

Democratic Services Officer: Erica Keegan (Ext. 37547)

14 August 2014

## **HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP**

A meeting of the Housing & Customer Services Working Group will be held in Committee Room 1 at the Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton on **Thursday, 4 September 2014 at 6.00 pm** and you are requested to attend.

Members: Councillors; Clayden (Chairman), Edwards (Vice-Chairman), Bicknell, Mrs Bower, Mrs Goad, Mrs Harrison, Mrs Oakley, Oliver-Redgate, Mrs Pendleton and Squires.

## **A G E N D A**

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Please send your apologies to Erica Fredericks – tel: 01903 737547 or e-mail: [erica.fredericks@arun.gov.uk](mailto:erica.fredericks@arun.gov.uk)

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers are reminded to make any declaration of personal and/or prejudicial/pecuniary interests that they may have in relation to items on this agenda.

You should declare your interest by stating:

- a) the item you have the interest in
- b) whether it is a personal interest and the nature of the interest
- c) whether it is also a prejudicial/pecuniary interest

You then need to re-declare your interest and the nature of the interest at the commencement of the item or when the interest becomes apparent.

3. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Housing & Customer Services Working Group held on 3 July 2014 (attached)

4. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

5. GAS SAFETY CERTIFICATES VERBAL UPDATE

The Head of Housing will update Members on the current position with respect to Gas Safety Certificates.

6. ROUGH SLEEPER UPDATE

The Head of Housing will update Members on the current numbers of Rough Sleepers in the Arun District.

7. \*TENANT SCRUTINY PANEL REVIEW OF THE HOUSING COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The recently constituted Tenant Scrutiny Panel has produced its first review which, in this case, has focused on Housing Complaints (Appendix 1 attached). This paper is brought to the Working Group to highlight its recommendations and for Housing to provide an outline of how it will respond. The responses and timescales for implementing any changes will be given at the meeting.

8. ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL'S WEBSITE

A report, for information, will be circulated under separate cover by the Service Development Manager.

9. \*HOUSING BUSINESS PLAN ANNUAL REVIEW

This report seeks to update the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and agree priorities for delivery. The attached report and appendices will have been considered by Cabinet at their meeting held on 18th August 2014.

10. \*WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

To note the work programme for 2014/15 and make any necessary amendments (attached).

'Subject to Approval at the Next Working Group Meeting'

HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP

03 July 2014 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: - Councillors Clayden (Chairman), Bicknell, Mrs Bower, Mrs Harrison, Mrs Oakley, Oliver-Redgate [from Minute 8], Mrs Pendleton and Squires

Councillor Elkins was also present.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN & VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor Clayden was nominated and seconded for the post of Chairman. No other nominations were received and Councillor Clayden was elected as Chairman.

The Chairman then asked for nominations for Vice-Chairman. Councillor Edwards was nominated and seconded for the post of Vice-Chairman. No other nominations were received and Councillor Edwards was elected as Vice-Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors; Edwards & Mrs Goad.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MEETING TIMES

The Working Group

RESOLVED

That its start times for meetings during 2014/2015 be 6.00 pm.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Housing & Customer Services Working Group's Terms of Reference for the Municipal Year 2014/15 was agreed.

6. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2014 were approved by the Working Group and were signed by the Chairman.

'Subject to Approval at the Next Working Group Meeting'

#### 7. GAS SAFETY CERTIFICATES VERBAL UPDATE

The Head of Housing confirmed that 13 properties had expired Gas Safety Certificates. 6 cases were with the legal team, 2 tenants were in hospital and 5 cases will be sent final letters.

Following request, The Head of Housing confirmed that he would advise the working group on the process followed upon Gas Safety Certificate expiry.

#### 8. ROUGH SLEEPER & STONEPILLOW UPDATE

The Head of Housing updated the working group on the nightshelter operation at Glenlogie, along with steps that would be taken to ensure its future operation. In view of the Arun District reporting the highest levels of Rough Sleepers in the West Sussex area the importance of this service was noted.

It was reported that, given the success there had been with the service, it had been concluded that it would be sensible to extend the service for a further 12 months, with a review to go back to Cabinet after 6 months, which will take effect in October 2014. Funding arrangements for the extended operation was approved by an Individual Cabinet Member decision made on 1 May 2014.

The working group noted that, since opening in November 2013, Glenlogie had enabled 31 of their clients to move away from rough sleeping into housing. The complex nature of individual cases was demonstrated by the many different ways Glenlogie had restored clients to accommodation. It was noted that of the 31 clients:

- 7 have moved into the private rented sector
- 4 have moved into Housing 1st (specialist supported housing)
- 3 have moved into supported living with Stonepillow
- 4 have moved with Bognor Housing Trust (supported housing)
- 3 into Sands (residential rehabilitation unit)
- 7 back in with family/partner
- 3 into residential detox secondary support (medical setting)

It was noted that the Hub facility which operated day time surgeries had also seen significant numbers with over 80 individuals using the service.

It was reported that the Street Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, which Stonepillow chairs, was working well with good input from the Police and Arun District Council. This helped ensure that the most up-to-date information was held on clients and helped various agencies for work and support.

The Head of Housing reported on the good work that Stonepillow's 'Restore' project in Chichester had achieved which helped clients re-engage

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with the world of work. It was noted that a similar service was to be developed in Littlehampton pending Arun District Council’s planning permission.

The Working Group commended the work of Stonepillow and Arun District Council’s partnership with them. Members were pleased that 31 clients had been rehabilitated into accommodation.

Discussion centred on the converted flats above Glenlogie that provided temporary accommodation. It was reported that this accommodation had been finished to a high standard and gave the Council an alternative to expensive Bed and Breakfast lodgings which was not always suitable for families. It was confirmed that the garden area to the rear of the Glenlogie would be cleared and provided for use for those living in the flats. The working group agreed that it would be important to make the garden area private, for resident’s use only.

The working group noted the need for volunteers to cook for the clients at Glenlogie and a plea was made encouraging more people to help.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Housing for his report.

## 9. EMPTY HOMES ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

The Principal Environmental Health Officer (Housing) presented the report on the Empty Homes Assistance Programme that explained the current work being undertaken by the Council with respect to empty homes.

It was reported that on 1 March 2014 the Council had entered a service level agreement with Adur and Worthing Councils for the provision of 2 days of empty homes work for a 2 year period ensuring the continuation of this work in the district.

It was advised that Arun District Council is committed to bringing empty residential properties back into use and the empty homes officer had been working with the Council’s Council Tax Department to identify empty properties. The Empty Homes Strategy had three key steps and these were outlined as :

- Engage in methods of identifying properties
- Encourage owners of empty properties to bring them back into use
- Enforcement action used in appropriate circumstances to target long term empty properties, if owners fail to co-operate with renewal options.

The working group was informed that the Council receives a New Homes Bonus grant, paid by Central Government, for increasing the number of available homes.

Two ways owners could be encouraged to put their empty properties back into use were described. Firstly, the Guaranteed Rental Scheme, which encouraged owners to let their property to Northwood Letting Agency who

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would then become the tenant and sub-let the property to a homeless customer nominated by the Council’s Housing Options Team. Secondly, the Empty Property Assistance Programme could be offered to owners where assistance could be given to bring their properties back into use. This would be in the form of a grant, up to a maximum of £5,000, or an interest free loan of up to £10,000, paid back on a monthly basis over an agreed term.

In discussing the report Members commented as follows:

- Compulsory Purchase Orders should always be used as a last resort.
- The idea of an interest free grant, tied to a property, was seen as low risk to the Council.
- The number of empty homes in the Arun District (599, based on tax records) was referred to and seen as very high. Members supported work to reduce the amount of properties that were not in use in the area.
- It was suggested that council house owners should be told that the council would be willing to purchase their home and put the property back into council housing stock. The Head of Housing confirmed that this had been done and something that would continue should if the funding was available.
- The various ways an owner could be encouraged not to leave a property empty were discussed including the recent increased Council Tax charges for empty properties.

Following this discussion, the Housing & Customer Service Working Group;

RECOMMEND TO CABINET – That

- (1) the Empty Homes Assistance Programme be approved for a maximum up front cost of £100,000 per year for a two year period to be recouped from property owners.

#### 10. WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

The working group considered the work programme for the new Municipal Year 2014/15 and noted the items for inclusion. Items were then scheduled to the appropriate meeting date.

(The meeting concluded at 7.15pm)

AGENDA ITEM NO .7ARUN DISTRICT COUNCILHOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP – 4 SEPTEMBER 2014

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Recommendation Paper

Subject : TENANT SCRUTINY PANEL – HOUSING COMPLAINTS REVIEW

Report by : Brian Pople

Report date: August 2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The recently constituted Tenant Scrutiny Panel has produced its first review which, in this case, has focused on Housing Complaints (see attached). The paper is brought to the Working Group to highlight its recommendations and for Housing to provide an outline of how it will respond. The responses and timescales for implementing any changes will be given at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the findings of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review of Housing Complaints are endorsed and that Housing implement such changes to their procedures to address the recommendations where possible.

**Background Papers:** None

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# Tenant Scrutiny Panel Housing Complaints Review





## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

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## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

### 1. Independent Chairs Introduction: Richard Tomkinson - TPAS

The review undertaken by the Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) has worked extremely well, with all members committing the time required to get the job done. Members have worked well as a team and have shared a strong sense of collective responsibility.

This was an ambitious first review to undertake as it required members to gain increased understanding of both the service concerned and the systems used. It is my view that the members have delivered a focussed, balanced review with thought-provoking findings and recommendations, which, if implemented will deliver improvements for both customers and staff.

The TSP and staff of Arun District Council have been a joy to work with and all involved deserve credit for their approach, which has resulted in completion of the review to a high standard and in a timely fashion.

This is the first report of the TSP following its creation in February 2014. The review began 25<sup>th</sup> April 2014, and the report was completed for submission.

It is the TSP's hope that the outcomes of this review will be shared, in summary, with as many residents as possible, utilising a broad range of media, as detailed in the Next Steps section of this report.

### 2. Background

The TSP aims:

- To work on behalf of residents of ADC to ensure that it provides excellent, customer focussed services and delivers value for money.
- To provide an independent check of the services provided by ADC and where needed challenge the delivery of services and the performance of the landlord, making recommendations for improvements in service delivery, performance and resident satisfaction.
- To support ADC to embed the National Standards and Co-Regulation, providing assurance that ADC is well managed and viable, putting customers at the heart of its decisions.

Its principle role is:

- To take an independent view of ADC Housing's performance.
- To establish priorities for Scrutiny Reviews based on a number of triggers
- To influence the priority for service based reviews by Housing staff and to provide customer experience evidence in support of service based reviews.
- To oversee all tenant scrutiny activities.
- Co-ordinate scrutiny activities and ensure other residents can contribute through a range of evidence gathering activities.
- To hold the Housing Management Team and ADC to account where performance fails to meet agreed and published standards.

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

- Utilising best practice from other organisations as part of the scrutiny reviews to ensure ADC Housing delivers excellent services including national standards and accepted best recognised practice.
- To make recommendations for improving performance and customer service.

### 3. Acknowledgements

The TSP, consisting of:

- Neil Hodder
- Chris Williams
- Sharon Coliss (Co-opted Member)
- Michele Gill
- Prue Fabian
- Barbara Gray
- Linzi Dougherty

would like to thank all residents and staff who contributed to this review, including:

- Residents who responded to our online survey
- Staff who engaged in interviews and those who attended the focus group

We would also like to offer specific thanks to:

- Elaine Gray, who supported us throughout the process and provided a point of liaison with Arun District Council and co-ordinated provision of the information we requested and participated in an interview.
- Richard Tomkinson, Tenant Participation Advisory Service – who provided support and expertise as our Independent Chair, Mentor & Trainer

The support, encouragement and expertise provided has been a key factor in our ability to complete this review.

### 4. Introduction & Choosing the Topic of Review

Following the successful recruitment and selection of 6 residents, and 1 co-opted member, the TSP participated in two training courses provided through the National Tenant Empowerment Programme (Tenant Central), covering 'Getting to Grips with Scrutiny' and 'Understanding Housing Management Performance Information'. The TSP then met in February to further develop its Terms of Reference, meeting for the first time to consider its work programme and establish priority areas for consideration on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

Supported by independent mentor Richard Tomkinson, TPAS and Elaine Gray, the TSP considered a range of information including:

- Performance against key indicators
- Comparing performance against that of the best performing comparable providers
- Customer Satisfaction data
- Complaints data

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

from which a 'long list' of potential topics for review were developed. The long-list was then scored as follows:

1. Public Interest: Priority given to topics which have given rise to concern amongst tenants and leaseholders.
2. Influence: Priority given to things the Panel can realistically influence.
3. Performance: Priority to areas that are not performing well or are performing particularly well.
4. Impact: Priority given to issues that have the greatest impact upon tenants and leaseholders.
5. Duplication: Take into account what is/has already happening/ happened e.g. avoid services that have been or are already subject to internal review, unless Tenant Scrutiny can provide a specific customer focus not already addressed

The results were as follows:

Topic	1	2	3	4	5
Anti-Social Behaviour	√	√	-	√	x
Welfare Reform	√	√	√	x	-
Temp Accommodation	x	√	-	x	X
Repairs (Tenant Responsibilities)	√	√	√	√	√
Repairs (Underspend)	√	√	√	√	√
Empty Properties (Voids) Process	√	√	√	√	√
Gas Servicing (Access)	x	√	√	x	√
Complaints (Tenant Awareness)	√	√	√	√	√
Repairs (Right 1 <sup>st</sup> Time)	√	√	√	√	√
Parking	x	√	-	x	√
Allocations	x	√	x	x	√
Repairs (Satisfaction)	√	√	√	√	√

Members then established a consensus around prioritising the top six topic areas through a 3-2-1 voting system, where members each awarded 3 points to their top choice, 2 to their second choice and 1 to their third choice topics.

The results of the 3-2-1 voting are set out below:

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Complaints                           | 10 points |
| 2. Empty properties (voids) Process     | 8 points  |
| 3. Repairs (Tenant Responsibilities)    | 6 points  |
| 4. Repairs (Budget Underspend)          | 6 points  |
| 5. Repairs (Satisfaction)               | 6 points  |
| 6. Repairs (Right 1 <sup>st</sup> time) | 0 points  |

It was therefore agreed that the first review topic would be 'complaints' and the TSP would undertake the exercise again following their pilot review in order to utilise their

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

increased knowledge and experience of the scrutiny process to determine the topic of their next review.

### 5. Scope of Review

Having undertaken some initial scoping of the review, it was agreed that the main area of focus would be:

1. To investigate the low numbers of complaints about Arun District Council's Housing Service, with particular consideration of:
  - Tenant awareness of the Complaint Procedure
  - Application of the procedure by Arun DC Housing staff
  - How complaints are logged/recorded
2. To compare Arun DC's approach to best practise within the housing sector

### 6. Methodology

The TSP planned to use a range of methods to gather information and evidence for the review as follows.

#### Request for Information

The TSP made a formal 'request for information' to improve their understanding of Housing complaints and the complaints procedure. This was submitted 02.05.14 and can be seen in Appendix 1.

#### Desktop Review

The TSP undertook a Desktop Review to consider Arun DC's approach to complaints about the housing service. Through this process of review, the TSP were able to establish a number of initial key findings, which were used to inform the design of subsequent reality checks. These included:

1. In the complaints policy, there is no suggestion that the initial complaint is logged. Whilst the TSP recognised that it is right to aim to resolve complaints at the first point of contact, they felt that the lack of recording meant that there is little scope for collation of this feedback for service improvement purposes.
2. The procedure suggests that a complaints form must be submitted although this can be done online or a member of staff can fill it in over the phone. This was seen by the TSP to be a potential barrier for tenants wishing to make a complaint.
3. Overall, response times were seen to be appropriate at 10 working days – though members noted that no target exists for acknowledging the initial complaint and there were examples of the timescale not being met.
4. The TSP noted examples of historical complaints being considered and no time limiting of complaints within the definition contained within the policy.

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

5. The TSP questioned the need for senior management involvement at stage 1, and the lack of tenant involvement throughout the various stages of the process.
6. The TSP noted that the 'Putting things right' section doesn't list the actions the Council will take.
7. The TSP were of the view that the current complaints procedure falls short of regulatory expectations as there was no information linking complaints to service improvement, no mention of publishing complaints information and informing tenants about complaints performance, and the procedure does not make it clear that the Council is willing to accept complaints made by advocates.
8. The TSP felt the current procedure was too complex, and too long. There was a suggestion that there was a need to include standards for tenants to escalate.
9. The TSP felt that the fact that complaints are directed to a corporate administrator could be a source of delays in action and questioned whether housing complaints should go directly to the Housing Service
10. The current procedure appears to have an unrecognised 'Stage 0', and the TSP were keen to test through further reality checking when a complaint becomes recognised as an 'official complaint'.
11. The complaints form was not easy to find on the Arun DC website. Members tested ease of access of other housing providers and found that it was much easier to access Viridian Housing's procedure online. Additionally, they found:
  - a. Viridian Housing has a dedicated team that can visit and one point of contact throughout
  - b. Wealden District Council and The Guinness Partnership HA procedures easy to follow and use and very clear and concise
  - c. Hyde Housing and Southampton City Council's approach gives a sense of encouragement – by utilising 'Complaints, Compliments & Comments'

### Staff Interviews:

Interviews were conducted with key staff members at various levels within Arun District Council.

Interviews were undertaken by members of the TSP. These interviews provided valuable information regarding how Arun DC currently handles complaints within the housing service. All the interviews were lively and cordial and the TSP believes that staff members showed a keen interest in tenant scrutiny and were supportive of the process and honest with their answers.

Our mentor was present at all interviews taking notes of responses provided.

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

### Staff Focus Group:

This was attended by 6 ADC Housing staff from a range of functions including Housing Management, Rent Collection Repairs team. Staff participating engaged fully in the process and provided useful insight into their current experience.

### Mystery Shopping:

Informal mystery shopping was undertaken by a number of members, though no formal collation of results was undertaken.

### Online Survey:

An online survey of tenants was constructed using Survey Monkey and sent to around 350 tenants whose email addresses are held by Arun District Council. The response rate was high at around 20% (72 responses). A summary of results can be found in Appendix 2.

## Findings & Recommendations

The TSP members considered all the information provided and sought to identify areas of strength and potential areas for improvement.

### Strengths

The TSP noted a number of key strengths as follows:

1. All staff who engaged in the review were open and honest in their views and provided a number of valuable suggestions for improvement.
2. When complainants move beyond the internal process and onwards to the Housing Ombudsman, it was clear that decision-making by ADC staff is seen to be correct by the Ombudsman.
3. The intent of resolving complaints as early as possible is a strength, though the TSP feel that this currently acts as an 'invisible stage 0' which can lead to delays in recognising the complaint 'officially'.
4. Managers are very supportive of their staff and expressed concern about excessive workloads and the pressures that staff are under.

### *Could do with a few more if the members can think of any?*

No organisation is perfect, however, and the TSP suggest the following areas require improvement:

NB: We suggest the following timescales for priorities: **TSP Members to consider which recommendations should be which priority**

**High Priority:** Commence actions within 3 months, complete within 6 months.

**Medium Priority:** Commence within 3-6 months, complete within 6-9 months.

**Low Priority:** Complete within 12 months.



## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

Theme	Findings	Recommendations
<b>Performance Management</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="517 600 1453 916">1. We found extensive evidence that there is no proper logging and recording for complaints until they are deemed 'official complaints'. We believe this impacts on ownership of complaints and progress to resolution. This lack of logging results in a loss of important customer insight and ADC has no real ability to assess the number of complaints, resultant resolutions or staff time in dealing with complaints. This in turn leads to a false sense of 'how ADC are doing', a lack of performance management and an inability to inform tenants on a 'you said, we did' basis.</li> <li data-bbox="517 995 1453 1059">2. Not seeking feedback from complainants in terms of satisfaction with the process is a clear weakness.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1476 600 2101 954">1. Record all complaints with no distinction between formal and informal.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1621 671 2018 772">a. Develop electronic system of logging/recording (subject to capability of new IT system).</li> <li data-bbox="1621 783 2085 954">b. Inform tenants in respect of complaints performance including synopsis of complaints, lessons learned and service improvements (you said we did) twice yearly.</li> </ol> </li> <li data-bbox="1476 995 2101 1059">2. Undertake a telephone satisfaction survey of all complainants upon case closure.</li> </ol> <p data-bbox="1476 1102 1632 1134"><b>High Priority</b></p>
<b>Complaints Procedure</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="517 1179 1453 1378">3. Currently, one staff member decides whether a complaint is 'accepted' as a complaint, and the TSP found evidence that this was viewed from the perspective of whether the service has had a good enough chance to put things right, rather than from the customers perspective. This can have the effect of making the procedure long and convoluted and can lead to months of inaction (invisible stage 0) before it is even recognised as a</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1476 1179 2063 1278">3. Undertake a full review of the complaints procedure, considering best practise and the Housing Regulatory Framework.</li> </ol>

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

	<p>complaint. The TSP also found evidence that some complaints move directly to stage 2 when the service is unable to find a resolution (again, this is outside of the current procedure.</p> <p>4. We were told that the procedure is currently under review, but found contradictory evidence of this.</p> <p>5. There was inconsistency around staff understanding of the complaints handling process and clear evidence that complaints are not dealt with as per the definition in the procedure – staff talked about ‘being accepted as a complaint’, stating that they ‘don’t get lots of official complaints, more expressions of dissatisfaction’; the definition currently contained within the procedure.</p> <p>6. The current definition doesn’t time limit complaints which could lead to staff investigating failure of service that are 18 months old or more.</p> <p>7. There was inconsistent evidence regarding the need for complaints to be in writing, though all staff stated that the complaints form needed to be completed (whether by the complainant or by a staff member). We were also told that if a staff member completed the form, they would send it to the complainant to agree – and we were told that this is as a consequence of ADC once investigating the wrong thing. Our online survey indicates that tenants want to complain predominantly via email and telephone – completion of the form represents an unnecessary delay in response/resolution.</p> <p>8. Overall, we found strong evidence that complaints are viewed as a ‘bad</p>	<p>4. Include in the review all regulatory requirements as detailed in section 6, above.</p> <p>5. A new two stage procedure where all ‘expressions of dissatisfaction’ (about the standard of service received; ADC’s response to a request for service; or actions by the Council) are treated as complaints and dealt with as Stage 1 (immediate resolution), stage two to be senior manager investigation/complaints panel (including tenant involvement).</p> <p>6. Details of what is, and what isn’t a complaint (time limiting complaints to failures in service which have happened within the past 12 months)</p> <p>7. Empower the new procedure and tenants by removing the requirement that complaints are received on the complaints form.</p> <p>8. Include in the new procedure the requirement</p>
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## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

	<p>thing’. Additionally that there was no clear commitment to apologising and putting people back into the position they were in prior to the service failure; one staff member telling us ‘we perhaps don’t empower staff to apologise and resolve’.</p>	<p>for staff members to identify what successful resolution looks like for the complainant, along with clear commitments to ‘put things right’ e.g:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apologise</li> <li>• take some practical action to put things right</li> <li>• put the complainant back in the position they would have been but for the circumstances leading to the complaint</li> <li>• ensure that the same situation does not happen again</li> <li>• offer compensation in some circumstances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Further, encourage complaints and recognise them as a clear opportunity to use customer insight to improve.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>All Actions 3-8, High Priority</b></p>
<p><b>Communications/Tenant Awareness</b></p>	<p>9. There appears to be weaknesses in communication (both internally and to tenants) around complaints, along with a lack of consistency in terms of frequency of contact. The current process can be extremely time consuming for staff (particularly senior staff) and could have the effect of worsening the position of the complainant.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Whilst we found evidence that training in complaints handling had been offered, this was voluntary and had not been taken up by any of the staff we spoke to. Further, no staff had received complaints handling training as part of their induction.</li> <li>b. We found evidence that the lack of training delivered was due to pressures of workload. We understand and sympathise with staff but we also noted that plans for an e-</li> </ol>	<p>9. Following the review and prior to the implementation of a new complaints procedure, develop and roll-out compulsory complaints handling training for all staff.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Include complaints handling in all new staff inductions</li> <li>b. Nominate a Senior (staff member) Champion to oversee the whole process including performance management and reporting.</li> </ol> <p><b>Medium Priority</b></p>

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

	<p>learning module (to address time commitments) had been on hold for 3 years.</p> <p>10. We found no evidence of a complaints leaflet in the Council Offices, and found that the form was not easy to find on the website.</p>	<p>10. Develop a clear, easy to read, user friendly and attractive complaints leaflet.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. Include a clear link to complaints information on the ADC Website Homepage</p> <p><b>Medium Priority</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>General</b></p>	<p>11. We were told that there are 40 Senior Officers across the Council who could be called upon to investigate complaints outside their own service area. Whilst we recognise the need for independent investigation, we are concerned that this impacts negatively on the ability of housing (and other) staff to deliver the requirements of their work role. We found evidence that Planning complaints form a significant number of those complaints received by ADC. These by their very nature can be extremely difficult and complex, and can require a significant amount of time. We found some evidence of staff members not feeling confident in their ability to fully investigate such a complex work area and also some discomfort both from managers and staff with this role.</p> <p>12. We found evidence of the Council generating its own complaints by going outside its own procedures and responsibilities e.g. fencing. We also observed that frontline staff often felt demotivated when their decisions were overruled by managers who would sometimes agree to do work that was the tenants responsibility</p>	<p>11. Consider whether the current approach could be improved by a dedicated complaints officer in respect of planning appeals/complaints.</p> <p><b>Low Priority</b></p> <p>12. Clarify and raise awareness of tenant responsibilities.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. Don't be afraid to say 'no', and give the reasons why.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b. Ensure staff have skills and confidence to be able to deliver a negative message in an effective way</p> <p><b>Medium Priority</b></p>

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

### Next Steps

The TSP commend this report and recommendations to Housing Senior Management Team of Arun District Council, having met and discussed its contents at draft stage with Brian Pople, Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July.

In accordance with our Terms of Reference, we request a formal response to our recommendations within 28 days of consideration of this report, following agreement of which, the TSP will submit any improvement plan to ATLO for monitoring of its implementation.

The TSP anticipate that this response will include a clear plan of action detailing:

- What actions will be taken
- When the actions should be completed
- Who has responsibility for each action

We would be happy to receive this information contained within additional columns in our table above.

On-going monitoring will be undertaken by ATLO and we anticipate that if successful, this review will deliver:

- Increased tenant awareness and understanding of the Complaints Procedure
- Increased tenant satisfaction with complaints process
- More consistent and transparent approach to recording and addressing complaints
- More effective complaints handling enabling staff to resolve at the first point of contact
- Increased customer feedback enabling more effective performance management and service improvement

The TSP are keen to see the outputs and outcomes of this review shared with those involved and the wider tenant population, and request that a full copy of the report and improvement plan be placed on the ADC website and that staff work with the TSP to develop a summary of recommendations and actions for circulation to all residents through the Arun Housing Bulletin.

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

### Lessons Learned

All members of the TSP have undergone an extremely steep learning curve, both in terms of Resident-Led Scrutiny and in respect of the service area reviewed. We initially felt shell shocked and quickly understood that there was more involved than we initially anticipate.

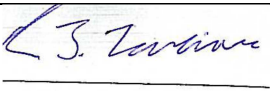
We learned that effective resident-led scrutiny is not about apportioning blame for a system or service that is not working to its' full potential but rather that we work together as a team with the Council to improve those systems or services for the benefit of all residents and staff. We learned a lot about the Council and were pleased and surprised by how responsive and co-operative ADC were.

We committed to the process and provided the necessary time to ensure that decisions could be made and acted upon and worked well as a team. We have been empowered to speak up, to ask questions and to develop open and honest working relationships by a supportive organisational response to our requests for information and staff time.

We have stepped out of our comfort zones, but are pleased with the result and look forward to undertaking our next review.

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

Appendix 1:Tenant Scrutiny Panel – Request for Information

<b>Service Area to be Reviewed.</b>	Complaints
<b>Objective of Review</b>	<p>3. To investigate the low numbers of complaints about Arun District Council's Housing Service, with particular consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenant awareness of the Complaint Procedure</li> <li>• Application of the procedure by Arun DC Housing staff</li> <li>• How complaints are logged/recorded</li> </ul> <p>4. To compare Arun DC's approach to best practise within the housing sector</p>
<b>Documents Requested</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints Policy &amp; Procedure (including logging and recording procedure)</li> <li>• Complaints Leaflet</li> <li>• Complaint form</li> <li>• Newsletter articles relating to how to make a complaint and the outcomes of complaints (service improvements)</li> <li>• Reports from internal reviews</li> <li>• Synopses of complaints (already received)</li> <li>• A selection (x3) of complaints response letters</li> <li>• Evidence of 'action taken'/'lessons learnt' (already received)</li> <li>• Staffing structure showing responsibilities for managing and dealing with complaints</li> <li>• Complaints satisfaction survey and synopsis of results</li> </ul> <p>Any other written information that Arun DC deems relevant to the review.</p>
<b>Date of Request</b>	Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May
<b>Date of Completion</b>	Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> May
<b>Signed (Independent TSP Chair)</b>	
<b>Signed (Arun DC)</b>	



## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

**Appendix 2: NB: All answers are as provided and have not been checked for spelling or grammatical errors or amended in any way.**

**Online Tenant Survey Results**

Q1

Have you ever seen any information about how to make a complaint about your housing service?

Answered: 72

Skipped: 0

Answer Choices –	Responses –
Yes	38.89% 28
No	48.61% 35
Don't Know	12.50% 9
Total	72

**Comments**

- in the paper work we got when we moved in
- ADC housing office
- Online
- tenant book
- Advised by phone
- pc
- Tenant's handbook
- adc
- Tenant booklet received at start of tenancy
- from the repairs department
- Came in the new tenant literature given when I became a tenant.
- In the welcome pack
- website
- ADC Website
- Went onto their website
- tenants handbook
- On the website
- From the housing office.
- Tenant handbook
- booklet when I first moved in
- leaflet given to us when we signed tenancy

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

**Answer Choices –**

- Handbook
- when I moved in

**Responses –**

Q2

Do you know how to go about making a complaint?

Answered: 72

Skipped: 0

**Answer Choices****Responses****Yes****50.00%**  
**36****No****50.00%**  
**36****Total****72**

Q3

If you had a complaint about the housing service, how would you choose to let Arun DC know?

Answered: 71

Skipped: 1

**Answer Choices****Responses****Telephone****36.62%**  
**26****Letter/In Writing****14.08%**  
**10****Email****35.21%**  
**25****In person at the Civic Centre****8.45%**  
**6****In person to my housing officer****1.41%**

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

Answer Choices	Responses
	1
Website	1.41% 1
Responses	2.82%
Other (please specify)	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>

Q4

Have you ever made a complaint about the housing service?

Answered: 70  
Skipped: 2

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	22.86% 16
No	77.14% 54
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>

### Comments

- Housing Inspector two years ago, kitchen update required as unsafe - inspector agreed this was the case though I was then passed over from pillar to post (in the end no kitchen update happened)
- poor maintenance
- builders
- The damp, bad condition of the property and mismatch between my experience and that of my neighbours compared to the council's response.
- I complained about the acts of a contractor, over the telephone to the repairs service, and never heard anything more....
- Cladding contractor, confused service regarding repair
- Delay in fixing damage when plumber repaired leak in pipe
- ADC ignoring complaints about damp for long time and try to blame tenants for it.
- Allowing a large vehicle to be parked on a small council estate (a court consisting of flats)
- poor standard of repairs after a long wait - resolved very quickly after the

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

Answer Choices	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>repair was inspected</li> <li>Years ago, when I first moved in the roof leaked and it wasn't repaired for over a year. However, when I wrote in saying that they owed me money for the bedroom that I could not use they were out the following week and replaced the whole roof.</li> <li>Anti - Social Behaviour from a neighbour .</li> <li>I as a resident of a sheltered housing scheme was alarmed to be told that we as residents would have to apply for funding to have a fence erected to secure our back garden area, although I had told the Housing manager that my bicycle had been dragged across the garden in an attempt to steal it. Also we have had young men crawling through the gaps in the hedge and drinking beer on our bench late at night.</li> <li>contractors not turning up on the day they say they are going to</li> <li>central heating- damp- electricity sockets</li> <li>Only with the heating contractors</li> <li>Was taken off the housing register a year or so go incorrectly! Eventually put back on after talking to the then Housing manager.</li> </ul>	

Q5

If you answered Yes to question 4, how easy did you find it to make your complaint?

Answered: 22  
Skipped: 50

Answer Choices	Responses
Very Easy	18.18% 4
Easy	22.73% 5
Difficult	18.18% 4
Very Difficult	0.00% 0
<b>Responses</b> Please tell us what you found easy or difficult about making your complaint:	40.91% 9

- Hard to know 'who' to complain to. At time no email link 'for a

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

Answer Choices	Responses
<p>complaint' could be found -so I asked at the Civic Centre where reception gave me a form (bit awkward to ask as you get the impression they work as a big team/ so feels not 'as' confidential as you would like (though reception didn't press me for details) - but would have preferred to just email/write it out in private without having to go 'to' the council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• too many referrals</li> <li>• Finding who to respond to - everyone passed the buck! And taking the decision to actually complain - I could have been evicted for speaking up</li> <li>• I was fobbed off by the man on the phone, who basically couldn't care less, as he said that I was complaining about a contractors contractor, and that it wouldn't go anywhere.</li> <li>• They had only done shoddy jobs in response to previous complaints and then tried to say that the water tank was leaking when the roof only leaked when it rained. Also, when contractors replaced the bathroom and kitchen, no account was taken of my complaints, or those of other tenants at all despite putting our complaints in writing as well as 'phoning. As we had been nearly killed after they drilled through a gas pipe and left it until we raised the alarm when the house was filled with gas I was particularly insulted by the utter lack of interest shown by the council.</li> <li>• Everyone from the housing department was very helpful.</li> <li>• Easy to email to the right person but difficult to get the right response. We are coping now but we know that once the hedge has been cut back, the intrusions will start again.</li> <li>• took an age to get a response and still no one knew the correct answer.</li> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	

Q6

If you answered Yes to Question 4, how satisfied were you with the way your complaint was dealt with?

Answered: 21  
Skipped: 51

Answer Choices	Responses
Completely Satisfied	33.33% 7
Reasonably Satisfied	

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

Answer Choices	Responses
	14.29% 3
Reasonably Dissatisfied	23.81% 5
Completely Dissatisfied	28.57% 6
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>

### Comments

- nothing really happened /though I think that 'particular' housing inspector is no longer there -so obviously wasn't the first to complain. -the next inspector I spoke to was really nice & helpful /think he managed the Bognor area also (so he was stepping in at the time) /a kitchen refit has now been put in motion.
- All my most treasured possessions are now in the dustbin. I was made to feel like a liar, a fool and a bad person
- man never said it would be reported to the council direct, it went into mears complaints procedure, and that's a laugh/joke.
- All repairs still not carried out as agreed with contractor, damage was caused by cladding company
- Time scale given to resolve problem has passed and no communication made by ADC
- With regard to the many issues with the council's contractors, the council officers were more interested in defending the contractors than taking any complaints seriously.
- Fell on deaf ears, and told to ask for funding as it was not a problem for the housing dept.
- felt like it was a case of oh well never mind your only a tenant
- N/A

Q7

If you haven't made a complaint, why is that?

Answered: 52

Skipped: 20

Answer Choices	Responses
<b>Because I am completely satisfied with the service provided by Arun District Council</b>	<b>46.15% 24</b>

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

Answer Choices	Responses
Because I don't know how to make a complaint	7.69% 4
Because I don't like to make a fuss	13.46% 7
Because I don't believe anything would be done about it	26.92% 14
<b>Responses</b> Other (please specify)	5.77% 3
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no need so far</li> <li>• I won't bother in future...basically having contractors makes it unaccountable to the council, and there is wholesale fraud going on with contractors services.</li> <li>• because it's difficult and people don't want to admit they made a mistake</li> </ul>	

Q8

How important do you think it is that tenants are able to make complaints when things go wrong?

Answered: 71

Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses
Very Important	92.96% 66
Reasonably Important	7.04% 5
Reasonably Unimportant	0.00% 0
Not at all Important	0.00% 0
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

## Answer Choices

## Responses

Q9

Do you have any comments about Arun District Council Housing Complaints Service that you would like to make?

Answered: 27

Skipped: 45

## Comments

- on a separate occasion when complaining on a noise complaint a few months ago via neighbours at my first address under the council. (it was dealt with immediately = so very pleased) -a week or so later the noisy neighbour who has a friend at ADC (unknown) asked her to look into it & they provided her with name of complainer 'details' etc.-neighbour told me face to face /so a really awkward situation for me. & sadly in my new home I'm having a similar problem with noise but now dare not go to complain in case my confidentiality is broken again. (& with this particular complaint) #noise you 'must' provide details of who you are (which I think puts people off -me included. -but basically I'd like to just say I think staff should be refreshed upon 'confidential complaints' & what that entails. -please understand I know that this wouldn't be the case for probably 90% of staff but it ruins it for the staff who do keep confidential matters confidential!
- No complains, thank you, just very grateful for the help and support received.
- when I phoned the council to say that I thought my neighbour was diabetic and forgot to turn the gas cooker off when he had a turn and I was worried about him starting a fire, the council officer was intent on dismissing anything i said as soon as said that i had a serious problem with my neighbour. I haven't bothered to get in touch since as I wasn't listen to and i went away feeling that i was in the wrong for bothering her
- I think that it is a great shame that a council house near to our home has been left empty for a year 'when there are so many people needing homes.
- some staff at civic centre were so full of themselves and unhelpful last visit.
- WHY POOR PEGGY SUE & I WERE NOT OFFERED A BEDSIT BUNGALOW WHEN WE CONTINUALLY CHOSE THEM ON THEIR LIST FOR YEARS & OTHERS LESS WORTHY WERE??
- Those handling the complaints have a vested interest in ensuring that the complaint fails and there is no remedy. They are obviously paid by ADC and prefer to keep their contract than to benefit any tenants.
- it doesn't deal with faults services, as that's mears....its completely separate...that's stupid
- I haven't needed to complain so far. Every request I ever made has been dealt with fairly quickly. I found maintenance and repairs respond quickest, whereas asking for something in writing from my housing officer never



## Tenant Scrutiny Panel Review – Housing Complaints

materialised (verbal confirmation was given, but I did need it in writing to send with a charity application, which I could not go ahead with as a result. I could have complained, but my health was/is so bad it was the least of my worries at the time.). Requests for a telephone call back have always be handled well at A.D.C. The staff are polite, patient and take the time to explain in another way if I could not take it in right away. I think they do a good job in very difficult circumstances with some desperate people. I am very grateful for my flat, and the quality of the fabric of the building and maintenance of the exterior and environs.

- I believe it is only open office hours. It should be possible to email them
- No
- A simple online form that has to be replied to within a set time limit and lays out how the complaint will be dealt with, if justified how the issue will be resolved
- Complaints sometimes fall onto deaths ears.
- On the whole were very good but circumstances dictated that my complaint was put on hold
- Procedures do not matter if officers are always on the defensive.
- No.
- No because all relevant information has been made available to me on how to make a complaint.
- Why is it that one block can have 10 CCTV cameras around its boundary yet we can't have a 20 foot piece of fence erected?.
- Perhaps contractors should be held accountable if they do not turn up. I have used holidays to be here when they say they are coming.
- award the heating contract to a company that can repair or replace parts without having to make over 10 appointments for a "engineer" to visit. to date the boiler still will not supply hot water.
- All Tenants should be advised in writing of a Complaints Procedure....Arun Housing should get rid of Mears and go back to employing Tradesman to do all the repairs...
- It's a shame when Arun District like to take the cheaper option rather than thinking the tenant doesn't know what they are talking about. There are too many men in authority in the council services and his leads to women not being fully listened which results in larger amounts of tax payers money being spent unwisely.
- Check your spelling before you send the form out!! Hosuing Service?!! Glad I'm not the only person terrible at spelling. (or checking text).
- Never had a problem with ADC housing always been excellent with repairs etc.
- Have no idea who they are, or what they are responsible for
- No

AGENDA ITEM NO.9ARUN DISTRICT COUNCILHOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP – 4 SEPTEMBER 2014

## Information Paper

Subject : HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT –  
BUSINESS PLAN REVIEW OPTIONS 2015-2025

Report by : Brian Pople

Report date: August 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks to update the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and agree priorities for delivery. The attached report will have been considered by Cabinet at their meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2014.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the report is endorsed by the Working Group.

**Background Papers:** None

**Contact:** Brian Pople  
Head of Housing  
Ext 37718  
brian.pople@arun.gov.uk

**AGENDA ITEM NO.****ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL****REPORT TO AND DECISION OF CABINET  
ON 18<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2014****PART A : REPORT**

<b>SUBJECT:</b> HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – BUSINESS PLAN REVISION OPTIONS 2015-2025
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<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b> Brian Pople	<b>DATE:</b> July 2014	<b>EXTN:</b> 37718
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<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:</b> This report seeks to update the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and agree priorities for delivery.
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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is asked to:-

1. Approve the priorities set out in Appendix 4 as a basis for updating the HRA Business Plan and 10 year financial model and agree to the use of specialist consultants to rewrite the Plan
2. Recommend that Officers commence discussions with RSLs to consider the option to using Right to Buy (RTB) capital receipts to fund the development of RSL housing and to see if it would be possible to attain social rents for such investment.
3. Recommend that, subject to there being sufficient available funding, the Council give priority to acquiring new housing stock in geographical areas demonstrating a clear need at a rate of up to 30 per annum over the next 2 years (2014-2016) and the preferred form of acquisition be in the following order:-
  - Purchase houses 'off-plan' from developments with the benefit of planning consent in the west of the district
  - Purchase of a number of existing properties
  - Subject to planning permission, construct up to 22 houses in the east of the district
4. Recommend that:-
  - Preparatory project work be carried out to identify the cost and timescale to invest in sheltered schemes. A projected cost of £4-5m is included in the prioritisation table at Appendix 4. If new properties are to be built/acquired, the work on the sheltered schemes may mean a need to borrow.
  - Discussions continue with WSCC about the provision of extra care at sheltered schemes.

## 1. BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2012-2022 was approved by Full Council in May 2012. It was agreed that the plan would be reviewed again in 2017.
- 1.2 The purpose of the plan was to reflect the changes brought about by the Localism Act 2011, which meant that, as from April 2012, a new financial regime was introduced for local authority housing. The new self-financing system replaced the previous negative subsidy system, giving Council's more freedom to borrow money and spend the income they receive from rents. This new method of financing required Arun to make a one off payment of £71m to the Government, financed by loans from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB). With regard to borrowing headroom, this currently stands at £15.476m. If we do not undertake any further HRA borrowing, this headroom will increase each year as we set aside funds for debt repayment.
- 1.3 Effectively, this purchase has changed Arun Housing Services into a business. However, as a business unit it has five unusual characteristics:-
- i. It is very high profile – both nationally and locally
  - ii. Its income levels are artificially constrained – its stock is open to sale via Right to Buy at below market values
  - iii. On occasions, it has to provide a proportion of its clients with some degree of support and compassionate help which is integral to the service
  - iv. It has statutory duties which involve responding to demands – demands over which it has no control and which are continuing to increase
  - v. It has an unusually high value asset base for a business

## 2.0 The Financial Position

- 2.1 The existing Business Plan forecast that there would be sufficient funding from rent income to service the PWLB loans and to generate surpluses for additional investment including – potentially – new homes.
- 2.2 Since the Business Plan was agreed, there have been a number of changes that have occurred which could impact on the ability of the Council to service its debt whilst, at the same time, delivering improvements to the Housing Service and, in particular, house building/acquisition.
- The Impact of Right to Buy (RTB)
  - A number of assumptions in the Business Plan, including rent income rising at RPI plus 0.5%. This has now changed with rent rises now being set annually using CPI + 1%. Historically, CPI has risen at a slower rate than RPI, which will impact on rental income projections in the longer term
  - The Business Plan was based on an assumed 6 RTB disposals each year.
- 2.3 Whereas there were no RTB disposals in 2011/12, there were 9 in 2012/13 and 20 in 2013/14. For the year to date, there are already 53 expressions of interest from tenants in purchasing their properties. Whilst these numbers may not all translate into sales, it is clear that it will impact more on rental income than was anticipated. Attached at Appendix 1 is a table which has been prepared by Accountancy that

illustrates the impact of RTB on the surpluses that are generated when either 20 or 50 RTB sales take place per annum. As can be seen in Scenario 2, the level of income is down by about £1.7m in 5 years' time (2018/19), if sales were to continue at around 50 per annum, as compared to 20 per annum.

- 2.4 The effect of Council house sales could also impact in terms of increased expenditure for the Council under the 'one for one' replacement arrangement. This arrangement allows Arun to retain the additional receipts generated by the relaxation of the Right to Buy discount rules. Arun can use these receipts for the provision of new affordable homes provided that it puts in £70,000 of its own funds for every £30,000 of receipts used (the "70/30" rule). To date £674,000 of these receipts have accrued, requiring an input of £1,573,000 of Arun's own resources (£674,000 X 70/30).
- 2.5 This level of input can currently be accommodated within existing HRA resources. However, receipt levels will need to be carefully monitored to ensure that the Council doesn't reach a point where the level of investment required from Arun's own resources under the "70/30" rule is unaffordable. This is likely to occur in the next few years if the current increase in sales continues.
- 2.6 Members should note that under the existing arrangement we have with the DCLG, we will lose any receipts for Council housing after 3 years, should the development of new housing not progress. However, we can continue to acquire existing housing using this funding, though the 3 year rule still applies.
- 2.7 In order to avoid paying the money to Government (at base rate plus 4%), the Council is able to use this money as funding for joint development with RSLs, who would fund the 70%. These are likely to be at 'affordable' rents.
- 2.9 It is recommended that Officers commence discussions with RSLs to consider the option to using receipts to fund the development of RSL housing and to see if it would be possible to attain social rents for such investment.
- 2.10 Also contained in the table are a range of issues that have the potential to impact on the Business Plan, which include the effect of Welfare Reform, the change in rental increase formula for 2015, and homelessness.

### 3.0 Increasing the Housing Stock

- 3.1 The existing Business Plan proposes building up 6-12 properties by 2015. Bigger numbers may not be sustainable given the level of RTB sales and investment needed in current stock. The Council has other options as set out below.
- 3.2 Besides buying 'off plan', the Council can also continue to explore development opportunities with the County Council who are seeking to maximise income opportunities through their own development of surplus land which has the potential to generate income via a mixture of house sales and retention of property for rental generation. The District Council has already been consulted and could have the opportunity to purchase the social housing element of any proposed scheme.
- 3.3 The Council could continue with its existing arrangements of purchasing Right to Buy (RTB) 'buy backs' which, in the last year, has provided 7 properties for rent with minimal disruption and does have the attraction that such properties can be purchased as and when surpluses in the HRA balances allow.
- 3.4 Attached at Appendix 2 is a table which shows what the impact of building 30 houses per annum would be over a 5 year period. HRA balances, even when supplemented

by the use of RTB receipts, are not sufficient to fund this new build programme and additional borrowing of £10m is required.

3.5 The Council also has the option to purchase 16 units of housing which has already received planning consent. These units are a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 bed properties for which it is believed there is a demand on the Housing waiting, which it would help meet. The properties will be available during 2015 and will be let at social rent, which supports Members' aspirations in terms of the Council's own house building programme. This option is currently being explored and valuations obtained. If the properties are available at an acceptable value, the Council may wish to consider funding this with the £2m already approved to support the development at Wick. The estimated completion date for this development is around the end of 2015.

3.6 It is recommended that, subject to there being sufficient available funding, the Council give priority to acquiring new housing stock in geographical areas demonstrating a clear need at a rate of up to 30 per annum over the next 2 years (2014-2016) and the preferred form of acquisition be in the following order:-

- Purchase sixteen houses 'off-plan' from developments with the benefit of planning consent in the west of the district
- Purchase a number of existing properties
- Subject to planning permission, construct up to 22 houses in the east of the district.

If funding for the scheme is agreed, it is estimated that the development would be completed around the end of 2015.

3.7 Having consulted the Planning Department, we are confident that the types and sizes of properties that the Council will acquire – either via development or repurchase – shall meet the requirements identified in the Local Plan and the Strategic Housing Marketing Assessment.

3.8 Whilst the Council would normally want to retain its housing assets, it has previously approved disposal of properties in certain circumstances which have included the requirement for significant investment. It is proposed that consideration is given to widening the scope for such disposals which could include:-

- level of investment to bring property up to Decent Homes standard
- isolated location with little or no public transport links
- no other Council housing stock in the vicinity
- no demand identified for such property in a particular location

Any receipt for such sales would be reinvested in housing that meet key criteria.

A report which identifies such a property will be brought to Cabinet for consideration shortly so that an agreed method of disposal can be adopted for use in disposing of any properties in the future.

#### 4.0 Other investment issues impacting on the Business Plan

##### 4.1 Sheltered Schemes

4.1.1 In the past year, detailed work has been undertaken regarding the Council's 22 sheltered schemes, which make up 690 units of accommodation – which is around

20% of the Council's housing stock. In some cases, the sheltered schemes are quite old and would not be considered as 'fit for purpose' as they operate using shared bathrooms and, in some cases, there are issues with locating white goods in the kitchens.

4.1.2 The sheltered accommodation is made up of a mixture of units which include 1 bedroom bedsits, 1 bedroom self-contained flats (these make up more than 400 of the units), 1 and 2 bedroom bungalows, and disabled bedsits.

4.1.3 Whilst this is a high level view for the purpose of the HRA Business Plan, Housing staff carried out an analysis of the existing accommodation, taking account of letting outcomes, property types and potential demand. One option is to reduce the overall number of sheltered units, which would release 114 units of accommodation for general needs, with further consideration being given to the future of other schemes which provide a total of 195 units of accommodation.

4.1.4 It is clear that there would be a need to invest in the retained sheltered schemes to ensure that they are 'fit for purpose', including installation of decent Homes kitchens/bathrooms where required, enlarging existing units to allow for larger kitchens, installation of additional/replacement lifts, provision of mobility scooter storage, updating internal decoration and flooring. The likely cost of such works is estimated at £4-5m

4.1.5 Discussions have also been ongoing with West Sussex County Council regarding the possibility of funding opportunities to support a change of use for sheltered accommodation. Two options are under consideration:-

- i. The first is in relation to the possible development of an 'extra care' facility where it is deemed that there is a demand in the West of the district. If such a scheme is to be given close consideration, it is likely that there would need to be significant capital investment both from the County Council and the District Council. The funding in relation to this proposal is likely to be at a level which would have to be given separate consideration outside of this HRA Business Plan. This facility may be located on the site of one of the existing sheltered schemes.
- ii. The second option involves reviewing the opportunity to have an increased level of care/support more readily available to two of the sheltered schemes where it is deemed that the residents would benefit. Funding for this increased support would be met through a continuation of increased County Council funding and increased rental charges.

4.1.6 (i) and (ii) may be opportunities to work with RSLs to provide the schemes, with Arun providing some funding or land.

4.1.7 It is recommended that:-

- i. Preparatory project work be carried out to identify the cost and timescale to invest in sheltered schemes. A projected cost of £4-5m is included in the prioritisation table at Appendix 4. If new properties are to be built/acquired, the work on the sheltered schemes is likely to mean a need to borrow funding.
- ii. Discussions continue with WSCC about the provision of extra care at sheltered schemes.

## 4.2 Housing Infrastructure

4.2.1 Housing Services continues to adapt to the changing demands placed on its service. The Council has made a significant investment in replacing the Housing I.T. system which will provide a range of opportunities to improve the way that the service is delivered and increase accessibility for tenants. Restructuring within the Housing service is currently underway, which it is believed will deliver and support the change that is required.

4.2.2 The condition of the Arun Housing property portfolio has been maintained with programmed and reactive maintenance, but other facets of asset management have to be addressed in a co-ordinated and comprehensive manner. It is recommended that a member of staff be given responsibility for other asset management issues.

Such a role would cover areas such as allotments and garages, parking areas, miscellaneous parcels of land, open spaces and play areas, as well as:-

- Shops
- Right to Buy
- Leaseholders (including service charges repairs liaison)
- Shared ownership
- DIYSO
- Housing development
- Licenses and access agreements
- Arrangements for use of any land/structure not included in a tenancy
- Inspection of properties in the above categories
- Stricter enforcement of these terms

#### 4.3 Welfare Reform

4.3.1 There is significant change underway in terms of welfare reform which, in turn, impacts on the abilities to effectively maintain a business plan

4.3.2 Whilst Universal credit has yet to be introduced, it is likely there will be increased transitional costs and reduced income. The removal of the Spare Room Subsidy has been in place since 2013, although to date the impact has been minimal as Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) have been claimed to offset all shortfall in rent.

4.3.3 A number of factors mean there is the potential for increased levels of bad debt and rent arrears in the longer term. In order to try and mitigate any such trend, it is proposed to appoint of a Debt Advisor post to provide proactive support and assist with monitoring rent arrears to acceptable levels.

#### 4.4 Fraudulent tenancies

4.4.1 It may be possible to free up houses by increasing work on housing fraud. Nationally it is suggested that up to 3% of housing stock is being used fraudulently, which in turn stops those that have a legitimate claim from being housed. In Arun a 3% rate of housing fraud would translate into just over 90 properties. As a result of some pilot work being undertaken using Benefit fraud staff, 2 properties have already



been returned that are now being used by those with a legitimate entitlement to be housed. Such an approach, whilst not increasing property numbers (which is actually unlikely given the rate at which properties are sold under RTB) would ensure that up to 90 families/individuals that are entitled to be housed, which effectively would be the same as building houses to meet their needs. This approach would also buy the Council some time in terms of growing the surplus on its HRA, which in turn would put it in a stronger position to self-fund housing developments in the future.

## 5.0 Proposals for service development

### 5.1 It is recommended that:-

- i. Steps are taken to protect the Housing Revenue Account assets and that specific resource be identified to carry out the work. It is proposed that this role be added to the post of Housing Project Development Officer and that post be made permanent from January 2015 when the existing postholder's post was due to end (£xx)
- ii. A Debt Advisor post be created with immediate effect to support tenants with money management debt advice, maximising income (including access to welfare benefits) and support understanding of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 (£34,000)
- iii. Existing staff resource is used to support the identification and, when necessary, prosecution of cases of Council Housing Fraud. This will be reviewed in a year's time to evidence the level of success, which may justify ongoing investment in the service.

## 6.0 Summary

6.1 Council provision of housing continues to be put under increasing pressure. Members clearly recognise that its tenants' ability to rent properties at social rent in many cases is the only option.

6.2 Housing Associations are increasingly becoming less accessible to prospective tenants as they become more selective about their applicants who are required to pay for financial checks and pay a month's rent in advance. Increasing use of the private rented sector is an avenue open to applicants and is something that the Council's Housing Options Team promote, although – in many cases – applicants would much prefer to be Council tenants.

6.3 Right to Buy sales are clearly increasing and at up to 50 per year which may indeed be exceeded; in the region of £1/4m rental income will be lost annually.

6.4 As is already clear, even if the Council is able to deliver a programme of acquiring or building 30 properties per annum, the result will still be a net reduction of housing stock on a year by year basis. In order to try and offset this, we may need to consider taking on stock from minor housing associations or trusts as well as continuing with buy backs.

6.5 Using powers resulting from the Localism Act, the Council could choose to borrow to fund house building. If a decision is made to effectively build on the basis of funding from HRA surpluses and taking account of other demands on housing highlighted in this report, the Housing service overall will become less viable over time. This is one issue that the Cabinet will need to give close consideration to in the longer term.

6.6 Another option that the Council could consider is along the lines of other local authorities which are setting up housing companies. Such an arrangement allows them to effectively protect their assets and determine the tenure of rent, with rents

<p>being set at market, affordable, or social rent levels.</p> <p><b>7.0 <u>Next Steps</u></b></p> <p>7.1 It is clear that in a period of less than two years since the Business Plan was adopted, it needs to be adjusted to take account of planned and unplanned issues that have impacted on it.</p> <p>7.2 The financial position of the HRA remains healthy, though the number of possible projects proposed will need to be prioritised to ensure that the HRA balance remains above the recommended minimum level of £2m.</p> <p>7.3 In order to progress the improvements in Housing, decisions need to be made to prioritise those areas that the Council wish to progress, accepting that others are unaffordable.</p> <p>7.4 At Appendix 3, I have set out a range of issues that need to be addressed, along with options for consideration.</p> <p>7.5 Once the priorities have been established decisions can be made with regard to the most suitable methods of funding, including balances, receipts from RTB disposals and – if necessary, and subject to full appraisal of affordability - borrowing.</p> <p>7.6 Finally the HRA Business Plan will need to be formally reviewed every 2 years as a result of the changing financial and political landscape. The 10 year financial model will need to be reviewed more regularly to address any major changes (increased RTB disposals, changes in legislation etc.). Significant changes can then be reported to CMT and to Members.</p>		
<p><b>2. PROPOSAL(S):</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To agree the priorities set out in Appendix 4 to this report, which will be delivered against timescales <u>or</u> will be fixed by the balances available in the HRA account</li> <li>2. To agree to the priorities set out in the Appendix against specific timescales which may require additional borrowing in relation to Council house building</li> </ol>		
<p><b>3. OPTIONS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To agree the priorities as set out in Appendix 4 to this report, taking account of the funding that is available</li> <li>2. Not to agree the priorities as set out in Appendix 4 to this report, taking account of the funding that is available</li> </ol>		
<p><b>4. CONSULTATION:</b></p>		
Has consultation been undertaken with:	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Relevant Town/Parish Council		
Relevant District Ward Councillors		
Other groups/persons (please specify)		
<b>5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

<b>THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)</b>		
Financial		
Legal		
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		
Sustainability		
Asset Management/Property/Land		
Technology		
Other (please explain)		
<b>6. IMPLICATIONS:</b>  The revised HRA Business Plan options contained in this report are not able to be sustained when consideration is given to the proposed Council house building programme of up to 30 homes being built or acquired annually. Further funding sources will need to be identified or the programme modified or extended over a longer timescale to sustain.		

<b>7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:</b>  1. To approve the modification to the HRA Business Plan and agree priorities and seeking further sources of funding if necessary.
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<b>8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b>  HRA Business Plan 2012-2022
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**HRA 10 YEAR FINANCIAL MODEL (Updated March 2014)****Scenario 1 - 20 RTB's per annum**

	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>										
Supervision & Management	4,507	4,634	4,727	4,821	4,917	5,016	5,116	5,218	5,323	5,429
Repairs & Improvements	7,610	5,987	6,050	6,210	6,396	6,646	6,899	7,622	7,850	8,086
Provision for debt repayment	3,544	3,544	3,544	3,544	3,544	3,544	3,544	3,544	1,365	1,365
Net interest	1,728	1,696	1,615	1,480	1,370	1,279	1,143	1,052	882	787
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>17,389</b>	<b>15,861</b>	<b>15,936</b>	<b>16,055</b>	<b>16,227</b>	<b>16,485</b>	<b>16,702</b>	<b>17,436</b>	<b>15,420</b>	<b>15,667</b>
<b>Income</b>										
Net rent	16,113	16,393	16,831	17,232	17,642	18,399	18,489	18,926	19,374	19,831
Other income	585	597	609	621	633	646	659	672	685	699
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>16,698</b>	<b>16,990</b>	<b>17,440</b>	<b>17,853</b>	<b>18,275</b>	<b>19,045</b>	<b>19,148</b>	<b>19,598</b>	<b>20,059</b>	<b>20,530</b>
(Surplus)/Deficit	691	-1,129	-1,504	-1,798	-2,048	-2,560	-2,446	-2,162	-4,639	-4,863
Balance Brought Forward	-3,980	-3,289	-4,418	-5,922	-7,720	-9,768	-12,328	-14,774	-16,936	-21,575
Balance Carried Forward	-3,289	-4,418	-5,922	-7,720	-9,768	-12,328	-14,774	-16,936	-21,575	-26,438

**Scenario 2 - 50 RTB's per annum**

	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>										
Supervision & Management	4,507	4,634	4,727	4,821	4,917	5,016	5,116	5,218	5,323	5,429
Repairs & Improvements	7,610	5,987	6,050	6,210	6,396	6,646	6,899	7,622	7,850	8,086
Provision for debt repayment	3,544	3,544	3,544	3,544	3,544	3,544	3,544	3,544	1,365	1,365
Net interest	1,728	1,695	1,608	1,462	1,342	1,249	1,112	1,024	860	775
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>17,389</b>	<b>15,860</b>	<b>15,929</b>	<b>16,037</b>	<b>16,199</b>	<b>16,455</b>	<b>16,671</b>	<b>17,408</b>	<b>15,398</b>	<b>15,655</b>
<b>Income</b>										
Net rent	16,048	16,191	16,479	16,719	16,960	17,521	17,439	17,677	17,914	18,149
Other income	585	597	609	621	633	646	659	672	685	699
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>16,633</b>	<b>16,788</b>	<b>17,088</b>	<b>17,340</b>	<b>17,593</b>	<b>18,167</b>	<b>18,098</b>	<b>18,349</b>	<b>18,599</b>	<b>18,848</b>
(Surplus)/Deficit	756	-928	-1,159	-1,303	-1,394	-1,712	-1,427	-941	-3,201	-3,193
Balance Brought Forward	-3,980	-3,224	-4,152	-5,311	-6,614	-8,008	-9,720	-11,147	-12,088	-15,289
Balance Carried Forward	-3,224	-4,152	-5,311	-6,614	-8,008	-9,720	-11,147	-12,088	-15,289	-18,482

**HRA 10 YEAR FINANCIAL MODEL****(Based on 30 new dwellings per annum from 2015/16 to 2019/20)**

	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>										
Supervision & Management	4,507	4,634	4,727	4,821	4,917	5,016	5,116	5,218	5,323	5,429
Repairs, Improvements and new build	7,480	8,108	7,608	7,298	7,014	6,794	7,049	7,772	8,000	8,236
Provision for debt repayment	3,544	3,594	3,669	3,769	3,894	4,044	4,044	4,044	1,865	1,865
Net interest	1,728	1,740	1,726	1,681	1,684	1,730	1,598	1,513	1,350	1,264
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>17,259</b>	<b>18,076</b>	<b>17,730</b>	<b>17,569</b>	<b>17,509</b>	<b>17,584</b>	<b>17,807</b>	<b>18,547</b>	<b>16,538</b>	<b>16,794</b>
<b>Income</b>										
Net rent	16,094	16,402	16,930	17,418	17,911	18,743	18,846	19,217	19,595	19,978
Other income	585	597	609	621	633	646	659	672	685	699
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>16,679</b>	<b>16,999</b>	<b>17,539</b>	<b>18,039</b>	<b>18,544</b>	<b>19,389</b>	<b>19,505</b>	<b>19,889</b>	<b>20,280</b>	<b>20,677</b>
(Surplus)/Deficit	580	1,077	191	-470	-1,035	-1,805	-1,698	-1,342	-3,742	-3,883
Balance Brought Forward	-3,980	-3,400	-2,323	-2,132	-2,602	-3,637	-5,442	-7,140	-8,482	-12,224
Balance Carried Forward	-3,400	-2,323	-2,132	-2,602	-3,637	-5,442	-7,140	-8,482	-12,224	-16,107

**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – Impact of Changes Since HRA Business Plan 2012-2022 was approved on 2 May 2012**

Income Reduction	Cost (if known)	Increased Expenditure	Cost (if known)	Possible Projects	Cost (if known)	
		Housebuilding programme - up to 30 units per year, dependent on funding	£4.5m p.a.	Opportunity to work with WSCC to acquire land for Council housing.		
				Developer opportunities in WSCC - Angels Nursery, 24 homes, potential for ADC to invest. (Initial site investment)	£3m (£160k)	
Right to Buy - loss of rental income	c£5K per annum for each disposal	Right to Buy - one for one replacement will require 70% shortfall against a replacement property to be funded by the Council	Potential for significant financial commitment.			
Welfare Reform - rent/arrears - rental income 50% increase in DFG funding is it still needed - movement etc		Welfare Reform - health warning only at this stage. Impact of under-occupancy (also known as Social Sector Size Criteria) and Universal Credit still to be felt. Specialist debt advice may assist in controlling level of arrears.	Impact yet to be felt. DHP offsetting issue. (identify level of current spend)			
Use of Social Rents over Affordable Rents				The Council recently adopted a new space standard for housing which is likely to increase building costs which in turn will increase the cost of affordable housing . Analysis of recent housing developments has already highlighted that the new standard will take property rents beyond the local housing allowance on a three bed property.		
Rental income for future years to be constrained by regulation - basis of future years rental increases, moving them from Retail Price Index (RPI) + 0.5 percentage point (+ up to £2 for Social Rents) to increase based on Consumer Price Index (CPI + 1 percentage point). As CPI has historically ?? at a rate of about 0.5% less than the RPI, this may present a problem in terms of achieving rent convergence. Proposals for April 2015 onwards						

Sheltered Housing Review - recommendation likely to include reassignment/alternative use of 1 facility = rental income loss	£10m +	Improvement options in relation to other sheltered schemes could require significant expenditure and outcomes/costs will not be known until review of sheltered schemes is concluded.	£0m?	If decision taken to reassign Sheltered Housing Schemes there is potential for 'extra care scheme' that could attract funding from WSCC. Potential to reintroduce managed sheltered housing scheme in West and East of district. This would provide an increased level of care over that in a standard sheltered scheme. Funding for management cost may be able to be met from additional benefit or contribution from WSCC.		
		Homelessness - growing expenditure which currently shows no signs of reducing. Steps taken to try and reduce spend include:- increasing temporary accommodation units by 10 which should all be completed in next few months, with first units coming on stream in May. Strengthening Options Team, in terms of proactive approach and stepping in early. <i>NB - Homelessness expenditure is covered by General Fund</i>		10 additional units of temporary accommodation should achieve savings estimated at  Strengthening Options Team should assist in reducing B&B spend	£100k p.a.	
		Gas Servicing Contract - contract due for renewal April 2015 - difficult to predict future costs.				
		Tenant Scrutiny - could lead to potential increase in expenditure as a result of raised expectations.				
				Review of leasehold management costs to ensure more realistic and cover all costs. Could generate more income, may need to increase incrementally if gap is large.	£50k	
				Opportunity to extend leases either piecemeal or across the board which would generate additional income.		
				Need to review Void Standard, which has potential to increase costs	£300k	
				Fuel poverty becoming an increasing issue. Opportunity to work with WSCC and improve tenants' position	Not known	
				Direct sale of Council properties		

**HRA BUSINESS PLAN PRIORITIES**

<b>ISSUE</b>	<b>OPTION</b>	<b>COMMENTARY</b>	<b>COST</b>	<b>SUGGESTED PRIORITY</b>
New Housing	Infill sites/up to 18 sites identified, providing capacity for up to 90 units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consideration needs to be given to timescales in relation to consultation</li> <li>- Subject to available funds</li> </ul>	£140k per unit (e.g. £2.5m for planning application)	1
	Purchase 'off plan' on sites with planning permission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Subject to demand on sites identified</li> <li>- Consultation already covered as part of planning approval process</li> <li>- Subject to available funds</li> </ul>	£140k per unit	1
Buy Back	Work with partner Councils to acquire social housing element of proposed development where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Subject to demand on sites identified</li> <li>- Consultation already covered as part of planning approval process</li> <li>- Subject to available funds</li> </ul>		1
	Buy back of previous RTB/shared ownership properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ease of purchase</li> <li>- Known property types</li> </ul>	Dependant on type of property, c£140-170k per unit	1
Sheltered Housing	Work towards reducing sheltered accommodation by 114 units for use as general needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Could provide better options for single, younger or older people</li> <li>- Would ensure that there was separation between sheltered accommodation and general needs in relation to shelter units</li> </ul>	Costs to be identified	3
	Ensuring that remaining sheltered units are fit for purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This would include removal of shared bathrooms</li> <li>- Improved kitchens suitable for white goods</li> <li>- Installation/refurbishment of lifts</li> <li>- Appropriate secure storage for mobility scooters</li> </ul>	£4-5m	2



	Supervised sheltered accommodation – 2 sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is felt to be an increasing need for such accommodation</li> <li>- Cost of service may be able to be met from WSCC care funding and appropriate increase in rents</li> </ul>	To be identified as part of review	2
	Possible use of existing sheltered housing site for Extra Care development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Costs associated with such a proposal are anticipated to be at least £10m</li> <li>- County Council funding may be available to help support scheme</li> <li>- Costs for District Council are not able to be estimated at this time</li> </ul>	Likely substantial borrowing requirement	The scheme would need to be given separate consideration
Housing infrastructure	Increase activity support for details of housing fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff are currently carrying out work on pilot basis</li> <li>- Housing fraud is a significant issue and prevent legitimate housing need from being fulfilled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Currently are being supported by Revenues &amp; Benefits</li> <li>- Cost £35k</li> </ul>	2
	HRA Asset Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would ensure that specific resource was assigned to protecting the Council's single biggest asset</li> <li>- This post can possibly cover Council housing development should it be supported</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Currently, cost could be covered via an existing post. However, the cost would be £35k pa if this post was to become permanent.</li> </ul>	2
	Debt Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would provide early stage debt advice and could help maximise alternative housing provision of client is to remain in existing accommodation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £30k</li> </ul>	3

	Long term future of Housing services	- If there is a continued net reduction in housing stock, the future of the service would need to be closely considered, given the business operating model	Could be significant cost	3
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Housing & Customer Services Working Group - 2014/15								
Meeting Date			03-Jul-14	04-Sep-14	23-Oct-14	08-Jan-15	05-Mar-15	
Item	Lead	Origin						COMMENTS
Election of Chairman & Vice-Chairman		ToR	*					
Terms of Reference		ToR	*					
Work programme - set and review		ToR	*	*	*	*	*	
<b>Housing Items</b>								
Review Rent Arrears Panel								From Audit & Governance Meeting on 26.6.14. Would like H&CSWG to look into whether the former Rent Arrears Panel should be re-established.
Stonepillow Update			*				*	
Gas Safety Certificates - verbal update at every meeting			*	*	*	*	*	
Rough Sleeper Update - verbal update at every meeting			*	*	*	*		
Allocations Review			*		*			
Empty Homes Assistance Programme	LC		*			*		
Impact of Welfare Reform Act (including Bedroom Tax, Housing Rent Arrears and Housing Allocations)	RA				*			
Housing Business Plan Annual Review	BP			*				
Tenant Scrutiny Panel review of the Housing complaints procedure	EG			*				
Landlord Accreditation Scheme (include Choice Based Lettings)	LC/JK				*			
Disabled Facility Grants (Sept/Oct 2014)	LC/S B					*		

Housing & Customer Services Working Group - 2014/15								
Meeting Date			03-Jul-14	04-Sep-14	23-Oct-14	08-Jan-15	05-Mar-15	
Item	Lead	Origin						COMMENTS
Review of Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy following implementation.	JK					*		From OSC: It was also noted that the Committee would receive a further report in around nine month's time so that Members could be advised of the outcomes achieved following the appointment of the Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Caseworker.
Decent Homes Programme	SB				*			
Update on new Housing IT System (QL) (To be presented in early 2015)	RA							
<b>Customer Service Items</b>								
Arun District Council's Website	PW/JF			*				
Customer Access Strategy - An update on the Action Plan & LGA Peer Review					*			
Arun Direct Update	JF/JH				*			
<b>Agenda Prep Timetable</b>								
Send to Gemma for CMT by 2pm Thurs			29-May-14	24-Jul-14	18-Sep-14	27-Nov-14	29-Jan-15	
CMT Tues			03-Jun-14	29-Jul-14	23-Sep-14	02-Dec-14	03-Feb-15	
Draft Reports to Erica by 11am Thurs			05-Jun-14	31-Jul-14	25-Sep-14	04-Dec-14	05-Feb-15	
<b>Agenda Prep Date 3pm</b>			11-Jun-14	06-Aug-14	01-Oct-14	10-Dec-14	11-Feb-15	
<b>Room</b>			<b>CR2</b>	<b>Ash</b>	<b>Ash</b>	<b>Ash</b>	<b>Ash</b>	
Final Reports to Erica by 11am Mon			16-Jun-14	11-Aug-14	06-Oct-14	15-Dec-14	16-Feb-15	
Despatch Agendas by 2pm Thurs			19-Jun-14	14-Aug-14	09-Oct-14	18-Dec-14	19-Feb-15	
<b>Date of Meeting 6pm</b>			<b>03-Jul-14</b>	<b>04-Sep-14</b>	<b>23-Oct-14</b>	<b>08-Jan-15</b>	<b>05-Mar-15</b>	
<b>Room</b>			<b>CR1</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>BRTH</b>	<b>BRTH</b>	<b>CR1</b>	
OSC Meeting Dates			29-Jul-14	23-Sep-14	18-Nov-14	27-Jan-15	10 Mar/TBC	
Cabinet Meeting Dates			21-Jul-14	13-Oct-14	08-Dec-14	19-Jan-15	16-Mar-15	
Full Council Meeting Dates			16-Jul-14	10-Sep-14	05-Nov-14	18 Feb/11 Mar	11 Mar/TBC	

Housing & Customer Services Working Group - 2014/15								
Meeting Date			03-Jul-14	04-Sep-14	23-Oct-14	08-Jan-15	05-Mar-15	
Item	Lead	Origin						COMMENTS
<b>Deleted Items</b>								
<b>Suggested items for 2015/16</b>								





