



NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date and Time:	Thursday 3 March 2022 at 7.00 pm
Place:	Council Chamber
Enquiries to:	Committee Services Committeeservices@hart.gov.uk
Members:	Bailey, Clarke, Cockarill, Kinnell, Neighbour (Leader), Oliver, Quarterman and Radley

Joint Chief Executive

CIVIC OFFICES, HARLINGTON WAY
FLEET, HAMPSHIRE GU51 4AE

AGENDA

This Agenda and associated appendices are provided in electronic form only and are published on the Hart District Council website.

Please download all papers through the Modern.Gov app before the meeting.

- **At the start of the meeting, the Lead Officer will confirm the Fire Evacuation Procedure.**

- **The Chairman will announce that this meeting will be recorded and that anyone remaining at the meeting had provided their consent to any such recording.**

1 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING 5 - 13

The minutes of the meeting of 3 February and Extra Cabinet of 8 February 2022 are attached to be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence from Members*.

**Note: Members are asked to email Committee services in advance of the meeting as soon as they become aware they will be absent.*

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare disposable pecuniary, and any other interests*.

**Note: Members are asked to email Committee Services in advance of the meeting as soon as they become aware they may have an interest to declare.*

4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

Anyone wishing to make a statement to the Committee should contact Committee Services at least two clear working days prior to the meeting. Further information can be found at:

[Public Participation leaflet 2021.pdf \(hart.gov.uk\)](#)

6 HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2022-27 14 - 53

To seek Cabinet approval for the adoption of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27.

RECOMMENDATION

That the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy attached as **Appendix A** be recommended for adoption by Cabinet.

7 HOUSING CAPITAL FUNDING FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES IN NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING 54 - 64

This report sets out a proposal to ringfence a proportion of the Council's housing capital funds to support Registered Provider's (housing associations) to provide additional energy efficiency measures in their new affordable homes.

RECOMMENDATION

1. For Cabinet to approve a scheme to install additional energy efficiency measures in new build housing association affordable housing that will bring energy efficiency beyond the current building regulation standards.
2. That £250k of housing capital funds are ring-fenced up to March 2025 for this purpose, at which time the scheme will be reviewed.
3. Specific sites will be brought to Cabinet to approve the spend.

8 AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE COMPLAINT POLICY

65 - 79

This is a report from the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel which provided guidance and advice on how the Councils Corporate Complaint Policy could be updated and improved. The report seeks Cabinet approval on the new Corporate Complaint Policy, to be supportive of the work that is ongoing to assist in the successful roll out and ongoing management of the Policy from April 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Cabinet approves the adoption of the new Corporate Complaint Policy and supporting information published on the website.
2. Cabinet approves the intention to develop systems to help manage day to day complaints and provide high level trend data as part of the corporate suite of data provided on a quarterly basis to Overview and Scrutiny.

9 REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN POSITION

80 - 91

This report contains the capital and revenue outturn for the nine months ending 31 December 2021. The report also contains a full year (to 31st March 2022) capital and revenue outturn forecast and 2021/22 debt write offs above the delegated officer level.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Cabinet notes the report including the revised projections and significant revenue variations highlighted in paragraph 4.3 and Appendices 1 and 2.
2. That Cabinet note the provisional full year revenue outturn position as of 31st December 2021 of an overspend of £488K overspend before any agreed drawdowns from earmarked reserves.

3. That Cabinet note the provisional capital outturn position as of 31st December 2021. The forecast for total capital expenditure for the year ended 31st March is £21.1M.
4. That Cabinet notes the debt write off requests summarised in Section 6 to the value of £27,425.

10 EASEMENT - EX TRAVIS PERKINS SITE IN HARTLEY WINTNEY 92 - 98

To seek approval to grant an easement across land located to the front of Primrose House and the former Travis Perkins Builders Merchants, Albion Place, Hartley Wintney and to seek delegation of authority to negotiate the final terms of the easement.

This report and its appendices are exempt from publication.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Cabinet approve the principle to granting an easement to Stratfield Homes (Hartley Wintney) Ltd to allow access to the planned housing development on the ex-Travis Perkins site. This is on condition that the developers pay an agreed sum as stated in paragraph 4.1 plus full cost recovery of legal and surveyors costs.
2. That the Head of Environmental and Technical Services, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Finance is given delegated authority to negotiate the final terms of the agreement.

11 URGENT DECISION: APPOINTMENT OF PSAA TO APPOINT EXTERNAL AUDITORS 99 - 103

This is to note that the Urgent Decision was taken to appoint Public Sector Audit Appointments to procure external audit services on our behalf. This is a continuation of existing arrangements.

12 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME 104 - 107

To consider and amend the Cabinet Work Programme.

Date of Publication: Wednesday, 23 February 2022

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 1

CABINET

Date and Time: Thursday 3 February 2022 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

Bailey, Clarke, Cockarill, Kinnell, Neighbour (Leader), Oliver, Quaterman and Radley

In attendance: Axam, Crookes, Farmer, Forster (from 7.14pm), Smith

Officers:

Patricia Hughes	Joint Chief Executive
Emma Foy	Head of Corporate Services & S151 Officer
Joanne Rayne	Finance Manager
Helen Vincent	Committee Services Team Leader

101 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2022 were signed as a correct record.

102 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies received.

103 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Joint Chief Executive, Patricia Hughes and the Finance Manager, Joanne Rayne declared interests for Item 8 as they are both Directors of the Housing Company.

104 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Following announcements made by The Chancellor today, The Chairman asked the portfolio holder for finance to read out a statement.

'The Chancellor today announced help for households with their energy costs. This follows a rise in the energy price cap. All domestic electricity customers will receive £200 off their energy bills from October 2022. This will be applied directly by the energy company, and it will then be recovered from customers in five equal instalments over the next five years beginning in 2023. It is effectively an interest free loan to assist households whilst the wholesale gas prices are high.

In addition, households in England in Council Tax Bands A-D will receive a £150 rebate made by authorities which will not need to be repaid. It is estimated Hart District Council will charge Council Tax to 18,045 households in bands A-D in

2022-23 meaning that the total rebate will be in excess of £2.7m across the district. This is a grant not a loan.

In addition, there will be some funding available for vulnerable people and those on low incomes who receive Council Tax Support across all bands.

Government is consulting on how these schemes are best administered although we expect that we will be responsible for all rebates and discretionary rebates.

The Chairman then asked the Joint Chief Executive to give a brief update on the associated Omicron Business Grants that was agreed under Urgency Provisions on 11 January 2022 in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to prevent any delay in implementation of the grant scheme which was noted.

105 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

None.

106 MINUTES FROM THE CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January were noted.

107 MINUTES FROM THE CIVIC QUARTER REGENERATION WORKING GROUP

Minutes of the meetings held on 10 January and 25 January 2022 were noted.

108 REPORT OF SCRUTINY PANEL ON THE OPERATION OF HART HOUSING PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMPANY

The Joint Chief Executive and Finance Manager left the meeting at the start of this item at 7.06pm.

Cllr Smith supported by Cllr Farmer presented Members with a report from the Housing Company Scrutiny Panel which provided an update of the performance of the company to enable the financial projections to be included within the budget for 2022/2023. Both Members of the Scrutiny Panel highlighted to Cabinet the business plan, reports, performance of the company and challenges met.

Noting for review were the additional start-up costs being higher at the beginning than anticipated due to snagging issues and early dilapidations and extra work carried out by the Agent. Members expressed concern that all snagging costs should be recovered from the developer.

Members raised questions regarding:

- The potential small risk for Shareholders and amending the Articles of Association. Legal advice would be sought at Member's request.
- Opportunities for future growth and resources required for future investments.

- To fully support the Scrutiny Housing Panel to meet twice a year.

DECISION

That:

1. The positive performance of the Housing Company against the initial business plan be noted (see 4.2)
2. The updated financial projections of the Housing company were agreed for inclusion within the budget for Hart District Council 2022/2023.
3. That Cabinet agreed not to amend the Articles of Association and bear the small risks associated with these items (see 4.4).
4. That Cabinet agreed to reverting to the original plan for the Scrutiny Panel to be convened twice per year (see 4.9).

The Joint Chief Executive and the Finance Manager returned to the meeting at 7.27pm.

109 FUTURE OF CAB YATELEY BUILDING

Cabinet were updated on the intended change in delivery strategy of services by Hart Citizens Advice and the opportunities this presents to work with other Public Sector organisations, in delivering vital services to our community. The Hart building in Royal Oak Close, Yateley (The Building) is currently occupied by Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) and Members were asked to approve to progress the following:

1. CAB move from The Building into the APEX, Ground Floor, Civic Building.
2. Agree in principle for Oakley Health Group (OHG) to move into The Building, dependant on agreement of lease terms.
3. Delegation to complete lease agreements with CAB and OHG.

Members questioned the:

- Organisations benefitting from making use of the Organisation's assets and being treated fairly by the Council.
- VAT charges on the commercial rent received and the VAT liability on the rent being covered by the grant given.
- Asked for reassurance that services received from CAB will maintain a high quality and if we have influence on how they provide their services.
- Requesting CAB prioritise their front-line services and secure delivery through the grant scheme.
- Amend the recommendation to state that Office presence in the APEX Centre to be consolidated.

- Strategic decisions made by CAB to move from physical presence to operations via the internet and online.
- The additional cost of outreach sites and facilities.

Cllr Bailey moved to make an amendment to the recommendation for clarity for residents and for Cabinet to note the desire for the CAB to retain a physical presence in Yateley and to extend this model to other parts of the district and to note the expressed willingness by Oakley Health for CAB to be able to have a presence in the form of a CAB building in Yateley. Members unanimously agreed.

DECISION

That Cabinet agreed:

1. The cessation of the existing Tenancy at Will arrangements with Hart Citizens Advice for the building at Royal Oak Close in Yateley.
2. A new lease with Hart Citizens Advice that would consolidate the service from Yateley to the Apex Centre within the Civic Offices, and consolidates the lease agreements into one single agreement, based on the Heads of Terms as set out in appendix 1.
3. Subject to agreement to points 1 and 2, that Cabinet agreed in principle the occupation of Oakley Health Group into The Building at Royal Oak Close, Yateley, based on the Heads of Terms as set out in appendix 2.
4. That Cabinet delegated the Joint Chief Executives in consultation with the Deputy Leader, authorisation to complete the lease agreements based on the Heads of Terms as set out in appendix 1 and 2, with both Hart Citizen Advice and Oakley Health Group (or other NHS body, so appointed to deliver, see paragraph 4.11).
5. That Cabinet recommended to Council, that subject to the conclusion of the lease arrangements with Hart Citizens Advice, as set out in appendix 1, that their core grant is increased to £220K.
6. That cabinet noted the desire for the CAB to retain a physical presence in Yateley and to extend this model to other parts of the district.
7. That Cabinet noted the expressed willingness by Oakley Health for CAB to be able to have a presence in the form of a CAB building in Yateley.

110 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Members were presented with the draft Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2022/23 which incorporated the Annual Investment Strategy and Prudential and Treasury Indicators for approval.

Members sought clarification on the capital programme and the element of maintenance and capital work requirements. It was explained that pure maintenance is funded through revenue budget and an update will be provided to Members. Capital budget requests are challenged before adding to the capital programme.

An updated list of investments was requested by Members, and it was agreed that this will be provided to all attendees of the Committee.

RECOMMENDATION to Council

That Cabinet recommend approval to Council of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and Capital Strategy.

111 DRAFT BUDGET 2022/2023 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

This report provided a summary of the revenue and capital budget proposals for 2021/2022 to be approved by Cabinet and recommended to Council. The report also included the statutory statement of the Head of Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer) to Council on the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of reserves. This proposed budget included funding provided in the provisional finance settlement for 2022/2023 which was published on December 16th, 2021. The final settlement is expected imminently.

The anticipated multi-year Spending Review was once again replaced by a short-term Spending Round. This limits any meaningful financial planning to one year. Whilst best estimates have been made for future years, this report therefore could not give any realistic projection beyond 2022/2023. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy is provided in Appendix 2.

In view of the Government statement made earlier it is anticipated that any spend on Council Tax rebates will be covered by grant from Central Government.

RECOMMENDATION to Council

1. That the level of Council Tax for 2022/23 be increased by £5 and set at £186.84 for a band D property.
2. That the summary revenue budget for 2022/23 as set out in paragraph 13 of this report be approved.
3. That the capital programme for 2022/23 as detailed in Appendix 1 be approved.
4. That no changes be made to the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23 but that consultation on a new scheme takes place in Quarter 3 2022/23 for implementation in 2023/24.

112 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was considered, and an amendment was made to the description of the Annual Car Parking report for March which is an annual report for on street parking and is a contractual requirement by Hampshire County Council.

113 EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION

The following item contained exempt information.

DECISION

Members decided that the public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to, on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information

114 REORGANISATION OF CORPORATE SERVICES

The purpose of this report set out proposals for the reorganisation of Corporate Services and aims to provide resilience, reduce the number of direct reports to head of Services and also ensure that resources are available in key areas such as procurement to match forecast demands and skills gaps. In addition, the restructure amends job descriptions which reflect the old Capita outsourced situation and further insources and accountancy service from Mendip. This paper was endorsed by the staffing committee in January 2022.

Members asked questions regarding the impact this reorganisation had on the internal audit work following the retirement of the previous head of audit. It was explained that this work was largely outsourced but these contracts would be consolidated. Client management roles that were historically in Capita contracts and are now inhouse are included in the procurement and contracts officer roles.

Members were advised that the process would start in March to April involving consultations with staff, involving new job descriptions and the new structure and will take on board Officers views for understanding the fundamental principles.

DECISION

That Cabinet approved the principles of the reorganisation and new structure as set out in appendix two to enable the Head of Corporate Services to consult with staff on the proposed new structure.

This report and its appendices are exempt from publication.

The meeting closed at 8.16 pm

EXTRA CABINET

Date and Time: Tuesday 8 February 2022 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

Bailey, Clarke, Cockarill, Kinnell, Neighbour (Leader), Oliver, Quaterman and Radley

In attendance: Ambler, Axam, Coburn, Farmer, Smith, Worlock

Officers:

Helen Vincent Committee Services Team Leader

115 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies had been received.

116 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

117 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no announcements.

118 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

None.

119 EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION

The following item contained exempt information.

DECISION

Members decided that the public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to, on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

120 EFFICIENCY SAVING: SENIOR MANAGEMENT RESTRUCTURE

Cabinet considered the recommendations made by Staffing Committee to Cabinet on the future restructure of the Senior Management Team to secure efficiency savings.

DECISION

The proposals presented to Cabinet were approved.

This report and its appendices are exempt from publication.

The meeting closed at 8.46 pm

CABINET

DATE OF MEETING:	3 March 2022
TITLE OF REPORT:	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27
Report of:	Head of Community
Cabinet Portfolio:	Community
Key Decision	No
Confidentiality	Non Exempt

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval for the adoption of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy attached as **Appendix A** be recommended for adoption by Cabinet.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 It is a statutory requirement for the Council to publish a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy that sets out its plans to prevent and tackle homelessness in the area.
- 3.2 Officers have conducted a review of homelessness, including a desktop review of data and carried out a wide range of consultation including a series of workshops with staff and stakeholders. A telephone survey of recent service users was conducted, and face to face interviews at Heathlands Court were carried out. An online survey was sent to a comprehensive range of organisations and individuals, including all Members.
- 3.3 Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee were invited to join a Task and Finish Group, to assist in the review of services and in developing the priorities for the new strategy. Members of this Group have also been involved in reviewing the draft strategy before bringing it forward to this committee.
- 3.4 The review of homelessness and wide-ranging consultation carried out has helped to inform the strategy's delivery plan which has been developed with our key partners and reflects the views of consultees. The Delivery Plan will help the Council develop its approach to preventing and tackling homelessness over the next 5 years. The strategy document, including the delivery plan, is included with this report at **Appendix A**.

4 MAIN ISSUES

4.1 The review of local homelessness and rough sleeping and the associated consultation activity identified 4 key priority areas for the Council to focus on. These are in keeping with the Government's national priorities and the Council's Corporate Plan and Corporate Vision.

4.2 The four key priorities identified are:

- **Prevention** - having measures and initiatives in place to prevent homelessness from happening.
- **Intervention** - having targeted support in place for those in crisis, at the point of homelessness.
- **Recovery** - having support in place to help to rebuild lives.
- **Partnerships** - working together to find effective longer-term solutions and interventions.

4.3 In essence, the strategy sets out a range of activity over the short to medium term that will drive forward improvement in the delivery of the services that are provided to those who find themselves facing homelessness. As with the outgoing strategy, the focus is on preventing homelessness, by working as 'upstream' as possible, to resolve people's housing issues before they hit crisis point. The Council cannot achieve this in isolation and the delivery plan sets out workstreams and actions that will be delivered by a range of local partners.

5 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DISCUSSION

5.1 Following a discussion at Overview and Scrutiny in January 2022, Members recommended that the Strategy be adopted by Cabinet. There were a number of minor revisions requested by the committee, such as improved numbering and version control. These have been taken on board in this final version of the strategy.

5.2 The draft strategy provided to committee has since also been improved through graphic design work.

5.3 Overall, the Strategy was well received, and the priorities identified were supported.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

6.1 It is a legal requirement to publish a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and so there is no alternative to bringing this forward for adoption.

7 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or The Hart Vision 2040

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy links directly into the Corporate Plan priorities including "A Thriving Local Economy", specifically in supporting residents in becoming economically active, "Healthy Communities

and People”, specifically, supporting residents in taking control of their own health and wellbeing and ensure access to housing.

This Strategy also links directly to the Council’s Vision 2040. “The place to live” priority identifies the need to improve affordability so families can stay close together and help our communities flourish.

7.2 Service Plan

Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan?	Yes
Is the proposal being funded from current budgets?	Yes
Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?	Yes

7.3 Legal and Constitutional Issues

It is a legal requirement that the Council publishes an up-to-date Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan. This strategy also supports the Council’s statutory homelessness and rough sleeping duties and assists in guiding the work of the Council and its partner agencies.

7.4 Financial and Resource Implications

All the financial and resource implications associated with this Strategy will be met within existing resources, which includes the use of central Government Homelessness Prevention Grant.

7.5 Risk Management

The Council is required to publish this strategy. If it fails to do so, it is unlikely that it will be able to access any government funding in relation to tackling homelessness.

In addition, it is essential to have a strategic vision for the work of the homelessness service. The strategy and the delivery plan tie the council and its partners in to delivering an effective, efficient and continually improving cross sector provision for residents.

8 EQUALITIES

8.1 This Strategy has been evaluated using the Council Equality Impact Assessment which identified that the Strategy is likely to have a positive impact on the following groups -

8.2 Women, Men, Disability, Children and Young People, Older Adults, Pregnancy and Maternity, Low Income/ benefits/ Unemployed, Living in Rural Areas.

8.3 No negative impacts were identified in the EIA assessment.

9 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

10 ACTION

10.1 It is requested that Cabinet approves the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27.

Contact Details: Kirsty Jenkins - Kirsty.Jenkins@Hart.gov.uk
 Nicola Harpham - Nicola.Harpham@Hart.gov.uk
 Kelly Watts – Kelly.Watts@Hart.gov.uk

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27							
B	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan 2022-27							

Background papers:

**Add rows as required to box below*

*Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are **unpublished** works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.*

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Equality Impact Assessment							
N/A							



Hart District Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2022-2027

JANUARY 2022

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Foreword

We are living in unprecedented times amid an on-going shortage of affordable housing, compounded by a pandemic and all the associated pressures arising from these issues.

In such times, planning suitable service provision going forward and supporting service users is increasingly difficult to deliver. At Hart we strive to continue providing high quality services despite the challenges we face and take pride in providing a responsive and person-centred approach which has been shown through the Council's approach to dealing with the difficulties of recent times.

Affordability is a key issue in the district and rising house prices and rent levels place increasing pressures on households which has led to many people approaching the Council for advice and support and finding themselves facing homelessness.

Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2018 the Council has successfully assisted many households and prevented homelessness for many. Hart has accessed and utilised Government

funding to provide services where they were needed most and to target support for rough sleepers and homeless families.

I am very pleased to support this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy which sets out the Council's approach for preventing and tackling homelessness and in the district. It aims to build upon services already being provided and to work with our local stakeholders to continue to build upon our successes and make positive differences to peoples' lives.

Councillor Stuart Bailey
Portfolio Holder for Community
Hart District Council

1. Introduction

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, all housing authorities must carry out a review of homelessness in their area and publish a homelessness strategy which sets out what it plans to do to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.

This strategy has been developed following a review of homelessness in Hart which has included a desktop review of national and local data, discussions with colleagues involved in delivering the statutory homelessness service, engagement with partners who deliver local services that homeless people access, talking to those who have been homeless and experienced Hart's homelessness service and an assessment of resources that can be targeted towards tackling homelessness in the future.

The Council established a Members Task and Finish Group to assist in the strategy development.

1.1 Aims

The strategy has been shaped in partnership with a range of stakeholders and colleagues from statutory and voluntary agencies, who have been engaged through a range of meetings, workshops and online surveys. Their help has assisted the Council develop a strategy that will tackle

homelessness by taking a multi-agency approach.

Several key issues and actions have been identified that will enable the Council to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in the district over the life of this plan. The actions have been prioritised in discussions with colleagues, stakeholders' workshops, Member workshops and through a review of best practice in homelessness.

The action plan is available as a separate document and is published on the Council's website.

1.2 Reviewing and updating

Progress on the actions identified through this strategy will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Housing Solutions Manager and a Community Services Officers' group as well as through the 'Here for Hart' themed workshops.

Elected Members from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will also monitor performance against the annual Service Plan, through the Service Panel process.

2. About Hart

Hart is a largely rural district with around half the population of the district living within the two main urban areas of Fleet and Yateley.

There are an estimated 35,500 homes in the district with 30% of the population living in rural areas. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) June 2020 mid-year population estimates a population of 97,608, and the ONS projected population for Hart by the end of the term of this strategy in 2027 is 100,220. Hart has an ageing population.

There is a high demand for all types of housing, with the ONS (2021) recording that in 2019, 80% of the population were owner-occupiers (40% owned outright and 40% owned with mortgage), 13% were living in private rented accommodation and 7% living in rented affordable homes.

Hart is a desirable place to live but this comes at a high price with the average house price in Hart being £415,000 (ONS – Sept 2020) which means that to afford to buy a property of that price there is a ratio of 10 x average earnings. Property prices seen within the rural areas of Hart can be significantly more.

Rental levels in the district are also very high with households requiring an income of £17,140 to afford £500 a month to rent just a room in a house, and £27,430 to afford to rent a 1 bed flat at £800 a month. Private rented family sized accommodation is in the region of £1,250 a month for a 3 bed and £1,700 a month for a 4 bed or larger home, which require incomes of £42,860 and £58,290 respectively. With the average annual income for residents of Hart at £41,419 with an annual lower quartile income for the district of £27,829 (ONS – Sept 2020) private renting is not an affordable or long-term option for many local people without assistance.

AVERAGE RENTS AND REQUIRED INCOME LEVELS IN HART

Property Type/ Size	Average Rent	Required Income (pa)
Room	£500	£17,140
Studio	£675	£23,140
1 bed	£800	£27,430
2 bed	£950	£32,570
3 bed	£1250	£42,860
4+ bed	£1700	£58,290

Source: ONS (Sept 2020)

One of the Council's key corporate priorities is to support the delivery of affordable housing in the district. The Council does not own its own housing stock; it was transferred to a housing association in 1994 and it works closely with housing associations, or Registered Providers (RP's), working in partnership to enable the delivery of affordable housing in the district.

This can be affordable home ownership, like shared ownership, or rented affordable housing. As of November 2021, there were 507 people on the Help to Buy Agent 3 register for shared ownership housing, and the average annual household income of an applicant registered for a shared ownership property is £38,056, with average savings of £24,125.

The demand for rented affordable housing exceeds supply with 1,468 people on the Council's housing register for rented housing as of April 2021 and only 198 properties being available to let last year (2020-21).

MAP OF HART DISTRICT SHOWING ALL WARDS



2.1 Council Priorities

The Council’s Corporate Plan is currently being reviewed and updated. It will identify key strategic priorities providing a golden thread through to the Homelessness Strategy. The new Corporate Plan priorities will feed through into this strategy action plan through the officer working group.

The Corporate Plan 2017-2022 sets out the following strategic priorities and key actions for the Council.

HART DISTRICT COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2017-2022 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- A Thriving Local Economy
- A Clean, Green and Safe Environment
- Healthy Communities and People
- An Efficient and Effective Council

2.2 The Council has adopted a new long-term Vision to 2040

The Vision for Hart: “To become the best place to live, work and enjoy”. It provides a clear direction for Hart and will shape the council and working environment. It will help to improve the Council’s use of

resources and align its strategies to reach the outcomes Harts communities deserve. The priorities identified within the Vision will be aligned with the corporate plan, service plans and projects.

“The place to live” priority identifies the need to improve affordability so families can stay close together and so keyworkers can afford to live in Hart and help our communities flourish.

2.3 Council Values

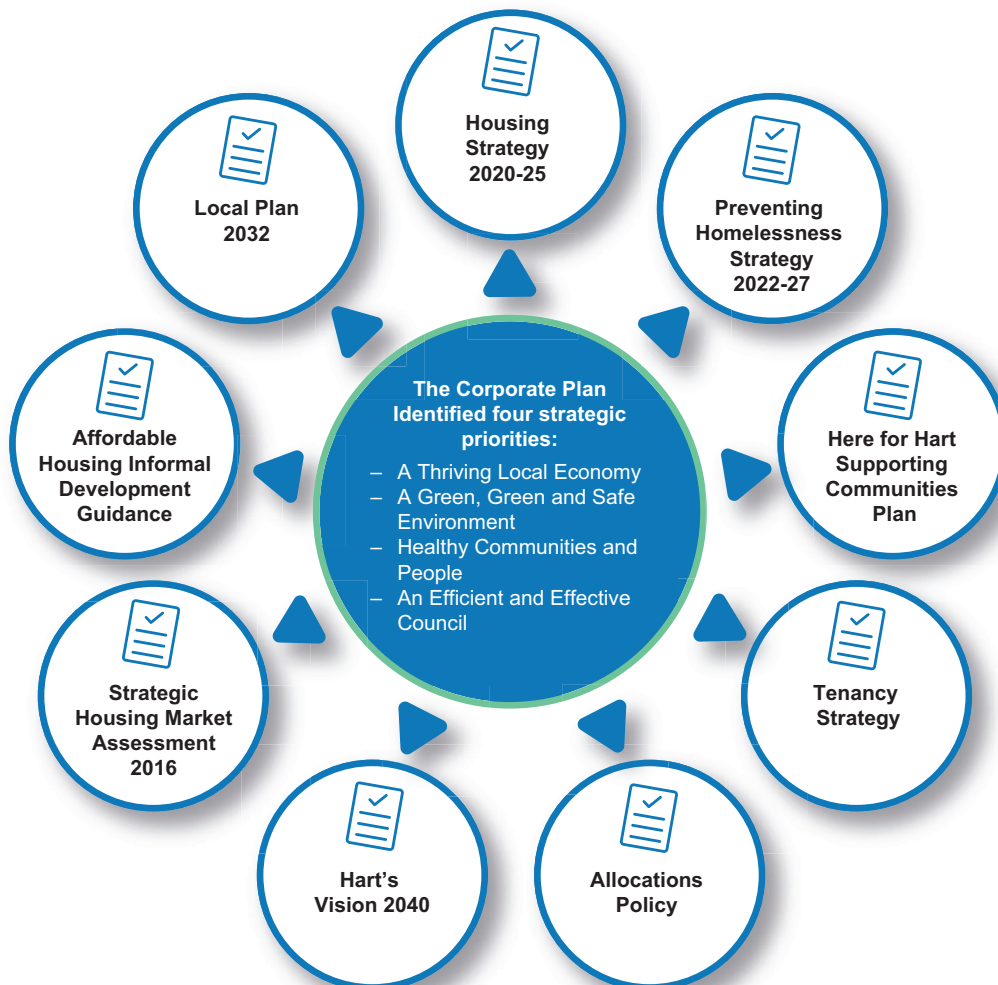
The Council Values shape the day-to-day way the Council and its staff operate and help ensure that all staff are consistently aware of how their role contributes to the achievement of corporate aims and objectives, creating shared values in their delivery.

COUNCIL VALUES ‘HART’

- **H** – being helpful
- **A** – being approachable
- **R** – being responsive
- **T** – taking ownership

2.4 Links to other Council Strategies and Plans

The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy links into the aims and actions set out in other strategies that sit within the Communities Team, as well as strategies and policies that sit under Place, such as the Local Plan. The objectives of the Council seen through wider corporate policies, including the Corporate Plan also have influence on this strategy.



3. Homelessness and Its Causes

3.1 What is homelessness?

In simple terms homelessness means not having a home. A home is not simply a building. Although most people associate homelessness with rough sleeping, that is far from the whole story. There are many circumstances where a person may have a roof over their head but are still homeless.

PEOPLE MAY BE HOMELESS IF:

- They are staying with family or friends “sofa surfing”
- They are staying in temporary accommodation including a hostel, night shelter or bed and breakfast
- They are at risk of violence or abuse in the home, or threats of violence or abuse
- They are living in unsafe or poor conditions that affect their health
- They have no legal right to stay in the property
- They are living apart from family because they don't have somewhere they can live together
- They are being evicted or the house is being repossessed

3.2 Achievements From the Previous Strategy

Through continued work to deliver improvements within the service and on-going collaboration with partner

organisations, Hart's Housing Team have delivered many of the actions identified in the 2016-2021 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Key achievements include:

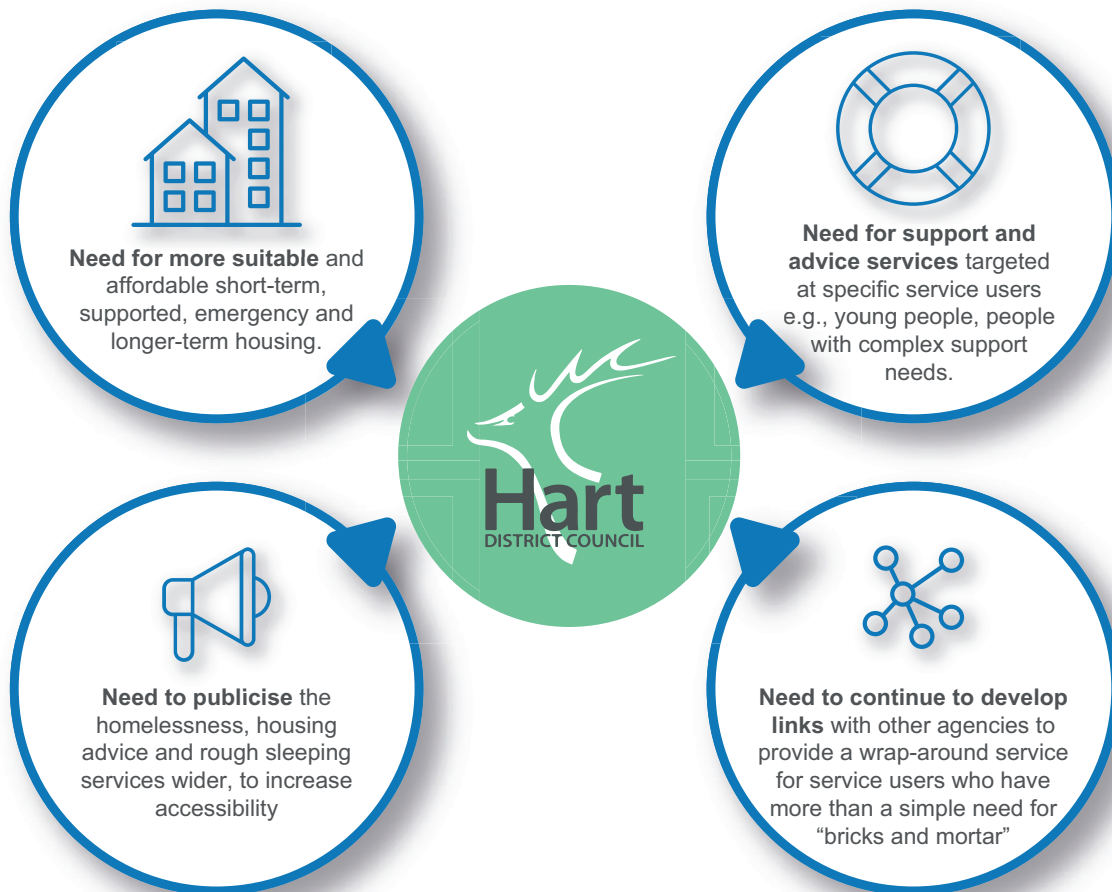
- Taking the learning from the Government funded ‘trailblazer’ project and embedding them into the homelessness service.
- The adoption of ‘No First Night Out’, keeping people from sleeping rough on the streets of Hart.
- Shifting the focus of the service towards a person-centred approach, adopting the principles of creating a psychologically informed environment for the delivery of services.
- A move towards a whole service approach, aimed at tackling the wider causes (and results) of homelessness including support in accessing other services and employment services.
- Delivery of the skills café, helping clients get job ready.
- Working with VIVID housing association to provide digital inclusion services.
- Improved signposting and links between agencies providing support and advice, through the development of the county wide duty to refer protocol.
- Targeted work with landlords in the private sector to improve access to good quality, well-managed private rented accommodation. Delivery of online training courses to local landlords
- Working with households adversely affected by the benefit cap.

3.3 Challenges

Hart is a relatively affluent and largely rural area where the cost of renting and buying a home is very high. Many support services and specialist accommodation are located

outside the district and accessing good quality, affordable, suitable homes is a real challenge.

Some of the key challenges identified through our work with stakeholders and internal teams include:



3.4 Homelessness and the Pandemic

In March 2020, central Government announced its ‘everyone in’ policy, which focussed on making sure everyone who was rough sleeping was brought inside for the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic. The ambition of this policy was to protect the health of rough sleepers and to prevent wider transmission of the virus.

A local cell was convened by Hampshire County Council to coordinate the effort across Hampshire, and through this

process each rough sleeper was offered accommodation.

This was an extraordinarily busy time for the Housing Solutions Team, dealing with requests for support, seeking accommodation and making sure that support was in place to make sure accommodation that was sourced was sustainable. There were other challenges facing the team during this time. The challenge of shared living associated with temporary accommodation meant social distancing was hard to maintain (or enforce). Whilst the Council’s temporary

accommodation gave people their own front door, the ability to access supported accommodation for single people became impossible. Additionally, huge numbers of hotels were closed and only those supporting the ‘everyone in’ effort were allowed to remain open.

In addition, a fear of sharing accommodation emerged. A significant number of approaches were made for help where housing situations had broken down. This was most common where a lodger was asked to leave because of fear of sharing a home during the pandemic, or where a lodger worked in a high-risk environment and was seen to be a threat to the health of the main household (e.g., was a social care worker). National data shows that during the pandemic, the most common triggers for homelessness were no longer being able to stay with friends and family.

Hart provided temporary accommodation for 36 people during this time under the ‘everyone in’ policy, and made placements in local hotels, most often the Travelodge.

Additionally, there were other issues seen that service users were approaching the council for support with:

- Increased reports of domestic abuse during lockdown (exacerbated by the stay-at-home requirement).
- Loss of employment, resulting in an increase in affordability issues (and subsequent rent and mortgage arrears).
- Debt, as furlough meant 20% less income for households on an already tight budget.
- Inability to access second-hand furniture and white goods for new tenancies as the Lions store was closed.

Central Government imposed an eviction ban during the pandemic, and this did protect most people from losing their homes. However, the ban ended at the end of May 2021, and this will undoubtedly have an impact on the number of people

turning to the council for help, although the full result of this has not yet been seen. Courts are full and possession actions will take some time.

The pandemic is not over at the time this strategy was published and there are still big concerns for some of our residents.

Key issues yet to be resolved include:

- Poverty
- Loss of employment as the furlough scheme ends and businesses stop receiving government support.
- Debt – Hart Citizens Advice have reported a 45% rise in requests for help with dealing with debt.
- Rent arrears – the government has recognised this to be an emerging issue and in November 2021 awarded each local authority an additional grant to assist with tackling rent arrears.
- Homelessness as pent-up possession action proceeds through the courts.

The Council is pleased to report that all those brought in under the Government’s ‘everyone in’ policy, have been moved on to sustainable longer term housing solutions.

3.5 Prevention Work and Early Intervention

The Council prides itself on preventing significant levels of homelessness, through early intervention work.

Some of the key successes include:

- Development of a ‘Duty to Refer’ protocol across Hampshire, including training partner agencies on its use and value, resulting in early awareness of potential homelessness.
- Implementation of a ‘No Second Night Out’ policy in 2018 and a ‘No First Night Out’ Policy in 2020. The No Second Night Out policy meant that nobody needed to spend a second night out on the streets in Hart; this was soon pushed forward, to mean that nobody needs to

spend even one night sleeping rough, due to active and responsive outreach

- Implementation of a pre-court action protocol (with an annual refresh), enabling all housing associations to notify the Council of any early possession action.
- Homelessness outreach service provided directly by the Housing Solutions Team, to prevent vulnerable tenancies from breaking down, pending service users engaging with other support providers.
- Landlord liaison service – providing quick interventions for tenancy issues when flagged by a private sector landlord.
- Promotion of the severe weather emergency protocol (SWEPE), to prevent rough sleeping in winter.
- Access to the Hardship Fund for essential purchases to enable independent living.
- Tailored supported accommodation was secured to address the complex needs of service users, on a personalised case by case basis
- Creation of Here for Hart and launch of the Here for Hart Supporting Communities Plan which brings together in one place information about the Council's priorities, partnerships and projects which tackle social and health inequalities, nurture supportive and inclusive communities, and support communities to recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

3.6 What is Homelessness Prevention Work?

The Housing Solutions Team will talk to people as early as possible about their housing options. Where there is a threat of homelessness, the team work hard to prevent it from happening.

This will include:

- Home visits.

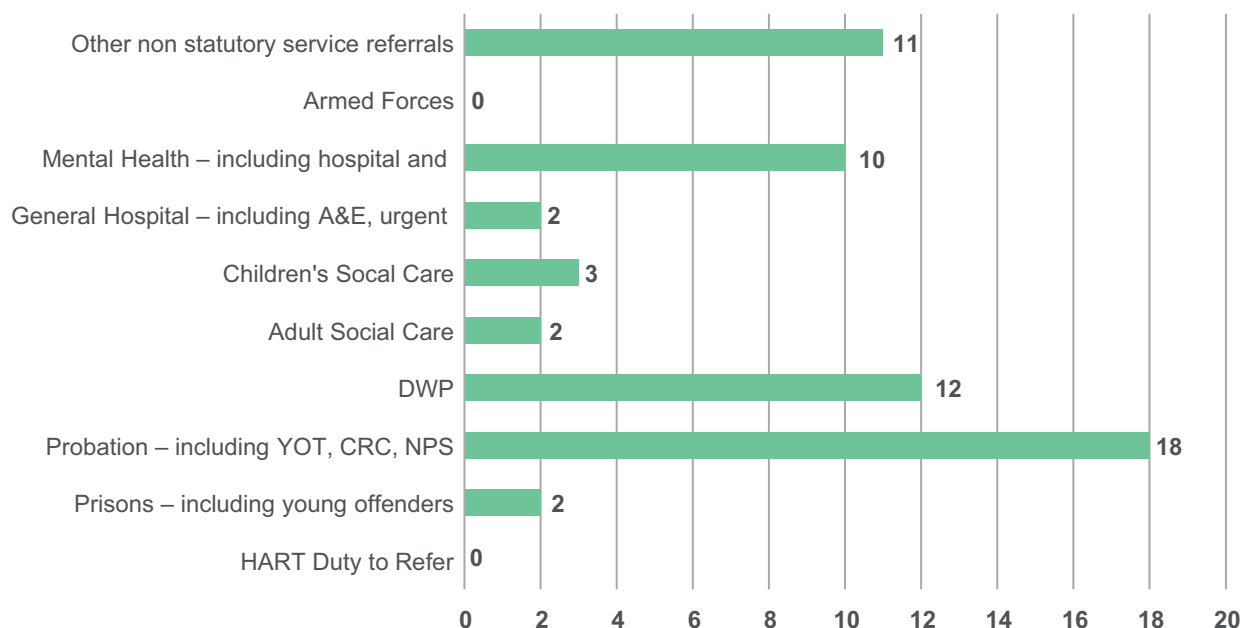
- Working with service users to create Personalised Housing Plans with agreed steps to prevent or relieve homelessness.
- Checking validity of notices (and often enabling longer stays before people need to leave accommodation).
- Negotiation with landlords, parents, family and friends to enable people to stay in their current accommodation.
- Use of discretionary housing payments to address difficulties with rent payments.
- Use of Government housing and/or COVID-19 support funding.
- Provision of money and debt advice.
- Additional wraparound help including access to the Hart Employment and Skills Hub, referral to other support services such as mental health or referral to the Supporting Families Programme administered by the Children's Services Team.

3.7 Referrals to the Housing Solutions Service from Other Agencies

The Homelessness Reduction Act (2018) introduced a new duty to refer. This was a duty on other agencies to send a referral to the Housing Solutions Team when they were working with a service user who was threatened with homelessness. This duty provides additional opportunities for homelessness prevention and early intervention.

Hart led on developing a county wide approach and referral process, as it welcomed this new opportunity for early intervention work. As a snapshot, referrals received during 2020-21 are set out below.

DUTY TO REFER REFERRALS. NOVEMBER 2020 – NOVEMBER 2021



The graph shows that most referrals were received from probation, the Department of Work and Pensions, non-statutory services (e.g. – supported housing, GP wellness clinics), and mental health services.

3.8 Homelessness Applications and Decisions

The Council provides a free housing advice service to all residents; this is a statutory requirement. The focus of the service is providing good quality housing advice to

enable service users to deal with their own housing situation, and the prevention of homelessness. Where a service user is facing homelessness or is already homeless, they will make what is known as a 'homelessness application'. Each application must be assessed, and a formal decision issued in writing.

The total number of homelessness applications and decisions made every year in Hart over the last 4 years is shown in the chart below.

Year	Total No. of Approaches to Service	No. Prevented	No. Relieved	Not Homeless	Homeless Main Duty	Housing Advice Only (doesn't meet Government triggers)
2018/19	285	67	51	9	35	123
2019/20	213	62	55	4	21	71
2020/21	498	31	47	0	11	393
2021/22 (up to 12.08.21)	274	8	5	0	2	259

The figures are then further broken down into the separate duties the Council holds. These are: Prevention, Relief and Main Duty and those who were found to be “not homeless”.

Prevention – The prevention duty is intended to help a service user find a solution to their housing situation. Prevention duty is accepted if a service user is facing homelessness within 56 days. This duty may end earlier if prevention is successful within this period or may be extended if they are able to stay in their accommodation for longer. If they are made homeless during this period, a relief duty will then be owed. A prevention duty can end if:

- Service user can continue to stay where they are living.
- Service user finds somewhere else to live.
- The Council finds them somewhere else to live (for example a private rented sector tenancy).
- Service user becomes homeless.

The Council works hard to prevent as many people as possible from becoming homeless. This means most service users will either be assisted to remain where they are living or helped to find a private rented tenancy.

Relief – If a service user already has no accommodation, for example, they are sofa surfing, sleeping rough or all efforts to prevent homelessness during the 56-day prevention duty have failed, the Council owes them a ‘**relief duty**’ for the maximum of 56 days.

The relief duty ends when:

- Accommodation is offered to the service user as a final offer of accommodation – this can be in the private rented sector or a Part 6 offer of social housing.
- The service user finds themselves somewhere else to live with the assistance of the Council.

- The service user refuses a final offer of suitable accommodation
- 56 days has passed, the service user is a non-priority adult, and no further duty is owed.
- The service user is no-longer eligible, or loss of contact /no engagement with the client.

Main Duty – At the end of the 56-day relief duty, if the Council decides a service user is in priority need and not intentionally homeless, the Council is likely to owe them the main housing duty. This decision would not be made until the relief duty ends after 56 days where all efforts to facilitate a housing solution have failed.

The number of service users approaching the Council for assistance with their housing options over the last 4 years has increased by 46%, as shown in the table above. However, the total number of homelessness applications each year were steady for the first two then significantly reduced. This is likely to be attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic and the eviction ban, which resulted in less people being formally at risk of homelessness.

Those service users reaching the main duty stage remain consistently low as the service’s primary focus is on prevention and relief work and ensuring we prevent as many service users as possible from becoming homeless.

Analysis of the approaches being made has shown that most service users who approach the Council for assistance do so either before they are threatened with homelessness (at the triage stage) or within 56 days of becoming homeless (the prevention stage). This is the approach the Council would like to maintain. The earlier service users approach us for assistance, the more opportunity there is for us to prevent any homelessness occurring and keep them in their own homes where safe and appropriate to do so.

3.9 Personalised Housing Plans

Each service user who approaches the service because they are facing homelessness will have a 'Personalised Housing Plan'. This is produced by the Housing Solutions Team, in partnership with them, and sets out the agreed actions each of the two parties will take over the coming weeks and months. It essentially supports the work on homelessness prevention and provides a tool for leaving no stone unturned in exploring other housing options.

3.10 Temporary Accommodation

Hart District Council transferred all its housing stock to a housing association in 1994 as part of a housing stock transfer programme. As such, it does not have access to its own housing stock for use as temporary accommodation, other than one housing scheme it owns at Heathlands Court in Yateley. Whilst owned by the Council, it is managed and let by Vivid Housing Association. This is the Council's main resource for temporary accommodation and it comprises of 23 x 1- and 2-bedroom flats.

This accommodation helps the Council meet its legal homelessness duties and reduces its reliance on bed and breakfast and other forms of less secure temporary accommodation for residents. Whilst it continues to be an asset for the Council the building and accommodation have some limitations and the flats do not adequately meet the needs of larger households or those who require adapted and accessible accommodation.

There is a review underway of Heathlands Court; with a view to modernising the accommodation provided and making better use of communal areas.

The average length of stay in Heathlands Court is 36 months. The Housing Solutions Team manage exit plans for each resident and generally move on accommodation is into the private rented sector, officers use the time that clients spend in Heathlands Court to manage debts and give a period of stability to ensure successful and sustainable move on.

3.11 Bed and Breakfast

Where the Council needs to provide emergency accommodation, it uses bed and breakfast establishments. The use of B and B is kept to a minimum – it is both costly for the Council and inappropriate accommodation for families, except in an absolute emergency.

Below shows some key points in relation to Hart's use of B and B accommodation. The timescales are from November to October as this was when the data was collected.

During the year November 2019 – October 2020:

- 35 households were accommodated in B and B.
- The average length of stay was 13.5 days.
- No families were accommodated in B and B for over 6 weeks in line with Government guidelines.

During the following year, November 2020 – October 2021:

- 24 households were accommodated in B and B.
- The average length of stay was 15 days.
- No families were accommodated in B and B for over 6 weeks in line with Government guidelines.

There have been less people placed into B and B accommodation in 2020-21 but their stays were longer due to the complex nature of some of service users' needs and because of difficulties sourcing

suitable (specialist or supported) move on accommodation.

3.12 Other Temporary Accommodation Options

Where either Heathlands Court or Bed & Breakfast accommodation is inappropriate or unavailable, the council accesses other forms of short-term accommodation to relieve homelessness.

This can include:

- Refuge accommodation for those fleeing domestic abuse.
- Supported accommodation for those with identified support needs.
- Attempts to access other specialist supported housing schemes across Hampshire and beyond as necessary.
- The Life Project, which is supported accommodation for young mothers and children and pregnant women.

There is limited local provision within Hart so, the Housing Solutions Team must work hard to find suitable alternative options for service users, looking across Hampshire and its borders, and even beyond.

3.13 Use of the Private Rented Sector

The Council's Landlord and Tenant Liaison Officer has a proactive relationship with local private sector landlords and private rented housing is used for move-on accommodation for both temporary and permanent housing solutions. In 2019-20, the Council assisted 65 service users into the private rented sector and in 2020-21 this increased to 72.

These private rented sector homes are used either to prevent homelessness, or as a discharge of a homelessness duty owed. The Council assists and supports service users into the private rented sector in several ways:

- Assessment of affordability – looking at income and expenditure, maximising benefit take up, giving employment advice and advising on expenditure and debt.
- Providing Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to assist with short term affordability issues.
- Assisting with the required rent deposit and rent in advance to secure a home.
- Providing ongoing tenancy support to service users and referring to specialist support services where necessary.
- Liaising with landlords through the duration of the tenancy to ensure the tenancy runs smoothly.

All the above work mean that tenancies are sustainable, and landlords report high levels of satisfaction in working with Hart's Housing Solutions Team.

3.14 Rough Sleeping

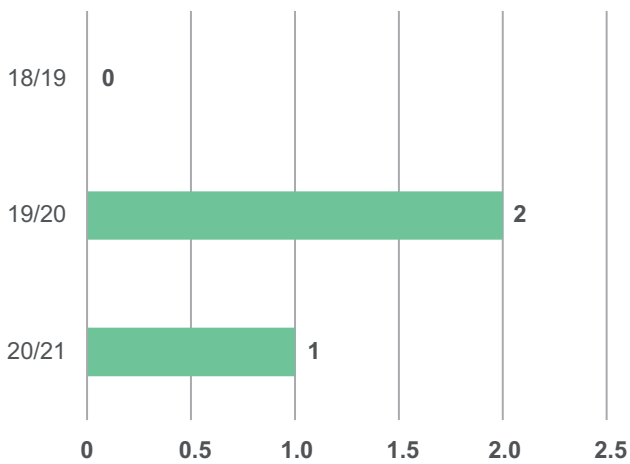
The Government published its rough sleeping strategy in 2018. It sets out the Government's plans to help people who are sleeping rough now and to put in place structures to end rough sleeping for good. The Government's vision is for halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027.

Hart has very low rough sleeping figures but takes the issue very seriously and provides a very reactive outreach service.

Through a joint bid with Rushmoor Borough Council for Rough Sleeping Initiative Funding (RSI) funding was secured to assist with supporting those who are rough sleeping. The bid has been successful over the last three years and has given access to specialised support for those who are the most complex and entrenched in rough sleeping. Hart's Rough Sleeping Action Plan outlines how the Council is working with partners to reduce rough sleeping in the district. It can be seen here: [Hart Ending Rough Sleeping Plan FINAL.pdf](#)

Every local authority is required to carry out a rough sleeper count every year. In Hampshire, this is achieved through an annual estimate. Each authority selects the same night in November and asks all agencies to report rough sleeping on that night. The figures are independently verified. The chart below shows the results of those counts for the last 3 years in Hart.

ANNUAL ROUGH SLEEPING FIGURES IN HART



Rough Sleeping levels in Hart remain consistently low. There is a ‘No First Night Out’ (NFNO) policy in place to support

people before they find themselves on the streets. Records show no evidence of any long term of entrenched rough sleepers in Hart; the Council works closely with central Government advisors and frequently respond to data requests from to ensure compliance.

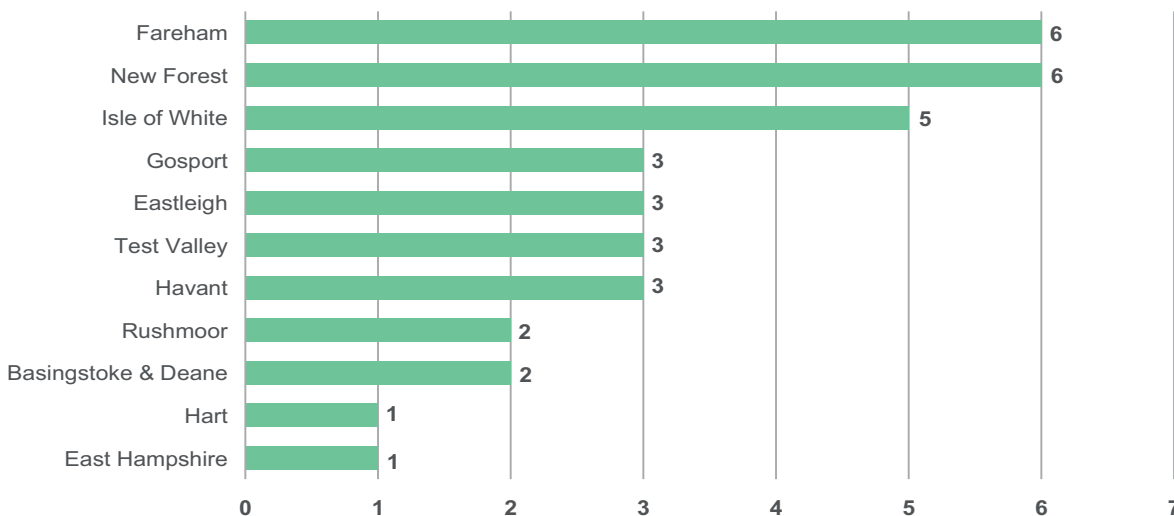
The Council adopts a ‘Housing First’ approach to tackling homelessness – where the provision of accommodation is pivotal and the support wraps around the individual to ensure they retain the accommodation and move on into independent living.

The Council has excellent links with local community Police force, through the Community Safety Team which allows for an excellent joined up approach towards safeguarding homeless people.

This is further strengthened through the RSI Partnership with Rushmoor Borough Council which supports the teams in meeting the health and social care needs of those experiencing rough sleeping.

The chart below shows the reported levels of rough sleeping across Hampshire as of the November 2021 official snapshot.

NUMBER OF ROUGH SLEEPERS



3.15 Street Link

StreetLink offers the public a way to report when they see someone sleeping rough, to ensure rough sleepers are connected to the local services and support available to them. It is delivered by Homeless Link. The service is funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and is part of Homeless Link, a national charity.

Hart has worked with Streetlink for the last 5 years and over that time has received several referrals. Particularly during winter, there are several social media campaigns to promote the service.

The table below shows the number of referrals made over the last 5 years.

When a referral comes in, a member of the Housing Solutions Team responds by going out to visit the rough sleeper that has been reported to work with them to bring them inside.

Year	Number of referrals to Streetlink
2017/18	3
2018/19	8
2019/20	7
2020-21	16
2021-22	8 to date (10/12/21)

As the table above shows, 2020/21 was a particularly busy year for referrals. This was largely due to the Government’s ‘Everyone In’ campaign – where every rough sleeper was expected to be assisted into accommodation during the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.16 Reasons for Homelessness

The top three reasons for homelessness in Hart have remained the same for the last 3 years.

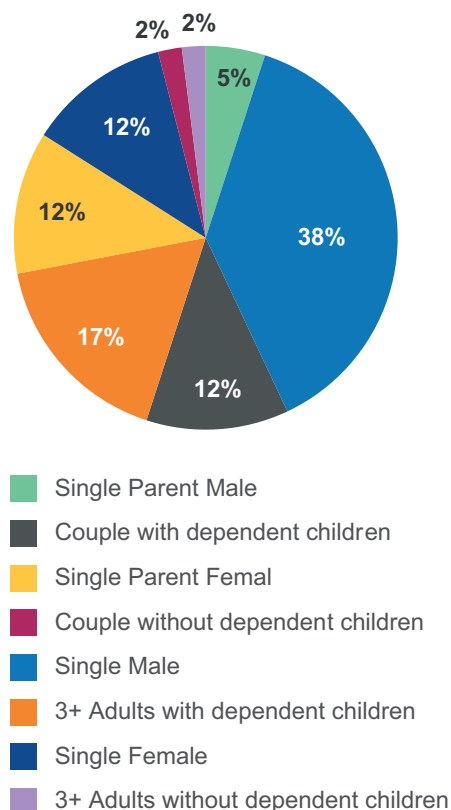
These are:

- ‘Asked to leave by Friends and Family’
- ‘End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy’
- ‘Violence or Harassment or Violent relationship breakdown’

3.17 Service User Profile

The chart below shows the composition of households using Hart’s Homelessness service in 2020/21.

**APPROACHES TO THE SERVICE IN 2020/21
BROKEN DOWN BY GENDER AND FAMILY COMPOSITION**

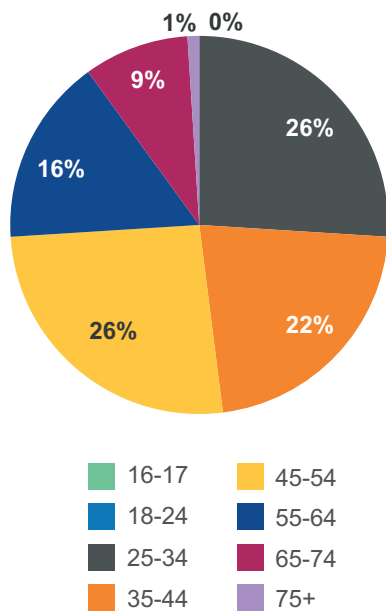


This data shows that most people using the service are single parent women, followed by single females, couples with dependent children and single males. Households of 3 or more adults with or without children make up the smallest numbers of households to use the homelessness service.

This chart shows the age ranges of the main applicants who used the Homelessness service during 2020-21.

(Taken from Live tables [DetailedLA_2020-21_Revised_dropdowns_fixed.ods \(live.com\)](#))

**APPROACHES TO SERVICE IN 2020/21
BROKEN DOWN BY AGE**



This shows that most service users are aged 18-24 and 35-44, followed by 25 to 34-year-olds. People aged 75 and over did not access the service in 2020/21 and only 1% of 65 to 74-year-olds and 9.1% of 55 to 64-year-olds used the service.

In 2020-21, 42% of those who were homeless in Hart had identified support needs. This included 14.1% who had a history of mental health problems, 9.1% physical ill health and disability, followed by

6.1% with alcohol dependency needs and 5.1% with a history of offending.

The chart on the next page shows the range of support needs of all those accessing the service in 2020-21.

From this data, further exploration is needed to understand how accessible the service is for different age groups, household types and for people with different support needs.

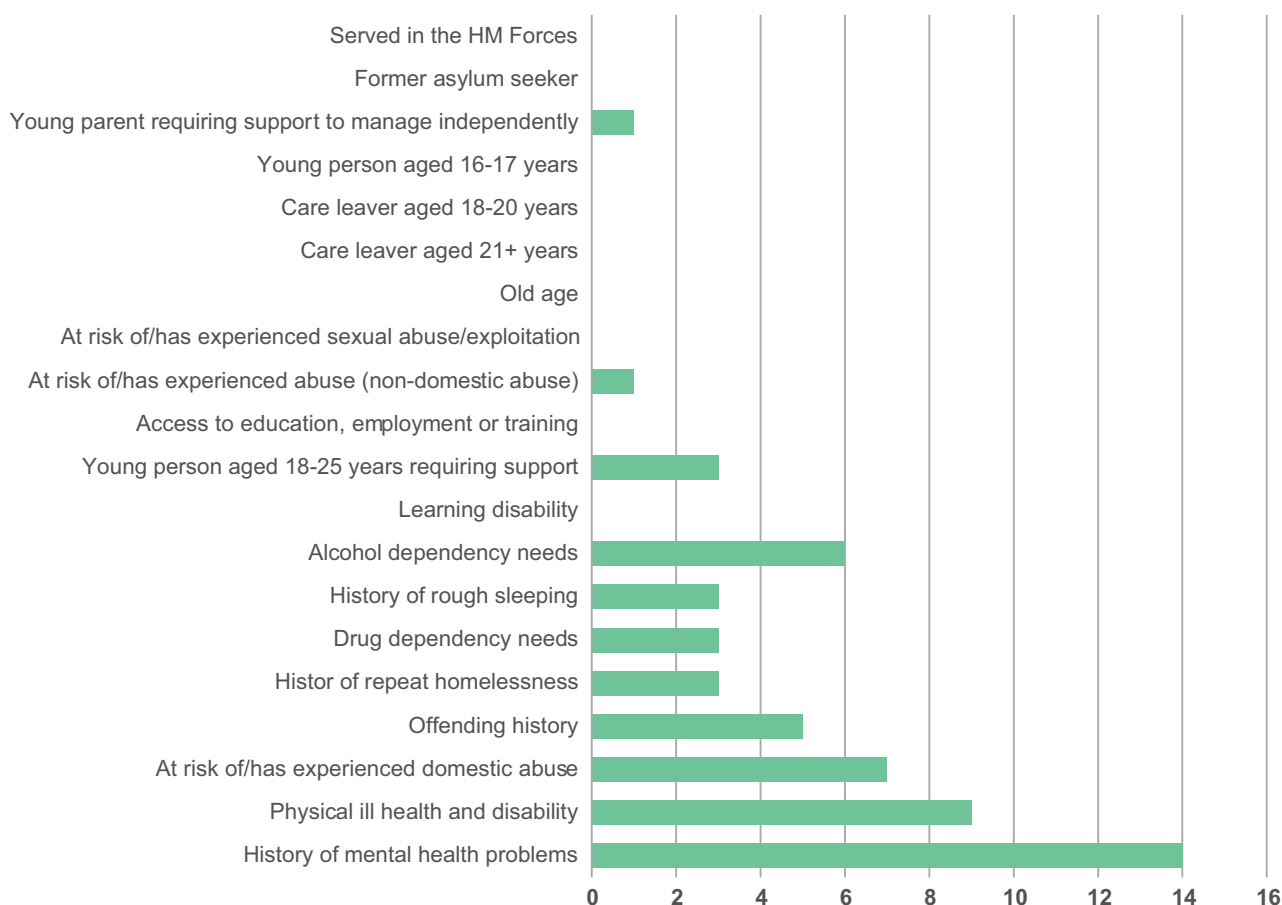
3.18 Domestic Abuse

Over the last five years, the Council has been the lead authority for a Hampshire wide domestic abuse project, called the Hampshire Making Safe Scheme. The focus of this was providing safe accommodation outside of a refuge setting and the provision of target hardening (security measures) so that residents can feel safe within their own homes. Early intervention and prevention have been provided by dedicated officers in front line health settings such as NHS Emergency Departments and maternity wards.

This scheme provided a model of best practice and was cited as such by the then Ministry of Housing. Much of its learning is reflected in the Domestic Abuse Act, and the projects managed by Hart are now commissioned and managed by Hampshire County Council, with new central Government funding.

Hart continues to be involved and takes the lead role as the Housing representative on the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership and has, during 2021, been active on working groups seeking to implement the Domestic Abuse Act locally and produce the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Strategy. The Council will continue to work with colleagues across Hampshire in delivering new initiatives aimed at supporting our residents who are affected by domestic abuse.

IDENTIFIED SUPPORT NEEDS TO THOSE APPROACHING THE SERVICE IN 2020/21



3.19 Assisting Asylum Seekers to find Settled Homes

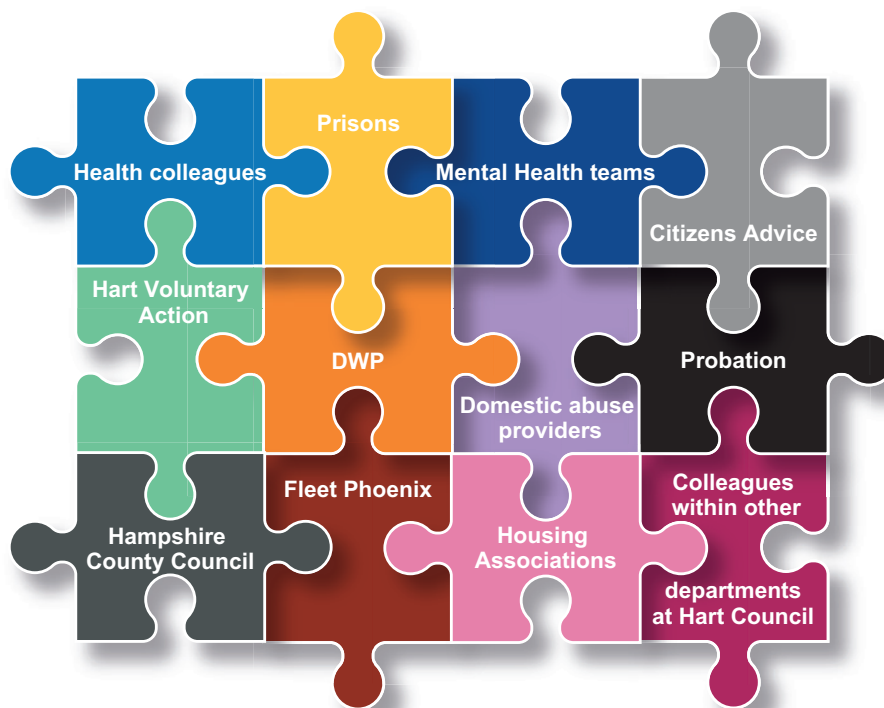
During 2021, the Council took on new projects to provide accommodation for Afghan families fleeing their homes and being relocated to the UK by central Government. As part of a county wide approach, Hart offered 3 homes to Afghan families and at the time of writing, two families have moved in and settled well into their new communities.

We continue to work as a team across Hampshire, helping to provide homes and support to relocating evacuees.

3.20 Working with Others – Building a Network of Support

Homelessness can only ever be prevented through partnership working, and Hart has worked hard to forge successful and strong links with a range of agencies who can help officers and service users. This strategy itself is the result of joint work, exploring what more can be done and developing priorities for action.

HART WORKS CLOSELY WITH THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES:



Here for Hart was created in 2021 to provide a robust platform for multi-agency collaboration, ensuring effective joint working to support the community through COVID-19 recovery and beyond. It is the umbrella under which the Council works with partners and communities to help people stay well, feel included in their community, and supported through the challenges they experience.

3.21 Consultation

To carry out the review of homelessness, the Council engaged with a range of stakeholders, including service users, to find out their views on current services and ideas for future action. Specifically, stakeholders and service users were asked about:


- Views on current service provision.
- Issues and challenges organisations faced in tackling homelessness with their clients.
- Any gaps people identified in the advice, homelessness and rough sleeping services within Hart.

- What they felt the 4 main priorities should be included within this Strategy.

3.22 The main issues identified were:

- The need to provide clear information and signposting to publicise the services available for service users and referrers, including the out of hours service.
- The importance of providing a consistent level of service, being contactable and keeping people informed.
- The importance of building upon existing partnerships and links to develop improved multi-agency working to deliver a holistic approach to service provision.
- Supporting the provision of long-term, good quality affordable housing solutions as well as short-term and emergency housing.
- Providing services for a range of service users including single white men and suitable accommodation for young single women.

OUR SERVICE USERS WERE POSITIVE ABOUT THE SERVICE OVERALL AND COMMENTS INCLUDED



The team were helpful and broke down complex issues so I could understand them

I was kept updated on what was happening and I couldn't fault the staff, or the help received

- Working with private landlords to make appropriate and supported placements in good quality accommodation.
- Improved data reporting to enable officers to drill down into who is using the service and identify their specific needs.
- Improved data reporting to identify the key cause of homelessness to reduce recurring homelessness in Hart.
- Provide targeted advice and information services specifically for young people.
- Provide accessible, joined up services for people experiencing domestic abuse.
- Utilise appropriate communication for different service users including technology and social media platforms.
- Telephone survey with service users and temporary accommodation residents, using an independent third party, to encourage people to speak freely
- Face to face discussions with residents at Heathlands Court
- Questionnaire for local private landlords.
- Workshop with stakeholders and partners through the Here for Hart Group.

3.23 Engagement and Consultation has included:

- Workshops and discussions with the Housing Solutions Team.
- Questionnaire for the wider Community Services Team and staff within other departments at the Council.
- Questionnaire for key stakeholders.
- Questionnaire and workshop with local Councillors.

3.24 Resourcing Homelessness Provision in Hart

The housing advice and homelessness service is a statutory function of the local authority and as such is funded through the General Fund. The Council also receives a Homelessness Prevention Grant targeted, as the name suggests, at initiatives that prevent homelessness. The Council uses this to fund a specialist staff member, to support the rent deposit scheme, fund specialist debt provision, spot purchase emergency accommodation and as a flexible prevention fund to achieve targeted individual interventions.

3.25 Bidding for Additional Funding

The Council takes every possible opportunity to bid for additional funding to support residents who are in housing difficulties. There have been several recent successes including:

Rough Sleeper Initiative 2020-21 £92,000 (Shared with Rushmoor Borough Council)	Secured funding from MHCLG to continue the Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI), working in partnership with Rushmoor Borough Council. This project provides specialist support for complex single residents facing homelessness. Funding helps them secure and keep accommodation, as well as providing on-going one to one support.
Homelessness Reduction Act funding 2020-21 £35,000	Secured MHCLG funding to enable Hart to fully implement the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness. The funding has been used to provide practical support and accommodation for those facing homelessness.
Private rented sector funding 2019-20 £97,000	Secured funding to provide access to private rented sector homes for single households who would otherwise be excluded or difficult to place with a variety of complex need. One off funding.
Cold Weather Fund 2020-21 £5,000	Secured Cold Weather Funding for the Winter period 20-21, to cover the cost of providing emergency accommodation for those who would otherwise sleep rough.

3.26 Covid Grant Funding

Over the past year several Covid-19 grants have been awarded to local authorities from central Government. Hart has been able to target a small number of these to assist the vulnerable who have faced poverty and hardship throughout the pandemic. A hardship fund has been administered by the Housing Solutions Team and has been used for provision of a variety of things from, white goods, assistance with utility bill arrears to school uniform and food parcels.

3.27 The Role of Allocations

The overall aim of this strategy and the work of the Housing Solutions Team is to prevent homelessness wherever possible. Where this is not possible, there is a duty

to relieve homelessness, through the provision of temporary accommodation. As described earlier, temporary accommodation is largely in the form of Heathlands Court, from which service users move on from into the private rented sector.

It is important that access to permanent social housing is through the housing register. This makes access fair and equitable and based on assessed need and waiting time. There is no direct link between being homeless and securing a permanent housing association property.

Most of those who are homeless will move on to the private rented sector and some will make housing register applications from that accommodation.

From April 2020 to March 2021 a total of 198 households were allocated a home

through the Council's Housing Register. These were 136 general needs, 34 older persons and 23 extra-care (for older people) properties.

Approximately 90% of all lets go to new housing register applicants and 8% to applicants seeking a transfer. Very few allocations are made to those who present to the Council as homelessness.

NUMBER OF APPLICANTS REGISTERED ON HART'S HOUSING REGISTER (AS OF 1ST APRIL)

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
1-bedroom need	740	666	795
2-bedroom need	482	388	410
3-bedroom need	177	152	206
4-bedroom need	60	57	57
TOTAL	1459	1263	1468

Below shows the average waiting times for applicants registered on Hart's Housing Register, broken down by bedroom need. The times stated reflects average waiting times for those placed in Hart's reasonable preference category Band C.

- 1 bed need = 2 years 3 months
- 2 bed need = 2 years 6 months
- 3 bed need = 2 years 10 months
- 4 bed need = no 4 bed homes let to Band C applicants within the past 12 months

3.28 Creating Sustainable Places to Live

Providing good quality, well-designed affordable homes on development sites is a vital part of addressing housing need in the district. Hart draws upon the housing needs information from the housing register to work with housing associations and developers to ensure that new affordable homes are the right mix of size, type and tenure to meet the housing need.

Over the last 5 years Hart has successfully delivered new rented affordable and shared ownership homes for people in the district who cannot afford to buy or rent privately because of the high costs of properties in Hart, shown in the table below.

Year	No. of Rented Affordable Homes	No. of Shared Ownership Homes
2016-17	79	70
2017-18	77	67
2018-19	78	50
2019-20	159	46
2020-21	58	92

3.29 Summary of Key Areas to Address

The information above highlights key areas to include in the Action Plan including:

- Increasing the understanding of what is needed to live independently; preparation for people to be tenancy ready.
- ‘Click before you Evict’ campaign to improve Information for landlords, and their tenants, to address issues in advance that could otherwise lead to an eviction.
- Providing advice and support for people experiencing domestic abuse and making their accommodation safe for those who wish to remain in their homes.
- Supporting the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021, review the local offering to survivors of domestic abuse who face homelessness or who need housing advice.
- Keeping up to date with new ideas and best practice relating to homelessness prevention and advice services.
- Drilling down into identifying who approaches the service and how to work with them even more effectively as early as possible.
- Reviewing links with a wide range of agencies who can provide additional services particularly for people with physical ill health and disabilities, substance misuse, a history of offending and mental health support needs and develop further if required.
- Exploring ways to improve networking with harder to access agencies to improve the overall service provision and holistic approach.
- Providing housing and homelessness advice and information specifically for younger people.

4. Priorities for the Future

From the review of homelessness and rough sleeping and consultation carried out to inform this strategy, 4 key priorities have been identified:

- **Prevention** – having measures in place to prevent homelessness from happening.
- **Intervention** – having targeted support in place for those in crisis.
- **Recovery** – having support in place to help to rebuild lives.
- **Partnerships** – working together to find effective solutions.

Prevention – Having measures in place to prevent homelessness happening

We will:

Make best use of available data and insight to inform preventative activity.

Continue to focus on prevention measures to encourage and enable people to access support early to prevent crisis situations.

Work with a range of agencies to target housing advice and information about homelessness

Work closely with other councils to share and learn from best practice

Scope out new initiatives to prevent homelessness.

Intervention – Having targeted support for those in crisis

We will:

- Develop or refresh referral processes with a range of organisations and services to improve information sharing and support provided.
- Work with others to provide suitable support services to assist in times of crisis.
- Develop referral processes and financial services for service users to access financial advice.

Recovery – Having support in place to help to rebuild lives

We will:

- Review the tenancy sustainment support on offer internally and externally to ensure it meets the needs of service users.
- Develop opportunities for clients to access employment, skills and education.
- Ensure there is a good supply of appropriate and affordable accommodation for people accessing the service, particularly young, single people and rough sleepers.

Partnerships – Working together to find effective solutions

We will:

- Explore opportunities for co-location of services.
- Review and develop further working protocols with health services including, hospitals, mental health, learning disability, physical disability, drug and alcohol misuse services.
- Proactively promote the service and raise awareness of what the housing solutions team does with other professionals and the voluntary sector.

5. Action Plan

The review of homelessness and the subsequent published strategy, gives rise to the creation of a homelessness strategy action plan.

This is a plan that sets out a range of actions that will improve the service offering for residents of Hart that find themselves facing homelessness.

The Action Plan is a separate document and can be found on the Council's website.

Further Information and Contact Details

If you require any further information, please
contact the Community Services Team:

Email: housing@hart.gov.uk

Telephone: 01252 774420

Hart District Council
Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
Action Plan 2022-2025

Responsible Staff Members:

Kelly Watts - Housing Solutions Manager

Guy Clayton - Social Inclusion & Partnerships Manager

Nicola Harpham - Strategy & Development Manager

Rachel Wilkinson – Community Safety Manager

Priority 1: Prevention - having measures in place to prevent homelessness from happening

	Action	Person Responsible	Completion date	Comments / Dependencies /Resources
1.1	Analyse available data to review the top 3 main reasons for homelessness and the causes for these, to monitor access to the service and to identify pathways to homelessness to inform future additional preventative activity.	Kelly Watts	April 2022 April 2023 April 2024 April 2025	Looking at main causes of homelessness using CA data and internal service data. Within existing resources
1.2	Review the service webpages and literature to ensure they are clear and accessible and available in a range of appropriate formats	Kelly Watts	April 2024 TBC - links to corporate timescales	Links to corporate website project.

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	for residents, service users and professionals.			Within existing resources
1.3	Create a friendly and informative short video to introduce the housing options service, what they can support with and let people know what to expect. Promote this as part of a set of videos created for Here for Hart.	Kelly Watts/ Guy Clayton	March 2023	Part of a wider piece of work due to be undertaken in Here for Hart programme. Resources – Communications Team.
1.4	Build upon existing services to develop more ways for people to access skills, training, employment and social inclusion opportunities.	Guy Clayton	March 2024	Here for Hart Supporting Communities' Plan. Within existing resources
1.5	Life skills development - for young people, people living independently for the first time and people who would benefit from assistance and advice to sustain a tenancy, to develop the skills and knowledge to manage money, access support, employment etc.	Guy Clayton	September 2024	Here for Hart Supporting Communities Plan. Within existing resources. Likely to commission externally.
1.6	Work with local schools, colleges and agencies working with young people to provide housing advice and information about homelessness including hidden homelessness, as an upstream prevention tool.	Guy Clayton Rachael Wilkinson	March 2024	Within existing resources plus commissioning external support

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1.7	Link into agencies working with young people to better understand the causes of youth homelessness and how these could be prevented.	Guy Clayton Rachel Wilkinson Fleet Phoenix Vision for Youth	March 2023	Look at how youth services prevent family breakdown and parental eviction and explore strengthening links. Within existing resources
1.8	Working with partner agencies to encourage digital inclusion for people accessing housing advice, homelessness and rough sleeping services.	Guy Clayton	June 2023	Here for Hart Supporting Communities' Plan. Within existing resources
1.9	Build upon existing success with using the private rented sector for short-term and longer-term housing solutions. Understand best practice and explore new initiatives.	Kelly Watts and Landlord Liaison Officers	April 24	Within existing resources
1.10	Implement a regular temporary accommodation inspection programme to ensure all TA including Bed and Breakfast is of a suitable standard for Council referrals.	Kelly Watts with Hart Environmental Health Team	March 23 March 24 March 25 March 26 March 27	Within existing resources
1.11	Proactively advertise the services available including the Out of Hours service for service users, Councillors, the public and other agencies and professionals.	Kelly Watts	December 22	With assistance from Hart's Comms Team.
1.12	Periodically test the quality of the Out of Hours Service.	Kelly Watts	Bi-annual every year	6 monthly mystery shopper type checks to be carried out.

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				Within existing resources
1.13	Review provision of services for survivors of domestic abuse, in line with the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021. Conduct a health check with the support (financial and other resources) of HCC.	Kelly Watts Vicky Atkinson - Hampshire County Council	March 24	Funding provided by Hampshire County Council

Priority 2: Intervention - having targeted support in place for those in crisis

	Action	Person Responsible	Completion date	Comments / Dependencies / resources
2.1	Develop referral processes for financial services for service users to access financial advice.	Guy Clayton	December 2023	Within existing resources
2.2	Refresh referral processes for service users to access skills, training and employment advice.	Guy Clayton	March 2023	Here for Hart Supporting Communities' Plan. Within existing resources
2.3	Refresh referral processes and joint working practices with prisons and probation.	Guy Clayton	September 2024	Countywide 'Minding the Gap' (Changing Futures) programme.

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				Within existing resources including discussions at county meetings
2.4	Refresh referral processes and joint working practices with hospitals.	Guy Clayton	September 2024	Within existing resources
2.5	Refresh referral processes and joint working practices with health services, including mental health, learning disability, physical disability, drug and alcohol misuse services.	Guy Clayton	September 2024	Within existing resources
2.6	Work with the Citizens Advice to develop methods to identify people at risk of losing their homes through mortgage arrears and repossession, because of the pandemic.	Kelly Watts/Guy Clayton	December 23	Within existing resources
2.7	Explore provision of safe accommodation with support for survivors of domestic abuse, linking to the Council's commercialisation strategy.	Nicola Harpham Vicky Atkinson - Hampshire County Council	March 23	Link with the keep well collaborative and Changing Futures - County-wide work. Within existing resources
2.8	Explore the need and possibilities to provide more shared accommodation in Hart for under 35's requiring affordable accommodation.	Kelly Watts	December 24	Consultation highlighted the need for good quality shared accommodation and options for single females. Within existing resources

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2.9	Ensure that there are suitable processes in place to assist care leavers who have accommodation problems and are homeless or facing homelessness.	Guy Clayton	March 2024	Within existing resources plus possible commissioning
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Priority 3: Recovery - having support in place to help to rebuild lives

	Action	Person Responsible	Completion date	Comments
3.1	Review the tenancy sustainment support on offer internally and externally to ensure it meets the needs of service users.	Kelly Watts	December 22	Link to review of Heathlands Court. Link to HCC Social Inclusion funding review. Within existing resources
3.2	Build upon existing services to develop more ways for people to access skills, training, employment and social inclusion opportunities.	Guy Clayton	March 2023	Here for Hart Supporting Communities' Plan. Within existing resources
3.3	Increase use of protocols and referrals set up with mental health services, probation, and	Guy Clayton	March 2025	Review whether Refernet can be used to streamline access.

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	education and employment services to support service users rebuild their lives.			Within existing resources
3.4	Go live with Housing First as clients are identified	Guy Clayton	Ongoing	Policy in place. Funding identified in ear marked reserves Within existing resources
3.5	Ensure there are regular liaison and tenancy checks with landlords and tenants of private rented housing used by the Council to identify any issues and rectify them.	Kelly Watts Landlord Liaison Officers	April 23	3- and 6-month review meetings to be standard practice. Within existing resources
3.6	Develop a “shared lived experiences” model to provide advice and information people can relate to.	Kelly Watts Guy Clayton	September 2023	Possible commissioning of research
3.7	Review the accommodation provision and support services provided at Heathlands Court to ensure that they are fit for purpose and providing the best services to enable people to rebuild their lives.	Kelly Watts Nicola Harpham VIVID housing association	September 2022	Existing staffing resources and use of housing capital reserves

Priority 4: Partnerships - working together to find effective solutions

	Action	Person Responsible	Completion date	Comments
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4.1	Proactively promote the service and raise awareness of what the Housing Solutions Team can provide with professionals and the voluntary sector.	Kelly Watts	April 2022 April 2023 April 2024 April 2025	Within existing resources
4.2	Continue to support the development of Community Pantries and larders to improve access to affordable food and reduce food waste.	Guy Clayton	March 2024	Here for Hart Supporting Communities' Plan. Within existing resources
4.3	Work with CA to investigate using Refernet as a potential common referral process between organisations and professionals.	Guy Clayton Sam Mabbot - CAB	March 2023	Here for Hart Supporting Communities' Plan. Within existing resources
4.4	Explore opportunities for co-location of services (accessed virtually or in person), through some form of community hub.	Guy Clayton	March 2023	Here for Hart Supporting Communities' Plan. Within existing resources
4.5	Actively engage with and support the work of the Domestic Abuse Forum.	Kelly Watts	Ongoing	Regular attendance at DA forum. Within existing resources

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4.6	Continue to attend county wide professional meetings to share best practice, and tackle and broader issues as a collective.	Kelly Watts Nicola Harpham Kirsty Jenkins	Ongoing	For example: Strategic Housing Officers Group. Housing Advisory Group, Housing Enablers Network. Within existing resources
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CABINET

DATE OF MEETING:	3 March 2022
TITLE OF REPORT:	Housing capital funding for energy efficiency measures in new affordable housing
Report of:	Head of Community
Cabinet Portfolio:	Community
Key Decision	No
Confidentiality	Non Exempt

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out a proposal to ringfence a proportion of the Council's housing capital funds to support Registered Provider's (housing associations) to provide additional energy efficiency measures in their new affordable homes.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 For Cabinet to approve a scheme to install additional energy efficiency measures in new build housing association affordable housing that will bring energy efficiency beyond the current building regulation standards.
- 2.2 That £250k of housing capital funds are ring-fenced up to March 2025 for this purpose, at which time the scheme will be reviewed.
- 2.3 Specific sites will be brought to Cabinet to approve the spend.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has circa £12m capital funding to support the provision of affordable housing within the district. Within this there is circa £3.5m from right to buy receipts; this proposal seeks that £250k of this is ringfenced for use for energy efficiency measures in new affordable homes.
- 3.2 The Council has funded several projects over the last 5 years ranging from top-up funding to reduce the rent levels for 4 bed affordable homes, funding to provide affordable homes at a Social Rent rather than an Affordable Rent level (Jean Orr Court) and most recently £325k to fund a joint project with VIVID to purchase a bungalow for a disabled resident. Amounts funded range from £57k to £360k.
- 3.3 The Strategy and Development Team have been exploring how to bring forward suitable projects to which these funds could be applied to deliver affordable housing projects in the district for the benefit of local residents. The decision was taken to bring this paper forward first to seek Cabinet support for the proposal prior to officers working with housing associations

on bringing forward specific sites for approval. Officers need to know that Members wish time and resources to be committed to this project before taking further steps. Other proposals will be discussed and prioritised with the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group and brought forward when appropriate to do so.

- 3.4 This paper outlines a proposal for the Council to provide top-up funding to new affordable housing schemes for additional energy efficiency standards and measures to be included in the new build homes. The primary driver is to be a positive contribution to addressing climate change issues and the Council's climate targets. However, the additional energy efficiency measures will also reduce energy bills helping with the affordability of energy bills for people on limited incomes. This is increasingly important considering rising energy bills.
- 3.5 This funding will help to encourage higher energy efficiency standards in affordable homes from the date of the decision. It will enable Hart to get ahead of the game, providing the authority with a good opportunity to learn from these sites before the requirements are mandatory. From 2025 new homes will be required to meet the Future Homes Standard (FHS) and have 75-80% lower carbon emissions than current standards and all homes will need to be "zero carbon ready" becoming zero carbon homes over time without the need for costly retrofitting.

4 MAIN ISSUES

- 4.1 At full Council on 29th April 2021 councillors declared a Climate Emergency and committed to becoming a carbon neutral authority by 2035 and a carbon neutral district by 2040. This was following the adoption of Hart's Climate Change Action Plan in 2020.
- 4.2 It is vitally important that affordable homes should not be precluded from providing additional energy efficiency measures due to cost and as such local authorities can consider how they can enable affordable, energy efficient homes in its area. This proposal will help the Council in working towards achieving this and its actions in the Climate Change Action Plan.
- 4.3 In terms of the national picture, in January 2021, the Government published the Future Homes Standard 2025 which gives targets for reducing carbon emissions in homes.
- 4.4 At present, Homes England funding supports the provision of a range of different affordable housing products, but not energy efficiency measures specifically. With limited funding available, this can make including these technologies in affordable housing difficult to achieve.
- 4.5 It is important to note that not all affordable housing sites will be appropriate for this proposal, and where an RP or housing association own the site or are developing the site themselves generally speaking there is more scope to include additional features.

- 4.6 The Council has a ringfenced capital fund to enable the delivery of affordable housing projects. By providing top-up funding to some of the new affordable homes the Council can enable the housing associations to provide additional energy efficiency measures on their properties including solar panels and air source heat pumps, for example. In some cases, there may be opportunities to provide Passivhaus standard homes. These are highly insulated homes and use very little energy for heating. The energy efficiency features will vary from site to site depending on several factors and it is proposed that each proposal is assessed on a case-by-case basis against set criteria. Further details of this are included with this paper.
- 4.7 This proposal provides an excellent opportunity for the Council to support a pilot scheme and to use it as a learning opportunity. Homes delivered with higher energy efficiency measures through the funding will be used to help provide evidence and develop future policy to raise energy efficiency measures of all new-builds across the district. Findings and observations will be shared with colleagues in housing and planning across Hampshire through the Housing Enablers Network and used to inform technical advice notes and planning advice.
- 4.8 It is important to note that Government funding is available to housing associations to improve the energy efficiency of their existing housing stock. Similar funding is not currently available for new affordable homes.
- 4.9 An additional important consideration is that carbon emission from domestic properties is the second biggest source of carbon emission in Hart, and one of the hardest to decarbonise. Funding additional energy efficiency measures will ensure that the homes that benefit from the funding will help to meet Hart's 2040 net zero goal.

5 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DISCUSSION

- 5.1 This paper was brought before Overview and Scrutiny in November 2021 and again in January 2022, because officers were asked for more information. At the January meeting, the Committee resolved that it could not recommend to Cabinet that it approved the officer recommendations. The committee felt that there were a number of gaps in the project (these are identified below.)
- 5.2 The issues that Overview and Scrutiny Committee raised with the report and its proposals are noted below:
- Delegated powers for decision – members of Overview and Scrutiny felt this was too open. In this report, officers are not seeking delegated powers but instead are recommending that specific schemes are brought back through Cabinet.
 - Scheme costs – members of Overview and Scrutiny felt that the overall ringfenced funding required was too much. This paper asks for a reduced funding envelope; seeking that a smaller proportion of the housing capital funds are ringfenced for this scheme. Funding requested has been reduced from £550k to £250k.

- More information on potential energy cost savings for occupants was required – officers from Community Services have worked with the Councils Sustainability Officer to produce some detailed costings (set out in section 6 of this report).
- Insufficient detail on the assessment criteria for funding allocation – an assessment process is in place and a detailed application form will be used by housing associations seeking funding under the scheme.

5.3 The Portfolio Holder for Community is keen to bring the report to Cabinet for consideration. The project has a number of key elements that he believes Cabinet will support. These include:

- The positive impact on tackling climate change.
- Facilitating residents on limited incomes living in homes that will be cheaper to run and heat.
- Supporting housing associations to use new and innovative methods to build energy efficient affordable housing and to learn from this to roll out to other affordable homes in Hart.
- Creating a model that sets an example for other local authorities, housing associations and developers.
- Providing Hart and others with first-hand experience and data on developing energy efficient homes and what its actually like to live in them through comments received through Hart’s new resident surveys.

6. Energy Efficiency Considerations

Overview and Scrutiny requested more detail on potential savings for residents living in these homes. The table below shows indicative figures based on estimates of fuel usage and potential annual savings.

	Energy Efficiency standards/measures per year for average 3 bed property	% Reduction in Energy Cost over EPC B	Total Saving Per Year	Total Emission (1 st year) kgCO ₂ e	Emission Reduction (1 st year) kgCO ₂ e
1	Current building Regulations new build EPC B	-	-	2837.9	-
2	Current building regulations new build EPC A	6.54	£117.60	2650.6	187.3
3	Passivhaus	15.42	£277.20	1932	905.9
4	Solar Panels (3.5kW)*	-	£408.00	-	693.36

*Solar PV does not elevate fuel poverty as it does not contribute to maintaining an adequate standard of warmth in the property. Properties are considered to be heated via gas.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 7.1 Officers will be bringing forward several other proposals for spending the Housing Capital Fund. A Task and Finish Group has been set up with Overview and Scrutiny Councillors which will explore these proposals in more detail.
- 7.2 In relation to this proposal, the Council could decide not to ringfence any funding for energy efficiency methods and use it to prioritise other projects. This could mean that new affordable homes are continued to be developed, but without any additional energy efficiency measures, or with some features but not making the most of the opportunity available. This will be a missed opportunity to deliver a pilot project focussed on energy efficiency, to inform future policy help people to reduce their energy bills and to meet Hart's climate change aims.

8 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 **Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or The Hart Vision 2040**
This proposal supports several of the priorities set out in Hart's Corporate Plan 2017-22. These include "A Clean, Green and Safe Environment" - to improve energy efficiency, and "Healthy Communities and People" - ensure access to affordable housing.
- 8.2 Also, Hart Vision 2040 - "Technological advances may be making even greater differences to the way we work and live as communities", and "Reducing the impact of climate change by building in sustainability and using new technologies to mitigate the impact of climate change"

8.3 Service Plan

Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan?	No
Is the proposal being funded from current budgets?	Yes
Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?	Yes

8.4 **Legal and Constitutional Issues**

There are no legal or constitutional issues arising from this report. If the proposal is agreed by Cabinet, the Council will engage Legal Services to ensure there is a legal agreement in place between them and the relevant Registered Provider, for the delivery of energy efficiency measures in exchange for funding.

8.5 **Financial and Resource Implications**

To support the provision of additional energy efficiency measures in new affordable homes it is requested that £250k of housing capital receipts is ringfenced up to March 2025 for this purpose. This has been included in the draft capital housing budget for 2022-23, subject to the outcome of the committee's decision.

8.6 The funding can be drawn from the Right to Buy receipts. There are no specific restrictions on the use of these funds.

8.7 On average, a Passivhaus or affordable home with several additional energy efficiency measures is estimated to require in the region of £10k per unit more grant funding than a traditionally built property. This is expected to vary very slightly from site to site depending on site specific restrictions and requirements. Build costs will also vary depending on availability of materials and skills. We have seen recently that costs have increased due to a shortage of certain materials and skills for most sites currently being built.

8.8 Therefore, it is proposed that the requested amount should enable a pilot site to be able to access the funding and this will provide the Council with the opportunity to review the effectiveness of the funding and the outcomes. If appropriate sites do not come forward the ringfenced funding will not be spent and can be used elsewhere from 1st April 2025.

8.9 The individual considerations, costs and aspects will vary from site to site as the property type, size, site etc will vary considerably from site to site. The cost of building materials may also change from time to time.

8.10 Recommendations will be made by the Head of Community and Portfolio Holder for Community to Cabinet to determine whether the funding request is approved.

8.11 There are no implications for additional resources or staffing to support this proposal

8.12 **Risk Management**

Possible risks Associated with not agreeing the project:

- Affordable housing providers will not be able to provide any (or many) additional energy efficiency measures in new affordable homes as they are too expensive and Homes England grant will not cover the full costs of including them.

- The Council does not meet its carbon reduction targets.
- Future opportunities to support schemes may be few and far between and the Council misses the opportunity to support innovative and forward-thinking designs to help reduce carbon emissions in new affordable homes.
- Residents living in the new affordable homes are faced with rising energy bills but limited incomes and problems with affordability of new homes arise.

8.13 Possible risks to be managed if the project goes ahead:

8.14 If the Council agrees to fund a pilot scheme there is a risk that no sites will come forward in the timeframe. If this happens the money can be used to fund other projects.

8.15 The Council could fund a pilot scheme and find that it does not deliver the energy savings expected. This is unlikely as there is well founded researched detailing the tested energy savings from different measures. Also, any findings, positive or negative would be used as a basis for learning and developing appropriate policies across the district.

8.16 There is a risk that the ringfenced amount is insufficient to fund more than one site. Possible sites will be brought forward to cabinet on a site-by-site basis. The associated report would identify the remaining balance of the ringfenced funds.

8.17 There is a risk that costs to implement the additional measures will increase as costs for developments are increasing at present and there is a shortage of some materials which may impact on the scheme development costs. If this were to occur the housing association would be required to provide officers and Members with the information relating to any increased costs and the reasons for this to be scrutinised.

8.18 There is a risk that costs to implement the additional measures will increase as costs for developments are increasing at present and there is a shortage of some materials which may impact on the scheme development costs. If this were to occur the housing association would be required to provide officers and Members with the information relating to any increased costs and the reasons for this to be scrutinised.

9. EQUALITIES

- 9.1 This funding will support the delivery of new, affordable housing which can be accessed by a wide range of people of different race, disability, gender, ages, sexual orientation, pregnancy, religion and belief, from the Council's housing register and the Help to Buy register.
- 9.2 It would also support the provision of affordable housing for people on low incomes who would benefit from more affordable energy bills in the long term.

10 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 This proposal has direct implications for reducing carbon emissions in the construction and occupation of new affordable homes arising from the recommendations.
- 10.2 The funding requested would be to enable the delivery of affordable homes with additional energy efficiency measures including, but not limited to, heat pumps, photo voltaic panels, improved airtightness measures with Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery, and some affordable homes built to passivhaus standards which significantly reduce the amount of carbon they use and generate. Furthermore, it contributes directly to the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, adopted in 2020.
- 10.3 By building properties that will meet the requirement for Hart to be a net carbon neutral authority by 2040, now will ensure these properties will not need to be retrofitted later to meet this target.

11 RECOMMENDATION

- 11.1 That Cabinet approves this proposal to ringfence £250k up to 31st March 2025 for housing associations to provide additional energy efficiency measures to their new build affordable homes as a pilot scheme and that any potential sites will be brought to committee for approval on a site-by-site basis.

Contact Details:

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Peter Summersell, Sustainability Officer	Peter.Summersell@Hart.gov.uk
Kirsty Jenkins, Head of Community	Kirsty.Jenkins@Hart.gov.uk

Appendices N/A

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Useful Terms							
B	Passivhaus – Costs and Benefits Report (link)							

Background papers:

**Add rows as required to box below*

*Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are **unpublished** works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.*

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
N/A							
N/A							

Appendix A -

Useful Terms

- **Carbon neutral** means that any CO₂ released into the atmosphere from a company's activities is balanced by an equivalent amount being removed.
- **Climate positive** means that activity goes beyond achieving net-zero carbon emissions to create an environmental benefit by removing additional carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- **Carbon negative** means the same thing as 'climate positive'.
- **Carbon positive** is how organisations describe climate positive and carbon negative.
- **Net-Zero carbon emissions** mean that an activity releases net-zero carbon emissions into the atmosphere.
- **Net-Zero emissions** - balance the whole amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) released and the amount removed from the atmosphere.
- **Embodied carbon** is the carbon dioxide emissions associated with making a building that comes from extraction, transportation and manufacturing of raw building materials is a significant part of a building's life cycle. Embodied carbon will be responsible for almost half of total new construction emissions between now and 2050.
- **Zero carbon building** - built-into the building's construction and use.
- **Passivhaus** - a building with an airtight envelope. It literally means 'passive house'. It is a voluntary standard for energy efficiency in a building, which includes highly energy efficient design which reduces the building's ecological footprint and provides very low-energy buildings that need very little fuel.
- **The Future Buildings Standard** - a government consultation carried out from 18 Jan 2021 to 13 April 2021. The outcomes of the consultation are due to be published. It sets out proposals for a Future Buildings Standard, which provides a pathway to highly efficient non-domestic buildings which are zero carbon ready, better for the environment and fit for the future.
- **AECB standard** - this standard is aimed at those wishing to create high-performance, low-carbon buildings using widely available technology.
- **NPPF** - National Planning Policy Framework.
- **PV panels** - also known as solar panels, capture the sun's energy and convert it into electricity.
- **Mechanical ventilation** - is used to control indoor air quality, excess humidity and odours.
- **Registered Provider** – Sometimes used to refer to housing associations, but RP's can be "non-profit" or "for-profit". The operating rules and regulations vary depending on whether an RP is a "for profit" or "non-profit" organisation.
- **Housing association** - Most non-profit providers are also known as housing associations

Appendix B -

What is Passivhaus?

One form of design to deliver more highly energy efficient housing is known as Passivhaus. Passivhaus literally means “passive house”. It is a voluntary standard for energy efficiency in a building, which includes highly energy efficient design which reduces the building’s ecological footprint and provides very low-energy buildings that need very little fuel. Other stock-holding local authorities including Reading and Winchester are building their new affordable homes to Passivhaus standard as the many benefits are widely accepted and understood.

- A Passivhaus property has an airtight building envelope, and can include triple glazed windows, mechanical heat ventilation and overhangs for shading.
- The homes are highly insulated and use very little energy for heating.
- They are currently more expensive to build which can take them out of reach as affordable housing.
- Passivhaus principles and technology play a key role in achieving zero carbon for the future.
- This is a fabric first approach which means that the energy efficiency is built into the property itself not just features added on to the building - like photovoltaic panels (PV) on the roof.
- Homes can be Passivhaus or partial Passivhaus - this depends on design and scheme.
- Larger, simple designs perform better in terms of passivhaus than smaller or more complicated shapes.
- The buildings aim to use design to achieve the most energy efficient outcomes, for example, south facing windows, airtight building, can and should open windows, pre-heating in-coming fresh air, mechanical ventilation.
- As technology and systems are more widely available costs will reduce over time.

The NEW Passivhaus Benefits Guide forms part of the Passivhaus Trust’s wider [cost-benefits research](#). The research has identified almost fifty types of benefits relating to Passivhaus. A link to the summary report is provided below.

<https://www.passivhaustrust.org.uk/news/detail/?nId=1043>

CABINET

DATE OF MEETING:	3 MARCH 2022
TITLE OF REPORT:	REPORT PROPOSING AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE COMPLAINT POLICY
Report of:	TASK AND FINISH PANEL
Cabinet Portfolio:	Leader and Strategic Direction and Partnerships
Key Decision	No
Confidentiality	Non-Exempt

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This is a report from the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel which provided guidance and advice on how the Councils Corporate Complaint Policy could be updated and improved.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet approval on the new Corporate Complaint Policy. Be supportive of the work that is ongoing to assist in the successful roll out and ongoing management of the Policy from April 2022.

2 TASK AND FINISH RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Cabinet approves the adoption of the new Corporate Complaint Policy and supporting information published on the website.
- 2.2 Cabinet approves the intention to develop systems to help manage day to day complaints and provide high level trend data as part of the corporate suite of data provided on a quarterly basis to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Work continues to review the Council's approach to the management of complaints. This will include further training for staff and the development of an organisational wide complaints platform to encourage greater consistency in handing, monitoring, and reporting. However, fundamental to the Council's approach is the Complaints Policy itself. We want to ensure that the policy is accessible and easily understandable by our residents and can be implemented effectively by our staff.
- 3.2 At the November meeting of Overview and Scrutiny, a request was made to establish a cross-party Task and Finish panel to assist in the refresh and updating of the Councils Corporate Complaint Policy. Councillors Davies, Dorn, Drage, and Smith were nominated.

- 3.3 The Task and Finish panel met twice to consider the policy in detail and recommend a series of changes.
- 3.4 Running alongside the Task and Finish group was consultation with residents, managers, and operational staff. Views from all groups including Change Champions have been considered and the policy has been refined accordingly. As part of the website review, residents were asked their views of the current complaint pages and had input on the draft webpage.

4 MAIN ISSUES

- 4.1 The Task and Finish Panel met on 1 December 2021 with key officers, looking in considerable depth at the current policy and the approach taken by the Local Government Ombudsman and other Councils to help inform the debate. This productive discussion created a new draft Complaints Policy which was circulated to the Task and Finish Panel, which enabled ongoing and effective feedback via an online conversation.
- 4.2 The revised policy was brought to Leadership Team and Management Team for consideration and comment.
- 4.3 The policy returned to the Task and Finish Panel on 25 January 2022 when final consideration and finessing of the complaints policy, as set out in Appendix 1, was finalised.
- 4.4 This report was discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 February 2022. Following a wide ranging debate, the Committee endorsed the recommendations
- 4.5 The main changes to the draft policy for Cabinet to note are:
- Creation of an informal stage for issues to be resolved quickly and efficiently
 - Creation of a two-stage process:
 - Stage 1 to be considered by Officers
 - Stage 2 to be considered by Heads of Service and reviewed by Joint Chief Executive
 - Enhanced user experience on the website to find information about the complaints process and make a complaint or compliment. This includes:
 - Straightforward information published on the website to summarise the complaints process
 - Creation of new complaints form
 - Development of complaints workflow system using Power Automate app within Office 365 suite for internal use to log, monitor and report on Stage 1 and 2 complaints
 - Analyse and report to Management Team and Overview and Scrutiny on a quarterly basis
- 4.6 A high-level view of the policy has been created to provide guidance for staff and complainants. This is included within the policy itself. Appendix 2 sets out the changes from the existing policy in more detail.

- 4.7 The proposed next steps for the launch of the policy and supporting platform will be:

17-25 February	Test website form with key stakeholders
2-11 March	Further testing of corporate complaints workflow system by Change Champions and other internal stakeholders
1 March	Virtual Staff Briefing to introduce the draft policy and outline the proposed changes to staff
3 March	Cabinet approval of Corporate Complaints Policy
Throughout March (to be planned)	Training for all staff on the new policy and how to use the new complaints system
30 March	Virtual Staff Briefing to confirm new policy go-live
1 April	Publish the webpage and form on the corporate site. Policy is live
July	Initial review and update to Task and Finish group
Reporting due in July, Oct and Jan for previous quarter	Monitoring and reporting of corporate complaints, with information being provided to Management Team to oversee key issues and trends, as well as provision of trend data via the quarterly performance reports to Overview and Scrutiny.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 5.1 It is key that our residents have an accessible and efficient way to provide feedback to the Council, including through complaint processes.
- 5.2 The review of the current three-stage process has demonstrated that the existing approach should not be continued due to complexity, effectiveness, and cost reasons. The do-nothing option was therefore rejected.

6 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or The Hart Vision 2040

This policy is relevant to the priority within the Corporate Plan to deliver an effective and efficient Council and is reflected in the operating model highlighted within the Hart Vision 2040, of a Council that delivers welcoming services that are inclusive and engaging.

Service Plan

Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan?	No
Is the proposal being funded from current budgets?	Yes
Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?	Yes

Legal and Constitutional Issues

Councils must provide a clear and transparent opportunity for residents to express concerns regarding the services they receive, this policy will meet that obligation.

Financial and Resource Implications

Adoption and training on the new Complaints Policy will be met within existing budget. At present the system for recording complaints is anticipated to utilise existing IT platforms. Should this not be possible, a business case will be brought forward to Cabinet for consideration.

Risk management

The provision of a refreshed and updated Corporate Complaints Policy reduces the Council's risk of

- failing to meet our residents' expectations
- inconsistent application of the complaints policy by staff
- ombudsman cases found against the council

loss of reputation

As with any project of this nature, there are potential risks of delays such as IT implementation issues, and data security issues that will need to be resolved. As highlighted above it is anticipated that the Council will be using well used and trusted existing systems, if this is not the case then further work may be required to install a bespoke complaints system. The resource implications of which would be brought back to Cabinet for consideration.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 Under equality legislation, the Council has a legal duty to pay 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality in relation to:

- Race
- Disability
- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief.

The recommendations set out in this report should not have any impact on any of the protected characteristics highlighted above.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct carbon/environmental implications arising from the recommendation.

9 ACTION

9.1 Subject to adoption of the new policy, the activities set out in para 4.5 will be implemented.

Contact Details: Steven Bennett steven.bennett@hart.gov.uk

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Appendix 1 Draft Complaints Policy							
B	Appendix 2 Changes from existing policy							

Background papers:

**Add rows as required to box below*

*Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are **unpublished** works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.*

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Seeking Nominations to a Task and Finish Group to Update and Refresh the Corporate Complaint Policy 16 November 2021							

Appendix 1

1. Introduction

We hope that members of the public will be happy with the services delivered by the Council. However, we recognise that, for any number of reasons, we may fall short at times.

The way we handle complaints, resolve issues, and use the feedback to improve our services is a key component of our corporate values. [Our values](#) promise that we will be helpful and respond to requests from our customers. We will be approachable and take ownership of an issue or complaint when it arises. Delivering on these elements of our service is crucial to support the Council's priority of improving customer satisfaction.

Anyone who is affected by our services can make a complaint. This includes:

- Residents
- People who work or visit the district
- Local businesses
- Community groups

We are happy to work with a representative or local councillor who has been asked to support or take forward a complaint on behalf of someone. We will need confirmation of the appointment verbally or in writing from the complainant or other legal representative.

Most of the time we get it right and we will promote compliments and feedback via our online form on the website [feedback on our services](#). We will use this feedback to highlight compliments about individuals or teams. Customers can also use this form if they have views on how we deliver our service or suggestions on the way we can improve the way we do things.

2. Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and transparent process for customers if they wish to make a complaint or share feedback about the Council. It also provides guidance for staff, so they are aware of their responsibilities in respect of complaints from members of the public, partners and the organisations and businesses that operate within Hart district.

This policy applies to:

- All staff working for the Council, including those working from home.
- Consultants, third party suppliers, agency staff and contractors working for the Council while engaged on Council business.

There is a separate policy for [complaints about elected members](#)

3. What is a complaint?

We define a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about the way in which we have provided a service.

A complaint could be in relation to:

- A delay in taking action without good reason
- A failure to provide a service
- Mistakes in the way a decision has been taken
- Not following the law or the Council's own policies
- Broken promises
- Bias or unfair discrimination
- Rude, unhelpful, or inappropriate behaviour by staff
- Poor communication from staff

Information is provided on the complaints page on the Council's website <https://www.hart.gov.uk/help-advice-1> to provide customers with information on how to make a complaint about specific services.

4. What we don't consider a complaint

Certain types of issues and complaints fall outside of the Council's complaints policy because there are other ways of dealing with them, or because they are outside of the Council's control. These include:

- Matters of law or central government policy which should be referred to your [local MP](#)
- Freedom of Information requests for reviews, or complaints about the decision, the information provided or how a request was handled. These are dealt with under [the Freedom of Information policy](#)
- Council policies. If customers are unhappy with a policy, they should be encouraged to contact the relevant Councillor who leads on that topic [known as a Portfolio Holders](#). Alternatively, you can ask [your local Councillor](#) to raise this issue on your behalf
- Where a customer is unhappy about the **outcomes** of an application, an appeal or tribunal decision these have separate review procedures that remain outside of the Council's complaint policy, including:
 - Planning application Decisions or Appeals against the refusal of planning permission or planning enforcement
 - Parking appeals
 - Housing Benefit appeals

However, if a customer is unhappy about the **way** that an appeal was handled, this should be dealt with under the Council's complaint policy and procedure

- Services provided by other layers of local government (e.g. town or parishes or Hampshire County Council) they will have their own complaints handling processes.

5. Informal stage/ issue resolution

Before reaching the formal stage, we will try to resolve issues quickly and efficiently without having to raise as a formal complaint. It will be managed by an Officer who will work with the customer to try and resolve the issue within 10 working days.

If the issue cannot be resolved to the customer satisfaction or in a timely manner, they will be invited to follow the formal route and submit a Stage 1 complaint. Examples of an issue include:

- staff not getting back to you within the times set out in our [customer care standards](#)
- a missed bin collection, having left out at the right time and [reported it as missed](#)
- information you find unclear, incorrect, or unable to be easily understood.

A customer can go straight to Stage 1 to report a complaint if they choose. They do not have to complete the informal stage.

6. Different stages of the complaints process

Complaints should be made to the Council as soon as they are aware of a problem. It should be within six months of when a customer feels that something has gone wrong. If it is longer the Council may not be able to investigate effectively. While we still hold records, staff may no longer be able to recall the exact content of conversations. As such we may not be able to investigate complaints over six months. We will advise you if this is the case with your complaint when you raise it.

If it is longer the Council will ask customers to explain and justify why they could not complain sooner.

6.1. Stage 1 complaints

Following submission, an assessment will be made about the type of complaint and passed to the relevant service area. An Officer or Manager will be allocated to the complaint and will be the point of contact throughout this stage. They will be responsible for recording, investigating, and responding to the complaint.

We will ask the customer to provide as much information as is reasonable in support of their complaint. They will also be asked what they would like the Council to do as a result of their complaint to see if this can be met. The Officer will work with the customer to try and resolve at this stage. We will attempt to investigate and resolve the complaint within 10 working days. If the complaint cannot be resolved in this timescale due to staff sickness or leave, an Officer will need to contact the customer to agree an extension of time.

If a customer is unhappy with the formal response to their complaint at stage 1, they can ask for the complaint to be escalated to stage 2.

6.2. Stage two complaints

All stage two complaints will be investigated by the respective Head of Service. They will be responsible for the recording, investigating, and providing a detailed response. Once their investigation has been completed, the response will be reviewed and signed off by the Joint Chief Executive.

The maximum amount of time expected for responding to a stage two complaint in full is 20 working days, with a customer receiving an acknowledgement within the first three days of this timeframe. If a complaint is complicated and likely to take longer to resolve, the Head of Service will keep the customer updated on its progress and inform the Joint Chief Executive of this situation.

The response will inform the customer that if they remain dissatisfied with how the complaint has been handled, they can complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

6.3. What are the possible outcomes of a complaint at Stage 1 or 2?

There are three potential outcomes when a complaint is investigated.

- Upheld. We find that the complaint is reasonable, there has been a failing on our part and the Council will rectify the problem
- Not upheld. We do not agree with the complaint
- Partially upheld. We agree that there are some parts of the complaint where we need to improve our service and rectify any failings.

All complaint responses will confirm what outcome has been reached with clear reasons for our findings. At each stage of the process, the customer will be given details of their next point of contact if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

6.4. Communication to customers at informal stage, Stage 1 and 2

It is important the Officer or Manager investigating the issue or complaint takes ownership of communicating with the customer throughout the entire process.

- Start of the issue or complaint. Each issue or complaint should be acknowledged within three days with the target date for completion confirmed. This will depend on the stage the customer has reached. When a Stage 1 or 2 complaint is recorded on the system, a unique identifier will be generated. This will be provided to the customer and should be used throughout the complaint
- During the complaint. If there are delays to the investigation, the Officer or Manager should contact the customer to confirm when the complaint will be resolved

- End of the complaint. Each complaint should receive a written response of the decision within the published timescales depending on the Stage with a clear outcome and any next steps open to the customer.

Communication to the customer should be in writing, email, or telephone. Any updates to and from the customer should be included on the complaints system.

6.5. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaints

If, after a stage two investigation, the customer is still not satisfied, they have the right to refer their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. This is an independent service which investigates complaints against Councils. For more details, go to [Local Government Ombudsman](#).

When the Council is informed of a complaint to the Ombudsman these cases will be coordinated by the Joint Chief Executive to ensure they have responded to the Local Government Ombudsman enquiry and appropriate action is taken to resolve them.

A summary of the different stages is included as appendix 1. It includes the timescales that will be used to manage the complaint through the different stages.

7. How can complaints be made?

Stage 1 complaints can be received via:

- The Council's complaint form on the website <https://www.hart.gov.uk/help-advice-1> . A hard copy can be made available
- By email. At stage 1, this should be sent to the relevant Officer if known or complaints@hart.gov.uk
- By post to: Hart District Council, Civic Offices, Harlington Way, Fleet GU51 4AE
- Made in person at the Hart District Council office
- By telephone.

When a Stage 1 complaint is received, this will be recorded on the complaints system by the receiving Officer or Manager to ensure that all complaints are managed consistently.

At Stage 2, all complaints should be sent to complaints@hart.gov.uk or by post to Complaints Coordinator, Joint Chief Executive Office Hart District Council, Civic Offices, Harlington Way, Fleet GU51 4AE. This will allow the complaint to be recorded on the complaints system and forwarded to the relevant Head of Service.

8. Privacy and customer information

We will need to process customer's personal information such as contact details in dealing with complaints. We are committed to looking after the information we hold on customers. There is more information in the [privacy notice](#) published on our website.

9. Anonymous complaints

When an anonymous complaint is made, it will not be possible for a response to be provided back to that customer. If a member of the public wishes to raise a complaint anonymously, they should be encouraged to include as much detail as possible to enable the Council to investigate the issues raised in the complaint.

Customers with concerns about confidentiality may raise issues through their elected Councillors. We reserve the right to not investigate anonymous complaints.

10. Dealing with unreasonable customer behaviour

Customers have the right to be persistent and make any number of complaints. However, Officers will need to consider when persistence becomes unreasonable, and the customer may be judged as unreasonably persistent or vexatious. We have an [unreasonable customer behaviour](#) procedure which is available for staff and customers.

11. Learning from complaints

All complaints will be investigated thoroughly, objectively and without bias. If the Council is found to be at fault, we will issue an apology and steps will be put into place to put things right.

The Council's complaints system will be used to ensure that lessons from complaints are captured, shared, and embedded into operational practice and processes. Management Team will monitor complaints, analyse trends, and review the lessons learned on a quarterly basis.

We will use the complaints system to identify trends across service areas and types of complaint to assess if operational practice or policies need to be amended. This insight will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Senior Leadership team.

12. Reporting and monitoring

A formal report including analysis on complaints and compliments will be reported on quarterly basis to Overview & Scrutiny Committee as part of the existing performance report.

13. Responsibility of the procedure

The overall responsibility for complaints monitoring and management rests with the Monitoring Officer/ Joint Chief Executive who will delegate specific responsibility to Heads of Service to manage and monitor complaints within departments.

It is the responsibility of Heads of Service to ensure that complaints are correctly managed throughout their lifecycle in their service areas including being recorded on the Council's complaints platform at Stage 1 and 2.

All staff will be provided with access to training and guidance on this policy.

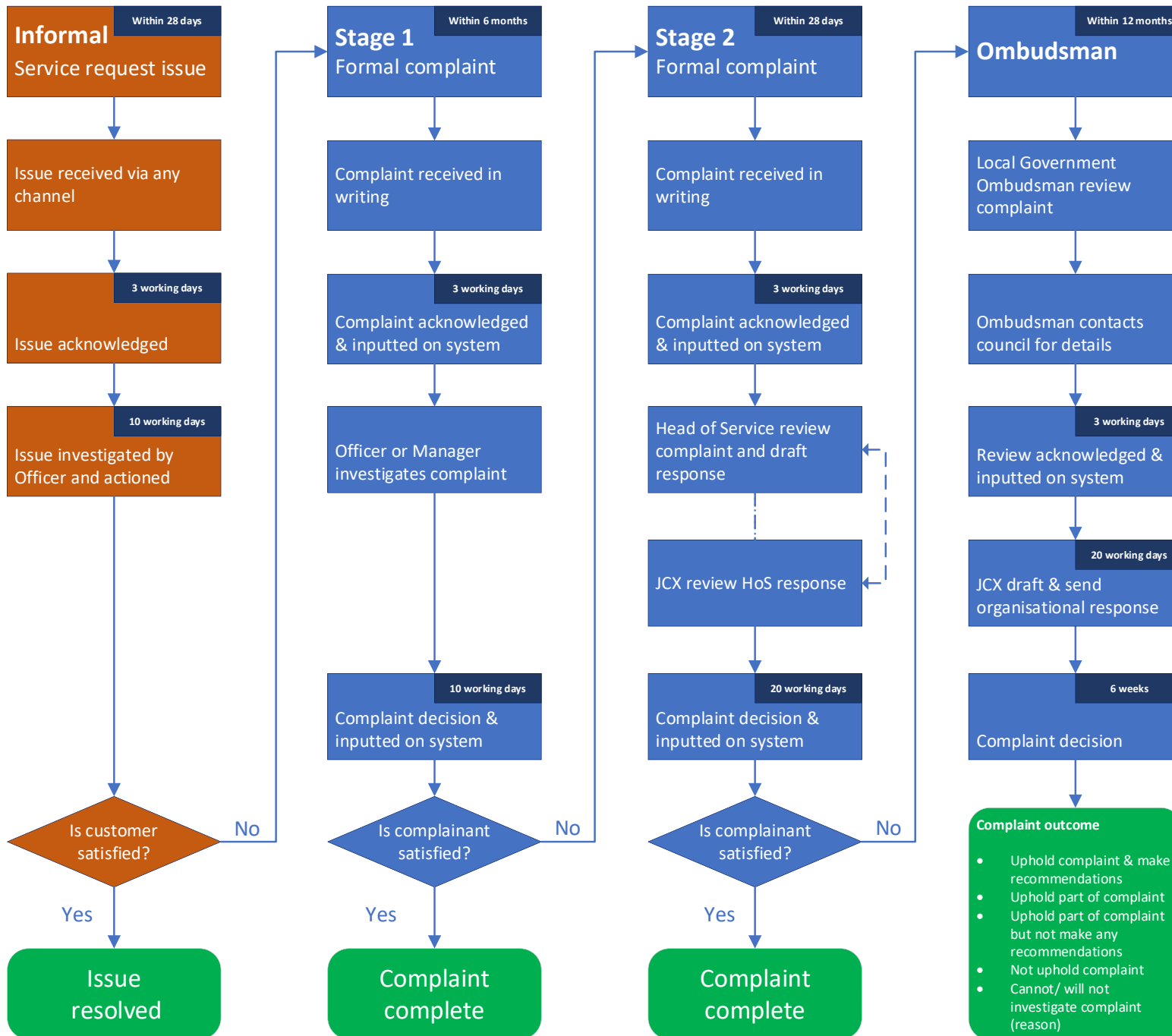
14. Version control

	Date	Author	Comments
1.0	20 December 2021	S. Bennett	Draft version created
1.1	31 January 2022	P. Hughes	Comments & revisions on draft
1.2	7 January	C. Dorn	Comments & revisions on draft
1.3	10 January	M. Saunders	Suggestion for review period in S.11
1.4	18 January	S. Bennett	SLT – edit to create separate section for informal stage. Now S.5
1.5	19 th January	P. Hughes	More comments and reordering of stage 1
1.6	26 January	S. Bennett	T&F group amendments
1.7	27 January	S. Bennett	Inclusion of S6.4 communication

Appendix 1

Channel
 Complaint form
 In person
 By letter
 By telephone
 By email
 Via councillor
 Via representative
 Via social media

Channel
 Via www.lgo.org.uk
 Complete online
 complaint form



	Heading from original policy	What's changed	Reason why
	Version control	Removed version control box at start of document	While it is predominantly a staff facing document, residents will be able to view this from the website if they require a deeper dive. Now included at end of document.
1	How to tell us...	Replaced with new introduction paragraph. Wording is more complaints focused to help staff and customers	Not required, new intro and purpose paragraphs pick up on points
2	Compliments	Reworded and included in introduction paragraph	Link to feedback form to pick up compliments
3	Comments	Reworded and included in introduction paragraph	Link to feedback form to pick up comments
4	Council policies	Removed section	Now summarised in Section 4 "what we don't consider a complaint"
5	Complaints – how to complain	Amalgamated into S3	Included in S3 "what is a complaint" to help reader understand what a complaint is
6	What is a complaint	Reworded to provide clarity around definition of a complaint	Revised definition included within S3
7	There will be times...	Reworded and summarised	Now included in S4
8	How can complaints be made	Reworded and broken down into Stages	Included in S7 "how can complaints be made" Need to ensure that staff and complainants understand Stage 1 & Stage 2 are in writing to formally trigger process
9	Things to include	Removed	Included in S6 "Different stages of the complaints process" stage 1 and webform, asking for as much info as possible
10	When can you make a complaint	Reworded and summarised	Included as opening sentence in S6 "different stages..."
11	Confidentiality	Reworded and included in S8 "privacy and customer information"	Included in privacy notice which can be accessed via link from policy
12	So here is what to do....	Reworded to reflect change in two stage process	Promoted to higher up in document. Included in S6 and accompanied by process map
13	Still not satisfied	Removed as this looks at Stage 3 of original process	Included in S6

Appendix 2

14	What if you are still not happy	Reworded	Included in S6.5 Local Government Ombudsman section
15	Anonymous complaints	Reworded and summarised	Included in S9
16	Equal opportunities	Removed	To be included in Equality Impact Assessment
17	Dealing with persistent, vexatious...	Reworded	Included in S10 Dealing with unreasonable customer behaviour
18	Comment, complaint or compliment form	Removed	Not required, link to form via policy document
New	Learning from complaints	New section S11 Learning from complaints	Confirm we would apologise if complaint upheld and recorded on complaints platform
New	Reporting & monitoring	New section S12 Reporting and monitoring	Confirm we will report to O&S committee on quarterly basis as part of existing performance report
New	Responsibility of the policy	New section S13 Responsibility of the procedure	Confirming responsibility of the policy as MO/ JCX
New	Workflow	New and included Appendix 1	High level view of process to be used a training guide
New	Communication to customers	New section S6.4 communication to customers at informal, Stage 1 & 2	Clarifying the process for officers and managers to communicate throughout the process

CABINET

DATE OF MEETING: 3 MARCH 2022

TITLE OF REPORT: REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN POSITION

Report of: Head of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer

Cabinet member: Councillor James Radley, Deputy Leader and Finance

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report contains the capital and revenue outturn for the nine months ending 31 December 2021.
- 1.2 The report also contains a full year (to 31st March 2022) capital and revenue outturn forecast.
- 1.3 The report contains 2021/22 debt write offs above the delegated officer level.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the report including the revised projections and significant revenue variations highlighted in paragraph 4.3 and Appendices 1 and 2.
- 2.2 That Cabinet note the provisional full year revenue outturn position as of 31st December 2021 of an overspend of £488K overspend before any agreed drawdowns from earmarked reserves.
- 2.3 That Cabinet note the provisional capital outturn position as of 31st December 2021. The forecast for total capital expenditure for the year ended 31st March is £21.1M.
- 2.4 That Cabinet notes the debt write off requests summarised in Section 6 to the value of £27,425.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 It is essential that regular monitoring of budgets is undertaken to ensure financial targets set by the Council are met, cash flow is managed effectively and value for money is achieved
- 3.2 Quarterly Budget monitoring and reporting is a key financial control. The report is prepared on an accruals basis.
- 3.3 This report was presented to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 15th February 2022. Detailed questions were asked pertaining to the delivery and project management of Technical and Environmental Service

capital scheme. Further information will be presented at the next Service Panel for this service area.

4 PROVISIONAL REVENUE POSITION

- 4.1 The Council set a balanced budget in February 2021. As part of Quarter 3 budget monitoring the forecast outturn position is an overspend of £488K. This is after subsidy received from Central Government for losses of fees and charges but before the drawdown of earmarked reserves agreed in year.

Table 4.2 (Revenue Outturn v 2021/22 Budget and 2021/22 Forecast)

£'000	Full Year 2021/22	Period to 31 st Dec 2021			Full Year 2021/22	
Service Area	Budget	Budgeted Expenditure	Actual Expenditure	Over/Under Performance	Forecast	Forecast v Budget
Corporate	3,686	4,799	3,875	(924)	4,748	1,062
Community	2,530	1,051	754	(297)	2,193	(337)
Technical and Environmental	3,660	1,767	1,704	(63)	3,696	36
Place	2,427	2,093	1,230	(863)	2,251	(176)
Accounting Adjustments	(1,509)	294	1,280	986	(1,606)	(97)
Net Cost of Services	10,794	10,004	8,843	(1,161)	11,282	488

- 4.3 A summary of the main variances within each Service is provided at 4.5.1 et seq. Detailed variance analysis is provided in Appendices 1.

4.3.1 Corporate Services.

- At the 31st of December, Leisure Services forecast an overspend of £880K. This is due to under-recovery of management fees. Cabinet has previously agreed that the shortfall in management fees will be met by earmarked reserves. This number also includes expenditure of £ 190K works carried out to ensure the swimming pool could remain open. This will be transferred to a debtor balance at year end.
- IT are overspent by £140K at the 31st of December, this is due to overspend on software SAAS payments, a detailed review will be carried out in Quarter four to eliminate all non-essential subscriptions. A review will also be carried out to understand whether some IT expenditure can be capitalised.

The Waste Client Team are overspent by £240K due to a reduction in income from the Green Waste service as subscriptions were extended due to suspensions during the year.

- Corporate Finance are overspent by £130K. The overspend is caused by staff vacancies being back-filled with agency staff – pending the Corporate Services re-structure and consultancy spend on the mandatory upgrade of the finance system.
- In respect of COVID 19 we have assumed that the Council will break even and spend 100% of Government Grants provided and any under-utilised Grants will be returned to the Awarding Body (if applicable).

4.3.2 Community Services

- There is a £340K underspend. In previous years the Council has been the administering authority for a Domestic Abuse Grant which covered several counties in South-East England, the budget was set on this basis. This service is now run from Hampshire CC and the costs for Domestic Abuse relate to Hart District Council only. A compensatory adjustment is included in actual expenditure within the accounting adjustments line.

4.3.3 Technical and Environmental Services

- Off street parking has reduced income of £270K. Covid-19 has changed the daily routines of our residents and visitors; car park income is £208K less than budget, fixed penalty income £36K less than budget.
- There is an underspend of £180K in Environmental Services due to the following:
 - Increase in income from Hartland Park - £27K
 - Reduction in staff costs reflecting department re-organisation – this under spend is compensated by overspend across other cost centres.
- Additional income of £135K has been received in highways management due to additional income generated from Traffic Management Orders.

Place Services

- Planning policy is underspent by £90K which is attributable to staff vacancies. These posts have been advertised but not yet filled.
- Environmental protection is underspent by £60K. There is a vacant post in this area due to an internal promotion. Recruitment to this position is expected to start in Q1 2022/23.

- Neighbourhood planning is underspent by £60K – this is due to a Government Grant carried forward from 2020/21 and little activity in this area
- Admin Buildings (Repairs & Maintenance) overspent by £50K due to investment in making the Council offices and Chambers a COVID safe environment. This spend includes audio equipment for the Chamber and colour coded protective screens for the offices.

5. CAPITAL POSITION

- 5.1 Capital expenditure as at the 31st of December 2021 was £19.9M against a Budget of £29.4M (including agreed carried forward budget from 2020/21).
- 5.2 The estimated outturn for capital is expected to be £21.1M which is £8.4M less than Revised Budget primarily due to delayed works at Fleet Pond.

Table 5.3 (Capital Outturn v Original Budget 2021/22, Forecast 2021/22)

CAPITAL - Table Budget Comparators - 2021/22 (YTD December 2021)

£'000	Full Year 2021/22	Period to 31st Dec 2021		Full Year 2021/22	
	Revised Budget*	Actual Expenditure	Over/Under performance	Forecast	Forecast v Budget
Corporate	23,811	18,983	(4,828)	19,675	(4,136)
Community	396	566	170	399	3
Technical and Environmental	5,198	356	(4,842)	955	(4,243)
Place	24	0	(24)	24	0
Net Expenditure before Adjustments	29,429	19,905	(9,524)	21,053	(8,376)

*Revised budget = Original budget + balances carried forward from prior year

5.4 A summary of the main variances in each Service Area is provided at 5.4.1 et Seq. Detailed variances are provided at Appendices 2.

5.4.1 Corporate Services

- IT Infrastructure Programme upgrade: YTD underspend v Budget is £678K
This is due to delays in the delivery of the cabling and firewall which had to be completed first. The Outturn is projected to be £32K over performance as additional funds are required for networking – this will be subject to approval by Cabinet.
- Commercial Investment Strategy: YTD underspend of £4M – the underspend is due to the lack of viable investment opportunities available to the Council.

5.4.2 Community Services

- Disabled Facilities Grant: There is an overspend of £210K YTD v Budget, this is within the grant levels for the year, and due to timing differences between profiling and spend. There is no variance expected for the outturn.
- An underspend of £40K in respect Private Sector Renewal Works again due to timing differences. The forecast outturn is expected to be £3K under performance.

5.4.3 Technical and Environmental Services

- Due to Covid 19, the proposed Fleet Pond Development was deferred, consequently the following costs have been delayed:

Fleet Pond Green Grid Engineering: £1,900K

Fleet Pond Green Grid Ecology: £700K

Fleet Pond Visitor Enhancements: £200K

Fleet Pond Access Track: £110K

Fleet Pond Fencing: £50K

- Edenbrook Skate/Bike Park: £335K. No expenditure has been incurred in 2021/22.
- Hartley Wintney Central Common Access Improvements: £160K work has not yet commenced.
- Bramshot Farm scheme: £870K works not yet delivered

Note: a capital underspend of £4.2M is forecast for Technical and Environmental Services for FY 2021/22.

5.4.4 Place Services

- A budget of £24K was made available for the proposed purchase of a replacement Dog Warden Van. This will not be spent in 2021/22.

6 DEBT WRITE OFFS

6.1 Efficient and well administered debt management is fundamental to ensuring the Council meets its statutory obligations in relation to the council's finances. A fully revised Corporate Debt Policy was approved by Cabinet in July 2021. The Financial Regulations were approved by Cabinet in November 2020.

6.2 The Financial Regulations details the following requirements for 'Excusal of Debts'

"10.34 – Debts over £5,000 must be referred to the Head of Corporate Services, who will seek approval from the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance. All write-offs must be reported to the next meeting of Cabinet"

"10.35 – Sufficient information about the debt and recovery action must be provided and documented before authorisation for write-off can be given".

6.3 The total value of debts written off to be reported to Cabinet is £27,425.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 All activity will comply with the authority's statutory duties.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 Budget setting and monitoring works alongside the council's ambition to become a carbon neutral authority by 2035. No direct carbon/environmental impacts arise from these recommendations.

9 CONCLUSION

9.1 This report presents the forecast capital and revenue outturn for year ending 31 March 2022 and debts written off above values of officer delegation in 2021/22.

Contact Details: Emma Foy, emma.foy@hart.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Revenue Outturn

Appendix 2 – Capital Outturn

CORPORATE SERVICES**Revenue Budget Outturn 2021/22 - Period 9 December 2021**

Cost Centre	Variance	£000 Over Spend	£000 Under Spend
Covid19	It is assumed that the COVID-19 Grants will be spent in full or returned		263
Non Distributed Costs	Pension cost adjustments for early retirement		168
Leadership Team	No recruitment has taken place.		30
HR Contract	Occupational health underspent		24
Corporate Communication	Less spend on external services e.g. advertising than budget.		24
Clinical and Bulky			2
Revenues & Benefits Contract			2
Civic Function & Chairman		1	
Digitalisation		1	
New Settlement		1	
Register Of Electors		2	
Housing/Council Tax Benefits		9	
Yateley Welcome Back Fund	This activity was approved post budget and is grant funded	13	
Cycling & Walking Infrastructure	This activity was approved post budget	20	
Basingstoke Waste Contract	Additional costs to be recovered.	20	
External Audit	Expected increase in fees from EY	27	
Waste Contract	Additional variable waste collection fees.	31	
Commercialisation	Recovery work on The Swan which will be funded from an Earmarked Reserve	57	
Corporate Finance	Staff vacancies back-filled with agency staff - pending Corporate restructure.	134	
IT Contract	Overspend on SAAS software - review pending.	139	
Leisure Centres	Under recovery of mangement fees plus spend on keeping the swimming pool open.	883	
Waste Client Team	Reduction in income from Green Waste Subscriptions	239	
		1,577	515
		1,062	

COMMUNITY SERVICES**Revenue Budget Outturn 2021/22 - Period 9 December 2021**

Cost Centre	Variance	£000 Over Spend	£000 Under Spend
Private Sector Housing	Reduction in agency staff as service provided by officers.		15
Domestic Abuse	Hart no longer the administrative body for Domestic Abuse Grants for South East Counties.		340
Community Safety	Service brought in house from Rushmoor		99
Strategic Housing Services	Developers Contribution - to be moved to the balance sheet.		60
Social Inclusion & Partnership			3
PRSAccessFund			
Health and Wellbeing		1	
Housing Needs Service	Rent deposit income not yet received £87K; software licence purchases which will be partly funded from EMR.	180	
		180	517
			337

TECHNICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Revenue Budget Outturn 2021/22 - Period 9 December 2021

Cost Centre	Variance	£000 Over Spend	£000 Under Spend
Environment Promotion Strategy	Increase in income from Hartland Park; reduction in staff costs reflecting department re-organisation		179
Highways Traffic Management	Additional income generated from Traffic Management Orders		134
Bramshot Farm	Developers Contribution to be moved to balance sheet		95
CCTV			7
Biodiversity			6
Hart Drainage			5
Elvetham Heath Nature Reserve			4
Land Repossessions		1	
Landscape & Conservation		2	
Tree Preservation Orders		5	
Churchyards	Expected maintenance charges	16	
Fleet Pond	Miscellaneous overspends	16	
On Street Parking	Reduction in car park permit income	18	
Estates/Asset Management	Maintenance work at Harlington auditorium/ceiling and roof.	24	
Climate Change	Consultancy charges for Climate Change Action Plan.	45	
Street Cleaning	Budget did not reflect increase in contract fees	45	
Off Street Parking	Reduction in car park income and fixed penalty income	296	
		469	431
		36	

PLACE

Revenue Budget Outturn 2021/22 - Period 9 December 2021

Cost Centre	Variance	£000 Over Spend	£000 Under Spend
Planning Policy	Staff vacancies		87
Environmental Protection	Staff vacancies		59
Neighbourhood Planning	Government grant - to be moved to reserves		59
Licences	Licencing income for Premises and Gaming higher than expected.		20
Dog Warden	Statutory service provided by an external provider resulting in cost savings .		35
Hart Development	Funding for Employment and skills co-ordinator		18
Print Room & Photocopying			9
Out Of Hours Noise Service			4
Health & Safety			3
Corporate - Apprentices			1
Building Control - Fee Earning		2	
Business Support Staff		5	
Env Health Commercial			6
Economic Development	Publicity support costs from Enterprise First	12	
Local Land Charges	Land fee income lower than expected.	17	
Planning Development	professional fees incurred for Watery Lane appeal off-set by planning application income.	40	
Admin Bldgs - R & M	Purchase of audio equipment for Council Chamber and protective screens for offices offices	51	
		126	302
			176

APPENDIX 2 – Capital Outturn

CORPORATE SERVICES

Capital Outturn 2021/22 - Period 9 December 2021

Cost Centre	Variance	£000 Over Performance	£000 Under Performance
IT Upgrade	£30K of additional capital required for Network - this is subject to approval by Cabinet.	32	
Edenbrook Apartments	Contingency for improvement works.		95
Frogmore Investment	Retention fees - not required.		17
ThePavilion, Southampton			
Commercial Investment Strategy	Conditional on appropriate investment opportunities		4,056
Capital take-on			
		32	4,168
			4,136

COMMUNITY

Capital Outturn 2021/22 - Period 9 December 2021

Cost Centre	Variance	£000 Over Performance	£000 Under Performance
Disabled Facs - Mandatory			
Private Sector Renewal			3
Grants for Affordable Housing			
		0	3
			3

TECHNICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL

Capital Outturn 2021/22 - Period 9 December 2021

Cost Centre	Variance	£000 Over Performance	£000 Under Performance
Fleet Pond Visitor Enhancement			193
Bramshot Farm			830
Kingsway Flood Alleviation Sch			57
CCTV			34
S106 Leisure Parish		4	
Fleet Pond Access Track	These funds will be transferred to the Fleet Pond Green Corridor project		110
Hazeley Heath Grazing Project			76
Hazeley Hth, Dilly Ln NoteBd			25
HW Cent Common Access Improve			160
Edenbrook CP Play Tree			60
Edenbrook CP History Walk	Work has been deferred to 2022/23		40
Service Vehicles			82
Edenbrook CP - Skate/Bike Park	Work has not yet started on this project		335
Edenbrook CP - Teen Health			60
Edenbrook CP - Visitor Improve			70
Fleet Pond Fencing			23
Refuse Vehicles			81
Fleet Pond Green Corridor	Delays starting project due to COVID-19		1,332
Fleet Pond Green Corr Ecology	Delays starting project due to COVID-19		735
Allotments at Edenbrook		57	
		61	4,304
			4,243

PLACE

Capital Outturn 2021/22 - Period 9 December 2021

Cost Centre	Variance	£000 Over Performance	£000 Under Performance
Dog Warden Vehicle	No purchase of van anticipated to occur in 2021/22		24
Printers/Photocopiers			
		0	24
			24

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Exempt from Publication



**Chief Executive
Civic Offices
Harlington Way
Fleet
Hampshire
GU51 4AE**

URGENT DECISION BY DELEGATED AUTHORITY

REPORT TITLE: APPOINTMENT OF PSAA TO APPOINT EXTERNAL AUDITORS

PORTFOLIO: FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

DELEGATED POWER: CLLR CHRIS AXAM AND CLLR JAMES RADLEY

KEY DECISION: NO

DECISION

To continue to appoint Public Sector Audit Appointments to procure our external audit services on our behalf. This is a continuation of existing arrangements.

PAPER ATTACHED YES

REASON FOR DECISION

The decision needs to be made by 11th March 2022. The next Audit Committee will be after this date.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED WHEN THIS DECISION WAS MADE

The option of not using PSAA is to carry out a procurement process to procure Auditors. If we do this then we are not protected by PSAA price caps or quality assurance of the work involved.

WHO HAS BEEN CONSULTED?

HAS ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST BEEN DECLARED BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER WHO HAS BEEN CONSULTED YES \ NO

IF YES, HAS A DISPENSATION BEEN GRANTED?

RESOURCE/ RISK/ CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS:

None identified

BACKGROUND PAPERS ATTACHED

(Please ensure that you attach sufficient information to support the decision.)

	Date:	Signed:
CABINET MEMBER:	20/02/22	James Radley
JOINT CHIEF EXECUTIVE	20/02/22	Patricia Hughes
S 151 OFFICER (Head of Finance)	20/02/22	Emma Foy

This report is confidential / exempt (*only complete if necessary*)

PROPER OFFICER: **DATE:**

NOTES:

- The decision cannot be implemented for 5 clear working days to give Members the opportunity for 'Call In'.**
- If a key decision, the report must be available for public inspection on the website (www.hart.gov.uk) for at least 28 days before the decision is made, unless a special extension has been agreed, and the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee given a copy as soon as practicable.
- This record will be made available for public inspection as soon as practicable unless certified as being confidential or exempt.

URGENT DECISION BY DELEGATED AUTHORITY

DATE: 21 FEBRUARY 2022

TITLE OF REPORT: APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

Report of: Head of Corporate Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor James Radley – Finance
Councillor Chris Axam – Chair of Audit Committee

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to appoint Public Sector Audit Appointments to appoint the Council's External Auditors.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That this Council opts into the appointing person arrangements made by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the appointment of external auditors from 2022/23 to 2027/28.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires authorities to either opt into the appointing person regime or to establish an auditor panel and conduct their own procurement exercise. This must be confirmed by the 12th of March 2022.

3.2 The current contract which ran for the audit years 2018/19 to 2022/23 was arranged by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA). The PSAA is a company incorporate by the Local Government Association and appointed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing Communities and Local Government in July 2016 to be the appointing person for principal local government and police bodies audits from 2018/19 under the provision of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Local Audit (Appointing Persons) Regulations 2015.

3.3 The Council has now received an invitation from PSAA for the Council to opt-in to the procurement of external auditors for the financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28 officers. In order for the opt-in to occur, a decision of Council is required by the and by the deadline of 12th March 2022.

3.4 PSAA are a private company set up by the Local Government Association, following the abolition of the Audit Commission. The PSAA's role is to

- Appoint auditors
- Set fees
- Monitor compliance and quality

- 3.5 If the Council were not to opt-in to this scheme the alternative would be to seek a joint procurement with willing neighbouring authorities, or seek to procure independently, inevitably this would require resources;
- to create a specification
 - to initiate and administering a tender process
 - to set a fee structure for the audits
 - to ensure ongoing monitoring and management of audit organisations
- 3.6 Previously the PSAA has been able to appoint the same auditors to all authorities signed up to the 5 Councils arrangements. This has ensured consistent knowledge over contractual arrangements, value for money of the contract and use of the Integra Financial System.
- 3.7 The main advantages of opting into the scheme are:
- Transparent and independent auditor appointment via a third party;
 - The best opportunity to secure the appointment of a qualified registered auditor;
 - The appointment, if possible, of the same auditors to bodies involved in significant collaboration/joint working initiatives, if the Council believes that it will enhance efficiency;
 - On-going management of any independence issues which may arise;
 - Access to specialist PSAA team with significant experience of working within the context of the relevant regulations to appoint auditors, managing contracts with audit firms, and setting and determining audit fees;
 - Collective efficiency savings for the sector through undertaking one major procurement as opposed to a multiplicity of smaller procurements;
 - Concerted efforts to work with other stakeholders to develop a more sustainable local audit market.
- 3.8 Regulation 19 of the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 requires that a decision to opt in must be made by Full Council (authority meeting as a whole).
- 3.9 Current External Audit Contract and Performance Since 2018/19 there have been significant delays in the completion of audits. (Only 9% of 2020/21 Audits were signed off by the 30th September), contributed to concerns around the effectiveness of the local audit regime. An independent review has been undertaken, by Sir Tony Redmond, into the arrangements in place to support the transparency and quality of local authority financial reporting and external audit in England. The Government has recently announced measures to improve local audit delays.

4 CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

External Audit Fees are a mandatory cost and budget will be provided.

4.2 **MANAGEMENT OF RISK, EQUALITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

There are no specifically identified risks relating to the appointment of PSAA. No risks regarding equalities or direct climate change implications have been identified

5 **CONCLUSIONS**

Council accepts the invitation of opting in to the PSAA sector led option for the appointment of external auditors for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28.

Contact: Emma Foy, emma.foy@hart.gov.uk

CABINET

KEY DECISIONS/ WORK PROGRAMME, AND EXECUTIVE DECISIONS MADE

March 2022

Cabinet is required to publish its Key Decisions and forward work programme to inform the public of issues on which it intends to make policy or decisions. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also notes the Programme, which is subject to regular revision.

Report Title	Outline/Reason for Report/Comments	Due Date	Key Decision Y? Note 1	Cabinet Member (Note 2)	Service (Note 3)	* This item may contain Exempt Information
Homelessness Strategy	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to consider a new Homelessness Strategy 2022-2027	Mar 22		SB	CSF	
Improving Energy Efficiency Measures in Affordable Housing	Post consideration by Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to consider housing capital funding for additional energy efficiency measures in affordable housing on sites in Hart	Mar 22		SB	H	
The Corporate Complaint Policy	Post nominations to a task and finish group at Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to propose amendments to the Council's Corporate Complaint Policy for Cabinet approval	Mar 22		DN	JCX	
Revenue and Capital Outturn Position	Post consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to consider a report on the revenue and capital outturn position	Mar 22		JR	F	

Report Title	Outline/Reason for Report/Comments	Due Date	Key Decision Y? Note 1	Cabinet Member (Note 2)	Service (Note 3)	* This item may contain Exempt Information
Easement – ex Travis Perkins Site in Hartley Wintney	To approve the consideration offered for access and service easement to the land located to the front of Primrose House and the former Travis Perkins Builders merchants, Albion Place, Hartley Wintney	Mar 22		JR	TS	Y
Yateley, Darby Green and Frogmore Neighbourhood Plan	To agree to proceed to referendum following receipt of the examiner's report	Apr 22		GC	P	
Service Plans	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, agree the 2021/22 Service Plans	Apr 22		DN	ALL	
Quarterly Performance Plans	To seek Cabinet approval for reports on performance data	Apr 22 Jul 22 Oct 22 Jan 22		DN	ALL	
Outside Bodies	To approve representation from the Council on identified outside bodies	Jun 22		DN	ALL	
Odiham Common Management Plan	To update Members on the Odiham Common Management Plan	Jul 22		DN	P	
Revenue and Capital Outturn 2022/2023	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to consider the Annual report on outturn	Jul 22		JR	F	

Report Title	Outline/Reason for Report/Comments	Due Date	Key Decision Y? Note 1	Cabinet Member (Note 2)	Service (Note 3)	* This item may contain Exempt Information
Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Asset Management Plan	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to consider the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy position and future Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Asset Management Plan	Sep 22		JR	F	

Note 1

A "key decision" means an executive decision which, is likely to -

- a) result in Council incurring expenditure or the making of savings which amount to £30,000 or 25% (whichever is the larger) of the budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- b) be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards within the area of the district of Hart.

Note 2

Cabinet Members

DN Leader	TC Digital	RQ Commercialisation (Cn)	SB Community (Cy)
SK Regulatory	AO Environment	JR Finance and Corporate Services	GC Place

Note 3

Service:

JCX Joint Chief Executive	CS Corporate Services	P Place Services
CSF Community Safety	PP Planning Policy	TS Environmental & Technical Services
F Finance	H Community Services	
SLS Shared Legal Services	MO Monitoring Officer	

Note 4

* **This item may contain Exempt Information** - Regulation 5 of the Local Authority (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

28/01/22	Cllr Neighbour	Welcome Back Fund – New applications	No Call-in
14/02/22	Cllr Neighbour	Release of S106 Funding towards an extension to Fleet Cemetery	No Call-in