



**NEWARK &
SHERWOOD**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

*Kelham Hall
Newark
Nottinghamshire
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Chairman: Councillor R.B. Laughton
Vice-Chairman: Councillor T. Wendels

Members of the Committee:

Councillor Mrs B.M. Brooks
Councillor Mrs C.A. Brooks*
Councillor Mrs I. Brown
Councillor M. Buttery
Councillor R. Crowe

Councillor K. Girling
Councillor Mrs S.M. Michael
Councillor N. Mitchell
Councillor Mrs P. Rainbow
Councillor Mrs S. Soar

Substitutes:

Councillor D.J. Clarke
Councillor Mrs G.E. Dawn
Councillor A.C. Roberts
Councillor D. Staples
Councillor D. Thompson

AGENDA

MEETING: Homes & Communities Committee

DATE: Monday, 12 June 2017 at 6.00pm

VENUE: Room G21, Kelham Hall

**You are hereby requested to attend the above Meeting to be held at the time/place
and on the date mentioned above for the purpose of transacting the
business on the Agenda as overleaf.**

If you have any queries please contact Helen Brandham on 01636 655248.

AGENDA

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None

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NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the **HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE** held on Monday, 13 March 2017 in Room G21, Kelham Hall at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor R.B. Laughton (Chairman)
Councillor T. Wendels (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs K. Arnold, Mrs. C. Brooks, Mrs I. Brown, M. Buttery, R. Crowe, K. Girling, Mrs S.M. Michael, Mrs P. Rainbow (substitute) A.C. Roberts and D. Thompson

SUBSTITUTES: Councillors: Mrs P. Rainbow for Mrs B.M. Brooks

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Mrs L.M.J. Tift

93. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Mrs B.M. Brooks.

94. DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS AND AS TO THE PARTY WHIP

NOTED: that no Member or Officer declared any interest pursuant to any statutory requirement in any matter discussed or voted upon at the meeting.

95. DECLARATION OF ANY INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

NOTED: that there would be an audio recording of the meeting undertaken by the Council.

96. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2017

AGREED (unanimously) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

97. DCLG £40M HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Housing & Safeguarding in relation to the outcome of two collaborative bids to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Homelessness Prevention Programme and subsequent commissioning proposals for a new County-Wide Rough Sleeper Service.

The report set out the background to the DCLG Programme and provided Members with brief details of the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer Bid and Rough Sleepers Bid. It also provided details of the DCLG response, bid outcomes and the commissioning proposals, noting that the Trailblazer Bid had been unsuccessful but that the Rough Sleepers Bid had been awarded an amount of £371,350.

Members agreed that it was excellent news that Framework Housing Association had committed £300,000 match funding for the Rough Sleepers Bid. They noted that the Scheme was countywide and queried how Newark & Sherwood District Council (NSDC) would ensure that they received a fair share of the funds. In response the Business Manager advised that a steering group was to be established with representatives from all the Nottinghamshire authorities to develop contract specifications, prepare data sharing agreements and to oversee commissioning and performance management arrangements.

A Member of the Committee queried how many rough sleepers were currently in the district. Members were informed that at the last count, taken in December 2016, there had been 10 and that the individuals in question were known to the Council. Members all agreed that there were many and often complex reasons as to why individuals became homeless and that it was very challenging for Officers to try and find the correct pathway for them to try and get them housed. Very often the individuals had mental health issues which further complicated their case.

AGREED that the proposal set out to establish a new Nottinghamshire Rough Sleeper Prevention Service utilising funds successfully secured through the Government's Homelessness Prevention Programme be supported.

98. COUNCIL HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME – IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Housing & Safeguarding in relation to an update on the implementation of the Council's Housing Allocation's Scheme and sought to recommend some minor amendments to the Scheme previously approved by the Committee on 12 September 2016 in readiness for its formal launch on 3 April 2017.

The report provided Members with the progress in working towards the implementation of the new Scheme with the proposed minor amendments being listed in paragraph 3.2 of the report. The Housing Allocation Scheme was attached as Appendix A.

Members noted that the decision to review the Scheme had involved a great deal of work by officers of both the Council and Newark and Sherwood Homes to ensure its timely implementation. However, once implementation was complete, it would ensure that all information about applicants on the waiting list would be accurate and up-to-date.

A Member of the Committee referred to the issue of statutory overcrowding, specifically the number and size of bedrooms in a property and how this affected the household. The Business Manager advised that there was a degree of flexibility and that officers would use their professional judgement in such cases. It was noted that it was not just the number of bedrooms which were taken into account in cases of potential overcrowding but the number of rooms overall, with the exception of bathrooms and kitchens. The Member asked that the size of bedrooms be taken into account as part of the Council's Housing Growth - HRA Development Programme.

AGREED that:

- (a) the progress being made to implement the new council Housing Allocations Scheme be noted; and
- (b) the proposed minor amendments and final Scheme be approved and delegated authority be given to the Director – Safety to approve any further minor amendments not requiring formal consultation, to ensure the Scheme continues to adhere to statutory requirements and operational practice.

99. HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION BILL

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Housing & Safeguarding which sought to provide Members with an overview of the Homelessness Reduction Bill as it was considered by the House of Lords, and the ‘new burdens funding’ proposed for local authorities.

The report set out the background to the Bill and provided Members with an update of its passage through Parliament. It also set out that the main thrust of the Bill was to refocus efforts on preventing homelessness with twelve proposed measures being listed in the report. Members considered the impact that the measures would have and were informed about the current activities being undertaken by officers to prepare for the pending legislative changes.

AGREED: that the report be noted.

100. HOUSING GROWTH – HRA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Strategic Housing which sought to update Members on progress to deliver the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) development programme.

It was reported that the Policy & Finance Committee had approved that the Council and Newark and Sherwood Homes (N&SH) would work in partnership to take forward an initial 5 year programme of Council housing development to provide an indicative 335 additional units. The Homes & Communities Committee had been charged with monitoring the delivery of the programme. The report also briefed Members on how the appraisal of sites had been undertaken and how the development programme was to be achieved.

The report set out in detail the progress made to date, including: pre-construction; local investigations; member consultation; scheme/site design; planning permission; procurement process; and year one – site delivery. Further details were also provided in relation to the development of Gladstone House – a 60 apartment Extra Care Scheme.

A Member of the Committee queried whether the sites chosen for the development programme were vacant plots or whether they would require demolition or renovation works, querying specifically whether the redevelopment of existing council housing such as that on the Hawtonville estate (including the redevelopment of the Community Centre site) had been considered. In response the Business Manager advised that a large number of sites had been considered. He added that the regeneration of sites was more costly and at present there was insufficient financial capacity within the HRA to facilitate this type of development. He also noted that the programme was to provide additional/new homes and not the redevelopment of existing ones. The Director – Safety commented that sites had been chosen that were easily deliverable in order to achieve the first year of development but that this did not mean that in the future, redevelopment sites would not be considered.

Members noted that decisions taken in the past had resulted in the provision of housing that did not always encourage social progress. A Member also commented that she would seek to be reassured that the contractors to be used were of an acceptable standard. The Chairman sought to reassure the Member that all the contractors to be used would meet the required standards.

AGREED that the report on the progress to date in relation to the delivery of the HRA Development Programme be noted.

101. ANNUAL REPORT DETAILING THE EXEMPT REPORTS CONSIDERED BY THE HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive in relation to whether an exempt report considered previously by Committee could now be released into the public domain.

The report set out that only one item of exempt business had been considered by the Committee on 12 September 2016 in relation to the Update on the Review of CCTV.

AGREED that the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.31pm

Chairman

HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT REPORT

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report outlines the proposed Home Energy Efficiency Act (HECA) progress report recommended for approval by Committee for submission to the Secretary Of State by the agreed extended deadline of 13 June 2017.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995, English Local Authorities with housing responsibilities have a statutory responsibility to:

- Prepare a report identifying the energy conservation measures that the Authority considers practicable, cost-effective and likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in its area (our previous report was approved by this Committee on 23 March 2015 and was submitted, as required, by 31st March 2015); and
- Following publication of this, report at two yearly intervals to the Secretary of State on progress in implementing these measures (by the agreed extended deadline of 13 June 2017).

3.0 National Agenda

3.1 The HECA guidance recognises that local authorities are uniquely placed to assess the needs of their local residents and areas, and to work with local partners to deliver improvements.

3.2 The Government recognises that local authority expertise in the targeting and delivery of energy efficiency measures gives us a key role in facilitating delivery of its fuel poverty policies.

3.3 Since the HECA Guidance was published in 2012 there have been various changes to the policy and statutory landscape for fuel poverty. Firstly, the original fuel poverty target, as described in the 2012 HECA Guidance, was replaced with a statutory target to “*ensure that as many fuel poor homes in England as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C by 2030*”. In addition, the Government set interim milestones of Band E by 2020 and Band D by 2025.

3.6 A Fuel Poverty Strategy for England was published in 2015 which set out the Department for Energy and Climate Change’s approach to delivering the target and milestones. However, the Government was keen to stress that the new strategy would not be static. The process of finding new and improved solutions, better support and better ways to deliver that support is continual and this applies equally to Newark and Sherwood District Council’s local activity plans.

4.0 The HECA Report

- 4.1 The attached report (at **Appendix A**) has been produced in collaboration with the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Local Authority Energy Partnership (LAEP).
- 4.2 The report provides an update on trends, initiatives and activities since 2015, and plans for the future as LAEP councils work together, independently and with key partners to reduce fuel poverty and carbon dioxide emissions across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

5.0 Equalities Implications

- 5.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report. The information set out in the progress report demonstrates there is equal access to information and services.

6.0 Impact on Budget/Policy Framework

- 6.1 There are no additional costs for the Council arising from the HECA progress report, however, it does demonstrate how Newark and Sherwood District Council is proactively and successfully competing for additional resources for the benefit of our most vulnerable residents.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the Homes and Communities Committee considers the HECA progress report and approves its submission to the Secretary of State by the agreed extended deadline of 13 June 2017.

Reason for Recommendation

To ensure the District Council meets its statutory obligation under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995.

Background Papers

Home Energy Conservation Act Progress Report (March 2015) for Newark & Sherwood District Council.

For further information please contact Leanne Monger, Business Manager – Housing and Safeguarding on extension 5545.

Karen White
Director – Safety



Home Energy Conservation Act 1995

Progress Report 2015-17 and

Further Report 2017-19

Newark & Sherwood District Council

&

**Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire
Local Authorities' Energy Partnership
(LAEP)**

May 2017

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Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Local Authorities' Energy Partnership (LAEP) Statement

The LAEP is a non-statutory partnership of all 20 councils across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire (established in 1996) and continues to provide an excellent model of how councils can work together for mutual benefit.

This report covers collective activities across the following 15 LAEP district authorities:

Nottinghamshire

Ashfield District Council
Bassetlaw District Council
Broxtowe Borough Council
Gedling Borough Council
Mansfield District Council
Newark and Sherwood District Council
Rushcliffe Borough Council

Derbyshire

Amber Valley Borough Council
Bolsover District Council
Chesterfield Borough Council
Derbyshire Dales District Council
Erewash Borough Council
High Peak Borough Council
North East Derbyshire District Council
South Derbyshire District Council

Partnership activities are delivered via a membership service and a communications service which are funded through separate subscriptions. Councils benefit from support, information and communication services and collaborate on carbon reduction, affordable warmth and sustainable energy projects, sharing expertise and best practice.

Each council is represented on the Officer Working Group (OWG) which runs the partnership and funds are held by Derbyshire County Council which is the LAEP Treasurer and Accountable Body.

This report provides an update on trends, initiatives and activities since 2015, and plans for the future as LAEP councils work together and independently to reduce domestic carbon dioxide emissions and fuel poverty across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

LAEP Chair's introduction

The production of this report by our partnership is an example of how our long-standing collaboration has provided huge benefit and exceptional value to our local authority members over the years. In increasingly challenging times for local government, this report provides evidence of how our partnership is striving to maximise the economic, social and environmental benefits to our councils and residents through its work on home energy conservation and affordable warmth.

*Phil Keynes, Team Manager, Energy and Carbon Management
Nottinghamshire County Council*



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE & DERBYSHIRE LAEP HECA REPORT

BASELINE INFORMATION

Levels of fuel poverty

Between 2012 and 2014 across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire and the East Midlands as a whole, government statistics show that there was a fall in the number and percentage of households categorised as being in fuel poverty, as illustrated in the table below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fuel-poverty-sub-regional-statistics>

Although these figures do not cover the period of this report, they are the latest available and show a bigger fall than during the preceding period 2010-2012 reported in the LAEP HECA Report 2013-15.

	2012		2014		
	Fuel poor households	% Fuel poor households	Total households	Fuel Poor Households	% Fuel poor households
EAST MIDLANDS	256,017	13.2	1,941,704	196,859	10.1
Derbyshire	43,565	12.8	340,691	33,527	9.8
Amber Valley	7,078	13.2	53,853	5,426	10.1
Bolsover	4,153	12.4	33,571	3,310	9.9
Chesterfield	6,217	13.0	47,925	4,594	9.6
Derbyshire Dales	4,917	15.6	31,524	3,835	12.2
Erewash	6,287	12.6	49,883	4,704	9.4
High Peak	5,281	13.3	39,898	4,208	10.5
NE Derbyshire	5,239	11.9	44,134	3,836	8.7
South Derbyshire	4,393	11.0	39,903	3,614	9.1
Nottinghamshire	41,432	12.1	342,501	32,029	9.4
Ashfield	6,507	12.5	52,126	4,835	9.3
Bassetlaw	6,193	12.7	48,839	5,072	10.4
Broxtowe	5,736	12.0	47,984	4,388	9.1
Gedling	5,522	11.0	50,562	4,379	8.7
Mansfield	5,796	12.6	46,027	4,292	9.3
Newark & Sherwood	6,311	12.7	49,982	5,026	10.1
Rushcliffe	5,367	11.5	46,981	4,037	8.6

In 2012, the Government moved to a new measure of fuel poverty named 'Low Income High Costs'. Under this definition, households are considered fuel poor if they have an income below the poverty line (including if meeting its required energy bill would push it into poverty) and higher than typical energy costs; higher costs would be incurred by those in hard to heat homes or those whose health or occupancy needs required higher home temperatures or longer heating periods.

While it is important to note that this new way of measuring fuel poverty led to a fall of around one third in the number of households categorised as being in fuel poverty in LAEP district council areas (as illustrated in the LAEP HECA Report 2013-15) Newark & Sherwood District is second highest in terms of fuel poverty levels across Nottinghamshire.

Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funded measures

The ECO programme provides funding for energy efficiency measures for households in hard to treat properties and to vulnerable or low income households who struggle to achieve affordable warmth.

The Energy Company Obligation Phase 2 (ECO2) ran from April 2015 to March 2017.

The most recent data available shows the cumulative total of ECO funded measures installed since the beginning of ECO to November 2016, compiled from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-energy-efficiency-national-statistics-headline-release-january-2017>

ECO OBLIGATION measures						
	Carbon Saving Target (CSO/CERO)	Carbon Savings Community (CSCO)	Affordable Warmth (HHCRO)	Total no. ECO measures installed	All Households in area	ECO measures per 1,000 households*
ENGLAND	682,800	401,415	560,049	1,644,264	22,718,084	72.4
E MIDLANDS	55,923	29,016	50,385	135,324	1,943,621	69.6
Derbyshire	9,837	3,244	7,364	20,445	340,259	60.1
Amber Valley	1,406	412	1,236	3,054	53,746	56.8
Bolsover	613	699	1,201	2,513	33,493	75.0
Chesterfield	2,008	501	1,054	3,563	47,373	75.2
Derbyshire Dales	492	215	260	967	31,399	30.8
Erewash	1,398	399	1,272	3,069	49,907	61.5
High Peak	944	211	837	1,992	39,758	50.1
NE Derbyshire	1,763	741	836	3,340	43,759	76.3
South Derbyshire	1,213	66	668	1,947	40,824	47.7
Nottinghamshire	11,485	5,237	8,656	25,378	341,941	74.2
Ashfield	1,768	696	1,838	4,302	52,117	82.5
Bassetlaw	1,576	1,379	1,280	4,235	48,659	87.0
Broxtowe	1,158	136	1,082	2,376	48,044	49.5
Gedling	2,140	279	1,322	3,741	50,397	74.2
Mansfield	1,329	1,397	1,586	4,312	45,741	94.3
Newark & Sherwood	1,996	1,140	969	4,105	49,948	82.2
Rushcliffe	1,518	210	579	2,307	47,035	49.0

* More than one measure installed in some homes

The total number of ECO funded measures per 1,000 households within the Newark & Sherwood District Council area is over 10% higher than the average for Nottinghamshire. This is in part due to the Council's role in providing advice, support and signposting.

PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

1. Priorities and ambitions

The LAEP acknowledges the requirements for local government to improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation as outlined in the Climate Change Act 2008 and has a collective ambition to reduce domestic emissions of carbon dioxide and to help reduce fuel poverty across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

The LAEP supports the aims of the 2015 Fuel Poverty Strategy for England ‘Cutting the Cost of Keeping Warm’ and the statutory target published in 2012 to ensure that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C by 2030, with interim milestones of Band E by 2020 and Band D by 2025.

The LAEP also looks forward to engaging with the reformed ECO framework during the transition period to the longer term ECO3 (running from 2018 – 2022) as a key means of achieving affordable warmth locally and has played a proactive role in both responding to the ECO consultation and positively influencing national policy.

Tackling fuel poverty and achieving affordable warmth has been the LAEP’s **key priority** for a number of years and is the main focus of its current work programme.

Affordable warmth is woven into most of the partnership’s activities with a particular emphasis on reducing the impacts of the cold on those with long term health conditions.

Through the development of health and housing programmes, local authorities in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire are taking a leadership role in assisting fuel poor residents with long term health conditions in new and innovative ways, working collaboratively with each other and with Public Health, the NHS and third sector partners to establish and expand the reach and impact of successful LAEP programmes and initiatives.

All local councils are committed to supporting the continued development of the Derbyshire Healthy Home Programme and the Nottinghamshire Warm Homes on Prescription pilot project which now have an established track record of delivery.

More broadly, the LAEP is committed to providing guidance and improving access to affordable warmth assistance and energy efficiency advice through its community and public engagement service and is exploring opportunities to engage with ECO providers in the new phase of ECO.

The LAEP intends to engage fully with the rollout of smart meters as a way of assisting all local residents to save money and energy in the future and particularly to ensure that the most vulnerable residents are as able as the general population to take advantage of the benefits which smart meters can bring.

The LAEP’s programmes and objectives are detailed in a number of countywide policy documents which, together, illustrate the integrated and cross-cutting nature of the partnership’s activities:

- Derbyshire Housing and Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2016)
https://observatory.derbyshire.gov.uk/IAS/Custom/Resources/HealthandWellbeing/Health_Needs_Assessments/DerbyshireHousingHealthJNA2016.pdf
- Derbyshire Anti-poverty strategy (2014-17)
http://www.derbyshirepartnership.gov.uk/images/Derbyshire%20Anti%20Poverty%20Strategy%20Final_tcm39-263319.pdf
- Derbyshire Climate Change Charter (2014-19)
https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/Climate%20Change%20Charter%20final_tcm44-252695.pdf

- Nottinghamshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
<http://jsna.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/insight/Strategic-Framework/Nottinghamshire-JSNA.aspx>
- Nottinghamshire Sustainability and Transformation Plan
<http://www.stpnotts.org.uk/media/116404/sustainabilitytransformationplan2016-21.pdf>
- An assessment of the Impact of Housing on Health and Wellbeing in Nottinghamshire
<http://www.nottinghaminsight.org.uk/d/112956>
- Housing and Health Commissioning Group Housing Delivery Plan 2016

As a two tier, two county area comprising 15 district and borough councils, there are both significant organisational challenges to be overcome and operational benefits to be gained from collaborative working on this issue. (In Nottinghamshire, this is recognised within the Sustainability Transformation Plan which includes housing as a core theme meriting its own housing chapter. This has been highlighted nationally as good practice.) The value of this joint approach is clearly demonstrated in subsequent sections of this report and in previous reports which document the track record of the partnership over the last 21 years of its operation.

2. Achievements 2015-17

2.1 Information, advice, education and promotion

The LAEP has commissioned the provision of a public facing communications service on behalf of its member authorities since 2010. This provides residents with information, advice and education on domestic energy efficiency, carbon emissions reduction and affordable warmth and is delivered by third sector partner, Marches Energy Agency (MEA).

A website provides advice and guidance to residents and active low carbon community groups to encourage and support domestic energy efficiency and other low carbon behaviour change. One-to-one advice is available for community groups wanting to set up community energy schemes or undertake other low carbon initiatives.

The communication service provided by MEA, and the LAEP's relationship with National Energy Action (detailed below) has also enabled access to health through affordable warmth training for frontline staff including social workers and health visitors.

Two half day training sessions (one specifically tailored to meet the needs of front-line customer facing staff and the other for partner agencies) were co-organised by Newark & Sherwood District Council's Energy & Home Support Team and hosted at Kelham Hall. In addition, MEA provided resources to support the provision of home energy saving information and advice at three of Lombard Medical Centre's Saturday morning flu clinics; attended by over 100 vulnerable residents.

As part of Newark & Sherwood's proactive preventative agenda, the Council commissions a local Debt Advice Service through Citizens Advice Sherwood & Newark. Fuel poverty is one of the top 6 reasons for household debt and so, in response, Citizens Advice also provides an 'Energy Best Deal' service. This began in October 2015 and since then has helped 142 households to make sure they are getting the best deal for their energy needs; identifying and explaining options and

providing support to switch or to resolve problems with their supplier. Clients supported by Citizens Advice for energy appointments also had other advice issues dealt with at the same time (see case studies below).

Local Case Studies from Citizens Advice

Fred was struggling with a large energy bill which Citizens Advice managed to reduce by getting his usage corrected, a mis-sold insurance product refunded and Warm Home Discount applied. Citizens Advice then helped him switch to a cheaper tariff. They helped him apply for Pension Credit and council tax reduction, and his housebound wife to apply for her state pension. Citizens Advice also helped him get a 90% reduction on his water bills for a year and supported him with budgeting advice.

Mark wanted to save money on his energy. Citizens Advice identified that he was eligible for help through NSDC's Warm Home on Prescription project and referred him. As a result, Mark was able to get a gas central heating system installed. Citizens Advice helped him to get a reduction in his water bills for a year and, when checking his benefits entitlement, identified that his wife was likely to be eligible for Attendance Allowance, which they are now helping her to apply for.

Improving Council Housing Stock and Supporting Tenants

Newark & Sherwood District Council's housing management company, Newark & Sherwood Homes, has carried out extensive improvements to the energy efficiency of the Council's housing stock (5,397 homes) over the past decade. The following list provides an indication of the strategic investment made in the two years since the last HECA report:

- 653 heating system/boiler replacements
- 812 energy efficient external composite doors installed
- 4 community centres upgraded with energy efficient/LED lighting
- Communal lighting schemes upgraded with energy efficient/LED lighting in 19 blocks
- 2 air source heat pumps installed in properties off the mains gas network (replacing old electric storage heaters)
- 110 properties fitted with voltage optimisation equipment (piloted in communal buildings initially and now being targeted at the lowest SAP rated properties)
- 96 flats/maisonettes fitted with external wall insulation to solid wall panels in conjunction with cavity wall insulation
- 23 properties benefitted from external wall insulation (now only a very small number of solid wall properties remain uninsulated, i.e. those with listed status)
- 10 units for the homeless received cavity wall insulation and loft insulation top ups in addition to upgrading the electric heating system
- Mains gas connections installed in 4 sheltered blocks of flats in readiness for decommissioning the existing communal heating systems and installing new individually metered gas central heating systems in summer 2017, enabling tenants to control their own heating requirements/budgets. (Citizens Advice is working in partnership with Newark & Sherwood Homes to offer energy advice and support to these vulnerable residents.)

Newark and Sherwood Homes attracted ECO funding totalling £7,500

2.2 Health and housing affordable warmth programmes

Since 2015 the LAEP and its member local authorities have made great strides in creating and establishing health and housing programmes in both counties which target comprehensive affordable warmth assistance at the most vulnerable residents. Households living in fuel poverty with long term health conditions made worse by the cold are identified and provided with home heating improvements, assistance to help lower their fuel costs and/or increase their incomes; enabling them to keep warm and well at home.

Over the last two years, over £500,000 of capital funding for domestic heating measures has been secured from external sources including National Grid, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (now BEIS) and National Energy Action (NEA) as well as from public sector budgets including Public Health and the Better Care Fund. This has enabled essential works to be paid for in homes where residents had no means to pay for heating repairs, heating replacements or insulation measures.

Many of these households would have been unable to access ECO funding because they required the replacement of back boilers, whole heating systems or off gas solutions, none of which provide sufficient 'life time savings' for the investment that utility companies would need to make. In the worst cases this means vulnerable residents with no means of paying for the works themselves being without any heating or hot water for an indefinite period. In other situations residents are unable to access ECO because they are not on qualifying benefits; this is often the case for those of working age.

Nottinghamshire Warm Homes programme (ongoing from 2016)

The Nottinghamshire Warm Homes on Prescription project (led by Newark & Sherwood District Council who also host and manage the Programme Manager) aims to help low income households with cold-sensitive long-term health conditions to achieve affordable warmth.

The project targets residents who satisfy the following criteria:

- Have long-term health conditions made worse by the cold
- Are in fuel poverty (defined as having a gross household income of no more than £16,010 per annum excl. PIP/DLA or <£800/month after mortgage/rent)
- Have savings of less than £16K
- Own their own home or privately rent their home

The project offers a bespoke service consisting of a home visit to primarily identify the need for a heating upgrade, an income maximisation assessment and/or support with energy tariff switching. In addition to these core elements, the project utilises existing local pathways to offer debt advice, temporary heating, home safety checks, falls advice, support with accessing Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's), Handy Person Adaptation Service and/or Housing Options advice.

The pilot year (2016-17) has delivered approximately 100 targeted interventions to 40 residents who are suffering with long term health conditions that are made worse by living in cold home. (A third of these beneficiaries live within Newark & Sherwood, and virtually all of the 60 vulnerable residents referred to Newark & Sherwood District Council benefitted from one or more of the support services on offer.) The home visits have been undertaken 'in house' by local authority representatives and whilst it was recognised early on in the programme that this pilot delivery model was unsustainable

to some authorities, the learning has proved invaluable and, as a result, all Nottinghamshire authorities are looking to incorporate the Warm Homes on Prescription project as a 'business as usual' activity through their future Better Care Funding (BCF) allocations for 2017-2019.

Utilising the capital funding available through the BCF has only proved viable due to Public Health providing revenue funding to support the Warm Homes on Prescription project for 2017-18. This funding will be used to cover the costs required to deliver home visits, as required, and the coordination and management of the project.

The project has been successful in creating new referral pathways with NHS frontline staff, Environmental Health Officers and local charities, however, engaging GP's has proved to be challenging. As well as creating new pathways, the project has been successful in building on the existing services delivered by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS), the Nottingham Energy Partnership (NEP) and the AGE UK Connect Service.

The project is governed by a Project Board and, looking forward, has been included as a key work strand in the Nottinghamshire Sustainability Transformation Plan (STP), enabling expansion into Nottingham City and delivery of targets set out in the Housing Chapter of the Nottinghamshire JSNA.

Newark & District Council Case Study – Mrs B

Mrs B has Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Atrial Fibrillation. As a result of her health conditions she spends a minimum of 15 hours per day on an oxygen machine which means she is virtually housebound.

Mrs B has very little in the way of savings. She receives the State Pension, a small private pension and is in receipt of Pension Credit. Living on a low income makes it impossible for Mrs B to adequately heat her home in cold weather but, as a result of her long-term health conditions, she feels the cold more than most.

At the time of the home visit Mrs B's heating was not working which led to the Home Energy Advisor making an immediate referral to the Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) to request that they deliver and set-up 2 oil-filled electric radiators as a temporary heating measure. Whilst NFRS were delivering the heaters they undertook a Home Safety Check which resulted in the installation of new smoke detectors.

Through the Nottinghamshire Warm Homes on Prescription project a full central heating system has been installed which consisted of a new 'A' rated combination boiler, new double panel high heat output radiators, a programmer, a room thermostat, thermostatic radiator valves (TRV's), all connections and pipework. The team also arranged the 1st year annual service to give Mrs B piece of mind that she would have no unexpected maintenance bills during the 2 year warranty period. As Mrs B lives alone general advice was given regarding falls prevention and a Lifeline was installed, just in case she falls and needs assistance. A grab rail was also fitted outside the back door to enable her safer access to her garden.

Mrs B was also referred to DWP for a benefits check; they visited her at home and have significantly increased her income via the Assisted Living Allowance which has enabled carers to visit twice per week to help her to live more independently.

As a result of these Nottinghamshire Warm Homes on Prescription interventions, Mrs B says she is looking forward to being warmer and more comfortable in her home during the winter and is very grateful to the project for all the support she has received.

Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) recognise that living in a cold home, especially during the winter months, can have an adverse effect on people's health

and for the past five years has been issuing oil filled radiators and blankets during the winter months to help prevent excess winter deaths.

NFRS' new 'Safe and Well' project is an ideal opportunity to foster a closer working relationship with the local authority-led Warm Homes on Prescription project. Whilst undertaking the 'Home Safety Checks', NFRS are ideally positioned and committed to identifying and referring residents who would benefit from interventions that are available through the Warm Homes on Prescription project to improve their health and wellbeing, paying particular attention to occupants who have a long term health condition that is made worse by living in a cold home. Likewise, local authorities are making referrals to NFRS when it has been identified that the resident would benefit from a 'Home Safety Check' to address issues relating to fire safety or the need for temporary heating whilst the resident's Warm Homes on Prescription application is assessed.

2.3 Housing intelligence

The LAEP has developed a Housing and Energy Database (HED) containing Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) records purchased by the partnership, and other housing data to enable district and borough authorities to identify and target housing archetypes for investment/signposting to ECO, fuel poverty initiatives and government funded schemes.

Newark & Sherwood Homes has invested in an enhanced IT energy module (Keystone) to enable the targeted investment of energy efficiency improvement measures towards the lowest SAP rated properties.

2.4 Local Building Control

The Building Control function for Newark & Sherwood District Council is now carried out by East Midlands Building Consultancy; a shared service partnership of three councils: South Kesteven (host partner), Rushcliffe and Newark and Sherwood. All team members are qualified or have membership of a professional body, such as RICS, CABE or CIOB and as such undertake 35 hours of CPD per year as a minimum. Additional training is provided where required and operational KPI's are set for the team to ensure the service meets customer expectations, this is above Government KPI's. In addition, the service is now an accredited Chartered Building Consultancy with the CIOB. The Business Manager for the Partnership submits a monthly report to the responsible Directors from each council and they meet quarterly. Meetings are also held with the Chief Executives of all three councils, where major decisions for the partnership are agreed.

Building Control can only enforce compliance with the building regulations. On any new build the regulations require a SAP/EPC which also details boilers etc. and compliance with the appropriate approved document. Heating replacements in existing homes generally tend to be completed through Competent Person Schemes (where the installer is accredited to sign off the works) and therefore Building Control staff would have no involvement other than their statutory duty to maintain a register of where those boiler replacements etc. have been undertaken.

3. Looking ahead 2017-19

3.1 Delivering warm and healthy housing programmes for the most vulnerable

District and Borough councils in both Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire plan to develop and expand their innovative health and affordable warmth programmes over the next two years.

LAEP councils will continue to work together to develop countywide alliances with Public Health, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and third sector partners to link into wider strategic priorities and funding streams including ECO, Better Care Fund (BCF) and Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) to ensure that these programmes are sustainable.

Using experience and expertise gained to date, targeting and delivery of programmes will be continuously improved. This will ensure that limited resources are used to achieve affordable warmth for those most at risk of harm from the cold, estimated to be around 3,000 households in each county, and will aim to impact positively on unplanned hospital admissions and avoid costs to the NHS and social care.

The Nottinghamshire Warm Homes on Prescription pilot project plans to expand during 2017-19 to reach 250 eligible households in year 2017-18 and 300 in year 2018-19 as detailed in the Nottinghamshire Strategic Transformation Plan.

A toolkit is under development between the 7 Nottinghamshire Local Authorities (via the Warm Homes on Prescription Programme Manager) and Public Health to provide the data required to academically evaluate the outcomes of the Warm Homes on Prescription project against the Better Care Funds Key Performance Indicators, with a focus on ascertaining the return on investment (ROI).

Newark & Sherwood District Council has secured £70K of Better Care Fund funding and has requested an additional £70K to further expand the project locally.

Adopting an Integrated Delivery Model in Newark & Sherwood

Within Newark & Sherwood District Council it is well recognised that housing is a significant determinant of health and, in its broadest sense, has an important role to play in the health and wellbeing agenda. This is primarily due to the daily contact providers of housing services have with residents, tenants and their families covering a range of issues beyond the traditional housing management and enforcement functions.

The Care Act 2014 amended the NHS Act 2006 to provide the legislative basis for the Better Care Fund (BCF). It allows for the mandate to NHS England to include specific requirements relating to the establishment and use of an integration fund. It creates a local single pooled budget to incentivise the NHS and local government to work more closely together around people, placing their wellbeing as the focus of health and care services, and shifting resources into social care and community services for the benefit of the people, communities and health and care.

Six projects (including Warm Homes on Prescription) have been approved by the Better Care Fund Project Board for delivery locally. In order to ensure the services offered and delivered within NSDC are equitable and available to as many householders as possible, officers have worked together to produce a Housing and Health based model that pulls together a number of grant-based schemes into a more integrated model to ensure that housing and health is at the centre of the model to deliver a range of preventative interventions to as many households as possible.

The 'Housing and Health Independent Living Integrated Model' aims to support disabled people and vulnerable households to remain living independently in a safe and healthy home. This is achieved by linking existing funding sources and support to newly available sources of small grants, with the aim of facilitating essential repairs and renovations to the homes of people in need of support to live independently in their own homes. This new delivery model will be implemented from 1 April 2017.

The Council is looking to attract approximately £10,000 worth of funding through the 'flexible eligibility' element of the Energy Company Obligation 2t (ECO2t) to support the Warm Homes on Prescription project and the Integrated Delivery Model from April 2017 to October 2018. It has been recognised that ECO funding rarely fully funds the measures available and, as a result, NSDC is looking to support the most vulnerable in society, who have historically been overlooked through previous energy company lead initiatives, by blending ECO2t funding with its Better Care Fund allocation to actively target residents with long term health conditions that are made worse by living in a cold home.

3.2 Tackling fuel poverty

The LAEP will engage with the new affordable warmth focus of ECO to help improve access to grant funding for those in fuel poverty across the two counties, estimated by BEIS to be around 65,000 households. The LAEP's Home Energy Database (HED) will assist councils to bring ECO funding for solid wall insulation into their areas by helping to locate areas of suitable housing type(s).

Comprehensive signposting and guidance about how to achieve affordable warmth, including how to access ECO funding, will continue to be provided through the LAEP website and its innovative community engagement service and through engagement with partner organisations.

LAEP will monitor the effectiveness of ECO to assist those in fuel poverty through the partnership's joint projects and will provide feedback on this to BEIS.

3.3 Increasing domestic energy efficiency throughout the population

Since ECO funding has been refocused to assist those in fuel poverty, 'able to pay' households will not have access to any public funding to assist or subsidise energy efficiency improvements in their homes.

The LAEP will redouble its efforts to provide incentives for individual action by promoting the cost savings and comfort improvements that can be achieved by financial investment and behaviour change, using its community engagement service, currently delivered by third sector partner Marches Energy Agency (MEA). This will include website signposting and public exhibitions (mentioned in item 2. above), co-ordination of Open ECO Homes events across the two counties and the promotion of the benefits of smart meters, as highlighted below.

The biggest council house building project in Newark & Sherwood for 40 years is set to commence this year; a £30 million programme which will involve the construction of 335 new, energy efficient council homes over a five year period. The development programme is being delivered in partnership with the Council's housing management company, Newark & Sherwood Homes.

3.4 Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in the Private Rented Sector

From the 1st April 2018 there will be a requirement for properties in the private rented sector to achieve a minimum energy performance certificate (EPC) rating of E. The regulations will come into force for new lets and the renewal of tenancies with effect from 1st April 2018 and for all existing tenancies on 1st April 2020. It will be unlawful to rent a property which breaches the requirement for a minimum E rating unless there is an applicable exemption. A civil penalty of up to £4,000 will be imposed for breaches.

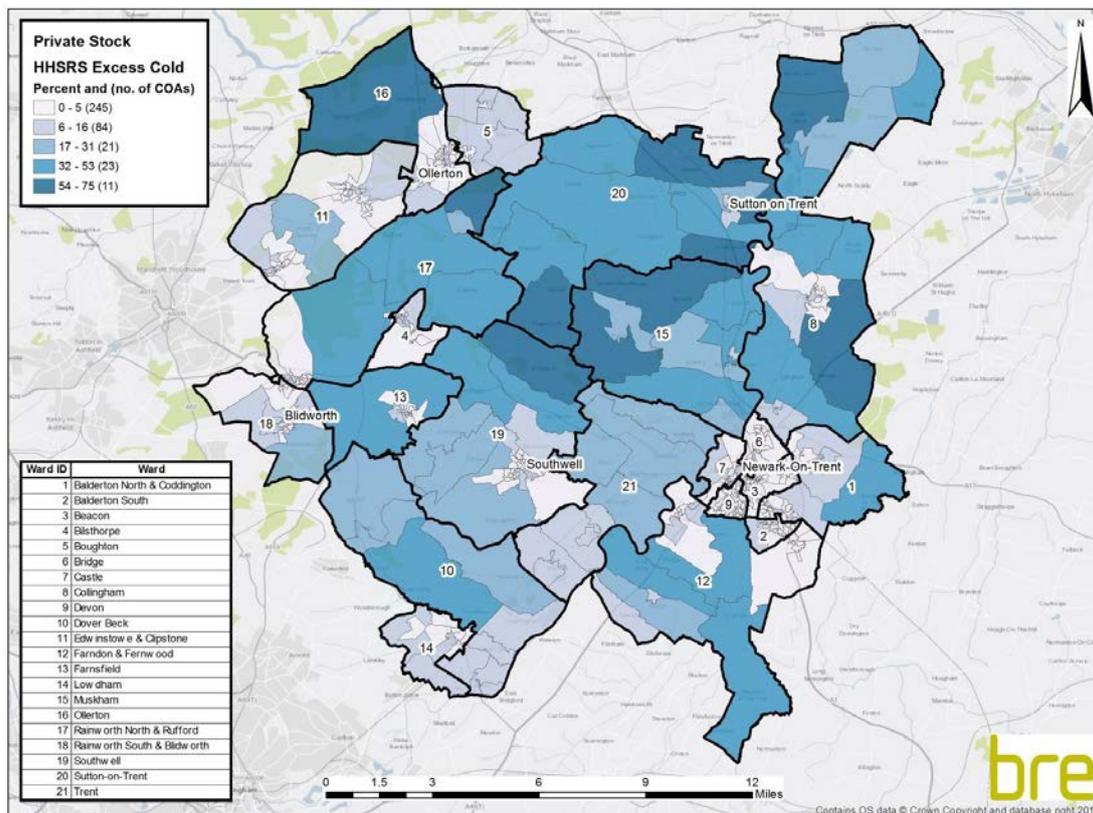
It is not yet clear how this requirement will be regulated or which properties will be subject to an applicable exemption. Until clarity is received from the Government on these matters it is impossible to estimate how many properties within Newark & Sherwood District will be affected. However, the 2016 Private Sector Housing Stock

Condition Survey estimates that 10.1% of dwellings in the private rented sector have an EPC below band E. Under proposed legislation these properties would not be eligible to be rented out after 1st April 2018.

It is also impossible to estimate how many of these ‘below E rated properties’ will become empty. More guidance is needed to understand what measures are necessary in a typical pre 1920’s solid wall terrace house in order to make it compliant.

Excess Cold

The map shown overleaf is an extract from Newark and Sherwood’s Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey 2016. It shows the percentage of private sector dwellings in Newark & Sherwood with the presence of a Housing Health & Safety Rating Scheme (HHSRS) category 1 hazard for excess cold.



Looking at the hazard of excess cold, of which there are higher levels in Newark and Sherwood compared to the regional and national figures, there are again higher concentrations in the more rural areas. The data behind the map shows that the highest levels overall are in Sutton-on-Trent, Muskham and Collingham but there are also higher concentrations elsewhere – for example to the north west of Ollerton.

The HHSRS is used as a tool to address Category 1 excess cold in the private rented sector. Typically, a house will need to have at least 200mm of loft insulation, cavity wall insulation (where appropriate), a modern condensing boiler, thermostatic radiator valves (TRV’s) on all radiators, a programmer and a room thermostat. The property will also be expected to have reasonable windows and doors that prevent excessive draughts, and suitable extraction from the kitchen and bathroom, taking away the reliance on opening windows during cold weather. If these standards are not met it is likely that a Category 1 hazard for cold will be present, and improvements required.

HHSRS training for Housing Options Officers, together with the introduction of a dedicated Landlord Liaison Officer role, are helping to expand HHSRS knowledge beyond Environmental Health Officers and improve standards in many properties by negotiating with landlords as a condition of the NSDC tenant finder scheme (RealHome) to meet the minimum standards required. It is also a condition of the scheme for the property to have a current EPC.

As part of the RealHome assessment, the Landlord Liaison Officer offers advice on energy saving measures to benefit the potential tenant and liaises closely with NSDC's Energy & Home Support team (two part-time staff) to carry out an energy assessment and offer financial assistance as and where appropriate. This advice and encouragement is reinforced at the Sherwood Area Landlords Forum where NSDC promotes a minimum standard and helps landlords to achieve this.

NSDC's Environmental Health team also works in partnership with the Warm Homes on Prescription project to signpost relevant landlords and tenants to the scheme as part of the independent living model described in 3.1 above.

3.5 Rolling out smart meters

The LAEP is committed to playing a proactive part in the rollout of smart meters and is working with National Energy Action (NEA) through the Smart Energy GB initiative to raise awareness and help councils to provide a lead. Councils see themselves as partners in the rollout of smart meters to assist residents to reduce domestic energy consumption and tackle fuel poverty.

Opportunities will be sought to ensure that the most vulnerable residents are as able as the general population to take advantage of the benefits which smart meters can bring. For example, Newark & Sherwood Homes is supporting a joint campaign with the National Federation of ALMOs and Smart Energy GB to ensure that its social housing tenants understand smart meters and their benefits; to help people get the best out of them by managing their gas and electricity usage in the most cost effective way for them.

Newark & Sherwood District Council plans to work in partnership with the local Citizens Advice service to deliver smart meter training to front-line staff/volunteers, partner agencies and local community groups.

This report focuses on our plans for the future as LAEP councils work together, independently and with external partners to reduce fuel poverty and promote affordable warmth for all across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. The key actions highlighted in this report are also captured and supported in Newark & Sherwood District Council's own local service delivery plans.

For further information about the contents of this report, please contact:

Leanne Monger, Business Manager – Housing and Safeguarding (contact details can be found on the front of this report) or Helen Richmond, Energy and Home Support Officer, Newark & Sherwood District Council on 01636 655418 or by email helen.richmond@nsdc.info

HOUSING OPTIONS SERVICE PEER REVIEW

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform this Committee of the National Practitioner Support Service Gold Standard Challenge and outcome of the Councils recent Peer Review of the Housing Options Service, as part of this programme.

2.0 Gold Standard Challenge

- 2.1 The Gold Standard Challenge is a local authority, sector led peer-review scheme designed to help local authorities deliver more efficient and cost effective homelessness prevention services.

- 2.2 The scheme has been developed by the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) which is funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and is designed around the 10 'local challenges' set out in the report of the Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness, 'Making Every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness' (2012):

1. To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services
2. To actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs
3. To offer a Housing Options prevention service to all clients including written advice
4. To adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative
5. To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that include appropriate accommodation and support
6. To develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both client and landlord
7. To actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme
8. To have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness, reviewed annually to be responsive to emerging needs
9. To not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation
10. To not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks

3.0 Peer Review

- 3.1 The NPSS supports local authorities to come together in clusters of three or more to undertake Diagnostic Peer Reviews (DPR's) on their Housing Options/Homelessness Services in preparation for applying for one or all of the 10 Local Challenges if a score of 60% or more is achieved.

3.2 The aim of the Diagnostic Peer Review (DPR) is to:

- assess how a local authority is tackling homelessness
- identify key strengths and weaknesses in the service by highlighting good practice and identifying gaps in provision
- make recommendations for service improvement
- develop effective improvement plans to help maximise the potential to prevent homelessness wherever possible
- help authorities make best use of current resources

3.3 The DPR measures the service against 12 different areas as detailed below:

Strategic Focus

1. Statistical and Key Documents Assessment
2. Homelessness Strategy Overview
3. Website Review

Service Management and Delivery

4. Reception and Interview Room Facilities
5. Customer Interview Observation
6. Housing Options File Review
7. Homelessness File Review

Stakeholder Views and Opinions

8. Staff
9. Managers
10. Partners
11. Visits

Overall Quality of Housing Options Service Assessment

12. Quality of Housing Options

4.0 Cluster Group

4.1 The consideration of a possible Nottinghamshire cluster group being formed commenced in 2016. Nottingham City had already taken part in a peer review of Norwich City Council; to date no further DPR's or application for local challenges has been made.

4.2 Initially there was appetite from Newark and Sherwood, Broxtowe and Gedling authorities in creating a cluster group. However, due to changes in staff structures, Gedling were later unable to commit to the process and the remaining Notts Authorities didn't feel that the timing was not right for them to take part. However, interest was shown from Oadby and Wigston DC via our Regional National Practitioner, who was equally trying to motivate Leicestershire authorities to create a cluster group to undertake a DPR.

4.3 Consequently, this led to Newark and Sherwood, Broxtowe and Oadby and Wigston forming a cluster group and a peer review of Newark and Sherwood took place in February 2017 - being the first authority in Nottinghamshire to be reviewed under the programme.

4.4 The timetable (attached at **Appendix A**) shows the commitment from staff, managers and partners who agreed to be involved in the peer review, who fully embraced the opportunity to give an open and honest account of the service.

5.0 Peer Review Outcome

5.1 The Diagnostic Peer Review Feedback meeting held on 16 March 2017 was attended by a number of officers from the team, the Business Manager, Director of Safety and Chair of Homes and Communities Committee which revealed an extremely positive review and scores for each category assessed, highlighting areas of good practice and some recommendations for improvement to the service.

5.2 Each category has been scored as detailed below and the results are shown in the following table:

Assessment Rating

Rating	Assessment
Very Good	The response meets all designated criteria, and there is no or very little scope for improvement.
Good	The response is high and meets most designated criteria, but there is still some scope for improvement.
Fair	The response meets the minimum necessary designated criteria but no more; and there is considerable scope for improvement.
Poor	The response does not meet minimum designated criteria.
Very Poor	The response does not meet any designated criteria, or the work is not done at all.

5.3 The table below summarises the results against each category and a copy of the presentation delivered by the Peer Review Team is attached at **Appendix B**.

Category	% score	Rating	Positives/Good Practice	Recommendations
Strategy Overview	66	Good	The strategy is put in front of the relevant committee on a regular basis and has strong 'buy in' from portfolio holder. The Joint Homeless Interagency Forum. SWEP project and the involvement of a significant volunteer element and several key partners.	Consider demonstrating that the strategy is robustly reviewed in addition to updating the action plan. Make clear whether the actions dealt with, address or mitigate the main causes of homelessness in the area.
Website Review	67	Good	Good audio facilities for those with visual impairments. Housing/homelessness enquiry form. Dedicated pages such as RealHome.	A suite of leaflets would be useful as self-help tools. Consider a specific housing options/customer service telephone number and dedicated email address. Consider service standards.
Reception and Interview room facilities	44	Fair	Plans to move to a new venue in progress.	

Customer Interview Observation	79	Good	Officer explained the purpose of the interview very clearly. Clear that the officer was listening to the customer.	No recommendations for improvement.
Housing Options File Review	73	Good	Home visits conducted where required, due to needs of the client. Continuity of case officer clear. Good use of Allocations Scheme.	Comprehensive written advice needed. No evidence of customer feedback obtained on files. <i>Aware Abrisas system being implemented.</i>
Homelessness File Review	84	Very good	Line manager does an audit on selected homelessness files. Evidence on files of appropriate referrals to other services. S184 letters well structured	No recommendations for improvement.
Staff	75	Good	Enthusiastic staff. PCSO's good working relationship. Support provided by Landlord Liaison Officer and Tenancy Support Worker.	Confirm advice in writing. Promote the service more formally (EHO) Explore ways of monitoring extensive prevention work that doesn't work and ends up as a homeless application.
Managers	83	Very Good	Prevention initiatives all from HPG. DHP – policies and procedures support (excellent arrangement of £20k ring fenced) with manager sitting on appeals panel. Dedicated officer to strategy. County wide protocols and commissioning. Solid and well thought out staff structure.	Evidence customer feedback informs service. Record informal complaints work. Further consider outcomes of work with partners.
Partners	85	Very good	Well organised forum, clearly well supported by the council. HB – Housing options are a trusted source.	Gaps in provision need to explore further joint working opportunities – faith groups.
Visit to TA	96	Very Good	Self-contained units are an excellent option for homeless households. Management by Housing Options. Support planning – outcomes star. Supporting children after school with homework by allowing the children to use the Wi-Fi at the community centre plus other activities. Use of general stock if someone needs DDA compliant unit.	No recommendations for improvement.
Quality of Housing Options	70	Good	Confident that major issues would be picked up and dealt with. Informal resolution of majority of complaints. Everyone gets assistance.	Use NHAS for complex cases. All cases should be followed up in writing. Give consideration to a NSNO approach to rough sleeping.

Overall Total	75	Very Good	Top 3 areas of good practice: Use of DHP in preventing homelessness. Partnership working both internal and external. Quality of TA and not using B&B.	
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5.4 The following comments were received from the reviewers:

'I just wanted to place on record my thanks to you all for last week, for making us welcome and making it an interesting and enjoyable 3 days.

Also please pass on my thanks to all members of the front-line team and also your internal partners, it was clear that they are all a very happy and highly motivated team who provide the best service possible with the resources at their disposal.

All internal officers were knowledgeable and enthusiastic and made our job much easier whilst on site by being helpful and honest in their replies to our countless questions.

As I said it was a pleasure to be at your offices for 3 days and you all have a service that you can be very proud of, which I'm sure the final scoring will reflect'.

6.0 Next steps

6.1 Authorities that achieve an overall score of 60% or above are able to make an application for the Gold Standard Challenge. Each successive local challenge that is applied for and awarded will place the council as a bronze, silver or gold service.

6.2 To date, within East Midlands only 9 authorities have been reviewed (including NSDC), Derby City and North East Derbyshire have been awarded bronze status.

6.3 Because Newark and Sherwood has been scored as having a very healthy service with an overall score of 75% we will now be applying for the first local challenge - *To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services.* Although DPR scores are not shared, NPSS have indicated that 75% is an excellent score in comparison to other Local Authorities.

6.4 NPSS hold an annual conference at Warwick University (in July 17) which will be attended by our Homeless Strategy Officer and at which, it is hoped we will receive our first award of bronze status following submission of our first challenge on 2 May 2017.

7.0 Continuous Improvement Plan

7.1 A Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) has been tailored for NSDC; the contents of which derive directly from the results of the DPR conducted by our peers. The purpose of the CIP is to provide specific action points for the areas within the assessment areas which received a low score in the DPR.

7.2 The CIP will now be used to make improvements that are appropriate and feasible, feeding into the Business Units Summary Service Plan and staff appraisals. The plan will also be useful and used when carrying out the next homelessness review in preparation for a new Homelessness Strategy due in 2018.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee consider the contents of this report and support any subsequent application towards the Gold Standard Challenge.

Background Papers

Full Diagnostic Peer Review and Continuous Improvement Plan can be made available if required.

For further information please contact Leanne Monger, Business Manager – Housing and Safeguarding on extension 5545.

Karen White
Director – Safety

APPENDIX A

		9 – 10	10 – 11	11 – 12	12 – 1	1 - 2	2 - 3	3 - 4	4-5	
OFF SITE ASSESSMENT	Lead Reviewer & 2 nd Reviewer	Read DPR guidance and familiarise self with on-line DPR toolkit	Complete Stats Compiler and Key Documents Analysis	Complete Homelessness Strategy Review		L U N C H	Complete Website Review		Prepare for onsite visit	
Wednesday 22nd February 2017 ON-SITE Rooms G21 and Training Room	Lead Reviewer Oadby & Wigston	Arrive, meet Cheska Asman and familiarise location.	Meet Director of Safety/ Portfolio Holder/ Business Manager and senior team Complete Managers assessment	Additional time to Complete Managers assessment	Meet Housing Options Team and complete Staff assessment		Review Reception and Room facilities	Front Reception shadowing / Case File Reviews/interview with staff	Additional time to complete DPR Clear G21 by 4pm for use by Nigel Hill	
	2 nd Reviewer Broxtowe						Complete Housing Options Case File Reviews (advice)			
Thursday 23rd February 2017 ON-SITE Rooms F19 and Training Room	Lead Reviewer Oadby & Wigston	Visit Temporary accommodation: Complete Visits: Temporary Accommodation		Shadow Interviews / home visits – Seven Hills Complete Customer Interview Assessment Officer – Bev McMillan			L U N C H	Additional time to complete DPR	Interview with private rented sector officers / housing benefit	
	2 nd Reviewer Broxtowe	Complete Homelessness Case File Reviews		Additional time to complete DPR				Shadow Interviews / home visits Complete Customer Interview Assessment Officer – Sue Stott Customer – Samantha Hardy	Additional time to complete DPR	
Friday 24th February 2017 ON-SITE Rooms G21 and Training Room	Lead Reviewer Oadby and Wigston 2 nd Reviewer Broxtowe	External Partner Focus Group Citizens Advice/Police/ Impact/Furniture Project/ Russell House/Newark and Sherwood Homes/Newark Woman’s Refuge/Young Peoples support/supported Housing provider		Partner Focus Group – Internal Teams ASB Team Customer Services Environmental Health		Interview with bespoke Options Officers - complete Staff assessment SWEP/Homeless Strategy/Rough Sleepers Older Persons/Hospital Discharge/Allocations		Complete Quality of Housing Options Service		

DRAFT

Diagnostic Peer Review Feedback

Newark and Sherwood District Council

*Delivered by:
Steve Nash –
Oadby and Wigston Borough Council*

*Gary Smithurst –
Broxtowe Borough Council*



Supporting local authorities to prevent homelessness
Funded by DCLG

Introduction

- Welcome
- Thank you for attending the feedback session
- Thank you for participating in the Diagnostic Peer Review (DPR) process
- Brief overview of the DPR process and purpose
- Feedback today
- Continuous Improvement Plan will also be shared



Supporting local authorities to prevent homelessness
Funded by DCLG

Strategy Overview	86%
Website Review	67%
Reception and Interview Room Facilities	44%
Customer Interview Observation	79%
Housing Options File Review	73%
Homelessness File Review	75%
Staff	75%
Managers	73%
Partners	73%
Visit	75%
Quality of Housing Options	70%
Total	75%



Supporting local authorities to prevent homelessness
Funded by DCLG

1. Statistical compiler and key docs

Key Stats/facts:
Footfall – 249 face to face appts, 1157 calls to customer service

Acceptances – 94 acceptances (2015-16)

Preventions – 166 prevented, 73 relieved – anomaly around reporting no recorded prevention alternative accommodation?

Use of Temporary Accommodation/B&B – no B&B use.

Homelessness decisions – 128 decisions (2015-16)

Private Rented Sector

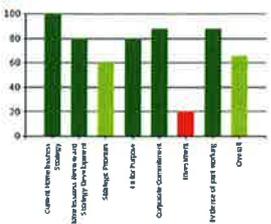
Hidden homelessness – not known.



Supporting local authorities to prevent homelessness
Funded by DCLG

2. Homelessness Strategy Overview

Graph and Summary



Strategy Overview	%
Current Homelessness Strategy	100%
Homelessness Review and Strategy Development	86%
Strategic Priorities	61%
Fit for Purpose	61%
Corporate Commitment	61%
Investment	30%
Evidence of joint working	61%
Overall	66%



Supporting local authorities to prevent homelessness
Funded by DCLG

2. Homelessness Strategy Overview

Positives / Good Practice:

- The strategy has a strong 'buy in' from the portfolio holder. The strategy is put in front of the relevant committee on a regular basis
- The use of a contractor, independent of the Council, to facilitate 1-2-1 interviews and focus groups
- The Joint Homeless Interagency Forum for Newark and Sherwood and Mansfield District Councils
- Focus on a multi-agency approach, acknowledgement that the Council needs it's partners
- SWEP project
- SWEP involves a significant volunteer element and several key partners



Supporting local authorities to prevent homelessness
Funded by DCLG

2. Homelessness Strategy Overview

Recommendations:

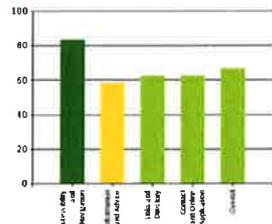
- Consider demonstrating that the strategy is robustly reviewed in addition to updating the actions
- Perhaps look to put the local data into the regional picture
- The statistical compiler shows that exclusion from parental home is the 2nd biggest reason for homelessness hence some form of mediation scheme might be considered
- Be clearer on how the strategy feeds into the corporate priority around supporting dependent families to become wage earners through measures to address child poverty
- make clear whether the actions deal with, address or mitigate the main causes of homelessness in the area
- DHP is an important tool in NSDC but is not mentioned in the strategy



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3. Website Review

Graph and Summary



Website Review		%
Accessibility and Navigation	67%	
Information and Advice	58%	
Links and Directory	63%	
Contact and Online Application	63%	
Overall	67%	



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3. Website Review

Positives / Good Practice:

- Good audio facilities for those with visual impairments.
- Website easy to navigate – link to homelessness on homepage.
- Housing / homelessness enquiry form.
- Links to Homeless Strategy and review.
- Dedicated page for Real Homes with good links and information for private-landlords.



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3. Website Review

Recommendations:

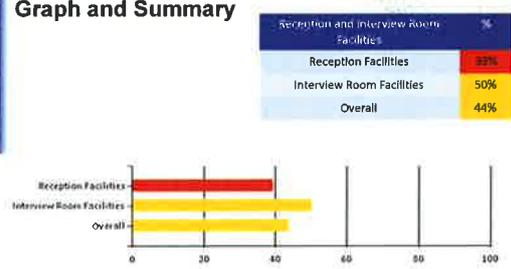
- A suite of leaflets would be useful as self help tools, suggestions include for domestic abuse, young people, dealing with debt, those experiencing mortgage difficulties etc. Abris enhanced housing options tool will go a large way to address some of this.
- Should consider a specific housing options / customer service telephone number and dedicated email address,
- Should consider producing a set of service standards for homelessness and housing options and publishing them on the website.
- The lack of housing options advice will be addressed by the Abris Enhanced Housing Options Module.



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4. Reception and Interview Room Facilities

Graph and Summary



Reception and Interview Room Facilities		%
Reception Facilities	32%	
Interview Room Facilities	50%	
Overall	44%	



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4. Reception and Interview Room Facilities

Positives / Good Practice:

- Plans to move to a new venue are in progress for last quarter of 2017.



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4. Reception and Interview Room Facilities

Recommendations:

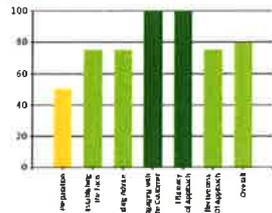
- Newark & Sherwood decided that the reception and interview facilities at Kelham Hall form the basis of this assessment. Customer Service Manager advised that the facilities were better at the Town Hall, however these were not observed. The new location, Castle House, is much more central and much better served by trains and buses. The plans for the new Council Offices offer the hope of a vastly improved situation.



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5. Customer Interview

Graph and Summary



Customer Interview Observation	%
Preparation	50%
Establishing the Facts	75%
Providing Advice	75%
Engaging with the Customer	75%
Efficiency of Approach	75%
Effectiveness Of Approach	75%
Overall	79%



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5. Customer Interview

Positives / Good Practice:

- Officer explained the purpose of the interview very clearly.
- Signposted to make application to NCHA
- Good suggestion in asking the customer to save their bank statement as a .pdf which could then be e-mailed to the Officer instead of trying to print them off.
- It was clear that the Officer was listening to the customer



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5. Customer Interview

Recommendations:

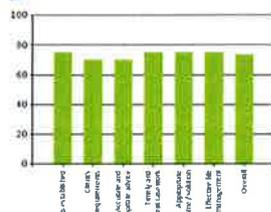
- Significant issue was that only one interview was observed.



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6. Housing Options File Review

Graph and Summary



Housing Options File Review	%
Facts established	75%
Client's requirements	70%
Accurate and appropriate advice	70%
Timely and efficient casework	75%
Appropriate outcome / solution	75%
Effective file management	75%
Overall	73%



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6. Housing Options File Review

Positives / Good Practice:

- Home visit conducted due to needs of client / Referral to cab made / Negotiation with LL to stay longer / Contacted debt service to obtain advice on IVA
- Good use of the housing register and giving priority banding.
- Continuity of case officer clear
- Strong evidence of use of DHP / INCOME AND EX FORM USED and scanned to images / Good communication with N&S Homes.



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6. Housing Options File Review

Recommendations:

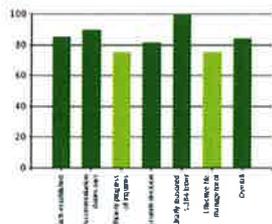
- Comprehensive written advice needed.
- No evidence of customer feedback obtained on the file. Consider use of closure letter and customer feedback form.
- Aware that Abritas system is due to be implemented.



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7. Homelessness File Review

Graph and Summary



Homelessness File Review		%
Facts established	85%	85%
Accommodation duties met	85%	85%
Efficient progress of inquiries	75%	75%
Accurate decision	85%	85%
Clearly reasoned s.184 letter	85%	85%
Effective file management	75%	75%
Overall	85%	85%



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7. Homelessness File Review

Positives / Good Practice:

- Line Manager does an audit on selected homelessness files for consistency.
- 5.184 letters are structured well and are clear to understand. Review notifications given.
- Part 7 applications taken at appropriate point and run alongside options and prevention work.
- Evidence on files of appropriate referrals to other services.



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7. Homelessness File Review

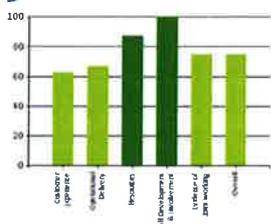
Recommendations:



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8. Staff

Graph and Summary



Staff		%
Customer Experience	63%	63%
Operational Delivery	67%	67%
Resources	85%	85%
Staff Development & Involvement	85%	85%
Evidence of Joint Working	75%	75%
Overall	75%	75%



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8. Staff

Positives / Good Practice:

- Enthusiastic staff
- Nominate into HAs ahead of making a homeless app.
- PCSOs – good working relationship
- Tenant support officer so Maria gives support to LL and Lisa supports tenants to keep the separation between LL and tenant



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8. Staff

Recommendations:

- Confirm advice in writing
- Promote the service more formally (EHO)
- Formal intelligence and reporting on numbers
- Explore ways of monitoring extensive prevention work that doesn't work and ends up as a homeless application

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9. Managers

Graph and Summary

Category	Score (%)
Service Structure & Staff Development/Involvement	100%
Customer Experience	83%
Resources	90%
Operational Delivery	90%
Evidence of Joint Working	50%
Corporate Commitment	100%
Overall	80%

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9. Managers

Positives / Good Practice:

- Prevention initiatives all from HPG
- DHP - policies and procedures support this excellent arrangement. £20k ring fenced. Leanne sits on appeals panel
- Empty Homes Officer with Mansfield, PRS Officer with branding only works with LLS.
- Dedicated officer to Strategy
- Banding used as a negotiation tool to sustain existing accom a bit longer.
- County Wide 16/17 protocol and commissioning work
- Golden Thread.
- Business user meetings.
- Solid and well thought out staff structure.

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9. Managers

Recommendations:

- Confirmation of advice in writing in all cases.
- Customer feedback would be useful to inform service.
- Record the informal complaints work.
- Comparison data through budget cost needed (and requested by Leanne)
- Use learning from meetings
- Allocations policy is about to change – needs to be reviewed and monitored.
- Think about the outcomes of the work that goes on with partners, not just a list

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10. Partners

Graph and Summary

Category	Score (%)
Operational Delivery	95%
Resources	100%
Evidence of Joint Working	85%
Customer Experience	85%
Overall	85%

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10. Partners

Positives / Good Practice:

- Well organised forum, clearly well supported by the council.
- DHP - Housing Options are a trusted source.
- The faith based sector are accessing voluntary sector provision.
- HB Manager confirmed regular use of DHP for prevention, confirmed the ring-fenced £20k for use by Housing Options team

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10. Partners

Recommendations:

- The faith based sector are accessing voluntary sector provision that perhaps Newark & Sherwood could not.
- Gaps in provision need to explore joint working opportunities

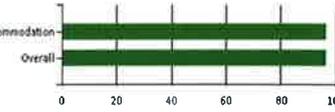


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11 Visits: Statutory Temporary Accommodation

Graph and summary

Visit	%
Visit to Statutory Temporary Accommodation	100%
Overall	100%



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11 Visits: Statutory Temporary Accommodation

Positives / Good Practice:

- Self contained units are an excellent option for homeless households.
- Housing Options staff now manage the temporary accommodation, for example the service of warnings or notices.
- Supporting children after school with homework by allowing the children to use the wi-fi at the community centre. Have put on other activities i.e. Baby Massage. Children's Centre, Fire Service, CAB and other agencies hold events at the centre.
- Has liaised with Education to provide student transport in SEN cases. Placed a woman in the emergency unit as she worked in Newark rather than move her into the temporary accommodation in Ollerton until a unit at Seven Hills became available.
- Tenancy Support Officer completes Support plan upon entry to temporary. Uses Outcome Start and self assessment to gauge outcomes.
- Will use stock if someone needs a fully DDA compliant unit.

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11 Visits: Statutory Temporary Accommodation

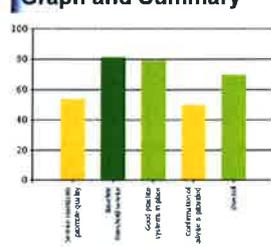
Recommendations:

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12. Quality of Housing Options

Graph and Summary

Quality of Housing Options	%
Service standards promote quality	54%
Baseline threshold service	100%
Good practice systems in place	79%
Confirmation of advice is provided	50%
Overall	70%



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12. Quality of Housing Options

Positives / Good Practice:

- Confident that major issues would be picked up and dealt with
- Informal resolution of majority of complaints
- Everyone gets assistance (albeit not necessarily accommodation)
- Take applications at the refuge

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12. Quality of Housing Options

Recommendations:

- Explore CPD approach to law and skills training.
- Customer feedback and internal observation of Interviews appears not to inform service improvement.
- Use NHAS for complex cases.
- Consider assistance to help access shared PRS offer.
- All cases should be followed up in writing.
- Give consideration to a NSNO approach to rough sleeping.

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Top 3 Areas of Good Practice

- Use of DHP in preventing homelessness
- Partnership working both internal and external
- Quality of TA and not using B&B

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Summary

	%
Strategy Overview	56%
Website Review	67%
Reception and Interview Room Facilities	44%
Customer Interview Observation	79%
Housing Options File Review	73%
Homelessness File Review	84%
Staff	75%
Managers	82%
Partners	83%
Visit	85%
Quality of Housing Options	70%
Total	75%

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE WARM HOMES ON PRESCRIPTION PROJECT - PILOT UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To notify Members of the successful delivery of the National Energy Action's 'Warm and Healthy Homes' Fund through piloting a Nottinghamshire-wide Warm Homes on Prescription (WHOP) project, led by Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC).

2.0 Background Information

2.1 NSDC as a member of the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Local Authorities' Energy Partnership (LAEP) and as lead authority for WHOP, has been working closely with the LAEP Co-ordinator, Public Health and the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to help ensure the partnership's National Energy Action (NEA) 'Warm and Healthy Homes' allocation was successfully delivered.

2.2 The LAEP received notification of the successful award of £325,000 on 9 October 2015 and was one of 10 healthy housing partnerships across the country awarded an equal share of a total fund of £3.25m.

3.0 NEA Programme Delivery

3.1 In summary, the Derbyshire Healthy Homes and Nottinghamshire WHOP has delivered a total of 174 measures to 155 households:

Amount	Target Properties	NEA grant and LAEP funding
£325,000	120	Main Measures Grant
£30,000	20	Main Measures Grant Amendment (21/11/2016)
£45,500	14	Main Measures additional grant (23/02/2017)
£9,500	3	Small Measures grant underspend (09/03/2017)
£410,000	157 properties	Target
£410,000	155 properties	Actual
£40,344.54		Match funding contributed (LAEP and council funding)
£46,186.98		Gap funding contributed (mainly LAEP funding)

3.2 The entire available NEA grant has been drawn down. The LAEP was also offered an additional £85k of funding towards the end of the contract delivery period as a result of the projects accurate and timely delivery and reporting, therefore the totalling amount drawn down to £410,000.

3.2 A total of £46,186.98 of 'gap' or 'top up' funding was also contributed; mainly from the LAEP's remaining DECC Booster Fund, to ensure that the target of installs was achieved with the available grant.

3.3 A further 16 homes were treated using a total of £40,344.54 match funding, as per the contract with NEA.

- 3.4 Against the more established programme in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire installed measures to **36** householders with a value of **£110k** through its Nottinghamshire WHOP Pilot Project. Although, over **75** residents were offered advice on energy switching, benefits checks and income maximisation, signposting and referrals to other services and help with reviewing their longer term housing options.
- 3.5 A Project Board (chaired by the Business Manager – Housing and Safeguarding at NSDC) has been established with representatives attending from each of the district/borough councils, Nottingham City, Nottingham County Council, Public Health (City & County) and CCG's. As WHOP expands beyond its pilot year there are plans to form an Operational Delivery Partnership sub-group.
- 3.6 The pilot year has been a catalyst for integrating the project into the district/borough councils business as usual activities via the Better Care Fund.
- 3.7 It is anticipated that around £600,000 of Better Care funding will be secured to expand delivery of the WHOP project across Nottinghamshire during 2017/18. (NSDC secured £70K of Better Care Fund funding in 2016/17 and has requested an additional £70K to further expand the project locally in 2017/18).
- 3.8 A toolkit is also under development between the 7 Nottinghamshire Local Authorities (via the WHOP Programme Manager) and Public Health to provide the data required to academically evaluate the outcomes of the WHOP project against the Better Care Funds Key Performance Indicators, with a focus on ascertaining the return on investment (ROI).
- 3.9 A further £54,000 of revenue funding has been secured from Nottinghamshire Public Health to support an extension of the Programme Managers role to the end of March 2018, which is hosted and managed by NSDC.
- 3.10 The Nottingham/Nottinghamshire Sustainability Transformation Plan 2016-2021 includes housing as a core theme meriting its own housing chapter. The WHOP project is one of two key work strands within this, with plans to expand delivery during 2017-19 to reach 250 eligible households in year 2017-18 and 300 in year 2018-19 through additional STP funding.

4.0 Equalities Implications

- 4.1 Positive impacts on householders' health and wellbeing are anticipated, providing evidence to demonstrate cost savings to the NHS (particularly around anticipated reductions in emergency admissions to A&E)

Please see the Case Study (attached at **Appendix 1**).

5.0 Impact on Budget/Policy Framework

- 5.1 The financial detail is contained within the body of this report and there is no additional impact on the Council's budget from these.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted and the Committee continue to support the Council's role in the expanding delivery of the Warm Homes on Prescription Project across Nottinghamshire.

Reason for Recommendation

To demonstrate the Council's commitment to tackling fuel poverty, health inequalities and partnership working, leading on an innovative and ambitious county-wide project.

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Leanne Monger, Business Manager – Housing and Safeguarding on extension 5545.

Karen White
Director - Safety

Case Study – Mrs B, Newark and Sherwood District Council

Mrs B has COPD and Atrial Fibrillation and as a result of these health conditions she spends a minimum of 15 hours per day on an oxygen machine; being dependant on oxygen makes Mrs B virtually housebound. Mrs B has limited savings and receives the State Pension, a small private pension and is in receipt of Pension Credit; being on low income makes it impossible for Mrs B to adequately heat her home in cold weather and as a result of Mrs B's long-term health conditions, she feels the cold.

At the time of the home visit Mrs B's heating was not working which lead to the NSDC Home Energy Advisor making an immediate referral to the Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) to request that they deliver and set-up 2 oil-filled electric radiators as a temporary heating measure. Whilst NFRS were delivering the heaters they undertook a 'Home Safety Check' which resulted in the installation of new smoke detectors.

Through the Nottinghamshire Warm Homes on Prescription programme a full central heating system has been installed which consisted of a new 'A' rated combination boiler, new double panel high heat output radiators, a programmer, a room thermostat, thermostatic radiator valves (TRV's), all connections and pipework; the team also arranged the 1st year annual service to give Mrs B piece of mind that she would have no unexpected maintenance bills during the 2 year warranty period. As Mrs B lives alone general advice was given regarding falls prevention and a Lifeline was installed, just in case she falls and needs assistance. A grab rail was also fitted outside the back door to enable her safer access to her garden.

Mrs B was also referred to DWP for a benefits check; they visited her at home and have significantly increased her income via the Assisted Living Allowance which has enabled carers to visit twice per week to help her to live more independently.

As a result of the Nottinghamshire Warm Homes inventions Mrs B says she is looking forward to being warmer and more comfortable in her home during the winter and is very grateful to the programme for all the support she has received.

COUNCIL HOUSE RENTS – METHODS OF PAYMENT

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To give further consideration to the requirement for tenants to pay their rent via direct debit.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Homes & Communities Committee on 13 June 2016, Members agreed that there should be a requirement for tenants to pay their rent via direct debit. This decision was taken in the context of: the Council's decision to move to 'cashless' payments systems for all of its services from January 2017; minimising rent arrears thereby maximising income recovery to the housing revenue account; and assisting tenants in budget management particularly those in receipt of housing benefit with the impending welfare reform changes.

- 2.2 The payment method requirement was to be achieved by introducing a new clause into the Council's secure tenancy agreement. The wording for new clause was proposed as follows:

"Your tenancy is a weekly tenancy from Monday to Sunday. The amount of your weekly rent is shown at the beginning of this tenancy agreement. The rent is payable on an agreed date and frequency by Direct Debit. You must make sure that you have sufficient funds available to pay your rent on the date that you and we agree to."

- 2.3 It is worth noting that across much of the housing sector, including registered providers as well as private landlords, the direction of travel is to require rent payments to be made by direct debit.

3.0 Consultation on Proposals

- 3.1 The Housing Act 1985 section 103(1) requires a local housing authority to consult with tenants when seeking to vary the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement. The introduction of the new clause concerning payment methods would be a variation of tenancy terms and conditions.

- 3.2 The consultation process requires the Council, as landlord, to serve a preliminary notice of variation which allows the tenant a reasonable time to comment. The timescale must be specified in the notice. The Council is then obliged to consider any comments received before then determining whether to proceed with the variation. If the decision is taken to proceed, the Council is then required to serve a full notice of variation implementing the changes to the tenancy agreement.

- 3.3 However, it is good practice to consult with tenants prior to serving the preliminary notice. Newark and Sherwood Homes (the Company), acting on behalf of the Council, has undertaken a detailed informal consultation through interaction with tenants at the local offices and at the tenants' forum.
- 3.4 During this informal process several issues and concerns to the proposed variation were raised with the Company by tenants and councillors. A number of these concerns and issues were also raised by councillors with council officers.
- 3.5 The issues and concerns raised by tenants and councillors are summarised below, together with officer comments where relevant:
- a. **No bank account** - a number of tenants do not have/or do not want a bank account. Some tenants have a mistrust of the banking system. The Company assists tenants in setting up credit union or basic bank accounts, covering the start-up fee where appropriate;
 - b. **Wish to pay in cash** – this is no longer an option since the Council moved to cashless payment options in January 2017;
 - c. **Mistrust of Direct Debit** – tenants have concerns about the level of control that the direct debit process gives to the payee and that this can lead to incorrect amounts being taken from their bank account;
 - d. **No steady form of income** – tenants may have fluctuating income levels from week to week for various reasons, i.e. zero hours contracts, variation in overtime, self-employment, wages not being paid on the same day each week or month etc. Comments received reflect that some tenants want to know how much they have earned before they decide how much rent they can pay;
 - e. **Concern about direct debit resulting in arrears** – Some tenants have expressed concern that a DD payment date that doesn't coincide with the rent payment date can make their rent account "appear" to be in arrears with resultant arrears letters being received;
 - f. **Tenants in receipt of housing benefit** -those on benefit are concerned about sanctions being applied to recover overpayments etc. which may result in their not having enough money in their bank account which could result in them incurring bank charges;
 - g. **Difficulty managing budgets** – Some tenants are concerned that they have poor money management skills and like the control that physically paying weekly gives them. The Company has focussed significant resource over recent years to offer education in budget management to those tenants who require it. This is in addition to the debt management service jointly commissioned from the CAB by the Council and the Company; and
 - h. **Older tenants** - enjoy the social aspect of going out to pay their rent and state that it provides them with a purpose for leaving the house.
- 3.6 As a result of the feedback received, officers of the Council and the Company felt that the matter should be reported back to the Committee to enable Members to consider whether some flexibility should be introduced to the requirement to enforce rent payment by direct debit through the tenancy agreement, allowing payment of rent by other means in exceptional circumstances.

4.0 Current Position and Cost of Payment Methods

- 4.1 The Company has a performance indicator target (agreed by the Council) to achieve 70% of rent payments by direct debit. Its current performance against this target is 54.60%. The Council's decision to move to cashless forms of payment has had the effect of increasing the number of tenants paying by DD, together with the fact that 100% of new tenancies entered into sign up to rent payment by DD.
- 4.2 The current figures relating to rent payment methods being used in percentage terms are set out below:
- a. 54.60% direct debit payments
 - b. 15.26% Pay point terminal payments
 - c. 22.91% payments via Pay point at the Post Office
 - d. 23.48% debit card payments
 - e. 4.64% standing order payments
 - f. 0.24% payment by cheque

N.B. The above figures represent all "rent payments" received, including current tenants and former tenants who are paying accrued arrears/charges.

- 4.3 It should be noted that there is a cost, which has to be met by the Council, in processing some of the payment methods above. The costs associated with Pay point are: New and replacement cards - 91p per card. Transaction costs 45p per post office transaction; and 42p per Pay point transaction. Based upon the current percentage transactions detailed in paragraph 4.2 above, this is an annual cost to the Council of approximately £10,700.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 In the light of some of the concerns expressed by tenants during the informal consultation process it is suggested that some flexibility be introduced into the requirement that rent payments must be made by direct debit, permitting payment by other cashless methods in exceptional circumstances. It is also considered that allowing for exceptions to be made to the general requirement that payment must be made by direct debit will enable officers greater scope to reduce the risk of homelessness in certain cases.

6.0 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 The proposals in the report will assist in ensuring that the specific needs of persons with protected characteristics are taken into account and ensure the Council's responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 will be fully considered and met.

7.0 Impact on Budget/Policy Framework

- 7.1 By overcoming most of the issues as stated in paragraph 3.5, evidence shows that by increasing the number of payees onto direct debit, the arrears position for an organisation also improves over the long term with the regularity of payments.

8.0 Comments of Finance Officer

8.1 The budget cuts which the Council has had to address over recent years has led to certain services being significantly cut back. One of these has been the cashiers' service throughout the district. This has led to tenants and other payees having to consider other means of paying, not only their rents, but other charges such as Council Tax.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

- a) **the proposed variation to the tenancy agreement requiring rent payments to be made by direct debit be amended to allow for other payment methods in exceptional circumstances with the wording proposed as follows:**

“Your tenancy is a weekly tenancy from Monday to Sunday. The amount of your weekly rent is shown at the beginning of this tenancy agreement. The rent is payable on an agreed date and frequency by Direct Debit. You must make sure that you have sufficient funds available to pay your rent on the date that you and we agree to. In exceptional circumstances an alternative form of rent payment may be considered.”

and;

- b) **a preliminary notice of the variation of tenancy be served upon all tenants, in accordance with the provisions of section 103 of the Housing Act 1985, and the matter be reported back to the next meeting of the Committee to consider any responses received.**

Reason for Recommendations

To enable the variation of the tenancy agreement to be considered and progressed.

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Karen White, Director - Safety on Ext 5240

Karen White
Director - Safety

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STANDARDS ENFORCEMENT AND CHARGING POLICY

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek Members' approval for a Private Sector Housing Standards Enforcement and Charging Policy

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The primary role of the Environmental Health Team, with regards to Private Sector Housing is to maintain and improve the housing conditions in the private sector and to ensure that landlords provide their tenants with a safe and healthy home.
- 2.2 In response to both the findings of the recent Housing Stock Condition Survey and the BCF priority to address morbidity and premature deaths caused by exposure of vulnerable people to excess cold and fuel poverty a more joined up approach has been taken to tackle these concerns by developing a "Housing and Health Integrated Independent Living Model" which brings together a number of housing functions, undertaken by NSDC to enable more effective delivery of a range of interventions to provide healthy homes.
- 2.3 This more integrated approach has also necessitated a review of the Private Sector Housing Standards Enforcement and Charging Policy to ensure that it aligns with these new priorities in a consistent and transparent way.

3.0 Introduction

- 3.1 Many of our enforcement powers relating to Housing are discretionary. This provides flexibility to the way that the Business Unit approaches its enforcement work. However, with such a wide array of interventions available, it is paramount that there is a robust policy to guide the Council's housing enforcement functions. The policy will:

- Ensure our enforcement is consistent, fair, proportionate and targeted.
- Ensure it is consistent with the aims and objectives contained in the Private Sector Housing Strategy and the Corporate Enforcement Policy.

- 3.2 The Private Sector Housing Standards Enforcement and Charging Policy sets out how and when enforcement powers are used to remedy unsafe or improve unfit housing. It also sets out when and how the Council will exercise its discretionary power to charge for enforcement action and recover costs associated with carrying out work in default. It also defines when pre-application advice may be provided by the Council at a charge.

- 3.3 It will do this by

- Setting out how and when the giving of advice, including chargeable pre-application advice will be appropriate.

- Setting out the criteria and priorities we will use when deciding the most appropriate course of informal or formal action when exercising our powers and duties under housing legislation, to ensure that the decision making process transparent and clear to the public.
- Settings out our policy in respect of charges that may be imposed for enforcement action and work in default and describe when these charges will be waived.

3.4 Local Authorities have a **Duty** to deal with Category One Hazards within a property and a **Power** to deal with Category Two Hazards. Previously informal negotiations and advisory reports have been used as a first intervention.

3.5 It is now proposed that where disrepair within a property is assessed under the Housing Act to be a Category One Hazard rated A,B or C, (that is a serious risk of harm is likely to a person within the vulnerable group) formal action will always be taken by way of serving a Housing Act Enforcement Notice, for which there is a charge. However this charge will only be levied where there has been an inadequate response to reduce the risks to below a D rated hazard. Any other costs such as obtaining specialist reports will be recovered. Where a person presents as being vulnerable the fee will also be waived. It is intended to use the definition of vulnerable as attached in **Appendix 1**.

3.6 The Policy will ensure that all Landlords are given clear and precise information about what repairs or improvements are required and which we as a local authority have a Duty to enforce. Landlords who comply with the Enforcement Notice will not be prejudiced by the charging policy. Conversely, Landlords who choose not to engage with the Housing Enforcement Team will be charged for the notice.

3.7 Where work in default is carried out in a situation of non-compliance the Council will seek to recover the costs relating to officer time, administration and the actual cost of carrying out the work. Invoices will be sent to the landlord for these costs and if immediate payment is not made this will be registered as a local land charge

3.8 The Policy will also support the introduction of a more defined working procedure that ensures a consistent approach to supporting tenants living in poor housing conditions.

4.0 Proposals

4.1 It is proposed that the new Private Sector Housing Standards Enforcement and Charging Policy will form the framework for enforcement decisions relating to private sector housing.

4.2 It is further proposed that the policy sets out a clear charging regime based on an hourly average officer rate capped at a maximum of 5 hours.

4.3 Where appropriate the policy sets out the situations where a charge may be made for property specific pre application visits and advice.

5.0 Equalities Implications

5.1 Many vulnerable households are found within the private rented sector which also tends to have the poorest standard of housing. This Policy will ensure an equitable and transparent approach to housing enforcement.

6.0 Impact on Budget/Policy Framework

6.1 It is not anticipated that the income generated from these charges would be a significant level of income.

7.0 Comments of Business Manager & Chief Financial Officer – Financial Services

7.1 There is very little financial impact resulting from this initiative.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

That Members support the adoption of the Private Sector Housing Enforcement and Charging Policy.

Background Papers

Housing Act 2004

For further information please contact Alan Batty 655467

Karen White
Director – Safety

Published 2017

Newark & Sherwood
District Council.
Private Sector
Housing Standards
Enforcement Policy

Environmental Health & Licensing Business Unit.

Newark & Sherwood District Council Private Sector Housing Standards Enforcement Policy

1 Introduction

The primary role of the Environmental Health Team, with regards to Private Sector Housing is to maintain and improve the housing conditions in the private sector. It endeavours to achieve this through advice, information and financial assistance. Where this approach fails or is not appropriate and it is necessary to protect the health safety and welfare of persons then the service will take the appropriate enforcement action.

The aim of this policy is to:

- Set out the criteria and priorities we will use when enforcing legislation so it is transparent and clear to the public.
- Sets out our policy in respect of charges that may be imposed for enforcement.
- Ensure our enforcement is consistent, fair, proportionate and targeted.
- Ensure it is consistent with the aims and objectives contained in the Private Sector Housing Strategy and the Empty Property Strategy.

2 Scope

This enforcement policy covers the following functional areas:

- Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Enforcing minimum Housing standards to prevent injury and ill health,
- Bringing empty homes back into use,
- Licensing of caravan sites and mobile homes

3 General Principles

When carrying out enforcement action it is important that the Council works within the statutory framework set out and that it follows best practice and procedure. All enforcement work will be carried out in accordance with the Environmental Health Enforcement Policy.

In particular, the Council is committed to acting in a fair and consistent manner and has adopted this enforcement policy as part of this commitment. When exercising its enforcement functions, the Council will act in such a way that is

- Transparent
- Accountable
- Proportionate
- Consistent
- Targeted only at cases where action is needed

4 Priorities for Intervention and Enforcement

4.1 Landlords & Tenants

The private rented sector is an essential to housing provision. It is recognised that many landlords and tenants work together to ensure that their homes and properties are of a high standard and provide safe and healthy accommodation. Housing teams across Newark and Sherwood District Council work to promote and support the private rented sector. From time to time and as part of projects such as Newark and Sherwood's Integrated Independent Living Models, grants and financial assistance may be part of Housing Standards Interventions.

However tenants in the private rented sector can also be vulnerable and subjected to unacceptable housing conditions. Where the council becomes aware of such cases they will be prioritised for intervention and enforcement.

4.2 Owner Occupiers

Normally we will not prioritise owner-occupiers for action as statistically these homes are safer and the owner has far greater control and power to remedy any hazards in the property. A private tenant would not have this control or power. However where the Council knows there is a serious hazard in an owner occupied property we may have to take formal action in accordance with our statutory duty.

4.3 Targeted Enforcement

To ensure that we meet our policy and enforcement objectives effectively, we will from time to time need to target our enforcement activity to specific subjects. For example this may be:

- On particular individuals or organisations who persistently commit offences or their activities result in the need for us to work proactively to meet our objectives or;
- Where a person is recognised by the Council and statutory partners as vulnerable and in particular need of support.
- On specific types of properties for example Houses in Multiple Occupation or Empty Homes;
- The need to work with partners on specific enforcement activities.

5 Proportionate Intervention and Enforcement

The council comes into contact with business, residents, agencies and organisations with different interests in residential properties within the district. When engaging with these customers a three stage approach of advice, informal interventions and formal enforcement will be taken, unless an urgent intervention is required to protect a person's safety.

5.1 Advice

Advice is given by way of providing and signposting customers to information on the internet, running campaigns and participating in Landlords Forums. It also includes pre-application site visits where a customer is seeks advice regarding the operation of a mobile home park, caravan site or House In Multiple Occupation, or other premises. Where the advice sought is extensive and specific to an individual application the Council reserves the right to make a charge based on an hourly officer rate for pre-application advice. (see paragraph 10)

5.2 Informal Interventions

Informal Interventions may include correspondence and inspection reports for licensed premises. Where the intervention arises as the result of a complaint about housing standards or disrepair all reasonable efforts will be taken to inform interested parties of the complaint before formal action is taken. A triage system is used to assess the severity of the complaint and where a complaint is assessed to be of minor or non-urgent disrepair, complainants and accommodation providers will be encouraged in the first instance to take responsibility for carrying out minor or non-urgent repairs without the need for a housing inspection and report. This approach also demonstrates the Council's proportionate and transparent approach. The triage procedure is shown in **Appendix 1**.

Informal action is also appropriate where;

- The act or omission is trivial in nature and it can be simply remedied.
- The views or circumstances of the occupiers or owners provide compelling reasons why formal action should not be taken.
- There are no concerns that the tenant may be subject to retaliatory action.
- It is not in the public interest to do so.

5.3 Formal Interventions

Where the triage system shows a complaint to be of significant disrepair or indicates that a hazard affecting the safety of the occupant within their home exists, the actions of the Council will be escalated straight to that of a formal intervention. This may include an immediate formal inspection or site visit. Where the inspection brings to light issues of concern that do not pose an immediate or serious risk to the occupants comfort or safety these will be brought to the attention of all interested parties in writing and advice given. Where a significant matter of serious concern exists or where the Council has a Duty to act and after considering all relevant information one or more of the following courses of action shall be taken. This includes the service of notice for a Category 1 Hazard or high scoring Category 2 Hazard as assessed under the HHSRS, see below para 6. Formal action may also be taken when Informal action has not resulted in compliance or progress. See **Appendix 1** detailing the PSH complaints procedure:

This list of enforcement options is not exhaustive.:-

- Statutory notices
- Simple caution
- Prosecution
- Works in default
- Penalty Charge Notice
- Compulsory purchase of property
- Enforced Sale
- Empty Dwelling Management Order
- Management order
- Any Other Legal Power , provided under relevant legislation

Not all of these options are available in every case. This underlines the need to consider powers available under each piece of legislation individually.

In accordance with the Environmental Health Enforcement Policy when making any decision on enforcement, officers will have regard to the following.

- The seriousness of any offence
- The owner/landlords past history
- The likelihood of retaliatory action or eviction
- Consequences of non-compliance
- The known or likely public benefit of the chosen enforcement action
- The willingness of the owner/landlord to carry out works and the confidence in them
- The likely ability of any witnesses to give evidence and their willingness to co-operate
- The Crown Prosecution Service's Code of Practice for Crown Prosecutors
- The risk of any hazard to health (see details below)
- Any relevant guidance or case law

6 Housing Act 2004 Duties & Discretionary Powers

The Act is mainly used to remove hazards in a property that puts occupiers at risk of injury or ill health. This legal provision applies to all property and tenures including owner-occupiers. Hazards are subject to a statutory risk assessment that determines whether the hazards are classified as a Category 1 or 2. A Category 2 hazard is less serious than a Category 1 hazard.

6.1 Duties

The Council are under a legal **Duty** to take formal action in the case of a category 1 hazard. The decision in deciding which type of notice or order to serve will depend upon a number of factors. These factors are contained in DCLG document "Housing Health and safety Rating System; Enforcement Guidance" and is summarised in paragraph 5.3.

6.2 Powers

The Council has the **Power** and may take enforcement action for category 2 hazards and will do so where it is felt appropriate. When exercising discretion the following matters will be taken into account.

- The wishes of the occupier
- Whether there are high scoring category 2 hazards
- Where there are multiple hazards;
- Whether the occupants are in the high risk group in relation to any hazards present
- Whether it is reasonably practicable to remedy the hazard;
- Whether the defects have a significant effect on the occupants well being
- Whether the landlord had a record of poor maintenance
- Whether the landlord is accredited with a recognised accreditation scheme
- Whether the landlord has agreed to remedy the defects
- Whether the property or person is within one of the Council priorities;
- Whether the hazard is likely to become more serious if not dealt with, for example, damp can often lead to the property fabric deteriorating.

7 Works in Default

Under certain pieces of legislation the Council is empowered to carry out works in default and recover the costs. Works in default may be carried out where: The recovery of costs is considered below at para 10.

A notice has not been complied with within the specified time

- There is no prospect of the person responsible carrying out the work, e.g. the person is absent or infirm
- Speedy abatement is required, e.g. where there is an imminent risk of injury or ill health
- The circumstances are such that works in default are a more appropriate or effective remedy than prosecution
- The problem persists after prosecution.
- Where a landlord has not complied with a 28 days remedial notice under the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 the Council must carry out works in default

8 Prosecution

Prosecuting someone is a serious matter and will be considered carefully on a case-by-case basis. When considering prosecution officers must follow the guidance in the Code of Practice for Crown Prosecutors

- Where criminal offences have been committed officers may consider prosecution is an appropriate way of dealing with the offence when:
- A simple caution is not appropriate or the person accused has refused to accept the offer of a simple caution; or

- There is a risk to public health and safety or of environmental damage as a consequence of the breach; or
- The breach was as a result of a deliberate act or following recklessness or neglect; or
- The approach of the offender warrants it, e.g. repeated breaches, persistent poor standards; or
- A legal notice or order has not been complied with or no reasonable progress made in relation to its requirements; or
- Obstruction of an officer in the course of their duty; or
- When a person continues to commit offences despite being informed by the Council of these; or
- The refusal or provision of false information.

Please note this is not an exhaustive list and each case will be considered on its individual merits.

9 Penalty Charges Notices

Under some legislation, the Council can serve a Penalty Charge Notice. These are: The fee associated with these FPN's are set each year under the Councils Fees and Charges Review.

- The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015
- Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act

10 Charging Policy

10.1 Charging for Housing Act Notices

The Housing Act 2004 allows Councils to charge for taking enforcement action that results in service of a notice. Local Authorities have a **Duty** to deal with Category One Hazards within a property and a **Power** to deal with Category Two Hazards. It is now proposed that where disrepair within a property is assessed under the Housing Act to be a Category One Hazard rated A,B or C, (that is a serious risk of harm is likely to a person within the vulnerable group) formal action will always be taken by way of serving a Housing Act 2004 Enforcement Notice, for which there is a charge, with the exception of a Hazard Awareness Notice.

The charge will be calculated on the average hourly rate of the Enforcement Officers time capped at a maximum of 5hrs. In most cases the fee will be between £150.00 and £250.00 (2017 salary scales)

However this charge will only be levied where there has been an inadequate response to reduce the risks to below a D rated hazard. Any other costs such as obtaining specialist reports will be recovered. Where a person presents as being vulnerable or it is in public interest to do so the fee may also be waived. This decision will be made by the Environmental Health and Licensing Business Manager. It is intended to use the definition of vulnerable as attached in **Appendix 2**.

Where the notice is fully complied with within the time allocated by the Council, then the costs charged relating to officer time and administration will be waived. Any other costs such as the obtaining of specialist reports will be fully recovered by the Council.

10.2 Recovery of costs borne by the Council when carrying out Work in Default

Where work in default is carried out following non-compliance of a Statutory Notice the Council will recover costs relating to officer time the actual cost of carrying out investigation and remediation work. Where a charge for enforcement action is levied, firstly a request for payment will be made and it will be registered as a local land charge until paid. If appropriate and legislation allows charges may also be registered on the deeds.

There will be discretion to waive the charge when it is not reasonable to expect a person to pay for charges for the enforcement action taken. Where a person presents as being vulnerable or it is in public interest to do so the fee may also be waived. This decision will be made by the Environmental Health and Licensing Business Manager. It is intended to use the definition of vulnerable as attached in **Appendix 2**.

10.3 Charging for Pre-Application Advice

Where advice is sought by a person operating a business, who wishes to apply for a license to run a HMO, Mobile Home Park or caravan site and the advice sought is extensive and specific to an individual application the Council reserves the right to make a charge based on an hourly officer rate for all site visits and pre-application advice there given.

11 Training and Development

Appropriate resources will be made available for training officers to enable them to successfully carry out their duties within this policy.

12 Authorisations

In accordance with the Council's constitution, only officers with suitable qualifications, experience and level of competency to enforce housing legislation to the required level, will be authorised to undertake an enforcement role.

Authority to exercise executive functions in relation to Private Sector Housing has been delegated to the Business Manager for Environmental Health and Licensing as detailed in the Councils Constitution. These powers have then been further delegated where considered appropriate and necessary.

13 Equality Impact Assessment

This policy aims to promote the Council's objectives of improving environmental quality, promoting prosperous communities, health and well-being.

Care has been taken to ensure that application of these policies will not result in discrimination against any of the equalities groups. This document is covered by the Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) for the overarching Corporate Enforcement Strategy.

Housing Standards Complaint Procedure.

Initial Contact with the Customer

- 1 Request for Advice or Assistance logged as a Service Request
- 2 SR allocated by SEHO to an investigating officer.
- 3 Triage call made to the customer
- 4 Enquiry sheet completed to determine if there is a serious or imminent risk of harm to the occupant or others. The request is categorised as urgent, routine or low priority

Urgent Service Requests

Where a serious and imminent risk of harm is identified using the triage assessment and a vulnerable group is present at the property the following action will be taken.

- 1 Identify the landlord or managing agent from tenancy agreement & or Land Registry search
- 2 Where ever possible contact the Landlord or managing agency by phone and ask if they are aware of the housing defect and if they plan to carry out an urgent repair.
- 3 Arrange a visit that or the next working day

Immediate Risk Found During Present.

- a. If the matter is so serious that it needs immediate intervention refer to the SEHO or Env Manager for the service of relevant notices or orders and if necessary to carry out Emergency Remedial Action or Work in Default. Follow the Statutory Procedure.
- b. Send written notification to Landlord stating that a complaint has been received about a serious housing standards issue and asking for them to carryout urgent work and including s239 notification that a full HHSRS inspection is also to be carried out. Explain that if an Improvement Notice is served it will chargeable.

Where a serious and imminent risk of harm is identified using the triage assessment and a vulnerable group is not present at the property the following action will be taken.

- 1 Identify the landlord or managing agent from tenancy agreement & or Land Registry search
- 2 Where ever possible contact the Landlord or managing agency by phone and ask if they are aware of the housing defect and if they plan to carry out an urgent repair.
- 3 Serve a s239 and arrange a visit to carry out a full HHSTS inspection as soon as possible and within 5 days of the original Service Request being received.

Immediate Risk Found During HHSRS Assessment

- a If the matter is so serious that it needs immediate intervention refer to the SEHO or Env Manager for the service of relevant notices or orders and if necessary to carry out Emergency Remedial Action or Work in Default, following all Statutory Procedures.

Serious Risk & High Scoring Hazards Found

- c. Following the full HHSRS inspection and report.
- d. If Cat 1 hazards are identified, or multiple or high scoring Cat 2 hazards serve Improvement Notice or if extenuating circumstances a Suspended Improvement Notice.

Low Scoring Hazards Found

- e. Follow the procedure for routine complaints.
- f. If Cat 1 hazards are identified, or multiple or high scoring Cat 2 hazards serve the relevant Housing Act Notice or if extenuating circumstances a Suspended Improvement Notice
- g. If low scoring hazards are found that do not justify the service of notice contact the owner with advice & close the complaint.

Routine Service Requests

- 1 Following the triage telephone call
 - a. Send written notification to Landlord that a complaint has been received about
 - b. housing standards issue and asking for them to contact the tenant and inspect the property within 14 day and there after carry out repairs. Explain that it may be necessary to visit the property to carry out a full HHSRS . The letter will include an explanation that we have a duty to deal with Cat 1 and a power to deal with Cat 2 by way of Improvement Notice and that if an Improvement Notice is served it will chargeable.
 - c. Send letter to tenant acknowledging receipt of SR advising the tenant to contact landlord to arrange repairs and asking to be contacted in 14 days if situation has not been resolved.
 - d. Situation unresolved after 14days.
 - e. Serve s239 Notification
 - f. Carry out full HHSRS inspection and report.
 - g. If Cat 1 hazards are identified, or multiple or high scoring Cat 2 hazards serve Improvement Notice or if extenuating circumstances a Suspended Improvement Notice
 - h. If low scoring hazards are found that do not justify the service of notice contact the owner with advice & close the complaint.

Low Priority Request for Service

Where the complaint is of a minor defect or hazard not covered under the Housing Act 2004, the landlord and tenant will be given advice and asked to resolve the situation informally between them. They will also be invited to contact us again if the situation deteriorates.

Types and Application of Housing Act 2004 Notices

Notice Type	Category 1 Hazard	Category 2 Hazard
Improvement Notice	Most common notice that will be used for Category 1 hazards. Although it's mainly used for rented accommodation, it may also be used for properties with owner-occupiers where there is a concern for the health of the occupants. An example would be in the case of a fire hazard in a multiple occupied property (flats).	This notice will often be used to require works to deal with category 2 hazards as part of a notice to remedy category 1 hazards. May also be used where there are high scoring category 2 hazards that may affect the health of the occupants or are likely to be a cat 1 hazard in the future if the works are not carried out.
Suspended Improvement Notice	This may be used occasionally. For example where the occupier refuses to have works carried out or the work is not practical with the current occupiers.	This may be used occasionally. For example where the occupier refuses to have works carried out.
Hazard Awareness Notice	Not normally used for serious hazards except where the owner occupies the property. In this situation the owner is in full control whether to remedy the hazard and simply notifying the owner of the hazard is believed to be sufficient.	This notice is often used where there are recommended works to be carried out but they are not serious enough to warrant an Improvement Notice. May also be used for a high scoring hazard if an owner occupies the property.
Prohibition Order	Used very occasionally. Mainly used where improvements are not practical or where it's more practical to prohibit certain age groups. Main use is for dealing with overcrowding. It may also be used to prohibit the use of unsuitable parts of a property such as cellars or attic rooms	This order is not normally used for Category 2 hazards.
Suspended Prohibition Order	A Suspended Prohibition Order may commonly be used where an owner occupies the property or in cases of overcrowding.	This order is not normally used for Category 2 hazards.
Emergency Prohibition Order	Only used in very exceptional cases. An Emergency Prohibition order will be served where there is an imminent risk to health or injury and prohibiting the use of the property is believed to be the only solution.	This order is not normally used for Category 2 hazards.
Emergency Remedial Action	This will only be used in exceptional cases. There has to be an imminent risk to health or injury. The Council can carry out Works immediately and recover their costs from the owner.	This action is not normally used for Category 2 hazards.

Definition of Vulnerable

Someone who has and may need help with everyday living. This includes disabled people who have physical or sensory impairments, learning difficulties, who suffer from mental illness or emotional distress or are frail older people; and who for any other reason are unable to care for themselves or protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.”

We will also take consider whether someone is financially vulnerable, vulnerable due to a medical condition or vulnerable due to a personal situation not covered by the above definition.

When making decision on whether to waive a fee the Council will take the view that:

“where a person is providing accommodation for others the paramount duty is to ensure the accommodation is safe and healthy to live in”

This means that only in exceptional circumstances will a Landlord have fees waived on grounds of vulnerability.

DRAFT

ANNUAL REPORT DETAILING THE EXEMPT REPORTS CONSIDERED BY THE HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide the Homes & Communities Committee with a list of the exempt business considered by the Committee for the period 17 May 2016 to date. Members have the opportunity to review the exempt reports and request further information. The rule is defined in paragraph 18 of the Constitution entitled 'Right of Members to Request a Review of Exempt Information'.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The Councillors' Commission at its meeting held on 25 September 2014 proposed a number of changes to the Constitution, one of which being that 'the Committees undertake an annual review of their exempt items at their last meeting prior to the Annual Meeting in May', this was ratified by the Council on 14 October 2014.

2.2 Members will be aware that, they have the opportunity to request under Rule 18 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules, that exempt information should be released into the public domain if there are substantive reasons to do so.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 The following table provides the exempt business considered by the Homes & Communities Committee for the period 17 May 2016 to date:

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Exempt Paragraph	Opinion of Report Author as to current status of the report
12.09.16	Update on the Review of CCTV	3	Could be released into Public Domain

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

That Members consider whether the contents of the reports noted in paragraph 3.1 above should be released into the public domain.

Reason for Recommendation

To advise Members of the exempt business considered by the Homes & Communities Committee for the period 17 May 2016 to date.

Background Papers - Nil

For further information please contact Nigel Hill – Business Manager Democratic Services on Ext: 5243.

Kirsty Cole
Deputy Chief Executive