

## STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA  
ITEM NO

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

10 SEPTEMBER 2019

12

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>HRA DELIVERY PLAN REVIEW</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To present to Committee the results of tenant and leaseholder consultation for proposed areas for change to the HRA Delivery Plan.
<b>Decisions</b>	<b>Housing Committee RESOLVES that the consultation feedback is noted and that a new delivery plan is presented to Committee in December 2019 based on the findings and links to the CDP and MTFP.</b>
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Tenants and leaseholders.
<b>Financial Implications and Risk Assessment</b>	<p>There are no financial implications directly relating to this report.</p> <p>Any changes to the Delivery Plan will need to be included within the MTFP as well as costed over 30 years to ensure that they are affordable and sustainable.</p> <p>Lucy Clothier, Interim Accountancy Manager Tel: 01453 754343 Email: <a href="mailto:lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk">lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk</a></p> <p>It is crucial we have a delivery plan that is not only financially viable but must meet the needs and aspirations of our tenants and ourselves as a local authority linking clearly to the CDP and associated strategies</p>
<b>Legal Implications</b>	<p>There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. Officers have embarked on a consultation process and have properly taken into account the consultation responses.</p> <p>Patrick Arran, Interim Head of Legal Services Tel: 01453 754396 Email: <a href="mailto:patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk">patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk</a></p>
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<b>Options</b>	Continue with the current delivery plan.
<b>Performance Management Follow Up</b>	Bi-annual updates to Housing Committee on progress by the Head of Housing Services.
<b>Background Papers/ Appendices</b>	<p>Appendix A – <a href="#">Current HRA Delivery Plan</a></p> <p>Appendix B – <a href="#">Tenant Consultation feedback</a></p> <p>Appendix C – <a href="#">Leaseholder Consultation feedback</a></p>

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The HRA delivery plan was commissioned in 2016 and supported by a Task and Finish group. The plan was agreed by Housing Committee on 24 January 2017.
- 1.2 A report presented to Housing Committee in June 2019 outlined the process to consult with tenants and leaseholders. This also included a further paper to be brought back to September's committee outlining the feedback and, based on that, to make amendments for the HRA Delivery Plan.

## **2.0. Introduction**

- 2.1 The consultation process ran for a total of eight weeks between June 2019 and August 2019. There were 342 attendees over 34 events that were set up at a number of sheltered sites in communal rooms and local community halls. Results can be found at Appendix B.
- 2.2 Leaseholders were consulted by direct mail and the results can be found at Appendix C.

## **3.0 Current position**

- 3.1 The findings from the consultations with tenants have included:

- Improve car parking
- Better communication (including pre and post works)
- Grass cutting / hedge cutting (grounds maintenance)
- Refuse / fly tipping (bin stores)
- Damp and Mould
- Communal cleaning
- Not to build on green areas (Dursley)
- Mobility scooter charging points

- 3.2 Things that we should do less of included:

- Wasting money on things like hedgehog fitting into gutters etc.
- Stroud canal
- Going out more in the community

- 3.3 The findings from leaseholders have included:

- Improve car parking (by removing green areas and reducing grounds maintenance costs).
- Good project management of regeneration projects (and inspection by a trained council officer, examples included cavity wall insulation (CWI) and loft insulation).
- Suggest that Tenant Services creates a carpentry service (another income stream). Due to the small size of flats, it's really important to make the most of space and, if possible, make some areas 'dual purpose'. For example, a carpenter could make a study bed – a space for sleeping and desk for children to use for homework/adults working from home.

- Provide Keynotes to leaseholders – they live in Council properties and pay maintenance charges as well.
- Communal cleaning is dreadful. Suggest that Tenant Services brings general needs cleaning in-house.
- Flats – provision should be made for ‘bulky waste’.
- Invite leaseholders as well as tenants to estate walkabouts.
- Need better communication between different departments of the Council. For instance, the launch of the new refuse/recycling service in November 2016 took little account of those council tax payers who live in flats on council estates – frankly it looked like (to ourselves and neighbours) that the council had scant regard for council flat dwellers at the time.

3.4 Based on the feedback, there are a number of higher priorities for tenants and leaseholders including better communication, grounds maintenance and communal cleaning; this is also reflected in the STAR survey. For us to satisfy the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and the four consumer standards, improving satisfaction levels and being transparent, the following are provided for committee to consider:

3.5 Suggestions for new priorities:

- Improve satisfaction levels by developing an action plan to actively deal with the items listed by tenants and leaseholders and apportion budgets accordingly (to be costed and linked to the MTFP).
- Expansion of the in-sourced responsive repairs and maintenance service to include void management.
- Tackle damp and mould in our stock utilising the energy strategy

3.6 Strategic priorities not mentioned by tenants or leaseholders during the consultation:

- To support initiatives supporting carbon neutral by 2030.
- Development (new build and sheltered modernisation) through additional borrowing.
- Working together with colleagues from other services to forge a one council approach.
- Pilot innovative approaches to housing need including modular homes and temporary accommodation.
- Estate modernisation and social value standard.
- Develop a strategy that aligns with the Asset Management Strategy (AMS) and delivers new development strategically.

#### **4.0. Risks and Opportunities**

- 4.1. The lifting of the debt cap has created opportunity for further investment in the new build and sheltered modernisation programmes but this again is a risk as we must be mindful of our debt repayment.
- 4.2. There is also a potential risk that the receipts may not be sufficient to fund the capital programme. If this were to happen, alternative funding would need to be found.

- 4.3. Interest Rates – the HRA is largely sheltered from interest rate changes in the medium term as all of the current borrowing is at fixed interest rates. As loans become repayable, advice will be sought from our treasury advisors on the most advantageous approach to refinancing.
- 4.4. Stock Condition – the information held on the condition of the stock continues to grow, with data being collected regularly. As more data is collected, the longer term forecasts are revised and could mean that more, or less, spend is required compared to the current forecast.
- 4.5. Internal Council Changes – any major changes to the Council could impact on the HRA medium/long term position.
- 4.6. Political uncertainty – Brexit and local elections in 2020.

## **5.0. Conclusion**

- 5.1. Leading officers must take ownership and accountability for the delivery plan rather than it sitting with one individual and it will be redrafted by the management team before coming back to committee, with responsible officers identified in the action plan.
- 5.2. Due to the consultation feedback, changes mentioned in this report and envisaged for the plan, and to ensure we are compliant with the regulator for social housing's consumer standards, it is proposed that the findings of the consultation are considered and a revised delivery plan is brought to December's meeting for approval.