

# Public Document Pack

Resources and Services Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee

9 July 2020

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW  
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,  
HELD ON THURSDAY, 9TH JULY, 2020 AT 7.30 PM  
THE MEETING WAS HELD IN ACCORDANCE WITH SI 2020/392. LINK TO THE  
LIVE STREAM IS FOUND HERE:  
[HTTPS://WWW.TENDRINGDC.GOV.UK/LIVEMEETINGS](https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/livemeetings)**

<b>Present:</b>	Councillors M Stephenson (Chairman), Scott (Vice-Chairman), Allen, Amos, Barry, Codling, Griffiths, Morrison and Skeels
<b>Also Present:</b>	Councillors P Honeywood (Portfolio Holder for Housing), Davidson, Miles and G Stephenson
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Ian Davidson (Chief Executive), Paul Price (Deputy Chief Executive & Corporate Director (Place and Economy)), Damian Williams (Acting Corporate Director (Operations and Delivery)), Richard Barrett (Assistant Director (Finance and IT) & Section 151 Officer), Tim Clarke (Assistant Director (Housing and Environment)), Keith Simmons (Head of Democratic Services and Elections), Keith Durran (Democratic Services Officer) and Emma Haward (Leadership Support Assistant) Karen Harges(IT Training Officer and Matthew Cattermole(Business Support)

**64. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bray (with Councillor Amos substituting) and Harris (with Councillor Skeels substituting).

**65. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on Monday 22 June 2020 were approved as a correct record and were then signed by the Chairman.

**66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Allen declared an interest for the public record in regards to Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy (Minute 68(A) refers) as the Disability Facilities Grants works were going to go to public tender and as a local contractor he could submit a bid.

**67. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38**

Pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 38, Councillor Griffiths asked the Chairman of the Committee:-

*"In regard to the Spendells item on the agenda for Cabinet, Friday, 26, June:-*

- 1. Can you clarify why we are showing a base budget for 20/21 of £187,030, which, according to one of the appendix documents excludes employee costs? Given that there is a cost centre for employees' involvement in using Spendells as*

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*temporary accommodation, why are direct and indirect staff, based, or providing services at the site, not included in the cost?*

- 2. I note the decision is to change this complex to emergency housing. Given that the clientele could range from homeless families, to single parents, couples, and single individuals, with an element of communal shower / washing facilities, what provisions are in place to screen individuals before we agree to accommodate them in Spendells?*

*How do we as an authority intend to safeguard the vulnerable to ensure that we do not have residents living next door to individuals who have the ability to have an adverse impact on their well-being?*

*For example, can we guarantee that we will not have an individual with an unhealthy interest in small children dwelling next door to a single mother, or those with a drug, alcohol or mental health issue living next to a family?"*

The Report and Appendices submitted to the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26 June 2020 were attached to the Agenda for this meeting by way of general background for the other Members of the Committee.

The Chairman responded to Councillor Griffiths' question as follows:-

In relation to the first question.

- 1. "The £187k budget referred to in the report is the existing non-employee budget which establishes the base funding position that is available to support homeless accommodation and other initiatives.*

*The proposals set out in the report seek to establish Spendells House as temporary homeless accommodation, so from a budgetary perspective, the overall cost of the scheme (including employee and other costs) would need to be less than this existing base budget of £187k, otherwise it would present a cost pressure to the General Fund. The purpose of the analysis set out in Appendix A is to demonstrate that the full costs can be accommodated within this existing base budget of £187k."*

In relation to the second question.

- 2. "Those who experience homelessness are in a vulnerable position already and we would not want their placement in temporary accommodation to increase their vulnerability. The arrangements for making placements will be no different to those we have in place currently. A homelessness application usually involves a thorough assessment of an individuals or families circumstances and past housing situation and nobody will be placed into accommodation where they are believed to pose a risk to others.*

*The scheme will be operated on a zero tolerance basis with regard to alcohol and drug use and other unacceptable behaviour."*

## **68. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OF HOUSING ISSUES**

The Committee conducted overview and scrutiny on the theme of Housing. A report of the Assistant Director (Housing and Environment) in respect of the items to be considered had been produced and circulated to the members of the Committee prior to the commencement of the meeting. Members paid particular emphasis to service delivery and performance in relation to:-

**(A) PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY**

The Committee was provided with the report on the Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy as approved by the Cabinet on 26 June 2020 (Minute 24 of that meeting referred).

The Committee's consideration of the policy focussed on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs): the processes, the timescales, any obstacles to delivery and options for solutions (and whether those options had been pursued) and the relative advantages of pooling.

It was explained to the Members that the DFGs were mandatory grants for those in owner occupied, private rented or housing association properties to provide disabled adaptations and were the only grant left from the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. Funding for the DFG came from the Better Care Fund.

Grant applicants were encouraged to make their own decisions about how the process would work best for them and the Council did not control who they employed to undertake the works.

DFGs involved a number of stages, the first of which was an assessment by an occupational therapist from Essex County Council (ECC) which might follow on from a GP or a self-referral. The occupational therapist would make a referral to this Council recommending certain *necessary and appropriate* adaptations. It was the Council's role to then inspect and decide whether those adaptations were *reasonable and practical* before offering funding towards them.

The Committee was told that once the Council had agreed that works were reasonable and practical a grant application had to be made by the person benefitting from the works or their family. All applications were means tested and that determined whether they should contribute anything towards the cost of the work.

Applicants could choose to make the application and find builders themselves or they could employ an agency, commonly known as a home improvement agency, to help them. The agency's fees could be included in the grant.

Once an application had been made along with submission of builder estimates the Council had a statutory six month period in which to approve it. Once a grant had been approved the applicant was formally notified and could go ahead and start the work. On completion of the work the Council would conduct a final inspection and if everything was satisfactory it would release the grant money, often paying the contractor directly. At no point did the Council have any contractual relationship with any builders or an agency.

Members were informed that in 2019/20, 352 referrals had been received from ECC with 270 of those resulting in formal recommendations for adaptations being sent to this Council. 175 grants had been completed in 2019/20 totalling £1,558,797. A commitment of £751,000 had been carried over into 2020/21 in unspent grants both approved and pre-approval.

Unlike many authorities this Council had not had a waiting list since 2009 (apart from during the current Covid-19 outbreak but here the Council aimed to have caught up by mid-August).

It was reported that over the past 5 years this Council had made many changes to its processes and had been trying to continually improve the service it offered the residents of Tendring. Through the introduction of a grant co-ordinator post and hard work by Officers to streamline the process and go electronic, the time from receiving a valid application to formal approval had been reduced from 33 days to 7 (the statutory period was 6 months) and this Council's average payment timescales were the lowest in Essex.

The Committee was informed that the average timescale for approval to certified completion (fully paid and closed case), although not fully in the Council's control, had also reduced to 56 days from 122 days with the assistance of contractors and the local agencies (the guidance target was 80 days). The Council strove always to improve the works it could fund, to 'think outside the box' to achieve results, ensure longevity and deal with an increasing number of bariatric and dementia cases whilst also working with outside agencies.

### **Expertise**

Members were made aware that the Council's DFG team was held in high regard within the DFG community. Foundations (the MCHLG appointed body overseeing Home Improvement Agencies and since 2015 providing advice to all authorities on the DFG whether they used a HIA or not) often passed this Council's details to other authorities who were looking for guidance. During the Covid-19 outbreak this Council had been contacted by several London Authorities to request advice about changes this Council had made for the continued provision of grants.

The Committee was advised that Ferret Information Systems were the leading specialist firm with regards to legislation and means testing – providing training and software. They had regularly confirmed that this Council processed cases correctly and provided the grants in the proper way. Again, this Council was often offered up as contact points for those authorities requiring advice.

### **Home Improvement Agencies**

It was reported to the Committee that, since ECC had discontinued their countywide funded Home Improvement Agency contract, several agents had decided to work in the District. This Council had a memorandum of understanding with DG Accessible Designs Ltd (who provided a full grant service for those who need help) and another with Townsend Bowen (who provided a more tailored option for those who may only need plans drawn or surveyor help). The Council had actively tried to find further agents or architect services to offer clients over the last few years, finding Townsend Bowen, and had discussed the option of an in-house agency with the Building Control department of the Council.

Members were informed that several Essex Authorities had internal agencies either because of the ECC decision to remove the contract or because they had had one in place for many years. An agent (internal or otherwise) could charge fees for the services they provided (funded from the grant) while this Council could not take fees for the provision of the mandatory function of administering the grant.

### **Issues with the DFG**

The report informed Members that a recent government funded review in 2018 had found that the main issues were:-

- The grant maximum of £30,000

That had been the grant maximum since 2008 and at that time it had been possible to provide a bedroom and specialist shower extension including all fees within that amount. This Council regularly provided grant maximum funding for those large projects, especially for children, but as the cost of building works had increased whilst the grant maximum had not, this Council was undertaking fewer large schemes as families could not afford the top-up required above the maximum grant figure. This Council had offered grants to families to move to suitable properties since 2010 as per government guidance but for some families this was still not a viable option. The Council's new policy aimed to offer a top-up for extensions of that kind which now cost approximately £45,000 until such time as the grant maximum was increased. The DFG community expected the government to announce the increase in the grant maximum when it looked into implementing the changes recommended in the review but that had been delayed first by Brexit and now further by Covid-19.

- The means test

The Government prescribed means test used allowances and premiums to assess what the disabled person (not applicable to children) and their partner could afford to contribute to the cost of the DFG funded works. This was based on what the government felt someone could afford to take out in a high street loan and did not take into account the actual outgoings of a person. If applicants were on an income related benefit they were pass-ported through the grant. When Council Tax Benefit had been removed and replaced by local schemes it had been a loss to the grant system and many people who would have been pass-ported were now means tested. Those who were working were unfairly treated in the prescribed test and often had high contributions. A full review of the means test had been requested and one option was to make it the same as the test for care provision. By removing the means test for simple stair lift installations in this Council's new financial assistance policy and treating them as equipment, it was felt that far more people would be able to stay in their homes who would otherwise struggle to fund works themselves. An option the Council had been discussing would be the introduction of a case worker position who could assist applicants with income maximisation and benefit applications such as attendance allowance, as those went in the favour of those being means tested and would, therefore, help more people get through the means test process until such time as it was reviewed again.

- Joining up the process

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The review had stated that working more strategically with the CCG and other authorities would improve the uptake of the grant. This Council was an active member of the Essex Well Homes Group which consisted of ECC, the other Essex Authorities including the Unitary Authorities & Foundations. The CCG had so far not been active members but were aware of the work in question through the Local Health and Well Being Boards. Over the last few years the group had not only supported one another but had allowed this Council to formally agree the use of the Better Care Funding for discretionary works and allowed this Council to formulate the new policy.

The Members were made aware of what the Officers felt were the local issues with the DFG –

- ECC –This Council was reliant on ECC as they had the legal responsibility to decide what was “*necessary and appropriate*” for the person before this Council then took over the process. This Council worked closely with the local occupational therapist teams but ECC had, over the years, restructured regularly and this had led to the loss of those with knowledge of the DFG process. ECC had made changes to their processes without considering the Local Authorities’ requirements which had negatively affected the number of referrals. However, there had been a recent improvement in the working relationship between ECC and this Council which had significantly improved matters.
- Contractors – If the applicant initially did not use a local agent they often struggled to acquire the necessary quotes and usually had to employ an agent in the end. This delayed the grant process. There had also been a reduction in the number of contractors that the local agents could use which exacerbated the problem. The Council had changed its processes to speed up the process as much as possible and had encouraged the local agents to attempt to recruit more contractors.
- Tendring District Council’s staff level – The Council currently had six full time members of staff within the team although those staff had other duties in addition to working on DFGs. The Grant Co-Ordinator post and a temporary increase from part time to full time for the administrative support post had greatly improved the work flow within the team. The Team had reviewed its work practices and processes for the first time in many years and had succeeded in making it simpler and more efficient. The Team planned on undertaking a review with finance and audit to look at further simplification of processes as well as further IT changes such as using computer tablets for inspections. The addition of a case worker would increase the number of grant applicants progressed past preliminary means test stage and also reduced the number of people leaving the process at final means test stage before approval. Foundations conducted a research project in December 2019 into staffing levels and the DFG which had demonstrated that this Council was already achieving a higher return than the average. The Council’s spend was the highest in Essex despite having a lower average cost of works than the England average and less staff per pound spent than Colchester and Basildon Councils. The planned pilot part time ECC occupational therapist to sit within Housing should bring additional benefits to the department as a whole, not just to the DFGs, and hopefully would prove the need for further occupational therapists to sit in the Housing Service of the Council.

The Committee was informed that overall therefore most of the issues with the DFG itself were not within this Council's control but despite that the new policy should make things easier for residents.

Despite Covid-19 during the first week of lockdown, and despite having a totally new way of working and some challenges, the Council had managed to pay £90,000 of grants in a single week to ensure contractors were paid and had continued to ensure that works were approved and paid for throughout the lockdown.

### **(B) VACATED/EMPTY COUNCIL HOUSING ('VOIDS')**

The Committee looked at the numbers of empty properties there had been over the past year, the proportion that those represented of the entire Council housing estate, expectations on standards of vacated properties, the extent to which the vacated properties were subject to major/minor repair works, the target times for inspecting vacated properties once they were empty and for repairs to be conducted, the periods of time properties were empty, the lost rental income during the period it was empty and the cost of housing homeless persons in the same period. Members also examined the situation one year on from the Council taking back the ROALCO Ltd contract (following the company being placed in administration), the transfer of staff to the Council and responding to the immediate issue this posed and the plan for sustaining the work now and in the future.

It was reported to Members that the turnaround time for a void property depended on the condition it was left in by the previous tenant and the extent of previous works such as asbestos removal. Many were left in a poor condition and required extensive void works before they could be let again.

Many voids required replacement kitchens and bathrooms, caused by a combination of them having been abused by the tenant or that they had come to the end of their life span, unfortunately most of them were from abuse.

The voids process was as follows:

- Keys returned to Allocations service
- Keys passed on to Building and Engineering services
- Refurbishment and Demolition (RAD) survey carried out within 1 – 3 days with works specified and ordered the same day or day after
- Works carried out to bring property back to void standard which included:
  - all asbestos removed where practical.
  - complete redecoration following the necessary works
  - boiler upgrade where necessary
  - electrical upgrades where necessary
  - Window / door replacement as necessary
- Works completed – target 21 days from start but licensed asbestos removal could add at least 14 days due to HSE notification.

#### Statistics from 2019 /20

186 properties had become void during the year and 164 properties had been let again. Additionally 32 sheltered flats had become void and 11 had been let again during the year.

It was noted that some voids would carry over from the previous year and some would carry over into the following year so calculating figures was not straightforward. An authority with a housing stock the size of Tendring District Council could have around 100 properties vacant at any one time.

### **Void rent loss**

Rental income loss as a result of void properties had been as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Void rent loss</b>
2019/20	403,769
2018/19	287,823
2017/18	563,214
2016/17	Not submitted
2015/16	350,139
2014/15	286,931

### **ROALCO Contract Issues**

The Committee was reminded that following the unforeseen collapse of ROALCO, the Term Maintenance Contractor for the Housing Stock, in July 2019, the Council had carried out a significant proportion of the repair work to the housing stock using both existing and a large number of casual staff. The Council had also used a number of contractors to support this function.

During this period two elements of work had been undertaken, one, as mentioned above, had been the actual carrying out of the repair work whilst trying to understand what staffing, equipment and materials were required to carry out this function.

The second had been to instigate a full tender process to replace ROALCO as a complimentary Term Maintenance contractor. That would allow the Authority to operate a 'mixed economy' approach and provide a 'backstop position' should the in-house team fail to operate efficiently as well as to provide cover if the volume of work exceeded the norm.

It was considered that the last 12 months had provided a valuable insight into what was required to run an in-house maintenance team for the Housing Stock. Therefore, Officers wanted to test the viability of a permanent in-house team by setting up a proof of concept model, for a fixed period of one year, in order to replicate the duties that a permanent workforce would carry out. Casual staff would still carry out the remaining duties until the Term Maintenance contract was in place. At that time, the casual workers would be released.

Members were made aware that the benefit of the proof of concept approach was that it would allow data to be collected that would provide accurate figures on the cost effectiveness of the in-house team and provide a comparison between the in-house and contractor's operating costs.

In order to help gather accurate information Officers were trialling a new software package, Oneserve, on a month-by-month basis. Oneserve was a software package that allowed for the accurate collection of data on a job-by-job basis taking into account the hours, materials, travelling time, and other associated costs. That would enable a very detailed understanding of the costs associated with running this element of the



service and would give an accurate picture of the length of time taken to undertake each job. If the trial was successful then it was proposed to roll it out across the rest of the service including Facilities Management and Engineering Services.

It was envisaged that the future maintenance of the housing stock would be provided using a combination of in-house and external workforces. This would provide a more stable, reliable way of re-introducing the in-house maintenance team back into the Authority. The proposed split in the work would be as follows:-

In-house team to carry out the following work;

- Window repairs
- Drainage Work
- Void work in Sheltered Blocks
- Sheltered unit day to day repairs
- Day to day repairs on the general stock

External Contractor to carry out the following work;

- All void work in General Housing Stock
- Foundations;
- Groundwork;
- Fencing and Gates;
- Drainage;
- Brickwork;
- Masonry;
- Roofing;
- Carpentry and Joinery;
- Plasterwork and other Finishes;
- Wall and Floor Tile and Sheet Finishes;
- Painting and Decorating;
- Cleaning and Clearance;
- Glazing;
- Plumbing;
- Heating, Gas Appliances and Installations;
- Electrical;
- Disabled Adaptations and Minor Works; and
- Specialist Treatments
- Energy Efficiency Appliances and Components

Officers had taken the opportunity to include a number of work streams, which had previously been placed as individual contracts, within the Term Contract, and included non-HRA sites across the Council, such as the Office accommodation sites. The benefit of this was that the volume of similar work should realise economies of scale and would simplify other Services' ability to place building maintenance work through that tendered route.

There were no savings as such to be made from this proof of concept model, however the Council would expect to see increased value for money as well as improvements in the quality of the work carried out and hoped to see this reflected in the tenant satisfaction surveys. It was also felt that the ability to control costs would be greater than

the previous arrangement with ROALCO and it would therefore provide greater financial flexibility within the HRA.

**(C) COUNCIL HOUSING TENANT SATISFACTION AND INVOLVEMENT**

The Committee looked at the measurement processes in relation to tenant satisfaction levels and tenant participation arrangements.

The Committee was informed that in 2018, this Council had carried out the eighth comprehensive survey to find out how satisfied tenants were with the services that the Council provided, as a landlord. This survey had been carried out in accordance with Housemark's framework and was carried out in the summer of 2018 over a six-week period.

40% of those canvassed responded, which ensured the statistical reliability of the responses. Although this was less than the response rate achieved in previous years, this was a common phenomenon when research of a similar nature was undertaken on a regular basis.

A summary of some of the key responses received in 2018 was reported as set out below:

<b>Question</b>	<b>Response %</b>
Overall satisfaction with service provided as a landlord	90
Satisfaction with quality of home	87
Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance	82
Satisfaction with neighbourhood	85
Satisfaction with rent as value for money	89
Satisfaction service charges as value for money	78
Satisfaction that kept informed as a tenant	81
Satisfaction with helpfulness of staff	83

Tenants had also been asked how likely they were to recommend the Council, as a landlord, to family and friends using scale of 0 (very unlikely) to 10 (very likely). This was known as the Net Promoter Score and was widely used in retail and other commercial environments but had recently been recommended for use in the housing sector. 84% of respondents scored the Council, as a landlord, 7 or more, which was a high proportion when compared to similar surveys.

Respondents had been also asked 'Of the following services, which three do you consider to be the most important and the top three were:

- Repairs and maintenance 71%
- Quality of home 53%
- Keeping tenants informed 35%

It was reported that this survey had been due to be repeated in the summer of 2020, based upon Housemark's newly revised framework, and questions from the recommended question library had been agreed with tenant representatives for inclusion. However, due to Covid – 19, this survey would now be carried out in the summer of 2021.

#### **Monitoring tenant satisfaction: Transactional surveys**

It was reported to Members that, in addition to the comprehensive satisfaction survey outlined above, which measured tenants' perception of the services received whether or not they had had a recent interaction with the Council, Officers had also carried out a number of transactional surveys–i.e. after an interaction had taken place between the Council, as a landlord, and the tenant.

The transactional surveys that the Authority currently carried out covered the following aspects of service:

- Responsive repairs
- Planned maintenance and improvement works
- Disabled adaptations
- New tenancies
- Nuisance and anti-social behaviour complaints
- Gas servicing
- Right to Buy
- Ending a tenancy

Data from those surveys for 2019/20 was reported as follows:-

<b>Survey</b>	<b>Outturn</b>
Responsive repairs	94%
Planned maintenance and improvements	96%
Disabled adaptations*	93%

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New tenancy*	100%
Nuisance and anti social behaviour	80%
Ending your tenancy*	100%
Gas servicing	100%
Right to Buy*	100%

### **Tenant involvement**

The Council's former dedicated Tenant Relations team, established to deal with all aspects of tenant consultation and involvement, was now part of the broader Customer and Support team under the Head of Customer and Commercial Services.

The Council's current tenant involvement arrangements were set out in the Resident Involvement Strategy agreed with tenants and the Housing Portfolio Holder in 2016. That strategy set out:

- Tendring District Council's approach to tenant involvement, including the reasons why it involved tenants
- the ways in which the Council would involve tenants and ensure that they were part of the service improvement process
- Tendring District Council's objectives in relation to tenant involvement
- the actions required to meet those objectives
- how the Council's performance would be monitored and reviewed
- how the Council would ensure that it met all statutory and regulatory requirements

The objectives of that strategy were to:

- Promote and raise awareness of tenant involvement as a means of encouraging more residents to get involved
- Ensure that the Council communicated effectively with tenants, providing good quality, timely and jargon free information
- Ensure that the Council was fully inclusive by providing a range of ways for tenants to get involved at a level and pace that suited them
- Make effective use of tenant feedback and involvement to improve service delivery
- Improve quality of life through effective tenant involvement
- Measure the impact of tenant involvement to make sure that it delivered effective outcomes for tenants and communicate this effectively

- Provide sufficient resources and, support and training to make resident involvement effective

The methods of tenant involvement used, as and when appropriate were reported in the graphic below:



Members were informed that Tenant representatives monitored the accompanying action plan. Preparatory work had been carried out in connection with the production of a revised Strategy but that had been delayed due to Covid 19. That would be progressed once meetings with tenant representatives could be reinstated.

**(D) NEW BUILD OF 10 COUNCIL HOUSES IN JAYWICK SANDS**

The Committee looked at the project and the delivery of those 10 houses in Jaywick Sands and whether there were lessons for further development there and for the emerging Acquisitions and Development Strategy of the Council. The Performance Report for 2019/20 as presented to Cabinet at its meeting held on 29 May 2020 had included that project at Page 10 of that report. Page 21 of that report had also referenced Council House Building and the emerging Acquisitions and Development Strategy. The aforementioned Pages 10 and 21 had been circulated with the Agenda for the meeting.

It was reported to the Committee that whilst the 10 houses being built in Jaywick were slightly behind schedule due to COVID 19, the larger project of developing a new Council house building programme and increasing the stock of new affordable/Council homes was on target. Due to the success of the 10 builds in Jaywick and the unexpected increased value, two investors were in talks about a further 100 properties to be developed on a lease back programme to the Council.

Members were informed that once an investor came back with actual figures, it would be brought before Cabinet for a formal decision.

After deliberation on all the housing themed items referenced in (A)-(D) above it was **RESOLVED:-**

- (a) That Cabinet be recommended to develop a public engagement plan in respect of financial assistance for private sector housing that includes providing information to community groups, health professionals and more widely to ensure that all those who would benefit from adaptations that could be funded through the financial assistance available through the Disabled Facilities Grant arrangements are aware of those arrangements and the process to apply for those Grants.
- (b) That the Chief Executive be advised that this Committee considers that it would be advantageous to report on the public engagement plan at the time that it is prepared and ready to be delivered so that Councillors can support the delivery of that plan across the District
- (c) That consideration be given to including details of grants available for those in private rented accommodation and in receipt of benefits (at the time of notification of benefit award/change/discontinuance) to support the installation of adaptations to the properties they rent to improve their lives (both related to disability facilities, safety and to address energy poverty).
- (d) That the position on the securing of additional occupational therapy assessment from Essex County Council be the subject of a short briefing note to the September meeting of the Committee.

- (e) That the intended reports to the Tenant Performance and Scrutiny Panel on voids for the Panel to scrutinise this area be also provided to Members of this Committee.
- (f) That the maintenance contract currently out for tender not be extended beyond the first year or re-tendered until this Committee has had the opportunity to review the delivery of that contract and the appropriate balance between in-house and contracted maintenance.
- (g) That, as the Tenant Satisfaction report indicates some figures were subject to low sample sizes, the actual numbers provided for the percentages in the report be circulated to the Members of this Committee.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.50 pm

**Chairman**

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## Response to Cllr Griffiths' Question

### Part 1) of the Question

1. *Can you clarify why we are showing a base budget for 20/21 of £187,030, which, according to one of the appendix documents excludes employee costs? Given that there is a cost centre for employees' involvement in using Spendells as temporary accommodation, why are direct and indirect staff, based, or providing services at the site, not included in the cost?*

The £187k budget referred to in the report is the existing non-employee budget which establishes the base funding position that is available to support homeless accommodation and other initiatives.

The proposals set out in the report seek to establish Spendells House as temporary homeless accommodation, so from a budgetary perspective, the overall cost of the scheme (including employee and other costs) would need to be less than this existing base budget of £187k, otherwise it would present a cost pressure to the General Fund. The purpose of the analysis set out in Appendix A is to demonstrate that the full costs can be accommodated within this existing base budget of £187k.

2. *I note the decision is to change this complex to emergency housing. Given that the clientele could range from homeless families, to single parents, couples, and single individuals, with an element of communal shower / washing facilities, what provisions are in place to screen individuals before we agree to accommodate them in Spendells?*

*How do we as an authority intend to safeguard the vulnerable to ensure that we do not have residents living next door to individuals who have the ability to have an adverse impact on their well-being?*

*For example, can we guarantee that we will not have an individual with an unhealthy interest in small children dwelling next door to a single mother, or those with a drug, alcohol or mental health issue living next to a family?"*

Those who experience homelessness are in a vulnerable position already and we would not want their placement in temporary accommodation to increase their vulnerability. The arrangements for making placements will be no different to those we have in place currently. A homelessness application usually involves a thorough assessment of an individuals or families circumstances and past housing situation and nobody will be placed into accommodation where they are believed to pose a risk to others.

The scheme will be operated on a zero tolerance basis with regard to alcohol and drug use and other unacceptable behaviour.

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## RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2020

### REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – HOUSING & ENVIRONMENT

#### A.1 **Disabled Facilities Grants**

(Report prepared by Emma Blake & Tim Clarke)~

#### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To inform discussions around the following agenda item:

- (a) Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy

The Committee will look specifically at Disabled Facilities Grants: the processes, the timescales, any obstacles to delivery and options for solutions (and whether those options have been pursued) and the relative advantages of pooling.

The report and the appendix to that report submitted to Cabinet at its meeting held on 26 June 2020 are attached to this agenda.

#### **INVITEES**

None

#### **BACKGROUND**

As set out in Purpose above.

#### **DETAILED INFORMATION**

##### **The Process**

Disabled facilities Grants (DFGs) are mandatory grants for those in owner occupied, private rented or housing association properties to provide disabled adaptations and are the only grant left from the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

Funding for the DFG comes from the Better Care Fund.

Grant applicants are encouraged to make their own decisions about how the process will work best for them and the Council does not control who they employ to undertake the works.

DFGs involve a number of stages the first of which is an assessment by an occupational therapist (OT) from Essex County Council (ECC) which may follow on from a GP or a self referral. The OT will make a referral to the Council recommending certain *necessary and appropriate* adaptations. It is the Council's role to then inspect and decide whether those adaptations are *reasonable and practical* before offering funding towards them.

Once the Council has agreed that works are reasonable and practical a grant application has to be made by the person benefitting from the works or their family. All applications are means tested and this determines whether they should contribute anything towards the cost of the work.

Applicants can choose to make the application and find builders themselves or they can employ an agency, commonly known as a home improvement agency, to help them. The agencies fees can be included in the grant.

Once an application has been made along with submission of builder estimates the Council has a statutory six month period in which to approve it. Once a grant has been approved the applicant is formally notified and can go ahead and start the work.

On completion of the work the Council conducts a final inspection and if everything is satisfactory can release the grant money, often paying the contractor directly. At no point does the Council have any contractual relationship with any builders or an agency, that is all between the applicant and whoever they choose to employ.

In 2019/20 352 referrals were received from ECC with 270 of these resulting in formal recommendations for adaptations being sent to us. 175 grants were completed in 2019/20 totalling £1,558,797. A commitment of £751,000 was carried over into 2020/21 in unspent grants both approved and pre approval.

Unlike many authorities we have not had a waiting list since 2009 (apart from now during the Covid-19 outbreak but we are starting new cases again this month and aim to have caught up by mid-August).

Over the past 5 years we have made many changes to our processes and have been trying to continually improve the service we offer the residents of Tendring. Through the introduction of a grant co-ordinator post and hard work by the team to streamline the process and go electronic the time from receiving a valid application to formal approval has been reduced from 33 days to 7 (the statutory period is 6 months) and our average payment timescales are the lowest in Essex.

The average timescale for approval to certified completion (fully paid and closed case), although not fully in our control, has also reduced to 56 days from 122 with the assistance of contractors and the local agencies (the guidance target is 80 days). We are always looking to improve the works we will fund, think outside the box to achieve results, ensure longevity and deal with an increasing number of bariatric and dementia cases as well as work with other teams and outside agencies.

## **Expertise**

The Council's DFG team is held in high regard within the DFG community. Foundations (the MCHLG appointed body overseeing Home Improvement Agencies and since 2015 providing advice to all authorities on the DFG whether they use a HIA or not) often pass our details to other authorities looking for guidance. During the Covid-19 outbreak we have been contacted by several London Authorities to request advice about changes we are making to continue providing grants.

Ferret Information Systems are the leading specialist firm with regards the legislation and means testing – providing training and software. They have regularly over the years confirmed we are processing cases correctly and providing the grants in the proper way. Again, we are often offered as contact points for those authorities requiring advice.

## **Home Improvement Agencies**

Since ECC discontinued their countywide funded Home Improvement Agency contract we have had several agents working in our area. Currently we have an MOU with DG Accessible Designs Ltd (who provide a full grant service for those who need help) and another MOU with Townsend Bowen (who provide a more tailored option for those who may only need plans drawn or surveyor help). We have actively tried to find further agents or architect services to over clients over the last few years, finding Townsend Bowen, and have discussed the option of an in-house agency with our Building Control department.

Several Essex Authorities have internal agencies either because of the ECC decision to remove the contract or because they have had one in place for many years. An agent (internal or

otherwise) can charge fees for the services they provide (funded from the grant) while we cannot take fees for providing the mandatory function of administering the grant.

## Issues with the DFG

A recent government funded review in 2018 found that the main issues were:-

- The grant maximum of £30,000
  - This has been the grant maximum since 2008 and back then it was possible to provide a bedroom and specialist shower extension including all fees within this amount. We regularly provided grant maximum funding for these large projects, especially for children, but as the cost of building works has increased while the maximum has not, we are doing fewer large schemes as families cannot afford the top-up required above the maximum grant figure. We have offered grants to move to suitable properties since 2010 as per government guidance but for some families this is still not a viable option. Our new policy aims to offer a top-up for extensions of this kind which now cost approximately £45,000 until such time as the grant maximum is increased. The DFG community is expecting the government to announce the increase in the grant maximum when it looks into implementing change recommended in the review but this was delayed first by Brexit and now further by Covid-19.
- The means test
  - The government prescribed means test uses allowances and premiums to assess what the disabled person (not applicable to children) and their partner can afford to contribute to the cost of the DFG funded works. This is based on what the government feels someone can afford to take out in a high street loan and does not take into account the actual outgoings of a person. If applicants are on an income related benefit they are passported through the grant. When Council Tax Benefit was removed and replaced by local schemes it was a loss to the grant system and many people who would have been passported are now means tested. Those who are working are unfairly treated in the prescribed test and often have high contributions. A full review of the means test has been requested and one option is to make it the same as the test for care provision. By removing the means test for simple stairlift installations in our new financial assistance policy and treating them as equipment, we feel far more people will be able to stay in their homes who would struggle to fund works themselves. An option we have been discussing would be the introduction of a case worker position who could assist applicants with income maximisation and benefit applications such as attendance allowance, as these go in the favour of those being means tested and would, therefore, help more people get through the means test process until such time as it gets reviewed again.
- Joining up the process
  - The review states that working more strategically with the CCG and other authorities would improve the uptake of the grant. We are an active member of the Essex Well Homes Group which consists of ECC, the other Essex Authorities including the Unitary Authorities & Foundations. The CCG have so far not been active members but are aware of the work in question through the Local Health and Well Being Boards. Over the last few years the group has not only supported one another but allowed us to formally agree the use of the Better Care Funding for discretionary works and allowed us to formulate our new policy.

What we feel are the local issues with the DFG –

- ECC – We are reliant on ECC as they have the legal responsibility to decide

what is “*necessary and appropriate*” for the person before we then take over the process. We work closely with the local OT teams but ECC has over the years restructured regularly and this leads to the loss of those with knowledge of the DFG process. They make changes to their processes without considering the Local Authorities and what we require. ECC used to have local teams who worked very closely with us, then they went to a model of independent workers and finally they seem to have settled into a system of both independent workers and local teams. When they changed their model in 2017 referrals dropped. Local ECC colleagues have worked with us to overcome obstacles and go around challenges and we thank them for this. These new teams have now recruited and we have had new OTs and social workers visit us over the past year to learn about the DFG, shadow us to see what we do and we have visited their team meetings and provided information sheets to them. We have also visited the discharge hub at Colchester Hospital many times to understand any barriers to discharge we can assist with and hope the new policy allows us to assist them further. Our plan is to carry out bi-annual DFG training events for OTs. We regularly assist OTs by getting involved at the start of their process, advising about suitable works and encourage early means testing in the process.

- Contractors – We do not employ the contractor and the applicant can employ whoever they wish. If people do not use the local agents to help them they often take longer through the grant process as they struggle to obtain quotes and many then end up deciding to use an agent as they are unable to get someone to price for them. The local agents have contractors that are vetted and used to doing the grant works and what the process entails – many local firms have done the work since the Tendring Home Improvement Agency back when ECC had the HIA contract. Unfortunately many of these local firms are retiring, sadly this last year we have lost several due to ill health themselves, and new contractors do not always succeed in staying on the agency lists. Any contractors found by us doing private grants are forwarded to the agents for applying to go onto their books but the uptake is not very high. We have altered our process with the agency to decrease the timescales for the client in getting their works on site and monitor with them to ensure that no company is pushing themselves too thinly. We are encouraging the agents to do a recruitment drive again this year.
- Our staff level – We currently have 6 full time members of staff within the team although these staff are not 100% DFG as we also do the energy efficiency work (arranging the ECO Flex declarations), discretionary repair works, approved assessor works (assessing and ordering minor equipment), agency advisory groups and also we have an officer who oversees the adaptations in our own stock. The Grant Co-Ordinator post and temporary increase from part time to full time for our admin support post has greatly improved the work flow within the team. Officers no longer need to undertake administration work or phone cover during absences and this has also allowed us to spend the time reviewing and improving our processes. We have looked at everything from the ground up for the first time in many years and managed to adjust our processes improving our timescales and simplifying where we can. We plan on undertaking a review with finance and audit to look at further simplification of our processes as we are “over audited” when it comes to parts of our system as well as further changes going electronic and using tablets for inspections. The addition of a case worker as mentioned above to help improve the means testing process we believe would increase the number of grant applicants progressing past preliminary means test stage and also reduce the number of people leaving the process at final means test stage before approval. Foundations conducted a research project in Dec 2019 into staffing levels and the DFG and found that it takes 5 FTE staff to spend £1.2M so as you can see as our spend is far higher than this and includes other discretionary work, that we are already achieving a higher

return than the average. Our spend is the highest in Essex despite having a lower average cost of works than the England average and comparing our teams we have less staff per £ spent than our closest comparable teams – Colchester and Basildon. We hope to spend even more over the next few years and will need to regularly review the new discretionary options we are adding to ensure that our staffing level does not cause delays. The plan for a pilot part time ECC Occupational Therapist to sit within Housing should bring additional benefits to the department as a whole, not just to the DFGs, and hopefully will prove the need for further OTs to sit in Housing.

Unfortunately most of the issues with the DFG itself are not within our control but despite this we believe our new policy should make things easier for residents and we are keen to begin providing these discretionary works. Hopefully the government review will address most of these issues as soon as possible.

Covid-19 has presented some challenges however, during the first week of lockdown, despite having a totally new way of working and a few hiccups, our team managed to pay £90,000 of grants in a single week to ensure contractors who needed the funds were paid for everything they could be and have continued to ensure that works are approved and paid throughout the lockdown.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Committee determines whether it has any comments or recommendations it wishes to put forward the relevant Portfolio Holder or Cabinet.**

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# RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9TH JULY 2020

## REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – HOUSING & ENVIRONMENT

### A.1 Tenant Satisfaction and Participation Arrangements

(Report prepared by *Emma Norton and Tim Clarke*)

#### PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The report has been written to facilitate discussion around the following agenda item:

(c) Council Housing Tenant Satisfaction and Involvement

The Committee will look at the measurement processes in relation to tenant satisfaction levels and tenant participation arrangements.

#### INVITEES

*None*

#### BACKGROUND

*As above in Purpose.*

#### DETAILED INFORMATION

##### Monitoring tenant satisfaction: Perception survey

In 2018, we carried out our eighth comprehensive survey to find out how satisfied tenants were with the services that the Council provides, as a landlord. This survey was carried out in accordance with Housemark's framework, which was based on out of sector practice and extensive research with housing providers, and was carried out in the summer of 2018 over a six-week period.

A postal survey was sent to all tenants in June 2018, with the option for this to be completed online, if preferred. 40% of those canvassed responded, which ensured the statistical reliability of the responses. Although this was less than the response rate achieved in previous years, this is common when research of a similar nature is undertaken on a regular basis.

A summary of some of the key responses received in 2018 is set out below:

Question	Response %
Overall satisfaction with service provided as a landlord	90
Satisfaction with quality of home	87

Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance	82
Satisfaction with neighbourhood	85
Satisfaction with rent as value for money	89
Satisfaction service charges as value for money	78
Satisfaction that kept informed as a tenant	81
Satisfaction with helpfulness of staff	83

*\*low sample size*

Tenants were also asked how likely they were to recommend the Council, as a landlord, to family and friends using scale of 0 (very unlikely) to 10 (very likely). This is known as the Net Promoter Score and is widely used in retail and other commercial environments but has recently been recommended for use in the housing sector. 84% of respondents scored the Council, as a landlord, 7 or more, which is a high proportion when compared to similar surveys.

Respondents were also asked 'Of the following services, which three do you consider to be the most important?' to identify their service priorities and the top three were:

- Repairs and maintenance 71%
- Quality of home 53%
- Keeping tenants informed 35%

This survey was due to be repeated this summer, based upon Housemark's newly revised framework, and questions from the recommended question library had been agreed with tenant representatives for inclusion. However, due to Covid – 19, this survey will now be carried out in the summer of 2021.

### **Monitoring tenant satisfaction: Transactional surveys**

In addition to the comprehensive satisfaction survey outlined above, which measures tenants perception of the services received whether or not they have had a recent interaction with the Council, we also carry out a number of transactional surveys. These collect data after an interaction has taken place between the Council, as a landlord, and the tenant.

The transactional surveys that we currently carry out cover the following aspects of our service:

- Responsive repairs
- Planned maintenance and improvement works
- Disabled adaptations
- New tenancies
- Nuisance and anti-social behaviour complaints
- Gas servicing

- Right to Buy
- Ending a tenancy

Data from these surveys for 2019/20 are shown below

Survey	Outturn
Responsive repairs	94%
Planned maintenance and improvements	96%
Disabled adaptations*	93%
New tenancy*	100%
Nuisance and anti social behaviour	80%
Ending your tenancy*	100%
Gas servicing	100%
Right to Buy*	100%

Tenant representatives agree performance indicators for key questions included in both the comprehensive satisfaction survey and some of the transactional surveys outlined above and monitor this on an annual basis.

### **Tenant involvement**

The Council's former dedicated Tenant Relations team, established to deal with all aspects of tenant consultation and involvement, is now part of the broader Customer and Support team under the Head of Customer and Commercial Services.

Our current tenant involvement arrangements are set out in the Resident Involvement Strategy agreed with tenants and the Housing Portfolio Holder in 2016. This strategy sets out:

- our approach to tenant involvement, including the reasons why we involve tenants
- the ways in which we will involve tenants and ensure that they are part of the service improvement process
- our objectives in relation to tenant involvement
- the actions required to meet our objectives
- how our performance will be monitored and reviewed
- how we will ensure that we meet all statutory and regulatory requirements

The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Promote and raise awareness of tenant involvement as a means of encouraging more

residents to get involved

- Ensure that we communicate effectively with tenants, providing good quality, timely and jargon free information
- Ensure that we are fully inclusive by providing a range of ways for tenants to get involved at a level and pace that suits them
- Make effective use of tenant feedback and involvement to improve service delivery
- Improve quality of life through effective tenant involvement
- Measure the impact of tenant involvement to make sure that it delivers effective outcomes for tenants and communicate this
- Provide sufficient resources and, support and training to make resident involvement effective

The methods of tenant involvement used, as and when appropriate are set out in the graphic below:



Tenant representatives monitor the accompanying action plan and this covers the period up until the end of 2019. Preparatory work has been carried out in connection with a revised strategy but this has been delayed due to Covid 19. This will be progressed once larger indoor gatherings are permitted and meetings with tenant representatives can be reinstated.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Committee determines whether it has any comments or recommendations it wishes to put forward the relevant Portfolio Holder or Cabinet.**



**RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**9<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2020**

**REPORT OF COPORATE DIRECTOR – OPERATIONS AND DELIVERY**

**A.1 Housing Voids during 2019/20**

(Report prepared by *Tim Clarke & Damian Williams*)

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To inform discussions around the following agenda item:

4) Vacated/Empty Council Housing ('Voids')

The Committee intends to look at the numbers of empty properties there have been over the past year, the proportion that those represent of the entire Council housing estate, expectations on standards of vacated properties, the extent to which the vacated properties were subject to major/minor repair works, the target times for inspecting vacated properties once they are empty and for repairs to be conducted, the periods of time properties were empty, the lost rental income during the period it was empty and the cost of housing homeless persons in the same period. It is envisaged that the enquiry will also cover the situation one year on from the Council taking back the ROALCO Ltd contract (following the company being placed in administration), the transfer of staff to the Council and responding to the immediate issue this posed and planning for sustaining the work now and in the future.

**INVITEES**

None

**BACKGROUND**

As set out in Purpose above.

## DETAILED INFORMATION

### Voids process and extent of works

Turnaround time for a void property depends on the condition it is left in by the previous tenant and the extent of previous works such as asbestos removal. Many are left in a poor condition and require extensive void works before they can be relet.

Many voids require replacement kitchens and bathrooms that is a combination of them having been abused by the tenant or that they have come to the end of their life span, unfortunately most of them are from abuse.

The voids process is as follows:

- Keys returned to Allocations service
- Keys passed on to Building and Engineering services
- Refurbishment and Demolition (RAD) survey carried out within 1 – 3 days with works specified and ordered the same day or day after
- Works carried out to bring property back to our void standard which includes:
  - all asbestos is removed where practical.
  - complete redecoration following the necessary works
  - boiler upgrade where necessary
  - electrical upgrades where necessary
  - Window / door replacement as necessary
- Works completed – target 21 days from start but licensed asbestos removal can add at least 14 days due to HSE notification.

### Statistics from 2019 /20

186 properties became void during the year

164 properties were relet.



Additionally 32 sheltered flats became void and 11 were relet during the year.

It should be noted that some voids will carry over from the previous year and some will carry over into the following year so calculating figures is not straightforward. We have focussed here on in year figures for 2019/20. An authority with a housing stock the size of ours can have around 100 properties vacant at any one time.

The Tenant Performance and Scrutiny sub-committee have agreed to monitor voids based on the parameters set out in Appendix A for 2020/21.

### **Void rent loss**

Rental income loss as a result of void properties has been as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Void rent loss</b>
2019/20	403,769
2018/19	287,823
2017/18	563,214
2016/17	Not submitted
2015/16	350,139
2014/15	286,931

### **ROALCO Contract Issues**

Following the unforeseen collapse of ROALCO, the Term Maintenance Contractor for the Housing Stock, in July of 2019, the Council has been carrying out a significant proportion of the repair work to the housing stock using existing and a large number of casual staff. We have also been using a number of contractors to support this function.

During this period two elements of work have been undertaken, one, as mentioned above, has been the actual carrying out of the repair work trying to understand what staffing, equipment and materials are required to carry out this function.

The second has been to instigate a full tender process to replace ROALCO as a complimentary Term Maintenance contractor - currently this is out to tender. This will allow the Authority to operate a 'mixed economy' approach and have a 'backstop position'

should the in-house team fail to operate efficiently as well as to provide cover if the volume of work exceeds the norm.

The last 12 months have provided a valuable insight into what is required to run an in-house maintenance team for the Housing Stock. Therefore, we would like to test the viability of a permanent in-house team by setting up a proof of concept model, for a fixed period of one year, to replicate the duties that a permanent workforce would carry out. Casual staff would still carry out the remaining duties until the Term Maintenance contract was in place. At that time, the casual workers would be released.

The benefit of the proof of concept approach is that it would allow data to be collected that would provide accurate figures on the cost effectiveness of the in-house team and provide a comparison between the in-house and contractor's operating costs.

In order to help gather accurate information we are trialling a new software package, Oneserve, on a month-by-month basis. Oneserve is a software package that allows for the accurate collection of data on a job-by-job basis taking into account the hours, materials, travelling time, and other associated costs. This will enable a very detailed understanding of the costs associated with running this element of the service as well as giving an accurate picture of the length of time taken to undertake each job. If the trial is successful then it is proposed to roll it out across the rest of the service including Facilities Management and Engineering Services.

It is envisaged that the future maintenance of the housing stock will be provided using a combination of in-house and external workforces. This will provide a more stable, reliable way of re-introducing the in-house maintenance team back into the Authority. The proposed split in the work is as follows;

In-house team to carry out the following work;

- Window repairs
- Drainage Work
- Void work in Sheltered Blocks
- Sheltered unit day to day repairs
- Day to day repairs on the general stock

External Contractor to carry out the following work;

- All void work in General Housing Stock
- Foundations;

- Groundwork;
- Fencing and Gates;
- Drainage;
- Brickwork;
- Masonry;
- Roofing;
- Carpentry and Joinery;
- Plasterwork and other Finishes;
- Wall and Floor Tile and Sheet Finishes;
- Painting and Decorating;
- Cleaning and Clearance;
- Glazing;
- Plumbing;
- Heating, Gas Appliances and Installations;
- Electrical;
- Disabled Adaptations and Minor Works; and
- Specialist Treatments
- Energy Efficiency Appliances and Components

We have taken the opportunity to include a number of work streams, which have previously been placed as individual contracts, within the Term Contract, and included non-HRA sites across the Council, such as the Office accommodation sites. The benefit of this is that the volume of similar work should realise economies of scale as well simplify other Services' ability to place building maintenance work through this tendered route.

There are no savings as such to be made from this proof of concept model, however we would expect to see increased value for money as well as improvements in the quality of the work carried out and hope to see this reflected in the tenant satisfaction surveys. It is also worth highlighting that we envisage that the ability to control costs would be greater than the previous arrangement with ROALCO and it would therefore provide greater financial flexibility within the HRA.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Committee determines whether it has any comments or recommendations it wishes to put forward the relevant Portfolio Holder or Cabinet.**

**Appendix A – Tenant Performance and Scrutiny Panel - Void performance monitoring 2020/21**

Number of vacant properties at end of each month – General needs	NEW																
Number of vacant properties at end of each month – Sheltered housing	NEW																
Length of time vacant and reason for each – voids, major works / adaptations, awaiting letting, offer made – General needs	NEW	<p>To be recorded by:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Vacant available for letting</th> <th>Vacant but not available for letting</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0-6 weeks</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 wks - 6 mnths</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Over 6 months</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Vacant available for letting	Vacant but not available for letting	0-6 weeks			6 wks - 6 mnths			Over 6 months			Total		
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Length of time vacant and reason for each – voids, major works / adaptations, awaiting letting, offer made – sheltered housing	NEW	To be recorded by: <table border="1" data-bbox="1189 236 1966 488"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="1189 236 1435 336"></th> <th data-bbox="1435 236 1700 336">Vacant available for letting</th> <th data-bbox="1700 236 1966 336">Vacant but not available for letting</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="1189 336 1435 371">0-6 weeks</td> <td data-bbox="1435 336 1700 371"></td> <td data-bbox="1700 336 1966 371"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1189 371 1435 406">6 wks - 6 mnths</td> <td data-bbox="1435 371 1700 406"></td> <td data-bbox="1700 371 1966 406"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1189 406 1435 442">Over 6 months</td> <td data-bbox="1435 406 1700 442"></td> <td data-bbox="1700 406 1966 442"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1189 442 1435 488">Total</td> <td data-bbox="1435 442 1700 488"></td> <td data-bbox="1700 442 1966 488"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Vacant available for letting	Vacant but not available for letting	0-6 weeks			6 wks - 6 mnths			Over 6 months			Total		
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6 wks - 6 mnths																	
Over 6 months																	
Total																	
Average length of time to relet property – General needs	NEW																
Average length of time of relet property – Sheltered housing	NEW																
Rental income loss from all void property – General needs	NEW																
Rental income loss from all void property – Sheltered housing	NEW																
Void dwellings as proportion of total housing stock – General needs	NEW																
Void dwellings as a proportion of total housing stock – Sheltered housing	NEW	Consideration to be given to reinstating target for this.															
Average number of days to relet property from return of keys from Building Services – General needs	NEW																
Average number of days to relet property from return of keys from Building Services – Sheltered housing	NEW																