independence and safety to be provided as quickly as possible
- 4.40 The responsibility for the maintenance and servicing of any stairlift lies with the grant recipient, including the purchase of any extended warranty. The Council will identify the preferred contractor to supply and fit the stairlift.
- 4.41 Works in excess of this amount will need to be addressed via a mandatory DFG.

4.42 Discretionary Winter Warmth Grant

This grant enables older and vulnerable residents, living with long term health conditions who own their homes to ensure their home is safe and warm (landlords cannot apply). It also enables the Council to make a positive contribution towards reducing the high winter death rate amongst older people associated with excessive cold.

4.43 The grant is available to households on a means tested benefit (including Council Tax Relief) and can pay for heating (normally replacement gas boilers, controlled by a room-stat, programmer and thermostatic radiator valves as ECO3 rules favour first time installations) or other insulation measures, such as replacement windows and doors, for which there is no other grant funding available.

4.44 Works can be considered for funding in the following circumstances:

- Where ECO funding is not available or is not viable (confirmation required from Action Surrey);
- The applicant is over 60 and has a long-term illness;
- Confirmation of the long-term illness has been confirmed by a health professional. The cost of obtaining any medical report is the responsibility of the applicant but the cost can be added to the grant and reimbursed.

4.45 Eligible health conditions are as follows:

- Atrial fibrillation or heart flutter
- Angina or coronary heart disease
- PAD or peripheral arterial disease
- hypertension or high blood pressure
- Osteoporosis or brittle bones
- TIA or mini stroke
- Asthma
- COPD
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Diabetes
- Cancer.

4.46 The maximum grant allowed is £7,000.

4.47 The grant is only available to homeowners and is subject to repayment conditions for 10 years from the date works are agreed as being complete (the certified date). During the 10-year grant condition period, the grant is

repayable if the property is sold or otherwise disposed of, or the applicant dies or no longer occupies the property.

4.48 Homeowner Repair Loan

Where an owner-occupied property has an identified category 1 Hazard identified by the Council's Private Sector Housing Team under the Health and Housing Safety Rating System (HHSRS), the Council can make available a Homeowner Repair Loan of up to £7,000 to remedy the hazard. Landlords and tenants are ineligible for this assistance.

- 4.49 This loan is only available to owner occupiers who are in receipt of a means tested benefit (extended to include Council Tax Relief) or who have a financial contribution of less than £7,000 under the statutory DFG means test.
- 4.50 This loan is available to remedy serious hazards in the home rather than minor works and repairs such as repairs to heating systems. Works costing less than a £1,000 will not qualify for assistance.
- 4.51 Annual compound interest will be charged on the loan at base rate, plus 1.5%.
- 4.52 The loan (plus interest) must be repaid to the Council when:
- The property is sold or otherwise disposed of (disposal includes the whole or part of the property and is a conveyance of the freehold or assignment of the lease or the grant of a lease for more than 21 years);
 - On the death of the applicant or on the death of both applicants if a joint application;
 - Or if the applicant(s) no longer live in the property as their principle home. Loans will become repayable where the applicant(s) has not lived in the property for six months.
 - If it appears to the Council that the applicant was not entitled to the loan at the time of the loan application being approved, no payment shall be made, and the loan cancelled. If any interim payments have been made, no further payments will be made and the Council may recover any previous payments.
- 4.53 When deciding to award a loan the Council will take into account:
- The value of any mortgage or other loans secured on the property;
 - Any large unsecured debts;
 - No loans can be offered if the applicant has outstanding Council Tax arrears or other debt owing to the Council.

- 4.54 The loan will be registered preferably as a legal charge and the cost for registering the charge added to the cost of the loan. If it is not possible to register a further legal charge, a local land charge will be registered instead.
- 4.55 It will be a condition of the loan that it is repaid when the property is sold, or otherwise disposed of, or if the applicant dies (if the application is a joint application, when both applicants die), or no longer occupies the property. "Disposal" includes the sale, assignment or transfer of the whole or part of the property or the grant of a leasehold interest for a period of 21 years or more.
- 4.56 When the loan is due to be repaid, the Council will write to the applicant, advising of the date the loan is to be repaid, setting out clearly the interest payable. If the loan is not paid by the due date, interest at base rate, plus 1.5% will be charged **daily** until the loan is paid. Where there is a breach in loan conditions, the loan will be immediately repayable, and interest will be charged at base rate, plus 1.5% daily until it is repaid.

4.57 Supporting Discharge from hospital and preventing admission to hospital

4.58 Community Equipment Service

The Council provides an amount of funding, which is agreed each year, under its discretionary powers to support Surrey County Council's Community Equipment Service (CES). This is to enable the CES to provide free of charge, key safes, ramps and grab rails to residents, who have an eligible care need under the Care Act.

- 4.59 This funding supports residents by preventing accidents and preventing hospital admission and also enables them to return home safely after a hospital stay.
- 4.60 The Council also provides the CES with funding to facilitate the speedy installation of ceiling track hoists, which are a major adaptation that can be funded via a mandatory DFG. This arrangement has been implemented to ensure fast access to this specialist equipment.
- 4.61 The Council provides funding to the CES to install hoists which cost below £15,000, to avoid the disabled person having to undertake the DFG application process. Hoists which cost over this amount must be considered via the mandatory DFG process.

4.62 Handyperson Service

The Council operates a Handyperson service, which provides a trusted contractor to undertake small jobs in resident's homes, for which it is difficult to engage a contractor.

- 4.63 The work undertaken by the Handyperson is small scale and must be able to be completed within two hours and covers a wide range of works including putting up shelving, small amounts of tiling and building flat pack furniture. The service user pays for materials themselves, with labour being charged at a reduced rate.

4.64 As the Council's Handyperson Service has been in operation for more than 20 years, the service has a high profile and excellent reach across the rural Tandridge District, making the service an excellent way to engage with vulnerable and disabled residents.

4.65 Using the Council's discretionary powers, discretionary funding is provided to the Handyperson service to supplement the work of Surrey County Council's Community Equipment Service to install grab rails, ramps and key safes free of charge in resident's homes. These free works extend the accessibility of these items to older and vulnerable residents and are offered on a preventative basis, as unlike the CES, it is not a requirement that residents have an eligible need under the Care Act to access the Handyperson service.

4.66 Repeat requests for discretionary grants or loans

Further grants or loans will not be awarded for works previously funded under this policy, except for where an item has reached its normal life expectancy.

4.67 A further loan may be awarded when the original loan has been repaid or when the grant conditions expire but another discretionary financial award may be given in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Resident Support Specialist responsible for this policy.

4.68 Maintenance of equipment provided via grant funding

The Council will only fund a standard one-year manufacturer warranty to ensure that the item provided is safe and free from manufacturing defects. Therefore, suitable arrangements will need to be made going forward to service and maintain the grant funded item as follows:

- Home owners will be responsible for the ongoing servicing and maintenance of any equipment installed as part of a grant;
- Housing Association tenants may find their landlords will take on the servicing and maintenance provision but as a result they may increase the applicants rent to cover the additional cost. Other housing associations may decide that it is the applicant's responsibility to service and maintain the equipment that has been specifically installed. Before the applicant agrees to go ahead with the DFG they need to discuss, and agree, the future servicing and maintenance requirements of any of the specifically installed equipment with the relevant housing association. A discussion also needs to take place regarding the removal of any equipment should the tenant no longer reside in the property.
- Applicants who are private tenants will also need to discuss, and agree, the future servicing and maintenance requirements of any specifically installed equipment with their landlord, and the impact, if any there is on their rent before agreeing to commence with the DFG. A discussion also needs to take place with the landlord regarding the removal of any equipment should the tenant no longer reside in the property.

- 4.69 Where the applicant/disabled person is to fund their own servicing package and warranty, they will need to explore purchasing this directly; it is usually cheaper to purchase this at the time of installation. If the cost of an extended warranty/service package cannot be met by the applicant, an approach can be made to various organisations and/or charities to try to identify funding to cover some or all the cost. The Council's Home Improvement Agency can advise on this.

4.70 Grant Conditions and repayment of grants

To maximise the availability of funding for adaptation works for as many people as possible, the Council will ensure that wherever it is possible and reasonable to do so, funding awarded in the form of a grant or a loan is repaid to the Council as set out in s.3 Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008. This is to enable grant funding previously awarded to be recycled to help others.

- 4.71 Unless stated otherwise, a mandatory grant will normally have conditions lasting 10 years requiring repayment of the grant if the property is sold or the applicants have died or vacated the property. Such condition will be recorded as a local land charge. Where the application is a joint application, the grant is not repayable until the death of both applicants.
- 4.72 Where a discretionary grant is provided or a discretionary loan the land charge will last indefinitely until the property is sold or otherwise disposed of (except for the discretionary contribution grant awarded for mandatory grants which will be recovered in line with the General Consent Order).
- 4.73 If there is evidence that repayment of a grant or loan will cause extreme hardship, then the grant repayment amount can be reduced or waived. Any request must be put in writing and agreed by the Executive Head of Communities.
- 4.74 Applicants must provide the relevant certificate with their application (owners or tenants certificate) to confirm that they have at least 10 years interest left at the property and that they intend to live there, as their main residence, for at least the next five years from the date the works are complete.
- 4.75 For mandatory DFGs only a portion of the grant awarded can be recovered for the costs between £5,000 and £15,000 (a maximum of £10,000).

5.0 Method of Application

Initial enquiries about assistance can be made to Millbrook Healthcare Ltd., the Council's contracted out Home Improvement Agency by telephoning 03301 243 758 or emailing surreyHIAcontactus@millbrookhealthcare.co.uk.

- 5.1 Enquiries can also be made by writing to: Millbrook Healthcare Ltd., The Old Crumpet Factory, 16 Brockham Lane, Brockham, Surrey, RH7 3EL.
- 5.2 Applications for assistance must be on the forms prescribed by the Council, which Millbrook Healthcare Ltd. provide to applicants. Millbrook can also provide support to applicants to complete the application process.

6.0 Complaints

If an applicant is dissatisfied with any decision made under this policy, they should raise the matter informally in the first instance and every effort will be made to address the concern raised.

- 6.1 If it is not possible to resolve the matter informally the Council's formal complaint process may be accessed. The Council offers a two stage complaints process, after which the complainant may complain to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 6.2 Details of the Council's complaint process and policy are available on the Council's website.

Tandridge District Council

Home Adaptation & Improvement Policy - Disabled Facilities Grants and Financial Assistance for Private Housing Sector



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy sets out how Tandridge District Council will provide financial assistance to support the provision of decent, healthy and safe housing within the district.
- 1.2 The Council's obligations, powers and duties in relation to the provision of financial assistance for repair and adaptations are contained within the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.
- 1.3 The overall aims and objectives of this policy are to:
- support the adaptation of disabled people's homes to enable them to live independently and ensure their homes are suitable for their needs or support disabled people to move to an alternative home that might better meet their needs
 - help vulnerable residents to remedy hazards and/or disrepair in their homes where these pose a significant threat to their health and safety and where they are unable to do so without assistance
 - assist residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and tackle fuel poverty
 - assist Tandridge residents with effective discharge from hospital back to their homes to minimise bed blocking and support recovery from illness.
- 1.4 The Council has limited resources to support the repair, improvement and adaptation of private housing and responsibility in the first instance must always fall to the home owner to address these issues.
- 1.5 The Council looks to target its limited resources effectively for vulnerable residents who would not otherwise be able to repair, adapt or improve their home without financial assistance from the Council.
- 1.6 A definition of vulnerable households is provided in Annex 1 to this policy.

2. TYPES OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- 2.1 The types of assistance that can be offered are as follows and detailed in Table 1:
- Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)
 - Home Repair Assistance Loan
- 2.2 Central Government Funding for DFGs for disabled people is allocated to the Council through the Better Care Fund (BCF). This funding is passed to Tandridge DC from Surrey County Council annually.
- 2.3 The funding for the loan assistance is met locally by the Council.
- 2.4 In order to make the most effective use of the Council's resources and maximise the number of households that can be assisted, a cascade approach is used to ensure that financial assistance is targeted at those who can demonstrate that other options are not available to them.

3. MANDATORY DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

3.1 Tandridge DC in its role as a local housing authority, is under a statutory duty by virtue of the provisions of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (the Act) to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) for private sector residential adaptations where the appropriate legislative conditions are met.

3.2 The purposes for which a DFG may be given are set out in the Act and can be summarised as follows:

- Facilitating Access – grant may be given for works to remove or overcome any obstacles which prevent the disabled person from moving freely into and around the dwelling, access to the garden and enjoying use of the dwelling and facilities or amenities within it.
- Making a Dwelling or Building Safe – grant may be given for certain adaptations to the dwelling or building to make it safe for the disabled person and other persons residing with them. This may include the provision of lighting where safety is an issue or for adaptations designed to minimise the risk of danger where a disabled person has behavioural problems.
- Access to a room usable for sleeping – grant may be given for the provision of a room usable for sleeping where adaptation of an existing room in a dwelling (upstairs or downstairs) or the access to that room is unsuitable. Where the disabled person shares a bedroom with a spouse or partner a grant may be given to provide a room of sufficient size so that normal sleeping arrangements can be maintained.
- Access to a bathroom – grant may be given for the provision of, or access to, a WC, washing, bathing and/or showering facilities.
- Facilitating preparation and cooking of food – grant may be given to re-arrange or enlarge a kitchen to improve the manoeuvrability for a wheelchair and to provide specially modified or designed storage units, work top area etc. Where most of the cooking and preparation of meals is done by another household member, it would not normally be appropriate to carry out full adaptations to the kitchen. However, it might be appropriate to carry out certain adaptations that enable the disabled person to perform minor functions in the kitchen, such as preparing light meals or hot drinks.
- Heating, lighting and power – a grant may be given to provide or improve the existing heating system in the dwelling to meet the disabled person's needs. A grant will not be given to adapt or install heating in rooms which are not normally used by the disabled person. The installation of central heating will only be considered where the well-being and mobility of the disabled person would otherwise be adversely affected. Provision is also made under this section for the adaptation of heating, lighting and power to make them suitable for use by the disabled person.

- Dependant Residents – grant may be given for works to enable a disabled occupant better access around the dwelling in order to care for another disabled person who normally resides there whether or not they are related to the disabled person. Such works could include adaptations to a part of the dwelling to which the disabled person would not normally need access but which is used by the person to whom they are providing care and therefore it is reasonable for such works to be carried out.
 - Common parts- grant may be given for works to facilitate access to a dwelling through common parts of a building.
- 3.3 The maximum amount of mandatory grant that the Authority can pay for any single grant application is set by Order and is currently £30,000. This amount is reduced by any contribution assessed as payable by the grant applicant.
- 3.4 The applicant must complete an Owner's, Tenants or Landlord's certificate and must state an intention to occupy the property by the applicant or a member of his/her family throughout the 'grant condition period'. This is 10 years for DFGs from the date the Council certifies grant works have been completed (or until the sale of the property in the case of a loan).
- 3.5 Grants are repayable if the property is sold or otherwise disposed of within the grant condition period as set out above. The first £5,000 of DFGs for owner-occupiers are not required to be repaid, thereafter up to a maximum of £10,000 of DFG funding is to be repaid. Repayment may be waived if there are exceptional circumstances requiring the sale or disposal and repayment would cause exceptional hardship. The decision to waive recovery will be made on a case by case basis, depending on the circumstances of the applicant.
- 3.6 In deciding whether the Land Charge is to be repaid, the Council will consider:
- the extent to which the recipient would suffer financial hardship if required to make the repayment;
 - whether the disposal of the property is for employment reasons;
 - whether the recipient is disposing of the property for reasons connected to their health or well being or that of a disabled occupant of the premises; and
 - whether the recipient is moving to provide or receive care.
- 3.7 All other grant monies are repayable in full if the property is sold or otherwise disposed of during the grant condition period.

4. DISCRETIONARY DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

- 4.1 In addition to providing mandatory DFG's, the Authority has the power to offer discretionary financial assistance by virtue of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002. Using these powers, the Authority has agreed to offer discretionary DFG's for private sector residential adaptations in certain specific circumstances.

- 4.2 Although the maximum amount of grant available for a mandatory DFG is currently £30,000 the Authority has agreed through this policy to potentially provide an additional maximum amount of up to £10,000 as a discretionary top-up where circumstances are such that the cost of work exceeds £30,000 (either as a result of unforeseen works or the extent of the original work that is recommended to the Council). This type of assistance will only be offered as a top up for schemes that fall within the mandatory grant headings as previously described.
- 4.3 This additional discretionary element will be subject to a means-test for both adults and children, using the nationally recognised assessment tool (families with a disabled child are not subject to means test up to £30,000). When determining any application for discretionary assistance the Council will consider any agreed Surrey County Council funding, plus the ability of the applicant to self-fund the identified additional costs. Subject to this assessment, discretionary award will potentially make up the difference between the maximum grant and the cost of eligible works (up to a maximum £10,000). Any discretionary top-up will be repayable on the eventual sale of the subject property and will be recorded as a Land Registry charge.
- 4.4 Any discretionary top-up will only be considered having regard to the amount of resources the Authority has at the time. If it does not have sufficient resources left to deal with other referrals that have been passed to the Authority by the Occupational Therapy Service at the time, the Authority reserves the right not to approve any discretionary top-up.
- 4.5 Where an applicant's calculated means-tested contribution is less than £1,000, this contribution will be waived and the application will proceed on the basis of a nil contribution.
- 4.6 The following works to be exempt from means-testing:
- internal stair lifts
 - grab rails
 - external galvanised rails
 - modular ramping

5. HOME REPAIR ASSISTANCE LOAN

- 5.1 The Council can offer financial assistance up to a maximum of £5000 to low income home owners to undertake emergency repair work to their home. This assistance is in the form of a loan that is paid back to the Council when the house is eventually sold or changes ownership. There are no monthly repayments.
- 5.2 Loans can be used to:
- repair a seriously defective electrical installation
 - repair a hazardous gas appliance
 - repair severe structural problems
 - remedy dampness considered to be a health hazard
 - repair a faulty domestic water heating appliance where an older persons health is at risk if it is not repaired
 - repair collapsed drains
 - improve heating where older people's health is at risk if it is not improved.

- 5.3 The Council will inspect the property and determine the work necessary.
- 5.4 As a general principle, the application process for financial assistance (except for Disabled Facilities Grants for disabled people) includes the following steps:
- a) Consideration as to whether the cost of the works can be met through private finance (for example, through the applicant's own resources or through a commercial loan)
 - b) If the client is not eligible or able to access a commercial loan an application for the relevant grant can be pursued.

5.5 A loan will be subject to the provision and availability of necessary funding.

6. ENQUIRIES, APPLICATIONS AND PROCESSING

- 6.1 Enquiries about financial assistance can be made to Customer Services by telephone on 01882 722000 or by e-mail customerservices@tandridge.gov.uk
- 6.2 Formal applications for Grants must be made on the forms prescribed by and available from the Council. The Council's nominated Home Improvement Agency can assist with applications where the applicant has chosen to use that service.
- 6.3 Applicants will be required to provide satisfactory documentary evidence of qualifying status in respect of any claim for assistance.
- 6.4 All grant or loan approvals will be issued in writing and the qualifying works must not be commenced prior to grant or loan approval being issued. Failure to comply with this requirement could result in the application being refused.
- 6.5 For all grants and loans, two itemised and individually priced quotations from suitable contractors must be submitted to ensure that best value can be demonstrated.
- 6.6 Once grant approval has been issued, payment of grant will usually be made direct to the contractor(s) undertaking the works (following receipt of an invoice and satisfactory completion) or to the applicant in the case of a Home Repair Assistance Loan.

7. APPEALS

Where financial assistance is refused, the applicant can appeal against the decision. This should be made in writing to the appropriate Head of Service.

8. HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY & HANDYPERSON SERVICE

- 8.1 The Council provides a dedicated home improvement agency service for older and disabled residents who need extra help to undertake repairs and/or adaptations to their homes.
- 8.2 Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) work as agents on behalf of residents seeking to improve, repair or adapt their home through the financial assistance available through Tandridge District Council or through private funding. They will visit clients in their own homes and initially provide advice on a range of options before the residents decides if they wish to proceed with any works to their home. If works are to be progressed, the agency can advise and support clients throughout the process including:
- preparation of 'schedules of work', detailed drawings and contract documents.
 - help in finding suitable and reliable builders/ contractors and in obtaining competitive quotes.
 - obtaining the required Local Authority Planning and Building Regulations approvals where this might be necessary for more major works.
 - assisting with grant and other application forms needed to progress the works.
- 8.3 The HIA service is non profit-making. It is joint funded by Surrey County Council and Tandridge District Council and is partly funded through the fees it charges for its services.
- 8.4 The Council also provides a subsidised, low-cost Handyperson Service for elderly and disabled residents to undertake very minor works of home repair and home safety such as:
- minor plumbing repairs
 - fitting shelves
 - installing smoke or carbon monoxide alarms
 - fitting grab rails or banisters, and
 - installing key safes.
- 8.5 Other types of work can be undertaken provided that they take no longer than three hours.
- 8.6 This service is open to homeowners or private tenants in Tandridge who:
- are aged 60 or more
 - have a disability
 - are vulnerable in some other way, or
 - are on a means-tested benefit.
- 8.7 The Handyperson Service can be contacted on 01883 722000 or by email at customerservices@tandridge.gov.uk

9. REVIEW OF POLICY

The Council will review this policy every 3 years, unless changes in legislation or regulation require an earlier review. However the first review will be in September 2019 to ensure that it remains financially viable.

September 2018

Table 1

Form of Assistance	Description – Eligible works	Client eligibility	Amounts	Other conditions
MANDATORY DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT	<p>All works that are necessary for one or more of the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to make it easier to get into and out of the dwelling by, for example, widening doors, installing ramps and creating hard standings and dropped kerbs; • to make access easier to the living room; • by providing or improving access to the bedroom, and kitchen, toilet, washbasin and bath (and/or shower) facilities; for example, by installing a stair lift or providing a ground floor bathroom; • to improve or provide a heating system in the home which is suitable to the needs of the disabled person; • to adapt heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use; • to improve access and movement around the home to enable the disabled person to care for another person who lives in the property, such as a spouse, child or another person for whom the disabled person cares; and 	<p>The applicant must be either an owner-occupier or a tenant and the relevant person for whom the adaptations are required must be or intend to be a disabled person within the household.</p> <p>The relevant person must be registered or registerable with Social Services as being disabled.</p> <p>A landlord may apply for a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant on behalf of their disabled tenant.</p>	<p>There is a limit of £30,000 for these grants per application.</p> <p>The disabled person and any partner and any dependents are means tested to determine the amount of any contribution towards the cost of the works. (See Appendix B). This determines the applicant's contribution towards the first part of the grant eligible works. The £30,000 mandatory grant is available for eligible costs over and above the applicant's contribution.</p> <p>If the disabled person is a child, the parents or legal guardian are not means tested.</p>	<p>The DFG repayment condition will be declared as a Land Charge against the adapted dwelling for 10 years</p> <p>If the property is subject to an Owners' Application and is sold within a 10 year period starting on the date of completion of work, the Council will seek to reclaim the funding that exceeds £5,000, but will not seek to recover more than £10,000.</p> <p>The Council will give consideration to the reasons for the disposal of the dwelling. Disposals for reasons of changes in employment, financial circumstances, physical or mental health, or to provide care for another person will be dealt with sympathetically.</p> <p>Monies are not expected to be recovered where significant reasons are</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to improve access to and from the garden of your home where feasible. • an application is only approved if it is considered reasonable and practicable to carry out the relevant works having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling or building. • a recommendation is required from a registered Occupational Therapist that works are necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the 'relevant person'. 		<p>Following a means test a contribution under £1,000 will be waived.</p> <p>There is no means test applied where the only works eligible are for the provision of an internal stairlift, a modular ramp or grab rail or external galvanized rails. (and associated works).</p>	<p>present in this respect or where financial hardship will be caused.</p> <p>DFG payments for owners applications are recorded as a local land charge.</p>
DISCRETIONARY DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT	In the case of mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants where the eligible expense (i.e. the reasonable cost of the required works identified by the Occupational Therapist combined with eligible fees and expenses) exceeds the mandatory grant limit of £30,000, the Council will consider a discretionary 'top up' grant of up to £10,000 as part of the DFG determination.	The applicant is eligible for a mandatory DFG but the eligible expense is over £30,000.	A discretionary top up of up to £10,000 will be considered to cover mandatory grant works and eligible expenses over and above those works assisted through the mandatory DFG.	<p>Where the property is sold within the grant condition amount of Discretionary DFG top up will be repaid to the Council. No interest will be charged.</p> <p>The discretionary £10,000 additional grant will be subject to the standard means test including in the case of children (currently non means tested).</p> <p>Subject to budgetary availability</p>

HOME REPAIR ASSISTANCE GRANT	<p>Minor works to a property which are necessary to keep the property free from serious disrepair.</p> <p>The type of items that can be grant- aided include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works to keep the property wind and weather tight • Repair or replacement of electrical wiring and/ or heating systems • Defective windows and doors • Treatment of dampness, timber infestation and rot • Energy efficiency works to supplement measures carried out by our partners Action Surrey and funded through government initiatives • Other works supported by the case officer. • Minor works required to enable or facilitate a patient in hospital to return home at the point of hospital discharge 	<p>An applicant must be</p> <p>(a) an owner-occupier AND</p> <p>(b) be aged 60 or over; AND</p> <p>(c) be on an income - related benefit or a low income, as set out in Appendix A</p> <p>(d) in the case of hospital discharge this criteria can be relaxed at the discretion of the case officer in consultation with the hospital services</p>	Grant limit of £5,000 on any one application	<p>Subject to budgetary availability</p> <p>There can be no further grant within 3 years of completion of previous grant.</p> <p>Repayable when property is sold or ownership transferred.</p>
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Annex 1: Definition of vulnerable households

Vulnerable groups targeted for assistance are those who may be particularly at risk of suffering health and safety problems as a result of poor housing conditions in situations where they do not have the resources or support to undertake remedial action themselves. Households in receipt of the following benefits are classed as vulnerable and will be eligible for grants or loans, so long as they meet any other eligibility criteria in place for any particular grant or loan:

- Pension Credit
- Households in receipt of working tax credit which includes a disability element, if they have relevant income of less than £15050
- Households in receipt of child tax credit, if they have a relevant income of less than £15050
- Income support
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Benefit (does not include single persons 25% discount) Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
- Attendance Allowance Disability Living Allowance Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
- War Disablement Pension Universal Credit
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

Annex 2: Means Test for Disabled Facilities Grant

All Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) applications are subject to a statutory financial means test. This assessment looks at the resources of the disabled person and their spouse/ partner and their dependants (called the relevant person) and is used to determine how much, if anything, they must contribute towards the cost of the works. The applicant must pay their contribution (calculated by the means test) towards the cost of grant-eligible expenses. The Mandatory DFG monies will pay for the reasonable cost of works and fees up to a maximum of £30,000 above that.

Where the applicant (the owner or tenant of the property) is not the disabled person, it is the disabled person (together with their spouse/ dependants etc.) who will be means tested and who will be required to declare, and provide documentary evidence of, all income, savings and capital.

The income, savings and capital figures will be used in conjunction with a table of fixed allowances, set by Government, to calculate the amount of contribution required. Certain pensions, benefits and capital are disregarded in the calculation.

If the calculated income is less than the assessed needs of the relevant person, the Council will grant-aid the eligible costs of the works and fees. If the relevant person's income is more than their assessed needs, a proportion of the income will be used to calculate how much they could contribute towards the cost of the works. If this assessed amount is less than the cost of the works, the difference between the two is paid as a Disabled Facilities Grant.

The maximum amount of mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant that the council is required to pay is £30,000 per application. In exceptional circumstances, if the cost of the eligible works is more, the council can provide a discretionary DFG to increase the amount, subject to the availability of grant funds. It is proposed this increase in funding will be to a maximum of £10,000 but will be subject to a means test including for works to benefit a child.

The grant can be paid in instalments or in full on completion of the work. The council will normally pay the contractor/s directly and in arrears when the council is satisfied that the work (or phase of work) has been completed to their satisfaction and in accordance with the grant approval.

The grant is not means tested if the adaptations are necessary for meeting the needs of a child with disabilities (excepting the discretionary increase as above)

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name of Service Area	Resident Support
Lead Officer and contact details	Jane Ellis, Resident Support Specialist jellis@tandridge.gov.uk 01883 732826
Officer(s) conducting assessment (if different from above)	As above
Date of assessment	06.06.2022

1. Name of Policy, Strategy, Function or Project being assessed

Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

2. Reason for assessment (What are you trying to do? e.g. new, updated or revised policy)

Revised policy

3. Description of the Policy, Strategy, Function or Project being assessed?

The purpose of this policy is to set out the Council's approach to delivering Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs) and targeted financial support to vulnerable and disabled people living in homes in disrepair. The policy ensures that the Council fulfils its duties to promote equality and eliminate discrimination and enables disabled and vulnerable enjoy improved quality of life. The Policy also ensures public funds are spent effectively and equitably, with value for money obtained. The delivery of adaptation and repair works under this policy helps to prevent hospital admission and pressure on acute services and supports avoidable early admission into care services.

4. Who are the main stakeholders/beneficiaries and detail any consultation held. (e.g. staff, tenants, residents, voluntary and community groups, service users, faith organisations, other council departments, other public sector and business partners)

Owner occupiers, private and RSL tenants, occupiers and licensees with a right to occupy accommodation living in the Tandridge District, who have (or their immediate family have) a disability or some other vulnerability and either require disabled adaptations to be installed, repairs to their home or both.

Consultation with members is planned between Further consultation is planned with Council Members which will be used to inform and develop further the original draft of this policy between 21st June 2022 and 8th July 2022.

The draft policy will then be subject to a period of public consultation scheduled to run between 18th July 2022 and 12th August 2022 which will involve members, key partners, resident and tenant groups and the public.

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5. Please complete the following table considering the impact of the proposed policy/project/ strategy on all equality groups (including the Protected Characteristics defined within the Equality Act 2010).

(What information data do you have regarding service users/ staff/ residents? What further information do you need? What cross-cutting issues do you need to consider?)

	Actual or Potential Negative Impact		Reasons/Comments or Gaps in Knowledge (Please expand in Improvement Plan)
	High	Low	
Race (Please include any actual or potential impacts on any persons due to race, ethnicity, colour or nationality, including refugees and migrants)	No	No	There are no specific issues that have been identified for this group.
Sex (Please include any actual or potential impacts on male and female persons)	No	No	There are no specific issues that have been identified for this group.
Marriage and Civil Partnership (Please include any actual or potential impacts on any persons due to marital or civil partnership status. Please note that civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.)	No	No	There are no specific issues that have been identified for this group.

Sexual orientation (Please include any actual or potential impacts on any persons due to sexual orientation)	No	No	There are no specific issues that have been identified for this group.
Gender Reassignment (Please include any actual or potential impact on any person that has or is in the process of transitioning from one sex to another)	No	No	There are no specific issues that have been identified for this group.
Pregnancy and Maternity (Please include any actual or potential impact on any person who is pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, this also refers to the period of 26 weeks after giving birth.)	No	No	There are no specific issues that have been identified for this group.
Religion or belief (Please include any actual or potential impact on any person due to religion, faith or recognised belief system. This also includes Atheism)	No	No	There are no specific issues that have been identified for this group.

Disability (Please include any actual or potential impact on any person with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This includes mental health; physical disability; hearing impairment or deaf; visual impairment or blind; dyslexia; or any hidden impairments such as HIV/AIDS or sickle cell)	No	No	<p>This policy has been developed to assist disabled people with a clinical need for adaptations and promotes independent living for disabled people and improving their quality of life.</p> <p>It also provides funding to enable disrepair to be remedied in the homes of vulnerable and disabled people living in the District.</p> <p>Housing is a key determinant of health and improving the quality of someones housing, and or installing adaptations, prevents accidents and maintains independence and dignity, relieving pressure on acute services and care.</p>
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Age (Please include any actual or potential impact on any specific age group, e.g. any person who is under 21 or over 60 years of age)	No	No	<p>The service does not discriminate on the grounds of age, either directly or indirectly – however it should be noted that the service user's age will be considered as part of the clinical assessment and may influence the nature and extent of works or support package proposed.</p> <p>Disabled and older tenants who have lived in their home for a long time can often resist change even if the best solution is for them to move home.</p> <p>The policy is accessible to all but it likely to predominately provide more benefits for older people who are more likely to be frail or have an impairment as a result of their age.</p> <p>The policy seeks to promote equality for elderly residents by providing aids and adaptations to promote independent living.</p> <p>There may be more alternative rehousing options for older disabled people in terms of move-on into particular types of accommodation (e.g. sheltered or enhanced care schemes) especially in the social rented sector.</p>
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Child Poverty and other socio-economic impacts (Please include short and long term implications for eradicating child poverty; actual or potential implications for residents who are living on a low-income or are unemployed; and economic prosperity of Tandridge overall)	No	No	<p>Some works will result in the landlord being able to increase the rent to cover servicing and maintenance costs for equipment installed. If a rental property increases in size as a result of an adaptation (e.g. extension) it may be subject to an increase in property value, and therefore rent. This could have a negative impact on individuals or families with low or no income.</p> <p>Families on low or no income would usually be in receipt of benefits that would (in the case of housing benefit) take into account any increase in size and rent. The policy requires tenants to be advised that their rent may be affected before agreeing any adaptation.</p>
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EIA IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Improvement Plan needs to outline the actions that you propose to mitigate each identified actual or potential negative impact on any equality group.

Actions from this Improvement Plan should be included as part of the final report and implementation taken forward as a part of that process.

ISSUE IDENTIFIED	ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN	LEAD OFFICER	TIMESCALE	COMMENTS

ISSUE IDENTIFIED	ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN	LEAD OFFICER	TIMESCALE	COMMENTS

To submit the form for review by the Equalities Officers, please save a copy of this form and send to Jason Thomas & Belinda Purcell.
 Further clarification or evidence may be requested.
 The final version will be sent to your CMT member for final authorisation.

A non-editable copy of the form which be uploaded to Covalent for monitoring purposes and may be published on the TDC website.

Equalities Officer Comments

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Equalities Officer Authorisation

Name:

Date:

CMT Member Authorisation

Name:

Date:

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Transfer Incentive Scheme

Housing Committee Tuesday, 21 June 2022

Report of: Executive Head of Communities

Purpose: For decision

Publication status: Unrestricted

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

The Council has, for a number of years, operated a Transfer Incentive Scheme with the aim of encouraging Council tenants who are under-occupying family-sized accommodation to move to lower demand older persons stock.

Although numbers participating in the scheme are relatively low, it is recommended that the scheme continues as it is a means of increasing the supply of much-needed family-sized Council housing available for allocation.

The Scheme has not been reviewed for more than 15 years and it is recommended that the Scheme is revised to consider inflationary increases in the intervening years and changes in relative demand for properties of particular sizes.

This report supports the Council's priority of:

- Building a better Council
- Creating the homes, infrastructure and environment we need
- Becoming a greener, more sustainable District

Contact officer David Gray - Resident Support Lead Specialist
dgray@tandridge.gov.uk

Recommendation to Committee:

That the amendments to the Transfer Incentive Scheme as set out in paragraphs 16 and 18 to 20 of the report be agreed, namely that with effect from 1st July 2022:

- A. eligibility for the Scheme will be extended to qualifying assured tenants of Registered Provider (RP) properties in the District providing that the Council has received written confirmation from their landlord that it will be entitled to nominate the new tenant for the resulting vacancy;
- B. eligibility for the Scheme will be extended to tenants moving to all one-bedroom properties and two-bedroom properties within the Council's permanent housing stock;
- C. the fixed grant amount payable to applicants transferring under the Scheme a property be increased as follows:
 - a £5,000 incentive grant for tenants moving to one-bedroom or bedsit accommodation; or
 - a £2,000 incentive grant for tenants moving to a two-bedroom property;
- D. budgetary provision for the scheme for 2022/23 be increased from £15,000 to £25,000.

Reason for recommendation:

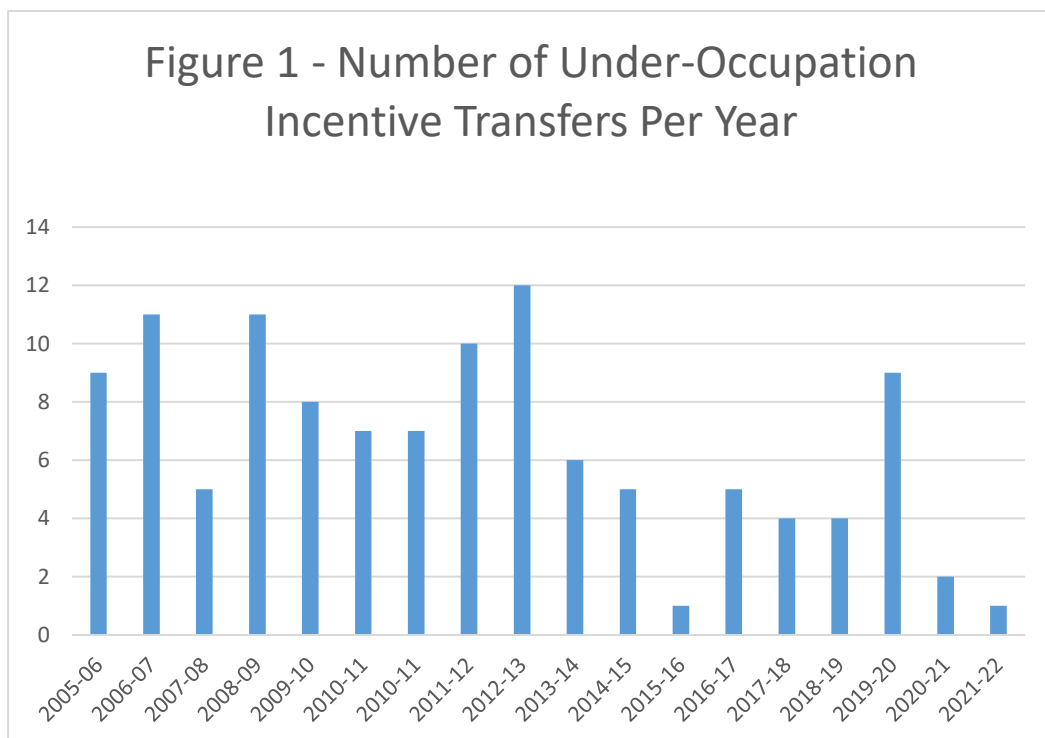
To enable the revised Transfer Incentive Scheme Policy at Appendix A to be adopted from 1st July 2022.

Introduction and background

- 1 The Council has operated a Transfer Incentive Scheme for several years. However, the Scheme has not been reviewed or amended since 2004.
- 2 The objective of the Scheme is to encourage Council tenants who are under-occupying family-sized accommodation to move to lower demand stock. As well as assisting tenants to move to accommodation that is likely to be more sustainable for them, it has the significant benefit of increasing the supply of much needed family accommodation for those on the Council's Housing Register.
- 3 The number of households in urgent need on the Council's Housing Register (measured by the Committee's key performance indicator HO5) has increased significantly over the last few years due to a limited supply of affordable housing. The vast majority (85%) of these applicants are in need of accommodation with two or more bedrooms. The Transfer Incentive Scheme is one of the initiatives that is being pursued to help increase the supply of affordable housing.
- 4 There is no central government funding for such schemes, so local authorities must fund such schemes from their own resources.

Current Scheme

- 5 The Scheme is designed to assist the Council to meet housing needs and make best use of its housing stock by giving existing secure council tenants who are under-occupying their home a financial incentive to transfer to smaller accommodation designated for older persons or designated for persons over 40 years of age.
- 6 The Scheme pays a grant of £2,000 to eligible tenants to assist with the reasonable costs of moving home - removals, connection and disconnection of services replacement carpets and curtains etc. Tenants are not expected to submit invoices or receipts to receive this payment
- 7 Deductions from the grant can be made for
 - the amount of rent arrears owed to the Council at the time of transfer; and/or
 - the cost of any works that the Council has to undertake to the vacated premises as a result of damage or neglect on the part of the tenant.
- 8 The annual budget for the Scheme, which is solely funded from the Housing Revenue Account, is £15,000 per annum. Despite this provision being sufficient to fund at least seven incentives, this figure has only been achieved once in the last nine financial years.
- 9 Numbers participating in the Scheme are currently very low with only one tenant transferring through it during 2021-22 and only two the previous year. While it is likely that the Covid-19 Pandemic may have played a role in the recent very low uptake, it is evident that take-up has declined significantly over the years. This is shown in Figure 1 below.



- 10 Table 1 below shows how the average number of transfers and the value of grants paid under the Scheme has decreased over time.

Period (Financial Years)	2006/09 – 2009/10	2010/11 – 2013/14	2014/15 – 2017/18	2018/19 – 2021/22
Under- occupation Transfers (Average)	9	9	4	4
Total Grant Paid (£)	18,250	19,500	8250	7,800

Consultation

- 11 Unfortunately, without conducting a full tenancy audit, it isn't possible to establish which tenants within our stock are under-occupying and may be eligible for the Transfer Incentive Scheme. However, analysis of Housing Benefit records and the Mutual Exchange Register has enabled officers to identify a number of such tenants.
- 12 In mid-2021, Officers from the Housing Needs Service wrote to these tenants to enquire whether they wished to move to smaller accommodation and advising them of the Tenants Incentive Scheme. Unfortunately, none of the tenants contacted indicated that they wished to move on the terms of the existing Transfer Incentive Scheme.
- 13 Subsequently, the same Officers conducted a follow-up survey to establish whether any of the tenants would be interested in moving if the grant amounts were increased to the values detailed in paragraph 20 of this report. While the majority of those contacted still did not wish to move to smaller accommodation, the survey identified 10 tenants who would consider moving to smaller accommodation if they were eligible for an incentive

Proposed Changes to the Scheme from 1st July 2022

- 14 The supply of general needs one-bedroom properties becoming available for allocation by the Council has increased in recent years, particularly as a result of re-designation following the Council's review of its sheltered housing stock. While such properties are not in low demand, there is lower demand for them from applicants in urgent housing need than there is for family-sized properties.

- 15 While two-bedroom properties are in relatively high demand and low supply, there is certainly a lower supply of properties with three or more bedrooms becoming available for allocation. As a result, applicants in urgent housing need requiring larger properties are having to wait considerably longer than those in urgent need requiring two-bedroom properties.
- 16 Having regard to both of these issues, it is proposed that eligibility for the Scheme should be extended to tenants moving to all one-bedroom properties and two-bedroom properties within the Council's permanent housing stock
- 17 In addition to being able to allocate vacant properties in its own stock to applicants on its Housing Register, the Council also has the right to nominate to the majority of vacancies that arise in register provider social housing stock in the District. As registered providers have been the main developers of social housing stock in the District for many years, the amount of stock that they manage within the District, particularly family-sized properties, has become significant in assisting the Council to meet housing need.
- 18 It is therefore proposed that eligibility for the Scheme should be extended to qualifying assured tenants of Registered Provider properties in the District providing that the Council has received written confirmation from their landlord that it will be entitled to nominate the new tenant for the resulting vacancy
- 19 The value of the fixed amount of grant payable to applicants transferring under the Scheme has not changed since the Scheme was last reviewed in 2004. To address this, it is proposed that the fixed grant amount payable to applicants be increased as follows:
 - a £5,000 incentive grant for tenants moving to one-bedroom or bedsit accommodation; or
 - a £2,000 incentive grant for tenants moving to a two-bedroom property
- 20 An initial target of a minimum of 5 under-occupation transfers be set for 2022/23 and budgetary provision be increased to £25,000 to enable this.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a separate ring-fenced fund to be used to reinvest and developed the Councils housing stock. The report is asking for an increase in the HRA Budget 2022/23 spend by £10,000 within budgets. Apart

from the additional spend the benefits in agreeing to the recommendations will be intangible.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

There is no specific statutory provision which empowers the Council to create this type of cash incentive scheme. However, under section 74 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 ("the 1989 Act"), the Council is required to keep a separate Housing Revenue Account (HRA) of sums falling to be credited or debited in respect of its housing stock. Sections 75 and 76 of the 1989 Act set out the rules for establishing and maintaining that account. Paying financial incentives to Council tenants to downsize or leave social housing altogether will normally have to come within the HRA as the "management of houses and other property" comes under the item of "Expenditure on repairs, maintenance and management" which is one of nine items that must be debited to the HRA (as set out in Schedule 4, Part I of the 1989 Act).

If Members are mindful and view the cash incentive scheme to be value for money, the Council has the authority under s111 of the Local Government Act 1972 which states that "a local authority shall have power to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions".

Equality

This report is not considered to disadvantage or discriminate against any different groups with protected characteristics in the community.

Climate change

It is not considered that this report contains any proposals that will significantly impact the Council's ability to take action on climate change and hit its target of net zero carbon by 2030.

Appendices

Appendix A – Proposed Transfer Incentive Scheme Policy

Background papers

None

----- end of report -----

Appendix A

Transfer Incentive Scheme Policy

1. Introduction

Tandridge District Council has a limited supply of social housing and has, for a number of years, promoted an under-occupation incentive scheme in order to free up much needed family-sized accommodation.

It is evident that there is a significant shortage of accommodation for families, particularly properties with three or more bedrooms. This shortage is much less apparent in our stock of one -bedroom properties generally. Furthermore, there still appears to be a relative over-supply of older persons' stock in relation to demand.

2. Strategic Aims

There is a need to make more effective use of our stock in order to meet known demand, and in particular to avoid any long-term reliance on Bed & Breakfast and other unsuitable temporary accommodation for homeless families

3. Objectives

The aims of the Transfer Incentive Scheme are therefore to:

- encourage and assist tenants under-occupying general needs Council accommodation to move to more widely available accommodation;
- release general needs accommodation, particularly three and four-bedroom properties, in order to maximise occupancy; and
- improve the letting rate of lower demand properties

4. Target

To achieve a minimum of 5 under-occupation transfers during 2022/23 with future targets being reviewed in the light of take-up and budgetary provision.

5. Eligibility

A Transfer Incentive Grant will be available to those persons who:

- (i) are currently residing in Tandridge as secure tenants of the Council and occupy a dwelling suitable for use by a family; **and**
- (ii) qualify, in accordance with the current Housing Allocation Scheme, to occupy accommodation that has less bedrooms than their current home; **and**
- (iii) agree to transfer to accommodation described in (ii) above and provide vacant possession of their present home.
- (iv) assured tenants of Registered Provider (RP) properties in the District will also be eligible for the Grant, providing that written confirmation that the Council will be entitled to nominate the new tenant for the resulting vacancy, has been received from their landlord

6. Exclusions

A Transfer Incentive Grant will not be available to those persons:

- (i) against whom the Council has commenced legal proceedings;

- (ii) are licensees or non-secure tenants of the Council;
- (iii) are in rent arrears and reasonable repayment of the debt cannot be negotiated.
- (iv) Hold a flexible fixed term tenancy with less than two years remaining on the fixed term

7. Incentive Payment

Fixed incentive payments will be paid at the following rates to those transferring from family-sized general needs accommodation to occupy accommodation that has less bedrooms than their current home:

- A £5,000 incentive grant to tenants moving to one-bedroom or bedsit accommodation; or
- A £2,000 incentive grant to tenants moving to a two-bedroom property

The above payments will be subject to budget limits. If there are more requests for transfer incentive grants than there is funding available, the Council will:

- give priority to those moving from accommodation that is more urgently needed, particularly three and four-bedroom properties; and/or
- assist with a transfer in the next financial year.

8. What does the payment cover and when will it be paid?

The disturbance payment is a fixed amount to assist with the reasonable costs of moving home - removals, connection and disconnection of services replacement carpets and curtains etc. Tenants will not be expected to submit invoices or receipts to receive this payment.

The Council reserves the right to reduce the payments set out in paragraph 5 above by:

- the amount of rent arrears owed to the council at the time of transfer; and/or
- the cost of any works that the Council has to undertake to the vacated premises as a result of damage or neglect on the part of the tenant. This matter is dealt with in more detail in the Council's Conditions of Tenancy. and/or
- the value of any disturbance payment previously paid (eg – for a tenant moving from a two-bedroom property to a one-bedroom property who has previously received a payment for moving from a three-bedroom property to a two-bedroom property)

Payments will be authorised once the tenant has moved and following an inspection of the vacated property.

9. Financial Resources

The annual budget for the existing scheme is currently £25,000. The scheme will be kept under review and the need for any additional funding will be dealt with as part of the annual budget setting process.

10. Exceptions

In some exceptional circumstances, where a family-size dwelling is urgently required, the Head of Housing may offer a Transfer Incentive Grant in relation to accommodation other than that described in paragraph 5. above, or may agree to some additional work being undertaken to the smaller unit, in order to secure the desired accommodation.

11. Policy Implementation

This policy shall come into effect on 1 July 2022. Thereafter, the Housing Committee will review the policy every three years unless there is some event, consideration or legislative change, which necessitates an earlier review.

July 2022

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Housing Committee Quarter 4 2021/22 Performance Report

Housing Committee Tuesday, 21 June 2022

Report of: Executive Head of Communities

Purpose: For decision

Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

- The appendices to this report contain data on the Committee's key performance indicators and risks for Quarter 4 2021-2022, to enable the Committee to monitor how the Council is delivering the services for which it is responsible.
 - Appendix C provides members with the Quarter 4 position in relation to the Council's House Building programme and affordable housing development by housing associations.
 - Performance and risk headlines are included in Section 3.
-

This report supports the Council's priority of: Building a better Council

Contact officer Alison Boote Executive Head of Communities
aboote@tandridge.gov.uk

Recommendation to Committee:

That the Quarter 4 2021-2022 performance and risks for the Housing Committee be noted.

Reason for recommendation:

To support the Committee to monitor and manage its performance and risks.

Introduction and background

1 Performance and Risk

1.1 Performance and risk reports are presented to each policy committee at the end of each quarter. The reports include a covering report and an appendix with individual performance charts and commentary for each performance indicator, and the committee's risk register.

2. Notes on performance and risk data

2.1 See Appendix A and Appendix B for the Housing performance data and risk register respectively.

2.2 Wherever possible the most recent data has previously been included in the appendices, regardless of whether it technically falls into the reported quarter. However, due to the committee report timelines, there may be occasions where data is not available in time for the committee report. In these cases, the data will be provided in the next scheduled report.

2.3 The Council uses the following risk management scoring matrix:

Likelihood	Very Likely	4	4	8	12	16
	Likely	3	3	6	9	12
	Possible	2	2	4	6	8
	Unlikely	1	1	2	3	4
			1	2	3	4
			Low	Medium	High	Very High
			Impact			

3 Performance

3.1 The following KPI's have not met target as detailed in Appendix A:

- HO2a - Average time taken to re-let local authority housing (days)
- HO2b - Average time taken to re-let local authority sheltered housing (days)
- HO5 – Number of people in 'urgent need' (bands A&B) on the Housing Register
- HO10a - Percentage of emergency responsive repairs completed within the timescales set for the contractor
- HO10b - Percentage of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the timescales set for the contractor

3.1.1 Narratives have been provided in Appendix A outlining reasons for the these KPI's not meeting target.

3.2 Risk

3.2.1. The risk register has been reviewed and the risks that are more operational in nature have been removed and will be monitored by Officers internally. However, this does not preclude these risks from being escalated back to the committee register in the future, or new risks being added.

3.2.2. See Appendix B for details.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

There are no direct finance implications arising from this report. However, the risks identified in the Corporate and Committee risk registers and there mitigating actions may lead to significant additional resources and cost implications for the Council if they come to pass.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

As this report is for noting, there are no direct legal implications arising from this report, but the report does provide Members with an overview of the achievement of targets in the past quarter and highlights risk management considerations where appropriate. These risks align with the Corporate Risk Register. The periodic review of these documents should ensure that they remain aligned.

Any other corporate implications

There are no other corporate implications.

Equality

This report contains no proposals that would disadvantage any

particular minority groups.

Climate change

There are no significant environmental / sustainability implications associated with this report.

Appendices

Appendix 'A' – Performance Charts

Appendix 'B' – Risk Register

Appendix 'C' – Update on the Council Housing Building Programme

Background papers

None

----- end of report -----

APPENDIX A – Housing Performance

H01 - Local Council rent collection and arrears: proportion of rent collected

<u>April-June 2021</u>	<u>July-September 2021</u>	<u>October- December 2021</u>	<u>January-March 2022</u>	<u>Target</u>
2.44%	2.45%	2.70%	2.23%	Met

Performance Summary

- The current rent arrears total was 0.27% lower than the annual target of 2.50%. This figure is 0.20% lower than the same period in 2020/21 when arrears were 2.43%.

Target: 2.5% (2021/22)

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H02a - Average time taken to re-let local authority housing (days)

<u>April-June 2021</u>	<u>July-September 2021</u>	<u>October- December 2021</u>	<u>January-March 2022</u>	<u>Target</u>
19.4	23	26.3	31.8	Not met

Performance Summary

- Performance has been affected this quarter by a number of properties that have proved difficult to let in the current climate as well as the increased void time caused by CoVID-19 compliant practices.

Target: 25 days (2021/22)

APPENDIX A – Housing Performance

HO2b - Average time taken to re-let local authority sheltered housing (days)

April-June 2021	July-September 2021	October-December 2021	January-March 2022	Target
104.6	85.5	67.9	68.2	Not Met

Performance Summary

- The figure has been inflated by 3 properties that were vacant for much of 2020/21 but were let early in 2021/22 and are, therefore, included in the current figure. It is evident that demand for older persons and, particularly, sheltered housing decreased significantly prior to the vaccination programme. As a result, the length of time taken to let these properties has increased significantly. This is in line with effects seen by other local authorities.

Target: 30 days (2021/22)

HO3 - Number of cases where it is known that advice and/or support from the Council successfully prevented or relieved the threat of homelessness

April-June 2021	July-September 2021	October-December 2021	January-March 2022	Target
34	68	105	137	120
				Met

Performance Summary

- On target.
- Please note our target is for the end of the year and therefore cumulative per quarter. Also, figures are provisional and may be subject to change following government audits.

APPENDIX A – Housing Performance

Target: 120 cases (2021/22)

HO4 – Number of households living in temporary accommodation

April-June 2021	July-September 2021	October-December 2021	January-March 2022	Target
23	21	20	21	30
				Met

Performance Summary

- On target. Figures are provisional and may be subject to change following government audits.

Target: 30 (2021/22)

HO5 – Number of people in 'urgent need' (bands A&B) on the Housing Register

April-June 2021	July-September 2021	October-December 2021	January-March 2022	Target
424	401	408	414	275
				Not Met

Performance Summary

This figure has improved minimally from the same quarter last year. It remains high due to high demand & a limited supply of affordable housing. The Housing Team continues to work with colleagues in strategy and development to ensure a continued supply of affordable housing is provided throughout the District, as well as pursuing other initiatives, including the Tenants' Incentive Scheme, Assisted Purchase Scheme and relocation strategies within our own housing stock.

APPENDIX A – Housing Performance

Target: 275 (2021/22)

HO7 – Average cost of repairs per property for Council Tenants (exc. Leaseholders)

April-June 2021	July-September 2021	October-December 2021	January-March 2022	Target £325
£65	£109	-	£215.92	Met

Performance Summary

- On target.
- While on target, the amount per property is significantly lower than previous years. This is due to fewer repairs being completed because of the pandemic plus resourcing restraints within the community surveyor and operational service teams.
- Q3 data is missing due to the reconciliation issues between the Housing Management system Orchard and the Councils finance system Agresso.

Target: £325 (2021/22)

HO8 - First time fixes (responsive repairs)

April-June 2021	July-September 2021	October-December 2021	January-March 2022	Target 85%
89%	85%	-	87%	Met

Performance Summary

- On target for the periods where data was available.

APPENDIX A – Housing Performance

- Q3 data is missing due to the reconciliation issues between the Housing Management system Orchard and the Councils finance system Agresso.

Target: 85% (2021/22)

HO9 - Recall Visits (responsive repairs)

<u>April-June 2021</u>	<u>July-September 2021</u>	<u>October-December 2021</u>	<u>January-March 2022</u>	<u>Target</u>
0.57%	0.9%	-	1.09%	Met

Performance Summary

On target for the periods where data was available.

- Q3 data is missing due to the reconciliation issues between the Housing Management system Orchard and the Councils finance system Agresso.

Target: 2% (2021/22)

HO10a - Percentage of emergency responsive repairs completed within the timescales set for the contractor

<u>April-June 2021</u>	<u>July-September 2021</u>	<u>October-December 2021</u>	<u>January-March 2022</u>	<u>Target</u>
92.1%	-	-	97.3%	Not Met

APPENDIX A – Housing Performance

Performance Summary

- Target not met – This is due to a low number of returned customer surveys. We are continuing to review this indicator and investigate more thorough ways of monitoring performance.
- Q2 and 3 data is missing due to the reconciliation issues between the Housing Management system Orchard and the Councils finance system Agresso.

Target: 98% (2021/22)

HO10b - Percentage of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the timescales set for the contractor

<u>April-June 2021</u>	<u>July-September 2021</u>	<u>October- December 2021</u>	<u>January-March 2022</u>	<u>Target</u>
92.5%	94%	-	88.4%	Not Met

Performance Summary

- Target not met due to very low numbers of customer surveys being returned during the quarter.
- Q3 data is missing due to the reconciliation issues between the Housing Management system Orchard and the Councils finance system Agresso.

Target: 90% (2021/22)

Appendix 'B' Risk Register

Ref:	Category	Risk cause and event	Risk consequences	Risk Owner	L	I	RAG	Mitigating actions and responsibility	Status update	On corporate risk register?
H1	Financial	Overspend on housing repairs	* Impact on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).	Head of Operational Services, Executive Head of Communities	4	4	16	* Financial monitoring and savings trackers in place. * Senior managers reviewing the implementation of the new budget arrangements. * Implementing new depot IT system within 12 months (in-line with IT priorities) to provide accurate cost data on time, labour, materials, fuel, vehicle usage, etc. * Heavily restricting the use of third party contractors by the depot for reactive repairs. * Reviewing the reactive repairs schedule of rates for the depot.	* Officers are meeting with Orchard to discuss replacing a software module for the depot and contractors, as the original module is no longer supported. Costings have been submitted to the Executive Lead for Communities. A meeting has also been arranged with IT and other Housing parties to assess future needs. Procurement of new tender for VOIDS has been delayed due to the Vacant Lead Community Surveyor position. The monitoring of budgets is a major risk as the Orchard and Agresso systems are not interfacing and allocating to the correct budget lines. This could result in overspends	NO
H2	Programme	Council fails to deliver the target number of properties in the Council House Building Programme, due to poor performance of the contractor, planning delays, unplanned costs, Covid 19 requirements, the availability of materials and utility providers	* Increase in number of households living in unsatisfactory housing conditions. * Increase in homelessness. * Failure to meet statutory homelessness duties. * Negative impact on resident wellbeing. * Negative publicity and reputational damage. * Inability to meet local housing need. * Increasing numbers of applicants registered on the Housing Needs Register, and impact on KPI HO5. * Increased cost of homeless service and of meeting requirements of the Homeless Reduction Act.	Lead Housing Development Specialist	2	4	8	* Active management of contracts via monthly contractor meetings and day to day contact with the project team; and appointment of an Employers Agent to manage the contractor on behalf of the Council. * Programme includes work to minimise inevitable delays resulting from manufacturing delays, material shortages, sub-contract labour being temporarily shutdown and the need to comply with Covid 19 advice and guidelines. * Consider use of alternative materials to overcome supply shortages, different designs and different finishes; and use of materials that are readily obtainable. * Use of JCT Design Build contract minimises additional costs. * Early liaison of utility providers by the contractor and the use of mature approved drainage plans within contract documentation. * New homes development programme to increase supply of permanent rented family housing. * Deliver actions within the Housing Strategy which include: Improve the councils sheltered housing to encourage downsizing / move on from family accommodation; Supporting Registered Providers to reduce rents; Development and implementation of an Empty Homes strategy. * Maximising the limited opportunities to release land for development. * Increase use of private sector Housing to meet temporary accommodation demand and prevent homelessness. * Target staffing resources at increasing development of New affordable homes where possible through the Council and Registered Providers. * Monthly monitoring of supply and demand for affordable housing. * Performance reporting to Executive Lead, Communities Directorate and Housing Committee; also regular monitoring of homelessness trends. * Ongoing review of national / Local issues affecting the service.	*Contractors have been consulted on any Covid impact and shortage of materials. The impact to both Contractors and materials has not been substantive to date. Officers will continue to monitor the situation and report any substantive risks. *Contractors have reported delays to delivery at Bronzeoak and Uplands due to materials and labour shortages. Officers closely monitoring this and assisting where possible e.g. paying main contractor invoices upon receipt, making prompt decisions over changes to materials etc *New homes programme forecasting an increase in build costs due to material and energy price rises - and the construction industry being energy intensive.	NO
H3	Financial	Current energy contract with Gazprom is terminated due to ongoing situation in Russia / Ukraine.	* Continuing with Gazprom as a supplier may be sensitive * Would need to procure a new contract at a much higher cost	Executive Head of Communities	2	4	8	* Monitor situation * Liaise with, and take advice from, energy broker	Statement from Inspired Energy on 28/02/2022 "At present there are no sanctions impacting Gazprom Marketing Ltd and we are doubtful that the UK government will impose these due to the amount of UK clients being supplied by Gazprom and the current amount of supplier disruption due to the market price crisis"	YES
H4	Strategic	Inability to deliver Housing Strategy	* Fail to deliver on the strategic objectives of the strategy, and associated improvements to residents and the Council.	Executive Head of Communities	1	2	2	* Regular updates brought to Committee. * Member briefing papers prepared for relevant strategy actions. * Officer working group in place. * Communications in place with key partner agencies.	* Regular annual updates being provided to Housing Committee with actions being worked by officers.	NO
H5	Strategic	Inability to deliver the Homelessness Strategy	* Fail to deliver on the strategic objectives of the strategy, and associated improvements to residents and the Council.	Specialist Services Manager	1	2	2	* Regular updates brought to Committee. * Member briefing papers prepared for relevant strategy actions. * Officer working group in place. * Communications in place with key partner agencies.	* Regular annual updates being provided to Housing Committee with actions being worked by officers.	NO

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Appendix C

Quarter 4 Update – Affordable Housing Provision and Council Housing Building Programme

This update provides members with the Qtr4 position in relation to the Council's House Building programme and affordable housing development by housing associations.

Council House building (CHB) programme

- The status of the Council's current programme at the end of Quarter 4 was as follows:

No of dwellings in Programme:	342 See Note 1
Completed homes:	50
Completed homes in 12 months defects period:	22 See Note 2
Homes contracted but not on site:	13 See Note 3
Homes on site:	47 (Uplands and Bronzeroak)
Buy Back programme	10
Buy Backs identified and being progressed	2
Buy backs completed	8
Homes being tendered:	0
Homes subject to planning:	0
Homes approved but at pre-planning stage	35 see Note 4
Homes yet to be found	165
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> This figure includes 142 homes from the original programme and the 200 additional homes added by the Housing Committee at its meeting on the 11th March 2021. 19 homes at Shallcross and 3 homes at Barnfield Way remain subject to minor end of defects works which are being closed out. Contract commenced on 1st March for Windmill Close (3), Auckland Road (3) Rochester Gardens (5) and Town End (2) Schemes at Wolfs Wood, Featherstone and Hollow Lane were approved at the Housing Committee meeting on the 11th of March 2021 	

- Progress of the CHB against the annual target for 2021/22 is as follows:

ANNUAL TARGETS CHB PROGRAMME 2021/22 and PROJECTIONS							
	2021/22 Targets	Qtr. 1	Qtr. 2	Qtr. 3	Qtr.4	2022/23 Targets	2023/24 Targets
Starts On site							
Projected	13	0	0	0	13	48	38
Actual	0	0	0	0	0	-	-

Completions							
Projected	9	2	2	2	3	49	48
Actual	7	2	3	2	0	-	-

Notes: The Caterham-on-the-Hill schemes at Rochester Gardens, Town End, Windmill Close and Auckland Road will now start on site in Qtr1 & Qtr2. The 49 completions include Bronzeoak, Uplands and 2 x buy-backs

38 units projected for 2023/24 include up to 22 units at Warren Lane and up to 16 units at Pelham House (subject to relevant committee approval and planning permission). The 48 completions include the Caterham-on-the-Hill schemes and Wolfs Wood, Hollow Lane & Featherstone (which remain subject to planning)

3. **Risks to the CHB programme are:**

- Due to a combination of material and labour shortages at both Uplands and Bronzeoak both schemes are reporting delays to completion. Uplands is now due to complete between June and August with Bronzeoak forecasting to complete in Dec/Jan.
- Due to the rise in material costs and underlying increase in energy costs for manufacturing construction materials, build costs are expected to continue to climb.

Featherstone, Blindley Heath and Wolfs Wood, Hurst Green

4. Both schemes have now received positive pre planning advice. Officers have continued to engage with residents and assist with the decant programme. Featherstone is almost empty and is due to have property guardians installed to secure the properties in the short term. Wolfs Wood has 5 residents remaining in occupation. The public consultation, including a drop in event has taken place in respect of the proposals for Wolfs Wood and a report will be brought to September committee with the outcome of the land appropriation consultation.

Hollow Lane, Dormansland

5. The process of appropriating the land at the Hollow Lane scheme is underway. Purchase of some rear garden land has been agreed which would allow for the addition of a one-bed bungalow to the scheme (subject to authority under delegated powers and subject to planning).

The Depot, Warren Lane

6. Work has now re-started on delivering the Warren Lane scheme. Procurement is underway for the appointment of specialists to undertake required surveys to inform the designs of the future scheme as well as the depot operation and office accommodation. Officers have prepared a separate report seeking approval for a pre app budget. This will enable a comprehensive full budget approval request to be brought to a later committee once costs are known. A formal consultation with local residents will take place once pre app advice has been received.

7. **Pelham House, Caterham**

Residents are currently being formally consulted about the proposals in accordance with the requirements of S105 of the Housing Act. They have also been informed of the delay to the handover of Wadey Court (Bronzeoak).

8. Open Market Land / Homes

Officers have introduced this section into Appendix C to provide information on work that has or is being undertaken by Officers to try and secure opportunities on the open market. In the last quarter Officers have pursued two land options, one in Smallfield for land with an expired planning permission and one in Whyteleafe, where the development is already underway. In Smallfield the vendor has received an offer higher than the Council is prepared to offer based on independent valuation advice. In Whyteleafe the vendor was not prepared to alter the specification of the scheme to allow the Council to make a competitive offer for the completed units.

There is one other land option that Officers are pursuing at the moment which is too sensitive to report on currently.

Housing Association Activity

9. Clarion Housing Group have restarted on site at the Rose and Young site in Caterham with 48 affordable rented flats (previously shared ownership) flats now projected to complete in September 2023.
10. The 9-home affordable rented scheme at Dormansland station is expected to achieve a start on site in 2022/23. Officers are currently considering a proposal from the landowner to deliver the homes as part of the Council House Building Programme. Officers are also once more engaging with RPs to try and secure an RP to deliver the units as rented housing.
11. English Rural Housing Association are progressing with a 3-unit extension to their rural exception scheme in Burstow. The site is forecast to complete in November 2022.
12. The development of 22 homes at Oldencraig is progressing well and will deliver four low-cost home ownership homes scheduled for completion in December 2022 comprising of 1 x 2 bed flat, 1 x 2 bed house and 2 x 3 bed houses.
13. Rosebery Housing Association have contracted with Antler Homes to deliver the 10 affordable homes under construction at Whyteleafe Road, Caterham. These are due to complete in September 2022 and Officers are working on the Nominations Agreement currently.
14. Shanly Homes are in contract with Mount Green HA to deliver the 8 affordable homes under construction at land off Anne's Walk in Caterham. These are due to complete in Dec 2022 and work is underway to agree the Nominations Agreement.
15. St Arthur Homes have advised that they have an interest in the 22 unit consented scheme at the Eugene Bann tennis centre in South Nutfield and although this is still STC they intend to deliver all 22 units as shared ownership and are forecasting a start on site in 2022/23.

ANNUAL TARGETS HA PROGRAMME 2021/22 and PROJECTIONS
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	Targets 2021/22	Qtr. 1	Qtr. 2	Qtr. 3	Qtr.4	2022/23 Targets	2023/24 Targets
Starts On site							
Projected	60	0	0	48	12	31	20
Actual	70	0	22	48	3		
Completions							
Projected	52	1	39	12	0	26	79
Actual	52	1	39	12	0	-	-

Notes: 2022/23 Starts on Site include 9 x Dormans Station & 22 x Eugene Bann.
 Completions include Whyteleafe Road x 10, Anne's Walk x 8, Oldencraig x 4,
 Burstow (Cophthorne) x 3 & 1 x Transform RSAP programme (approved by committee Nov
 2021)

2023/24 Starts on Site include 20 speculative units at a rural exception site. Completions
 include 48 x Rose and Young, 9 x Dormans Station & 22 x Eugene Bann