



**GREAT YARMOUTH**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee

**Date:** Monday, 08 November 2021

**Time:** 18:30

**Venue:** Assembly Room

**Address:** Town Hall, Hall Plain, Great Yarmouth, NR30 2QF

## AGENDA

Open to Public and Press

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

You have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter to be discussed if it relates to something on your Register of Interests form. You must declare the interest and leave the room while the matter is dealt with.

You have a Personal Interest in a matter to be discussed if it affects

- your well being or financial position
- that of your family or close friends
- that of a club or society in which you have a management role
- that of another public body of which you are a member to a greater extent than others in your ward.

You must declare a personal interest but can speak and vote on the matter.

Whenever you declare an interest you must say why the interest



**11 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC**

In the event of the Committee wishing to exclude the public from the meeting, the following resolution will be moved:-

"That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12(A) of the said Act."

**12 ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY FOR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING**  
**SCHEME**

Details



**GREAT YARMOUTH**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee

## Minutes

Thursday, 23 September 2021 at 18:30

**PRESENT:-**

Councillor Grant (in the Chair); Councillors Candon, Cameron, Flaxman-Taylor, D Hammomd, Jeal, Martin, Price, Talbot, Smith-Clare, Wainwright & Williamson.

Councillor Wells attended as a substitute for Councillor Galer.

Mrs P Boyce (Strategic Director), Mrs K Blakemore (Strategic Director), Mrs N Turner (Housing Director) & Mrs C Webb (Executive Services Officer).

Mr B James, Mr S Bentley & Mr A Oakley (Active Norfolk).

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Galer.

## **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Jeal declared a Pecuniary interest in item no 9, Community Grants 2020-21 & update on Community Investment Fund 2021-22, as he was an employee of Firstmove Furnishaid and reported that he would take no part in the determination of this item.

## **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2021 were confirmed.

## **4 FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee received and considered the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the Forward Plan.

## **5 ACTIVE NORFOLK STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Strategic Director introduced Ben James, Samuel Bentley & Andy Oakley from Active Norfolk to the Committee.

Ben Jones introduced a Youtube video titled Getting Norfolk Moving and then gave a presentation which covered the following areas:-

- Our Vision
- Our Mission
- Our Approach
- Insight into Norfolk
- Physical Health & Well-being
- Active Environments
- Strengthening Communities
- Children & Young People
- How We'll Work
- Getting Local
- Measuring Success.

Councillor Candon asked if the review of children's play areas was being undertaken which had been requested by the Environment Committee. The Strategic Director reported that an open spaces review was underway and a report would be taken to the Environment Committee later this year.

Councillor Jeal reported that officers had undertaken sterling work in the repair of the play equipment and floor surface at St.Georges Playground.

Councillor Smith-Clare asked how Active Norfolk intended to map the individual journeys/outcomes of residents and whether community wide engagement would be carried out. Ben Jones reported that their approach was flexible and would

develop/evolve as engagement was carried out.

Councillor Jeal asked how Active Norfolk planned help residents like himself who preferred driving a car rather than being active and walking or cycling to get about the town. Ben James reported that it was getting the approach right to give residents the confidence and feel safe to exercise to combat long term health conditions or inactivity and they would work in partnership with health care providers to offer a holistic approach.

The Chairman thanked Ben, Samuel & Andy for their informative video & presentation.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the update.

## **6 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Strategic Director.

The Strategic Director reported that the Council currently worked in partnership with Active Norfolk to deliver its Active GY Framework and wider sports development through the appointment of a jointly funded Physical Activity Development Officer since October 2020.

As part of this arrangement, a collaboration agreement had been signed up to by both parties, which required twice yearly review meetings. This report provided the Committee with an update following the first review meeting which was held on 25 May 2021.

The following highlights of the subsequent outcomes, as a result of this partnership working and dedicated resource included:

- Reinigorated Active GY Stakeholder Group,
- Active GY Framework annual action plan with actions being assigned and delivered by all partners who attend the GY Stakeholder Group; and
- The highest proportion of the Tackling Inequalities Fund monies awarded to Active Norfolk being spent in Great Yarmouth (£48K of the £80K funding allocation for Norfolk).

Andy Oakley reported that funding from the Norfolk wide pot for Phase 2 of the Tackling Inequalities Fund of £56k had been secured for Great Yarmouth, from a pot of £160k for the County, which equated to the town receiving 35% of the funding and that additional funding of £61k had been secured, taking the total funding secured for Great Yarmouth to £117k. The Strategic Director reported that this demonstrated the benefit of Andy working in our community to secure additional funding streams and achieve wider outcomes.

Councillor Williamson asked for clarification as to who sat on the Great Yarmouth Stakeholder Group referred to in the report. The Strategic Director reported that this group consisted of a diverse range of partners from across many different sectors from the CCG to Dial and that Councillor Flaxman-Taylor attended and represented the Council.

Councillor Williamson noted that the strategy was a good narrative but that he had

concerns regarding its delivery. Councillor Williamson asked if the Academy schools had been directly consulted/engaged as it was imperative that the schools became part of the delivery process as they had the facilities to offer the local residents, such as access to 3G pitches. Andy Oakley reported that schools were being engaged with by the County Schools Games Officers who were mapping and understanding what they could offer to the community. Councillor Williamson informed Andy that East Norfolk Sixth Form College had not yet been approached.

Councillor Williamson asked if Active Norfolk would be expecting qualitative or quantitative outcomes. Ben James responded that it was hoped to have a mixture of both. The Strategic Director reported that the Action Plan contained outcomes to be met each year and the data would be reviewed on a yearly basis and reported to this Committee, together with the planned outcomes to be included in next years Action Plan.

Councillor Williamson reported for accuracy purposes of the report, that Great Yarmouth did not have CIL in this area in regard planning.

Councillor Candon welcomed the report and was pleased to see the proactive steps being taken to improve the health and well-being of the residents of the Borough. Councillor Candon asked for clarification regarding the Physical Activity Development Officer post. The Strategic Director reported that Andy Oakley was the Council's Physical Activity Development Officer.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the report.

## **7 2021-22 PERIOD 4 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Housing Director.

The Housing Director reported that this report provided an update on the 2021/22 HRA budget. In reviewing the budget, the actual expenditure and income to the end of period 4 had been compared to the profiled budgets for the same period. Key variations were identified and explained within Appendix 1, HRA Income and Expenditure 2021/22 and Appendix 2, HRA Capital programme expenditure.

The Housing Director reported that the Revenue Account currently had a revised 2021/22 forecast deficit of £2.805m, from an originally budgeted forecast deficit of £2.954m, a reduction of £149k. Capital programme spend was currently on track and there had been fewer Right to Buys than the budget originally assumed.

The Housing Director reported that the detail within the report and appendices provided commentary on the variances to date, together with the full year position.

Councillor Price was concerned that the budget forecast might not stack up due to the increase in costs of building materials, kitchens and bathroom fixtures which had increased by approximately 30%. The Housing Director reported that the capital

programme was monitored on a regular basis and the Property Team were looking closely at the cost of build and component prices and this would be reflected in the report provided to the Committee for period 6.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee consider and note the 2021/22 Housing Revenue and capital Budget monitoring position, as at the end of period 4.

## **8 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ADAPTATION AND IMPROVEMENT POLICY**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Housing Director.

The Housing Director reported that the revised policy presented to Members, updated the existing Private Sector Adaptation and Improvement Policy which was revised in July 2019, to reflect best practice and current thinking on the delivery of the Disabled facility Grant (DFG) and discretionary assistance. Section 2 of the report, at page 37 of the agenda pack, set out the key amendments made to the policy, which included updating service standards and a number of changes to grants and loans such as:-

- Using DFG monies to fund the first £5,000 of an applicant's financial contribution to remove a barrier to some applicants pursuing their DFG application and being able to benefit from the adaptations they required.
- Introducing a new discretionary DFG top-up grant of £20,000 where they have been awarded a DFG for which the costs exceeded the current limit of £30,000. This reflected the increasing complexity of some DFG applications where more than one adaptation was required. This would be secured through a charge on the property allowing full recovery of the discretionary grant on transfer of the property.
- Introducing a new Discretionary Top-Up grant for heating and energy efficiency measures where recipients were receiving other government/energy industry funded works but there was a shortfall of funding to meet the costs of the works.

The Housing Director reported that the report provided an update on current DFG service delivery, which was still experiencing low levels of DFG completion due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic.

Councillor Williamson asked if the Council had filled the two vacant Technical Officer posts. The Housing Director that both posts had now been recruited to.

Councillor Martin referred to the Night Owl Service provided as part of the Be at Home Alarms as detailed on page 55 of the agenda, as the service was struggling to meet the demand and this key area needed to be urgently addressed, as it allowed people to stay in their homes and not have to go into care or take up valuable hospital beds. Councillor Martin asked if the call volume number information was shared with County. Councillor Martin had heard of instances where it had taken an ambulance four hours to arrive after calling the emergency services which was inexcusable and she asked whether the Council could fund these alarms for tenants on a low income as it could help to save lives. Councillor Martin asked if a discretionary fund for these alarms could be set up.

Councillor Martin reported that the alarms cost £17.58 a month, which did not appear to be a great deal of money, but was hard to find for someone on a fixed, low income. **The Housing Director agreed to investigate whether we shared information with County on the number of calls made to the Night Owl Service and would look in to whether the Be at Home alarms could be provided for a period of time, free of charge, through the Better Care Fund.**

Councillor Jeal reported that he supported Councillor Martin's request, as he had heard stories of elderly people falling in their homes and having to wait hours and hours to be rescued which was not acceptable.

The Housing Director reminded the Committee that the Night Owl Service was provided by County but that the Council was in regular contact with them and raised concerns over the level of service provision in these challenging times.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee approve the Private Sector Adaptation & Improvement Policy.

## **9 COMMUNITY GRANTS 2020-21 AND UPDATE ON THE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND 2021-22**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Strategic Director and Neighbourhood Manager.

The Strategic Director reported the salient areas of the report to the Committee which provided Members with an update on both the community grants awarded in 2020/21, which due to the pandemic, Members agreed to extend to 30 August 2021, and a six month update on the work of the Norfolk Community Foundation, as fund manager for the newly established Great Yarmouth Community Investment Fund, which Members approved on 4 March 2021.

In addition, the report also summarised the £141,427 of commissioned Community Champions' Programme VCSE outreach services that were now in place. Members would recall Great Yarmouth Borough Council was awarded £465,000 grant funding for 2021/22 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to establish a Community Champions' Programme comprising of three workstreams. This had enabled a new outreach programme to be commissioned by the Council which was being delivered by four Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations. The primary purpose being to ensure residents had access to trusted sources of health information and guidance for themselves and their contacts relating to the COVID-19, local vaccination services and the broader support offered by Norfolk County Council, the Borough Council, Norfolk Public Health, the Norfolk & Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group and the Borough's two Primary Care Networks.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Director for her comprehensive report.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee:-

(i) Note the outcome and impact of the Council's Community Grants provided to VCSEs up to 30 August 2021,

(ii) Note the progress on the Community Champions' outreach programme; and

(iii) Receive and note the update on the Great Yarmouth Community Investment Fund administered by the Norfolk Community Foundation and the Foundation's plan to grow this independent fund.

## **10 ROUGH SLEEPING ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME BID - HOUSING FIRST SCHEME**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Housing Director.

The Housing Director reported that the Covid pandemic highlighted the scale of rough sleeping and the number of individuals in insecure housing at risk of rough sleeping across the Borough. The Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan 2020 produced in response and adopted by Full Council in July 2020, identified the need for a clear pathway approach which ensured that rough sleeper's accommodation and support needs were assessed to ensure they could access accommodation which met their needs. In considering this pathway approach, it had become clear that there was a gap in the existing provision for rough sleepers with high or complex needs within existing or planned provision.

The Housing Director reported that to meet this need, a new Housing First model scheme had been developed to provide five self-contained properties where rough sleepers would be able to be accommodated for up to two years. These properties would be bought and repaired to ensure that the homes for the scheme met the required standard. Integral to the scheme, was the provision of a personalised, flexible support offer, reflecting the high level of support needed, and there would be one full-time post to support the five individuals who would be housed through the scheme. The Council had submitted a bid to the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme for both capital and revenue funding to deliver the scheme with a decision expected by the end of September/beginning of October 2021.

Councillor Wainwright reported that he welcomed this policy and asked for clarification as to how many people had been identified as being homeless in the Borough at the present time. The Housing Director reported that the last figure she had received, as of Monday this week, there were 14 homeless people in the Borough.

Councillor Wainwright reported that he thought that the Council had identified a building for this scheme subject to a condition survey. The Housing Director reported that the building which Councillor Wainwright was referring to related to the transitional housing scheme, which was a different proposal to this scheme, and was

still progressing.

Councillor Wainwright asked if the five houses would be close together or spread throughout the Borough as sometimes, proposals such as this, could cause tensions within a community. The Housing Director reported that they would ideally be sited in Great Yarmouth, Gorleston or a larger village, which had services to offer and would be effectively managed by 1 full-time dedicated officer.

The Chairman reported that the funding allocated allowed for a purchase price of £130k per property which he thought could be inadequate. The Housing Director reported that the confidential appendix to the report provided a breakdown of costs.

Councillor Jeal requested that any housing provided did not incur a weekly rent over the government housing allowance. The Housing Director reported that affordability was the key and the the Universal Credit housing element would be uppermost when an offer was made to ensure that it was affordable for the tenant in the long term.

Councillor Talbot asked if the Council was considering the introduction of "wet houses" as addiction was not a choice, but an illness, and if addicts had a safe home environment and were able to get off of the streets they would have a much better chance of becoming clean and a functioning member of society again. The Housing Director reported that careful consideration would be required as how the Council could best address this issue.

Councillor Martin thanked the Housing Director and her team for all their support in getting this much needed scheme up and running which had been much needed for a very long time.

RESOLVED:-

That the Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee recommend to Full Council:-

1. Approve the purchase and renovation of five properties to be used to meet the needs of rough sleepers with high support needs within the parameters of the project as set out in this report and the Confidential Appendix,
2. Approve, subject to a successful application for grant funding, the expenditure and the borrowing set out in the report at paragraph 3.1. i.e. the purchase, repair and renovation and furnishing of the properties,
3. Delegate decisions in relation to the purchase of the properties and the completion of the required renovation works to the Head of Property and Asset Management and the Section 151 Officer in accordance with the Property Acquisitions and Disposals Policy,
4. Approve the procurement of a third-party support provider to deliver the support and manage the five homes; and
5. Accept the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme grant funding and conditions.

**11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman reported that there was no other business being of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration at the meeting.

**13 CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX - ROUGH SLEEPING ACCOMODATION PROGRAMME BID - HOUSING FIRST SCHEME**

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the confidential appendix.

The meeting ended at: 20:30

**Forward Plan for Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee**

<b>Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee 2</b>				<b>Pre Meet Date</b>	<b>Committee Date</b>
1	21-035	Council Housing Compliance & Performance	Director of Housing	10/11/2021	18/11/2021
2	21-103	Period 6 Budget Monitoring Report HRA	Financial Services Manager	10/11/2021	18/11/2021
3	21-038	Resident Engagement Strategy	Director of Housing	10/11/2021	18/11/2021
4	21-173	Acquisition of Property for Transitional Housing Scheme update	Director of Housing	10/11/2021	18/11/2021
5	20-200	Temp Accommodation Strategy Update	Director of Housing	12/01/2022	20/01/2022
6	21-142	Middlegate Regeneration Scheme	Housing Director	12/01/2022	20/01/2022
7	20-199	Empty Homes Policy	Director of Housing	12/01/2022	20/01/2022
8	21-083	Rent Income Policy	Director of Housing	12/01/2022	20/01/2022
9	21-143	Sustainable Warmth	Housing Director	12/01/2022	20/01/2022
10	21-144	District Direct - information & outcomes	Housing Director	12/01/2022	20/01/2022
11	21-113	Period 10 Budget Monitoring Report - HRA	Financial Services Manager	02/03/2022	10/03/2022
12	21-084	Leasehold policy	Director of Housing	02/03/2022	10/03/2022
13	21-085	Right to Buy Policy	Director of Housing	02/03/2022	10/03/2022
14	21-145	Primary Care Mental Health Services - Steam Café	Housing Director		TBC
15	21-146	CCTV investments - update	Strategic Director (PB)		TBC
16	21-147	Asset-Based Community Development - Community Centres	Housing Director		TBC
17	21-148	Locality Strategy Action Plan & Community Involvement	Strategic Director (PB)		TBC
18	21-149	Anti-social Behaviour Strategy & Action Plan - update	Housing Director		TBC
19	21-141	Wellesley Recreation Ground - update	Strategic Director (KB)		TBC

**URN:** 21-103

**Subject:** 2021/22 Period 6 Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring Report

**Report to:** ELT  
Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee –8<sup>TH</sup> November 2021

**Report by:** HRA Service Accountant

#### **SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

Consider the 2021/22 Housing revenue and capital budget monitoring position as at the end of period 6.

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. There is a statutory requirement to maintain a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and that account must not show a deficit. The HRA is a separate (ring fenced) account of the Council covering income and expenditure relating to its role as landlord. Under the self-financing arrangements for local authorities, the HRA records the costs of management and maintenance of the Council's dwellings and the related income from rents and other charges. The Government provides guidance on what should be included in the HRA to protect Council tenants.
- 1.2. Although there is not a requirement for a similar separation of capital expenditure, the capital programme as it relates to the HRA is separately monitored. This report outlines the estimated forecasts for the full financial year 2021/22 as well as showing the position of the HRA as at the end of period 6.
- 1.3. The regular review and monthly monitoring of the HRA budgets provides a sound basis for the preparation of estimates for 2021/22 and of the HRA Business Plan.

#### **2. Budget Monitoring at Period 6 (April – September 2021)**

- 2.1. For budget monitoring purposes, the actual expenditure and income to the end of period 6 is reviewed to produce estimated forecasts, compared against original budgets, for the 2021/22 financial year. Key variations are identified and explained within Appendix 1, HRA Income and Expenditure 2021/22 and Appendix 2, HRA Major Capital Programme 2021/22.
- 2.2. To prepare updated forecasts, detailed analysis has been undertaken of actual figures and any further changes identified from the budget monitoring process, completed alongside services via review work. Updated forecasts are set out below; table 1 shows the HRA Income and

Expenditure forecast and table 2 shows the HRA Capital Programme and planned resourcing of the programme.

- 2.3. The Housing Revenue Account summary, displayed within table 1, shows a revised 2021/22 forecast deficit of £2.199m, from an originally budgeted forecast deficit of £2.784m, resulting in a favorable movement of £584k.
- 2.4. The forecast changes incorporated within Table 1 and Appendix 1 are overall predictions to capture the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2.5. The HRA employee turnover for 2021/22, to the end of period six is currently 13.51%, in comparison to period four, which was 9.65%. It should be noted, that the average headcount for the HRA is currently 73.
- 2.6. Employee turnover is the total number of leavers as a percentage of the average head count of employees over the period. In financial terms, turnover will result in underspends against direct employee related budget, for example pay, NI and pension when posts become vacant up to the point of recruitment. Some of the in-year vacancy savings will be offset using agency and interim appointments. Overall, for the period to the end of September there is an underspend of (£113k) of direct employee costs, with a revised budget forecast reduction of £123k in 2021/22.
- 2.7. Repairs and maintenance budgets continue to reflect a reduction in demand led revenue void spend, along with gas heating repair spend. Both budgets are demand led and will continue to be monitored going forward.
- 2.8. Both revenue funding capital and interest payable budgets are forecast to be underspent in year. This is due to the reduction in capital spend, as detailed in table 2. The reduction of major capital programmes has reduced the revenue required to fund the capital programme, although much of this underspend is forecast to be carried forward to 2022/23. The reduced interest payable is due to the reduction of the affordable and additional housing schemes. This has resulted in reduced borrowing in year and therefore reduced interest incurred.
- 2.9. Increased rents, rates & taxes spend forecast is following increased insurance costs received in year. This is partly due to increased premiums received, along with additional perils being added to the policy.

**Table 1 - HRA Income and Expenditure Forecast 2021/22**

	<b>Original Budget 2021/22 £000</b>	<b>Current Budget 2021/22 £000</b>	<b>P6 YTD Actual 2021/22 £000</b>	<b>Full Year Forecast £000</b>	<b>Full Year Forecast Variance £000</b>
Dwelling Rents	(21,495)	(21,495)	(11,645)	(21,665)	(170)
Other non-dwelling rents	(275)	(275)	(278)	(275)	0
Charges for services and facilities	(1,366)	(1,366)	(620)	(1,366)	0
Interest & investment income	(15)	(15)	0	(15)	0
<b>Income Total</b>	<b>(23,151)</b>	<b>(23,151)</b>	<b>(12,543)</b>	<b>(23,321)</b>	<b>(170)</b>
Repairs & Maintenance	9,257	9,257	4,075	9,019	(238)
Supervision and Management (Direct Employee)	2,580	2,580	1,177	2,457	(123)
Supervision and Management	3,126	2,956	312	3,096	140
Rents Rates & Taxes	284	284	253	397	113
Depreciation	3,738	3,738	1,869	3,738	0
Capital expenditure funded by the HRA	3,561	3,561	295	3,410	(151)
HRA Interest Payable	2,946	2,946	1,327	2,790	(156)
Provision for bad and doubtful debts	150	150	0	150	0
Employer's Pension Adjustment	513	513	0	513	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>26,155</b>	<b>25,985</b>	<b>9,308</b>	<b>25,570</b>	<b>(415)</b>
Transfers (from)/to Earmarked Reserves	(30)	(30)	(30)	(30)	0
Leasehold Capital Contributions	(20)	(20)	(17)	(20)	0
<b>Deficit/(Surplus) for the year</b>	<b>2,954</b>	<b>2,784</b>	<b>(3,282)</b>	<b>2,199</b>	<b>(585)</b>
Bfwd HRA Reserves Balance (01 Apr)	<b>8,563</b>	<b>8,563</b>	<b>8,563</b>	<b>8,563</b>	<b>8,563</b>
Deficit/(Surplus) for the year	<b>2,954</b>	<b>2,784</b>	<b>(3,282)</b>	<b>2,199</b>	<b>(585)</b>
<b>Cfwd HRA Reserves Balance (31 Mar)</b>	<b>5,609</b>	<b>5,779</b>	<b>11,845</b>	<b>6,364</b>	<b>9,148</b>

### 3. Budget Monitoring Forecasts – Major Capital Programme

- 3.1. The Housing Revenue Account currently has a major capital works budget of £13.696m for 2021/22. As at period 6, the 2021/22 capital budget forecast is revised to deliver a £10.033m programme in year, this reflects the reduction in the affordable housing programme (see below)
- 3.2. Actual capital spend to the end of September 2021 totals £3,286k, as summarised in table two.
- 3.3. Capital projects have been affected by the increased difficulty in sourcing materials. Budget totaling £1.875m is currently forecast to be carried forward into 2023/24.
- 3.4. The Major void programme has been subject to increased demand to the year to date. This budget increase is forecast to be supported by reductions in expected spend within the Decarbonisation programme. Decarbonisation works will continue to be completed, but due to time pressures, are forecast to be completed following roofing completions, resulting in slippage of some of the programme into next year.
- 3.5. Other programmes continue to be on track, such as windows and doors and neighbourhood plans, with the latter delivering the upgrade of communal doors and screen upgrades.
- 3.6. The Council has recently submitted a capital funding bid under the Social Housing Decarbonisation fund (SHDF), to support project spend targeting a total of 85 properties, 74 Social Housing dwellings and 11 Privately owned homes, across a number of terraced streets in the borough. Total project cost for the scheme is £1.9m, with funding contributions broken down within the table below:

Capital costs	Total Properties	Total SHDF capital grant £000	Total GYBC capital contribution £000	Total costs £000
Great Yarmouth Council properties	74	£920	£638	£1,558
Owner Occupied infills	11	£204	£0	£204
Administration Fee's		£124	£62	£187
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1,248</b>	<b>£700</b>	<b>£1,949</b>

- 3.7. If successful, the Council, along with Eon, who will manage the day to day delivery of this project as our delivery partner, will aim to deliver a programme to decarbonise the way residents heat their homes.
- 3.8. Proposed works are to complete a further external wall insulation programme, providing the needed fabric improvements that enable properties to improve the energy performance of the buildings, as well as improving the quality of life for the tenants. The Council is still currently awaiting the bid outcome.
- 3.9. The Council had also submitted a bid to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for part of £10m of funding available in 2020/21, to support estate regeneration. The Council bid and was awarded £858k. This funding will be used support works to improve leisure and recreation facilities on the Middlegate estate. Resident engagement will inform the proposed works. This capital funding needs to be spent by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

3.10. With effect from 1 April 2021, the regulations around the use of Retained Right to Buy receipts have changed, allowing 1-4-1 receipts to be used to fund 40% of the cost of building/acquiring new Council homes. Prior to this, it has been restricted to 30%. The time frame of which receipts must be spent has also been revised. Receipts are now required to be spent within five years from the sale of the dwelling, not three years.

3.11. The above changes have impacted the profile spend of receipts, therefore adjusting the budget requirement for 2021/22 onwards. The table below displays a high-level review of changes in order to prevent receipt return:

Financial Year	Current Budgeted spend		New requirement		Year of Receipts
	Receipt	Capital	Receipt	Capital	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	
2021/22	1,094	2,554	0	0	N/A
2022/23	487	1,136	0	0	N/A
2023/24	1,054	2,458	725	1,087	2018/19
2024/25	1,263	2,948	526	789	2019/20
2025/26	1,310	3,056	117	176	2020/21

3.12. As per the above table, the new receipt requirements have reduced the volume of receipts required to be spent prior to 2023/24.

3.13. To reflect this, the Council has reduced its affordable housing budget to be spent in 2021/22, from £3.648m to £1.8m. Although reduced, this will ensure that the Council remains ahead of its minimum receipt spend required, as well as continuing to add new homes to its stock. The use of Retained Right to Buy Receipts and associated borrowing will continue to be closely monitored to ensure effective and timely spend.

**Table 2 - HRA Capital Expenditure and Financing Forecast 2021/22**

Capital programme	Original Budget 2021/22 £000	Current Budget 2021/22 £000	P6 YTD Actual 2021/22 £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Full Year Forecast Variance £000
Kitchens & Bathrooms	2,869	2,869	535	2,869	0
Windows & Doors	592	647	149	647	0
Planned Maintenance	611	642	343	642	0
Energy Efficiency Improvements	1,173	1,173	160	973	(200)
Specific Planned Projects	546	756	87	756	0
Empty Properties	700	785	647	1,035	250
New Affordable Housing - Right to Buy receipts	3,648	3,648	723	1,800	(1,848)
New Affordable Housing – Additional Non 1-4-1 Provision	250	500	11	125	(375)
Decarbonisation	1,738	1,978	601	828	(1,150)
Neighbourhood Plans	91	91	1	91	0
Housing Transformation Budget	211	607	0	207	(400)
Key Safe Installation	0	0	29	60	60
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>12,429</b>	<b>13,696</b>	<b>3,286</b>	<b>10,033</b>	<b>(3,663)</b>
<b>Financing:</b>					
Borrowing	4,108	4,150	723	1,925	(2,225)
Capital Receipts	2,227	2,227	382	1,338	(889)
Revenue	2,336	3,561	295	3,012	(549)
Depreciation	3,738	3,738	1,869	3,738	0
Leasehold Contribution	20	20	17	20	0
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>12,429</b>	<b>13,696</b>	<b>3,286</b>	<b>10,033</b>	<b>(3,663)</b>

#### 4. Right To Buy (RTB) Summary 2021/22

- 4.1. Table 3 provides the number of the RTB sales made year to date at period 6 against our anticipated budgeted sales. Further analysis will be undertaken in Quarter 3 to review the projected sales anticipated for the full year.

**Table 3 – RTB Sales 2021/22**

	<b>Estimated Sales</b>	<b>Actual Sales</b>
<b>Qtr. 1</b>	8	5
<b>Qtr. 2</b>	9	0
<b>Qtr. 3</b>	10	0
<b>Qtr. 4</b>	10	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>5</b>

- 4.2. Right to Buy sales continue to be significantly below previous sales levels, with five sale completions in quarter 1 and no sales in quarter two. A number of sales have already taken place in quarter 3 year to date.
- 4.3. It is estimated that approximately 21 sales will complete by the end of the financial year, which is revised from a budget estimate of 37. This will be kept under close review.
- 4.4. The continued low level of sales will be impacting upon the level of capital receipts available to support the capital programme in 2021/22, as well as the level of Right to Buy Retained Receipts available.

#### 5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The Housing Revenue Account currently shows a revised 2021/22 forecast deficit of £2.199m, from an originally budgeted forecast deficit of £2.784m, resulting in a favorable movement of £584k. The Income and expenditure position will continue to be monitored going forward.
- 5.2. Major Capital spend to the end of September 2021 totals £3,286k. Spend is expected to increase as the year progresses, although projects have been affected by time pressures and the increased difficulty in sourcing materials. Budget totaling £1.875m is currently forecast to be carried forward into 2023/24.

#### 6. Financial implications and Risks

- 6.1. The detail within the report highlights the significant variances, including estimated forecasts of the full year impact to the HRA revenue and capital budgets.
- 6.2. The HRA monitoring report aims to capture all impacts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes increased costs and reduction to income streams.
- 6.3. The income and expenditure will continue to be monitored in detail during the year, including additional reviews of the HRA 40 year business plan throughout the year.
- 6.4. The HRA is dependent mainly on the rental income stream of the social housing rents, and we have a dedicated team monitoring tenant arrears on a regular basis.

#### 7. Background Papers

*Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?*

<b>Area for consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	
Existing Council Policies:	
Financial Implications (including VAT and tax):	
Legal Implications (including human rights):	
Risk Implications:	
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	
Crime & Disorder:	
Every Child Matters:	

**Appendix 1 - HRA Income and Expenditure 2021/22**

	<b>Current Budget 2021/22 £000</b>	<b>Full Year Forecast £000</b>	<b>Full year Forecast Variance £000</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Dwelling Rents	(21,495)	(21,665)	(170)	Rent received from HRA Dwellings. Increase in forecast rental income, following increased acquisitions being added to the stock and reduced Right to Buy sales in the prior and current year.
<b>Income Total</b>	<b>(21,495)</b>	<b>(21,665)</b>	<b>(170)</b>	
Rents, Rates, Taxes and Other Charges	284	397	113	Increased insurance premiums as a result of the COVID-19 and increased perils.
Repairs and Maintenance	9,257	9,019	(238)	Planned large repair works are currently forecast to increase by £217k. This increase is mitigated by the reduction of revenue neighbourhood planned works and revenue car park budgets. Revenue heating works are forecast to reduce by £243k. This is partly due to increased capital works in prior years reducing over repair costs required.
Supervision and Management	2,956	3,096	140	Utility charges forecast to increase by an estimated £39k. RTB income is revised to reflect reduced sales estimated in year. Sales are revised from a budgeted 37 sales, to 21. Increased temporary staff costs to maintain service operation while the recruitment process is completed. Revised CCTV budget allocation in order to maintain the service going forward (£23k).
Supervision and Management (Staff Pay)	2,580	2,457	(123)	Staff vacancies year to date within multiple housing teams. Services are working towards recruiting into these posts going forward. This saving is partly offset by interim and agency staff being appointed in year (As above).
Capital Expenditure funded by Revenue	3,561	3,410	(151)	Reduced revenue required to fund the capital programme for 2021/22.
Interest Payable and Similar Charges	2,946	2,790	(156)	Reduced borrowing required in year due to the revised Affordable and

	<b>Current Budget 2021/22 £000</b>	<b>Full Year Forecast £000</b>	<b>Full year Forecast Variance £000</b>	<b>Comments</b>
				Additional housing budgets, resulting in reduced interest payable.
<b>Expenditure Total</b>	<b>21,584</b>	<b>21,169</b>	<b>(415)</b>	

## Appendix 2 – Major Capital Programme 2021/22

Capital Programme	Current Budget 2021/22 £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Full year Forecast Variance £000	Comments
Energy and Efficiency Improvements	1,173	973	(200)	Heating budgets have been reduced by £200k. This budget is forecast to be carried forward into 2022/23.
Empty Properties	785	1,035	250	Major void works are ahead of schedule year to date. The Major void programme is forecast to exceed its original budget provision. An additional £250k is forecast to support increased demand.
New Affordable Housing – Additional Non - 1-4-1 Provision	500	125	(375)	Programme delays year to date. Schemes are currently still undergoing the project planned process. £375k forecast to be carried forward to continue projects into 2022/23.
New Affordable Housing – Right to Buy receipts	3,648	1,800	(1,848)	Two properties have been purchased off the open market year to date, as part of the planned scheme using Right to Buy retained receipts. The 1-4-1 receipt retention agreement has been recently revised, changing how authorities can use the 1-4-1 receipts available to them. Budget allocation has been revised to reflect this change.
Key Safe Installation	0	60	60	Additional works to replace key safes within Housing. Programme continuation from works started in 2020/21.
Housing Transformation Budget	607	207	(400)	Delay to programme has resulted in reprofile of spend. Budget to be carried forward to support the programmes completion.
Decarbonisation	1,978	828	(1,150)	External wall insulation (EWI) and roofing budget allocations are to be reduced by 1,150k for 2021/22. The Council has recently submitted a bid to further complete works on dwellings which display low energy performance in 2022/23. £1.1m is forecast to be carried forward to support this bid.
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,691</b>	<b>5,028</b>	<b>(3,663)</b>	



**URN:** 21-035

**Subject:** Council Housing Compliance and Performance – six monthly update  
October 2021

**Report to:** ELT 20 October 2021  
Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee 8 November 2021

**Report by:** Russell Heath, Resident Engagement Officer  
Nicola Turner, Housing Director

#### **SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS**

This paper provides the first six-monthly compliance and performance update in relation to the Council's housing stock. It provides information on regulatory compliance as well as an update on Resident Engagement and satisfaction with the Housing Service.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That Committee:**

1. Note the report.

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 On 15 July 2021, committee considered a report which set out the Council's compliance and performance for its housing stock for the 2020/21 financial year. This information provides a benchmark for the ongoing monitoring and scrutiny by committee of compliance and performance through six monthly reports. This report provides the first six monthly report and reflects the position at 30 September 2021.

## **2.0 Regulatory Compliance**

- 2.1 The table below provides updated information on the Council's compliance against each of the Consumer Standards and the Rent Standard. Compliance is RAG rated to identify where the Council is fully compliant (green), compliant but there is a need for

further improvement (amber) and where the Council is non-compliant (red). The current position is shown below, along with the position reported in July 2021 for the 2020/21 financial year:

Standard	Sub area	Current Rating 2021	Previous Rating 2020/21
<b>Neighbourhood and community</b>			
	Neighbourhood management	Fully Met	Fully Met
	Local area co-operation	Fully Met	Fully Met
	Anti-social behaviour	Fully Met	Fully Met
	Overall rating	Fully Met	Fully Met
<b>Tenancy</b>			
	Allocations and mutual exchanges	Fully Met	Fully Met
	Tenure	Fully Met	Fully Met
	Overall rating	Fully Met	Fully Met
<b>Home</b>			
	Quality of Accommodation	Not compliant in one area	Met - improvement required
	Repairs and maintenance	Met - improvement required	Met - improvement required
	Overall rating	Met - improvement required	Met - improvement required
<b>Tenant involvement and empowerment</b>			
	Customer service, choice and complaints	Fully Met	Fully Met
	Involvement and empowerment	Met - improvement required	Met - improvement required
	Understanding diverse needs	Met - improvement required	Met - improvement required
	Overall rating	Fully Met	Fully Met
<b>Rent Standard</b>			
	Setting rents	Fully Met	Fully Met

2.2 The assessment recognises some areas where further improvement is required and further information on these areas is provided below:

### Home Standard

This standard relates to the standard of homes and delivery of a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service.

#### Quality of Accommodation

At the 30 September 2021, 89% of homes met the Decent Homes Standard, this reflects a lower position than reported for 2020/21 outturn, but the level of

compliance will increase over the rest of the financial year as the reduction on performance at the end of 2020/21 relates to new properties which became non-decent at the start of the financial year. By the end of the 2021/22 financial year, it is expected that 95% of the Council's housing stock will meet the Decent Homes Standard.

The red status reflects the requirement to:

- Address a backlog of completion of some Fire Risk Assessments. The backlog is being actively addressed and monitored and will be removed by the end of 2021.

In addition, the following areas of improvement are required

- Build upon current reductions in non-decency and ensure all homes meet the Decent Homes Standard and are free of Category 1 Hazards (as defined by the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System). Currently 8 homes have Category 1 Hazards – where works have been declined by the tenant (4) or where the extent of works required is planned or current status is being reviewed (4).
- Produce a new Asset Management Strategy for 2021-26 to provide the strategic plan for the maintenance of council homes including the requirement to decarbonise the housing stock.

### Repairs and Maintenance

The amber status reflects the requirement to:

- Ensure value for money in repairs and maintenance through a forthcoming review.
- Focus on communal areas to ensure they are well maintained in terms of both repairs and decoration – enhancing both homes and neighbourhoods. In 2021/22, a programme has been introduced with a focus on timber screens, cyclical decoration and block flooring.
- Timely and cost-effective void process and bringing long term empty homes back into use. Since April 2021, works have been completed on all long-term voids except two that require specialist support.

Identified interventions will address the areas identified above allowing the amber status to change to green.

### Tenant Involvement and Empowerment

This standard requires landlords to provide choices, information and communication which reflects the diverse needs of tenants, to have a clear approach to complaint

handling and provide wide opportunities for tenant involvement and influence. The July 2021 report provided information on what was to be progressed to further strengthen our position in meeting the requirements.

#### Involvement and Empowerment

A new Resident Engagement Strategy has been developed with tenants reflecting the new approach developed since December 2019 which will be presented to committee in November for adoption. Once the Council has adopted the Resident Engagement Strategy this will enable the Council to build on current progress on resident engagement allowing the amber status to change to green.

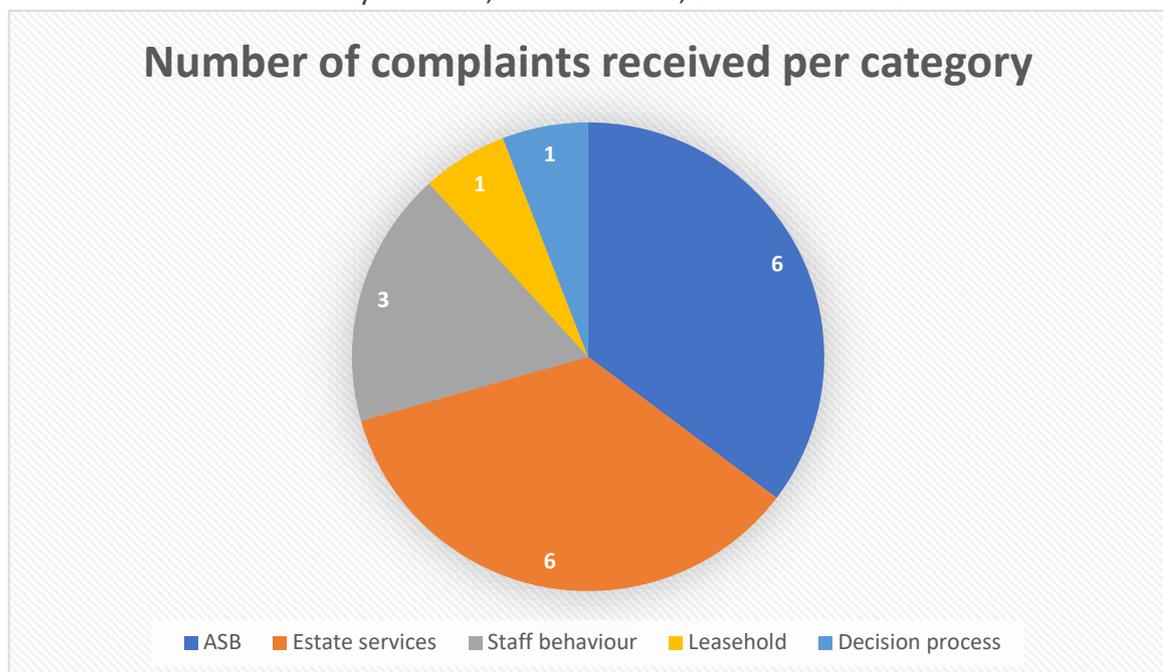
#### Understanding diverse needs

The amber status of this measure reflects the fact that the Council's current IT system limits the ability to access and analyse up to date information on the needs of tenants which means the Council is unable to use this insight to support resident engagement and service improvement.

### 3.0 Complaint Handling

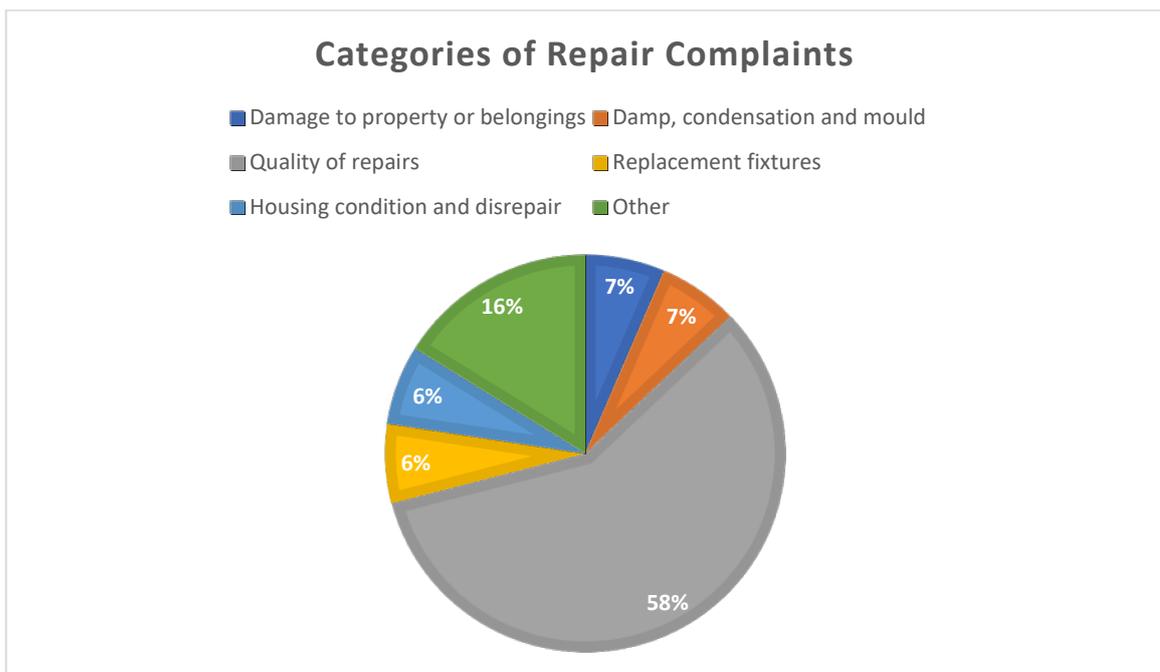
3.1 The Council has improved the way it is recording complaints and outcomes. Since 1 April 2021, 48 Stage One complaints have been recorded in addition to one compliment.

3.2 Complaints relating to the Housing Service numbered 17, the categories of complaints received related to Tenancy Services, Income Team, Leasehold and Estate Services



3.3 In responding to complaints, the Council continues to capture and implement identified improvements to the Housing Service and its processes or procedures. Recent examples of learning from complaints include:

- 3.3.1 Supporting residents with measuring noise nuisance and the use of different tools for measuring noise nuisance
- 3.3.2 Further consultations with the community regarding access to communal areas
- 3.3.3 Clearer communication when a complaint is initially responded to as a service request
- 3.4 Staff behaviour is linked to dissatisfaction with decisions and how staff were received over the phone.
- 3.5 There is a need for a renewed focus on recording compliments received across all methods in which they are made. This recognises individuals and teams focus on delivering great customer service as well as enabling the service to learn from what is done well. The compliment received was regarding Estate Services caretaking.
- 3.6 The number of complaints recorded relating to the repairs service was 31. The breakdown of categories of complaints is shown below:



#### 4.0 Resident Engagement Update

- 4.1 The Resident Engagement Strategy and associated action plan will be considered by committee in November 2021.
- 4.2 Following the last Committee meeting, further progress has been made through:
  - Expanding the number of transactional surveys to include tenancy review visits
  - Supporting the Sheltered Housing Review.

#### 5.0 Satisfaction

5.1 The following transactional surveys to understand the level of resident satisfaction with various aspects of the Housing Service were undertaken during quarters one and two:

- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
- New Home (quality of home and sign-up process)
- Tenancy Support
- Tenancy Review Visits

5.2 Over the first two quarters 2021/22, a total of 124 surveys have been returned, the satisfaction figures below reflect the percentage of tenants who rated the service good or very good.

Survey	Q1	Q2	Satisfaction
ASB	25	18	81%
New Home	26	24	86%
Tenancy Support	3	6	67%
Tenancy Review Visits	1	22	100%

5.3 Overall tenant satisfaction across all transactional surveys:

- Q1 - 88.70%
- Q2 – 85.71%
- Overall - 87.10%

5.4 The results of the surveys and in particular comments made by tenants completing surveys, supports the team to identify service improvements. From the responses received, the following changes have been identified:

- Ensuring tenants and residents are clearer on how to contact the Housing Service – changes are to be made to the Council’s website, letters and News and Views newsletter.
- Supporting the Out of Hours service and residents when receiving calls about Anti-Social behaviour – currently exploring what guidance can be provided to the Out of Hours Control Operators to support residents when calls are received. To be progressed in January 2022
- Garden condition at sign up – a new approach to reduce the number of gardens requiring work at sign up is to be agreed with GYB Services
- Feedback has been received from respondents about the effectiveness of block letters that are sent out when reports of nuisance are received but the cause of the Anti-Social Behaviour is not identifiable. A review of the block letters will be

undertaken so they are clearer to residents to support how reports of Anti-Social Behaviour are managed.

## 6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

## 7.0 Risk Implications

7.1 The Council remains focused on ensuring it is compliant with the regulatory requirements for social housing. The most significant risk with maintaining compliance relates to the Home Standard reflecting the need to ensure the Council's Homes are safe, well maintained and meet the Decent Homes Standard. This risk is mitigated by the Council's capital and responsive repair programmes which remains focused on ensuring the Council's homes meet required standards.

## 8.0 Conclusions

8.1 The report evidences that the Council continues to be compliant with the Consumer Standards and the Rent Standard. The report identifies that in relation to the Home Standard and Tenant Involvement and Engagement Standard there are areas where further improvement is required although the Council does meet the requirements of the standards.

## 8.2 Background Papers

Council Housing Compliance and Performance report – 15 July 2021, Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee

*Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?*

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Via ELT
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Via ELT
Existing Council Policies:	Tenancy Policy, Housing Allocations Scheme, Void Policy, Social Housing Tenancy Fraud Policy, Rechargeable Repairs Policy
Financial Implications (including VAT and tax):	None associated with the report.
Legal Implications (including human rights):	No legal implications associated with the report.

Risk Implications:	Set out in the report.
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	None
Crime & Disorder:	None
Every Child Matters:	None

**URN:** 21-038

**Subject:** Resident Engagement Strategy

**Report to:** ELT 25 August 2021  
Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee 8 November 2021

**Report by:** Russell Heath, Resident Engagement Officer

#### **SUBJECT MATTER**

This report provides an outline of the development of the Resident Engagement Strategy. It seeks adoption of the strategy to support and expand how the Council engages and involves tenants across the Housing Service.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Committee:

- 1. Adopt the Resident Engagement Strategy**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 On 1 October 2020 a presentation was provided to the Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee detailing what work had been carried out to date on Resident Engagement and to seek views on the proposed approach for the Resident Engagement Strategy.

## **2 RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

- 2.1 The aim of the Strategy is to clearly set out the Council's commitment to listening to residents, involving residents, and making sure they are part of the decisions the Council make in relation to the Housing Service. It is designed to complement the existing community structures and role of members who play a key role in representing and supporting residents to address their concerns.
- 2.2 The Strategy identifies that the vision for Resident Engagement is to make sure residents feel listened to, are able to influence decisions, hold the Council to account and work in partnership to make positive changes.
- 2.3 The Strategy sets out three strands to engagement:
  - Your Area: supporting residents to continue to be involved where they live including Community Representatives, monitoring the standards of services across estates and attending local get togethers. Support residents to improve their local environment and community health and wellbeing through the small community grant
  - Your Voice: aimed at residents who are happy to be involved from home through online surveys

- Your Service: being part of face-to-face groups including service improvement panels, groups and projects and holding the Council to account through reviewing and challenging performance.

2.4 The Strategy was developed with the input of residents. Acknowledging the challenges of meeting face to face, resident views were collated from the initial series of community drop-ins (pre -pandemic) and an online survey and meeting. Through these activities the aims and objectives and the support offered to enable residents to participate were agreed.

2.5 The strategy will be reviewed on a regular basis with residents to make sure it is delivering what it has set out to do through an annual action plan. The Strategy is designed to be an accessible document and is attached as Appendix A. In addition, an action plan has been developed which identifies what the Council will do and how the success of the strategy will be measured which will allow continuous improvements to be made to the resident engagement approach of the Council. The action plan is attached at Appendix B.

### 3 RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

3.1 Following the previous update, the Housing Service has continued to embed and grow the opportunities for Resident Engagement. The new approach of focusing on Your Voice, Your Area and Your Service has been well received with more residents signing up to help either from home or across the borough.

3.2 The amount of insight received from residents has been expanded through increasing the number of transactional surveys carried out. Focus has been on the views and experiences of tenants moving into their new home, when reporting anti-social behaviour, closed tenancy support cases and understanding the impact of the tenancy review visits. These surveys are used to refine and improve services.

3.3 Different digital approaches including the use of QR codes, different survey software and using the Love Clean Streets App have been trialled to increase engagement opportunities.

3.4 An update on Resident Engagement forms part of the six-monthly Council Housing Compliance and Performance report to committee allowing members to retain oversight of Resident Engagement.

### 4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Resident Engagement Strategy sets out the Council’s approach to resident engagement to ensure that residents are able to hold the Council to account in the way the Housing Service is delivered and sets out the ways that residents are able to engage with the Council and ensure that customer insight supports improvements in service delivery. The strategy provides the framework thorough which the voice of our residents is heard. The strategy is supported by an annual action plan which identifies what the Council will do and how the success of the strategy will be measured which will allow continuous improvements to be made to the resident engagement approach of the Council.

*Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?*

Area for consideration	Comment
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Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Via ELT
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Via ELT
Existing Council Policies:	
Financial Implications (including VAT and tax):	Covered within the current designated budget
Legal Implications (including human rights):	No legal implications associated with the report.
Risk Implications:	None
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	None
Crime & Disorder:	None
Every Child Matters:	None

## Resident Engagement Strategy Action Plan – update and progress September 2021

Objective 1: Increase the number of conversations with Residents			
What are we going to do?	How we are going to do it?	Timescale	Progress / RAG rating
Promote resident engagement opportunities to increase the numbers engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver a variety of promotional campaigns to increase engagement across all contact</li> </ul>	Mar 22	In progress New notice board posters completed Promote engagement through current surveys
Demonstrate how we are listening and what actions we take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up a 'you said we did' initiative to demonstrate how we listen and act. These include timely ways to promote service improvements because of receiving complaints and suggestions/ideas</li> <li>Include actions within newsletters, website, social media, internal and wider tenant communications</li> </ul>	Oct 22	In progress Individual activity feedback regularly provided
Increase and make effective use of resident feedback to improve service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with teams to find out what the hot topic of the month is and what officers are hearing on a daily basis from tenants</li> <li>Carry out targeted surveys</li> <li>Ensure that feedback from customers is used to inform business planning and developing our strategies</li> <li>Have clear mechanisms in place to feedback the impact of involvement to all residents</li> <li>Develop approaches to encourage maximum responses for key consultations</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Commencing sheltered housing review consultations Completed service specific surveys on the garden maintenance scheme.
Make sure sharing views and contributing to discussions is easily accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold regular community conversations 'Let's Talk' sessions focusing on local issues and service wide improvements</li> <li>Focus on rural communities - to understand how responsive the Housing Service is to those who live in rural towns and villages throughout the Borough</li> <li>Continue to support Community Representatives and encourage more to come forward</li> <li>Identify themes of the month through informal contact</li> </ul>	Ongoing	In progress Initial local let's talk held in March 2020 further events to be scheduled from November 2021. Resources and information developed for Community Representatives

Make better use of technology and social media - develop digital tools to give as many residents as possible the chance to share and express views to contribute to improving services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore and trial different options to increase engagement</li> <li>• Identify the best software to use that results in easy access for residents</li> <li>• Develop further the use of social media to publicise Resident Engagement work and advertise opportunities to get involved</li> <li>• Increase website visits</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Surveys available via MS forms, the Love Clean Streets App and Facebook page for resident engagement.
Work with councillors and local parish councils to increase exposure and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide regular updates on key activities through existing channels</li> <li>• Utilise local communication channels to promote engagement</li> <li>• Incorporate keys issues raised through councillors within the 'hot topics' feedback (ad hoc themes from informal discussions with residents) as part of wider insight</li> </ul>	Mar 22	Not started

<b>Objective 2: Expand opportunities - Develop more ways for residents to be involved and share their views including through the use of technology</b>			
What are we going to do?	How we are going to do it?	Timescale	Progress / RAG rating
Increase the tools and widen communication to support engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore different tools to support engagement</li> <li>• Create recognisable templates and promotional materials</li> <li>• Support and develop residents to be effectively engaged to include the provision of training if required (to ensure that participants have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enable them to fully participate)</li> <li>• Improve ways of communicating with residents</li> </ul>	Oct 22	Set up dedicated resident engagement email address Engagement welcome pack created Launched regular e-zine
Develop a clear approach to ensure continuous recruitment of residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the different methods for residents to involved formally and informally and the benefits</li> <li>• Continually review how accessible it is for residents to share their voice and be involved</li> <li>• Consider incentives</li> </ul>	Oct 22	In progress – currently linked to existing wider consultations and transactional surveys in addition to team support

Support residents to be engaged proactively where they live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce a survey to measure the effectiveness of estate services and improvements</li> <li>• Introduce a process for tenants to monitor grounds maintenance and communal cleaning</li> <li>• Review the role of Community Representatives and continue to promote and expand so increase local voices</li> <li>• Enable and support residents to develop local involvement opportunities to meet local community needs</li> </ul>	Mar 22	On target Estate monitor activity launched Estate caretaking survey in development Continue to support residents with small community grant applications
Expand engagement to support residents to be involved strategically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a task and finish process to support resident-led scrutiny of key operational issues with residents</li> <li>• Programme in a main annual conference and progress sessions as required</li> <li>• Include opportunities to assess value for money and efficiency</li> <li>• Developing resident involvement in monitoring and improving performance to increase accountability and opportunities to challenge</li> </ul>	Oct 22	In progress  Initial templates and approach developed for task and finish and performance accountability
Extending our reach to encourage involvement across diverse groups through making engagement more accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify gaps in views to understand and respond to the diverse needs of residents (collect and analyse diversity data of involved residents)</li> <li>• Consider developing special interest groups (e.g. disability, young voices, leaseholders) where there is a clear demand and need or gap in views</li> <li>• Develop and offer diversity training</li> </ul>	Oct 22	In progress Initial profiling of actively involved residents completed annually Consultation held with residents on the type of training that could be offered

<b>Objective 3: Develop and use resident insight, so services are shaped by the feedback from residents' experience of services and their needs</b>			
What are we going to do?	How we are going to do it?	Timescale	Progress / RAG rating
Increase the use of transactional and targeted surveys to understand the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver more surveys at the point of service delivery</li> <li>• Increase insight using one-off surveys to support service reviews</li> <li>• Analyse and share trends to support service improvement</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Four transactional surveys launched. Continuing to identify and assess the need for other

impact and perception of our services and identify improvements			services. Using the feedback from surveys to support service delivery.
Develop a voice of the resident report to build a picture of what residents feel about our services and support Resident Engagement focus areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build a report that raises the profile of the resident voice and supports better decisions and understanding of key issues. Report to include key information from satisfaction, feedback, complaints &amp; performance information</li> </ul>	Mar 22	<p>Template completed</p> <p>Information to be shared quarterly with Housing Director, Tenancy Team Managers and through six-monthly compliance report</p>

Objective 4: Embed the engagement approach to support service improvement and provide clear accountability			
What are we going to do?	How we are going to do it?	Timescale	Progress / RAG rating
Provide accessible information to support residents to be involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular communication about benefits and opportunities</li> <li>Regular promotion of the three strands of engagement internally and with residents</li> <li>Provide accessible information about engagement online (residents can see what they can do and easily join)</li> <li>Develop an approach to make sure residents can hold GYBC accountable against service standards (performance)</li> </ul>	Ongoing	In progress Improved information on the website
Embed engagement at all levels across the department with appropriate support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure staff have relevant knowledge and understanding of the structure and arrangements for tenant and leaseholder involvement through creating resources/tools for teams to effectively engage</li> <li>Regular attendance by staff at meetings of established groups</li> <li>Ensuring there is agreement regarding the actions to be taken and feedback to tenant and leaseholder on the outcomes of engagement</li> </ul>	Mar 23	Induction chats scheduled for new starters

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop tailored induction chats</li> </ul>		
Have a clear approach to recording the impact of engagement activities capturing service improvements (evidence the success of engagement and use this to continually review in collaboration with residents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create an approach of recording resident influence (suggestions, recommendations, improvements)</li> <li>Use the existing House Mark definition to demonstrate impact of engagement</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<p>Spreadsheet developed and in use to capture impact of engagement</p> <p>Impact to be reported annually to residents</p>
Hold regular borough wide conversations (support collaboration and recognise the efforts of engaged residents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme in a main annual conference and annual update/progress sessions as required</li> </ul>	Oct 22	Not yet started

### Monitoring

An annual report will be provided to members summarising the impact of resident engagement activities and measuring how successful resident engagement activities have been.



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# RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY



# FOREWORD

Welcome to the Resident Engagement Strategy. I am delighted to introduce the Council's Resident Engagement Strategy. The Council is committed to listening and involving tenants and leaseholders in the management of their homes.

This strategy outlines the Council's commitment to the residents on the Council's estates and in Council homes that their voice will be heard. The strategy strengthens the approach to engagement. The strategy will drive forward plans to embed the resident voice in everything we do, provide opportunities for real influence and positive change.

The Council recognises that genuine and flexible engagement is the driver to successfully delivering services that tenants and leaseholders want. I look forward to working in partnership with residents to improve the housing services the Council provides and to create an environment where working together we can all make a positive difference to our tenants, homes and communities.

Cllr Andy Grant, Chair of Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee

# INTRODUCTION

This strategy has been developed with residents and considers the changing regulatory environment for the Council's Housing Service.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC) has a long history of working closely with its residents to support decisions. Resident engagement has recently been centred around local neighbourhoods and Community Representatives. This has created a solid foundation of working with residents at a local level supporting estate management and localised improvements.

GYBC Housing Services provides a range of housing services for over 10,000 people across the borough.

2020 saw the publication of the Charter for Social Housing. It is explicit in its aims to increase the tenant voice, make sure homes are safe, make sure landlords are accountable, strengthen the consumer regulation of housing services, ensuring complaints processes are fair, increasing respect

and delivering good quality homes and neighbourhoods. In line with the Charter, the Resident Engagement Strategy is clear that the Council must make sure it can support all residents to have their say.



# WHAT WE MEAN BY RESIDENT

## ENGAGEMENT

Resident Engagement is a vital to understanding how services are received and supports the Council to improve the Housing Service it delivers. As a landlord, the Council has a responsibility to make sure everyone's voice can be heard and support a range of ways this can happen.

Resident is used throughout this strategy to refer to the tenants, leaseholders and other residents who live on the Council's estates and in Council owned homes. This strategy sets out the Council's approach to resident engagement in this wider sense. In some cases, however, the Council will carry out consultations which are for tenants and / or leaseholders only, where there is a need to do so, to meet legal requirements upon the Council.

In summary, resident engagement is:

- An opportunity to find out what residents want and need (expect and aspire to).
- A way that supports any resident to hold the Council to account and importantly influence and change how services are provided.

By working together, we can achieve more by:

- Creating the right environment that is open and supportive that leads to genuine partnership
- Having a clear approach where engagement activities lead to service improvements and positive solutions
- Improving resident focus and increasing satisfaction
- Using resident insight to provide better services, improve the design of services and achieve greater value for money
- Providing services that reflect tenants needs
- Supporting more sustainable and vibrant communities
- Improving relationships between landlord and tenant with more awareness of everyone's position.

# VISION

The Council's vision for resident engagement is to deliver a great housing service through residents feeling listened to, able to influence decisions, hold us to account and work in partnership to make positive changes.

Resident engagement enables us to reflect and understand what we are doing and helps us develop more effective and efficient services.



# OBJECTIVES OF THE RESIDENT

# ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The benefits of resident engagement are clear in supporting good customer service and delivering efficient services.

To help the Council achieve its vision for resident Engagement, this Strategy identifies two key objectives to support the Council to deliver excellent engagement and involvement:

- To hear everyone's voice and work together with residents to make a difference through delivering excellent involvement/engagement.
- Residents have clear opportunities to stay informed, be consulted with and take part in decision making.

To achieve these objectives and the vision for resident engagement, the Council will:

- Increase the number of conversations with residents

- Develop more ways for residents to be involved and share their views including through the use of technology
- Develop and use resident insight, so services are shaped by the feedback from resident's experience of services and their needs
- Embed the engagement approach to support service improvement and provide clear accountability



# HOW DO WE PLAN TO DELIVER A STRONGER VOICE?



## 1. INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CONVERSATIONS WITH RESIDENTS

Many residents don't get involved due to time constraints or the belief the Council does not listen. It is important to make it easy for all residents to be involved when they can as well as showing the difference that has been made in the way things are done through 'you said we did'.

## 2. EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES

Everyone has a busy life, but everyone has a voice. Using technology better will support residents to share their voice more easily. The use of different approaches and software will be explored to increase engagement. It is easier to be involved where you live, therefore new ways have been developed so all residents can make a difference to their local area.

## 3. DEVELOP AND USE INSIGHT

Develop our approach to using the information and feedback received from residents so it can tailor and improve services. Information will be made more available to support resident engagement. To deliver better services it is important to know and understand residents' aspirations and needs.

## 4. EMBED THE ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The resident voice needs to be strong and productive so everyone can work towards delivering the best services. The new engagement structure will be continually developed and embedded across the service to be effective and transparent. It will have clear routes for accountability and clearly show the impact of resident engagement. This will be owned by everyone, residents and staff.

# WAYS TO HAVE YOUR SAY

The Council's Resident Engagement supports residents to be engaged in the way they want across one or more of the following workstreams:



There is a clear and simple structure to support and encourage residents to be involved in a way that suits them. All residents will have an opportunity to have their say across a variety of different activities dependent upon their level and choice of involvement.

### Demonstrating that we listen and deliver

The Council will clearly show the difference involvement and engagement makes, how it leads to value for money and better services. The Council will evidence the positive change and communicate this to everyone through our News and Views magazine, on our website and social media channels.

### Making it easy to have your say

The Council will support anyone who wants to be involved through covering reasonable out of pocket expenses and support you with training and attending events. The Council will make sure residents have access to the right information and support from the right staff members to make the most of every resident engagement opportunity.

**Your Area**

**Your Voice**

**Your Services**

<p><b>Community Reps</b> - work with us where you live to help improve your neighbourhood and services you receive</p>	<p><b>Local Let's Talk</b> - get together with others to talk about the service you receive</p>	<p><b>Estate Monitors</b> - help us to maintain spaces you are proud of through independently assessing against the Council's standards</p>
<p><b>Online Survey Panel</b> - an online panel to share your views and support consultations</p>	<p><b>Share ideas &amp; suggestions</b> to improve the services you receive</p>	<p><b>Reviewing and supporting us</b> to communicate better</p>
<p><b>Specialist interest groups and projects</b> - sign up to be involved in one off panels, meetings or projects addressing the things that matter most to you</p>	<p><b>Task &amp; Finish</b> - take an in-depth look at a specific area and make recommendations for improvement</p>	<p><b>Performance Review Group</b> - hold the Council to account on performance</p>



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