



# Wolverhampton Homes

## Open Board Meeting

12 March 2021

**Time** 9.30 am      **Public Meeting?** YES      **Type of meeting** Wolverhampton Homes  
**Venue** Virtual Meeting – via Microsoft Teams

### Membership

Derek Allen  
Parveen Brigue  
Victor Browne  
Angela Davies  
Hajrija Dergic  
Steve Finegan  
Joy McLaren  
Councillor Lynne Moran  
Mike Porter  
Councillor Rita Potter  
Councillor Zee Russell  
Councillor Paul Singh

### Information

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact:

**Contact** Maya Dhanda  
**Tel/Email** 07881358595; maya.dhanda@wolverhamptonhomes.org.uk  
**Address** Virtual meeting - via Microsoft Teams

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# Agenda

*Item No. Title*

- 1 **Apologies**
- 2 **Declarations of interest**
- 3 **Minutes of previous meeting - 02 December 2020 (Pages 3 - 6)**
- 4 **Matters arising**

## **FOR DECISION**

- 5 **Anti-social Behaviour Policy - Joanne Mason, Head of Housing Operations (Pages 7 - 16)**
- 6 **Revenue Budget 2021 - 2022 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy Update 2021 - 2022 to 2025 - 2026 - Julie Haydon, Assistant Director - Corporate Services (Pages 17 - 22)**

## **FOR INFORMATION**

- 7 **Revenue Monitoring Quarter 3 Outturn to 31 December 2020 - Jo McCoy, Head of Financial Management (W-ton Homes) (Pages 23 - 28)**
- 8 **Rents and Service Charges (Annual Update) - Darren Baggs, Assistant Director - Housing (Pages 29 - 42)**
- 9 **A.O.B**

**DATE OF NEXT OPEN BOARD MEETING: FRIDAY 11 JUNE 2021**

# M I N U T E S



**Meeting:** Open Board Meeting  
**Date:** Wednesday 02 December 2020  
**Venue:** Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams  
**Time:** 9:30 am

## **MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:-**

Angela Davies	-	Board Chair – Tenant
Steve Finegan	-	Board Vice-Chair – Independent
Joy McLaren	-	Board Member – Tenant
Mike Porter	-	Board Member – Tenant
Victor Browne	-	Board Member – Tenant
Parveen Brigue	-	Board Member – Independent
Derek Allen	-	Board Member – Independent
Councillor Lynne Moran	-	Board Member – Councillor
Councillor Rita Potter	-	Board Member – Councillor
Councillor Zareena Russell	-	Board Member – Councillor

## **STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:-**

Shaun Aldis	-	Chief Executive
Darren Baggs	-	Assistant Director – Housing
Julie Haydon	-	Assistant Director – Corporate Services
Ian Gardner	-	Assistant Director – Building Services
Nicky Devey	-	Head of Business Services
Catherine Stewardson	-	Business Assurance Manager
Jessica Whitehouse	-	Business Assurance Officer

## **STAFF IN ATTENDANCE – CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL:-**

Lynda Eyton	-	Client Relationship Manager – Housing Management Agents
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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Councillor Paul Singh – Councillor Board Member</li> <li>- Hajrija Dergic – Independent Board Member</li> </ul>	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Declaration of Interest</b>	
2.1	<p>Tenant related issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Angela Davies</li> <li>- Joy McLaren</li> <li>- Mike Porter</li> <li>- Victor Browne</li> </ul>	
2.2	Noted with interest and allowed to remain and join in with the debate.	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting – Annual General Meeting and Open - 18 September 2020</b>	
3.1	The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting were agreed as a true record.	
3.2	The minutes of the previous open Board Meeting were agreed as a true record.	
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Matters arising</b>	
4.1	Typing error page 8, at item 12.2 – it refers to Vice-Chair of Committee rather than Board – to be amended on AGM minutes.	<b>CS</b>
<b>For Decision</b>		
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Health and Safety Plan 2021 - 2022 – Tim Munro, Head of Service Health &amp; Safety, City of Wolverhampton Council</b>	
5.1	Board were provided with an update and overview of the Health and Safety Plan 2021- 2022. It was seen that adoption of this plan will show visible leadership and active commitment from Board with reference to the management of Health and Safety in Wolverhampton Homes.	
5.2	<p>Board member noted that the plan was comprehensive with further clarification and information provided on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- programme of inspections for day to day operations forming part of the action plan, that will see operational inspections resume and specifically highlight the difference between inspection and audit</li> <li>- Potential Violent Persons Register (PVPR) – the new system, which provides safety alerts for staff, being introduced in</li> </ul>	

	<p>conjunction with the City of Wolverhampton Council. Board asked to be updated with progress on implementation.</p> <p>5.3 Further reassurance was provided to Board that personal safety devices are issued to staff where required, with usage monitoring undertaken monthly.</p> <p>5.4 Board members were informed that the Health and Safety Champion meetings have been revised to incorporate individual directorate meetings.</p> <p>5.5 Reference was made to item 7.1 in the report - Equality Impact Assessments where it was confirmed that both the Health and Safety Policy and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy will be embedded across all areas of the business.</p> <p>5.6 Board member enquired as to the approach for reasonable adjustments for staff including disability and wellbeing. Board were advised that assessments were inclusive and fit for purpose for each individual with a solution that is supportive to their needs.</p> <p>5.7 As part of the regular updates to Board, it was confirmed that the H&amp;S action plan will be regularly reported at the relevant Board or Committee also providing feedback from the external Health &amp; Safety audit undertaken by HQN specifically for Building Services.</p> <p><b>Resolved: Board members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approved the proposed Health and Safety Annual Action Plan 2021 – 2022</b></li> <li>• <b>Noted the contents of the report</b></li> </ul>	
<p>6.0</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p><b>Board Development Plan 2021 - 2022 - Julie Haydon, Assistant Director – Corporate Services</b></p> <p>Board were provided with an overview of the Board Development Plan 2021 – 2022, which seeks to gain approval in terms of Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) and the Board Training Plan.</p> <p>Board provided feedback on the Letter of Appointment in relation to softer wording and content. This will be incorporated, and the final document will form part of the new board member welcome pack.</p> <p><b>Resolved: Board members:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Approved the Learning Needs Analysis (LNA)</b></li> <li>2. <b>Noted the draft Board training and development plan</b></li> <li>3. <b>Noted the Letter of appointment for Wolverhampton Homes directors</b></li> </ol>	

<p><b>7.0</b></p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p> <p>7.2.1</p> <p>7.3</p>	<p><b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, Action Plan and update – Julie Haydon, Assistant Director – Corporate Services</b></p> <p>Board were provided with an overview of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy (EDI) Action Plan and updates. The development of the EDI Strategy improvement plan was supported by the City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) and noted thanks to Jin Takhar, Head of Equality Diversity and Inclusion and her team for their support and collaborative working.</p> <p>Board member referred to page 90 of the pack with reference to formal mentoring and shadowing of staff for delivery Q1 in 2022 should this be noted as 2021.</p> <p><b>Action: Page 90 of the Board pack to be updated to reflect 2021.</b></p> <p>Board welcomed the appointment of Joy McLaren as Chair of Equality and Diversity Steering Group – (EDSG) and the work being undertaken in support of the strategy and plans, by the EDI team at CWC.</p> <p><b>Resolved: Board members approved the:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Draft Wolverhampton Homes Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021 – 2023</b></li> <li>• <b>Draft Wolverhampton Homes Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Action Plan – 2021 - 2022</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Board members noted the progress made in relation to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Inclusive Futures Campaign – Update</b></li> <li>• <b>Black Lives Matter Agenda – Update</b></li> <li>• <b>Meeting the needs of key equality groups during the Covid-19 crisis – Update</b></li> <li>• <b>Annual Action Plan Update – 2020</b></li> <li>• <b>Key achievements – Update - 2020</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>CS</b></p>
<p><b>8.0</b></p> <p>8.1</p>	<p><b>A.O.B.</b></p> <p>There were no items raised.</p>	
<p><b>9.0</b></p> <p>9.1</p>	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>Date: Friday 12 March 2021  Time: 09:30 am  Location: Virtual meeting – via Microsoft Teams</p>	

# Board Report

	<b>Agenda Item 5</b>
	<b>12 March 2021</b> <b>Anti-social Behaviour Policy</b>
	<b>Open Report</b>
<b>Status:</b>	For Decision
<b>Author and job title:</b>	Joanne Mason, Head of Housing Operations
<b>Contact No:</b>	07890 397685
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>Board members are asked to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>approve the proposal for the investigation and management of low level anti-social behaviour / nuisance be undertaken by Tenancy Officers</b></li> <li>• <b>approve the proposed changes to the ASB Policy</b></li> </ul>
<b>Key risks and contentious issues:</b>	In line with the Social Housing White paper, Wolverhampton Homes as an agency is involved in tackling anti-social behaviour and signposting tenants to those agencies who can give them the most appropriate support and assistance.

## **Management Summary**

### **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval from the Board to implement the following proposal:
- Responsibility for the investigation and management of reports of low level anti-social behaviour (ASB) / nuisance relating to Wolverhampton Homes' (WH) tenancies transfer from the ASB team to Tenancy Management
  - To approve the Anti-social Behaviour Policy 2021 – 2024 to take into account the proposed changes detailed above.

### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The specialist, tenure neutral ASB team was established in 2014, since which time ASB officers have investigated and managed reports of ASB and nuisance related issues to WH tenancies, private housing, businesses, street-based and open spaces. This ranges from low level complaints from playing football in the streets to working with partner agencies in tackling high level gang-related issues as well as high-profile regional issues, for example the Black Country Car Cruising Injunction.
- 2.2 The exception to this is the handling of noise and environmental ASB issues in private housing, and on the City of Wolverhampton Council's (CWC) managed and private land. These issues are dealt with by the CWC's Environmental Health team.
- 2.3 At the request of CWC, since 2019, WH has been delivering an ASB service to the managing agents - Bushbury Hill, Dovecotes, New Park Village and Springfield Horseshoe. This approach is to ensure a consistent ASB service is available to all social housing tenants in the City and builds upon continually improving partnerships with stakeholders, including West Midlands Police. The council contributes funding equivalent to a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) ASB officer for the service and this arrangement is reviewed annually.
- 2.4 The number of new ASB cases has increased year-on-year. So far in 2020 - 2021, there has been a 40% increase in new cases reported compared to 2014 when the ASB team was established. Despite this increase in case work, there has been no increase in resources. The demand on the service has meant that the majority of the work of the ASB team has been reactive (i.e. dealing with cases as they come in), leaving little time for any proactive work around prevention of ASB.
- 2.5 With the inception of the estate custodian ethos, a pilot has been running since July 2019 whereby Tenancy Officers (TO) have been investigating and managing low level ASB / nuisance complaints. The aim is that these low-level issues will be managed without the need for the involvement of the specialist ASB team. It is felt that by prompt intervention this can de-escalate the lower level ASB / nuisance complaints, which will be more effective in managing the expectations of customers.

- 2.6 In addition, where reports of a low level have been received in the pilot area, the aim has been to deal with matters at the first point of contact via either Homes Direct (HD) or by CWC's customer services, as an advice and signposting service.
- 2.7 An evaluation of the pilot has been carried out, which has yielded positive results. A full evaluation of the pilot can be found at Appendix 1 - in summary:
- 28 percent of low level ASB / nuisance cases in the pilot area have been dealt with by Tenancy Officers (TOs).
  - Cases managed by TOs have been dealt with and closed in a timely manner; the number of cases reopened or referred to the ASB team has been low.
  - Customer feedback has been positive, and the data indicates that in the majority of cases, customers were contacted within the required timescales and indicated they were satisfied with the service they received.
  - Feedback from TOs indicates work relating to low level ASB enhances the estate custodian model and supports a greater knowledge of matters arising on their management areas.
  - The TOs have also reported that they have not received any negative responses from customers who may have expected to be contacted by an ASB officer.
- 2.8 During the current year to date (2020 - 2021), of the customers surveyed, 98.4 percent have said they are satisfied with the way their ASB/nuisance case was handled and 96.8 percent are satisfied with the outcome.
- 2.9 Due to the success of the pilot, it is recommended that the investigation and management of low level ASB / nuisance by TOs relating to WH tenancies continues. ASB reports relating to private housing or open spaces, businesses, etc., will continue to be dealt with by the ASB team. The exception to this is noise and environmental ASB issues in private housing and on CWC managed and private land (as outlined at point 2.1), which the CWC's Environmental Health team will continue to undertake.
- 2.10 Further work will be carried out with the aim of resolving reports about low level ASB / nuisance at the first point of contact.
- 2.11 The anticipated reduction in the number of cases the ASB team will deal with will give the team the opportunity to undertake more proactive work around under-reporting, both in geographical areas and in communities of interest. The team will also link in with the proactive work being co-ordinated by CWC around a 'place-based' approach to 'hotspot' areas, tackling specific streets where data shows high levels of multiple deprivation.
- 2.12 So far in 2020 - 2021, there have been 2,600 new ASB cases received. This represents an increase of 31% in new cases compared to the corresponding period in 2019 - 2020.
- 2.13 The draft ASB Policy 2021 - 2024 can be found at Appendix 2.

### **3.0 Financial and value for money implications**

- 3.1 Where possible, low level matters will be responded to a first point of contact via Customer Service Officers.

- 3.2 Low level matters that require investigation will be referred to Tenancy Management and dealt with by TOs whilst out 'on patch', reducing the need to call upon a second ASB officer in the area.

#### **4.0 Legal and Regulatory implications**

- 4.1 In line with the Social Housing White Paper, the revised ASB Policy sets out who is responsible for dealing with ASB, the steps WH will take to investigate and tackle ASB and how ASB can be reported.
- 4.2 The revised (draft) ASB Policy 2021 - 2024 complies with the requirements of the Housing Act 1996, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 and the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

#### **5.0 Human resources implications**

- 5.1 As part of the service redesign 'Our Future', Wolverhampton Homes will ensure services are fit for purpose to meet the need of our customers.

#### **6.0 Health and safety implications**

- 6.1 There are no health and safety implications identified within this report.

#### **7.0 Equalities implications**

- 7.1 Has an Equality Impact Assessment been completed: Yes

Explanation: An EIA on the ASB pilot was presented to the Equalities' Circle Forum in March 2020. There were no equalities implications identified. A further EIA will be completed on the updated policy.

- 7.2 As outlined in paragraph 2.8 above, the anticipated reduction in cases the ASB team will deal with will give the team the capacity to undertake more proactive work around under-reporting, including with equality groups from a range of geographical areas and in communities of interest.

#### **8.0 Impact on the environment and community**

- 8.1 It is envisaged that the proposal to give advice only to customers reporting low level issues and the agile working approach for Wolverhampton Homes staff, should result in a reduction in the need for staff to travel around the City, thus contributing to a reduction in carbon emissions.
- 8.2 Furthermore, many of the ASB / nuisance complaints referred to Tenancy Management will be dealt with by the TOs when they are undertaking their normal duties out on the estates, which should also contribute to a reduction in the number of journeys required.

## **9.0 Long term consequences for the company**

9.1 The changes proposed within this report will enable ASB issues to be tackled quickly and effectively. It will also provide capacity for a more proactive approach in working to address ASB in hotspot areas, with the aim of supporting a longer term reduction of serious ASB across the City.

## **10.0 Impact on business relationships with suppliers, customers, and others**

10.1 It is beneficial for customers quality of life that ASB issues are resolved at the first point of contact wherever possible.

10.2 With this proposal customers' expectations will be managed more effectively.

## **11.0 Impact of Covid-19**

11.1 Since the first Covid-19 'lockdown' in March 2020, the ASB team has been working closely with West Midlands Police in dealing with breaches of social distancing regulations in residential properties. This joint approach has focussed on an engagement based resolution, by explaining to and encouraging those committing a breach, to adhere to government guidelines.

11.2 Of the 2600 cases reported so far in 2020 – 2021 approximately 450 of these new ASB cases are linked to breaches of the Covid-19 regulations.

11.3 The vast majority of people have responded positively to the advice given, but in one recent case enforcement action by way of a civil injunction due to a continued breach of Covid-19 regulations.

## **12.0 Impact on Wolverhampton Homes' Management System**

12.1 If approved, and subject to the required EIA, the ASB Policy 2021 - 2024 will go onto the management system by:

Date: 31 March 2021

Officer responsible: Joanne Mason

## **13.0 List of appendices**

13.1 Appendix 1: Evaluation of management of low level ASB / nuisance pilot

13.2 Appendix 2: Draft Anti-social Behaviour Policy 2021 - 2024 – circulated under separate cover

## **Appendix 1: Evaluation highlights of management of low level ASB / nuisance pilot (Abridged from the 2019 pilot document)**

### **1.0 Introduction / background**

- 1.1 For the purpose of the pilot, it was agreed that low level ASB / nuisance to be investigated by the Tenancy Officers (TO) would include the following categories:
- Noise
  - Pets and animal nuisance
  - Vehicle related
  - Rubbish related incidents
  - Garden nuisance
  - Cannabis smells
  - Some 'mis-use of communal areas' (depending on the nature of the report)
- 1.2 It was also agreed that the TO would contact the complainant in line with the existing ASB key performance indicators (i.e. Cat B – 3 working days, Cat C – 5 working days).
- 1.3 Reports of more serious ASB that require a specialist approach would be investigated by the ASB team, including the following categories:
- Harassment, threats, and violent incidents
  - Domestic violence
  - Gang-related
  - Hate-related
  - Drug dealing
  - Prostitution
  - Other criminal behaviour
  - Some 'misuse of communal areas' (depending on the nature of the incident)
- 1.4 Prior to the start of the pilot, a process was agreed whereby if it became apparent that the TO required support in the resolution of an issue, the case may be escalated to the ASB team. For example: more serious or persistent noise-related incidents, where noise monitoring equipment or professional witnesses are required, and cases where it is deemed a notice of seeking possession should be issued for ASB.
- 1.5 Prior to the commencement of the pilot, ASB Team Leaders provided training to TOs in the pilot area in aspects of case management, referrals to mediation, etc.
- 1.6 Other than the reports that were dealt with by WH / CWC Customer Services at the first point of contact, it was agreed that all initial reports of ASB / nuisance would be triaged by the ASB team. Cases would be recorded on React case management system with business actions created on Northgate and assigned to the relevant TO where appropriate.

## 2.0 Evaluation of the pilot

### 2.1 Cases dealt with at first point of contact

From the quantitative data provided, approximately 11% of calls made to Homes Direct and CWC Customer Services were dealt with at the first point of contact where advice only was given. A continuous programme of development will be provided to ensure staff are equipped to deal with incoming reports of low level ASB issues.

### 2.2 Cases referred to TOs during the period 01 July 2020 to 31 October 2020:

Ward	Total no. of cases	No. of cases referred to TO	% of total cases referred to TO
Bilston East	109	36	33%
Bilston North	87	31	36%
Bushbury North	58	18	31%
Bushbury South & Low Hill	88	21	24%
Blakenhall	25	1	4%
East Park	104	23	22%
Ettingshall	92	20	22%
Fallings Park	60	12	20%
Graiseley	57	13	23%
Heath Town	159	50	31%
Merry Hill	82	25	30%
Oxley	79	6	8%
Park	35	6	17%
Penn	19	3	16%
Springvale	68	18	26%
St Peter's	69	22	32%
Tettenhall Regis	33	9	27%
Tettenhall Wightwick	39	9	23%
Wednesfield North	56	16	29%
Wednesfield South	59	21	36%

In summary:

- During the pilot, approximately 28% of new ASB cases were deemed to be low level and referred to the TO for the area. Whilst this percentage may appear low, it should be noted that included in this data are all reports of breaches of Covid-19 regulations in regard to residential properties which, for the purposes of consistency, have all been managed by the ASB team.
- Wednesfield South (36%) and Bilston North (36%) saw the highest percentage of cases referred to the TOs. Blakenhall (0.04%) was the ward with the lowest percentage of cases referred to the TO.

- The average number of days a case remained open when referred to the TO was 12 days. This represents a more timely turnaround of cases when compared to the average time all ASB cases remained open which was 46 days.

### 2.3 Case monitoring / audits

The cases managed by TOs were regularly monitored / audited by the Tenancy Manager. Where issues were identified in relation to case recording these were rectified and staff provided with one to one feedback and additional training was provided as required.

### 2.4 Compliance with key performance indicator (KPI) response times

Since the pilot commenced in July 2019, the React case management system reports that 95.7% of complainants were contacted within the required timescales.

### 2.5 Customer satisfaction

The overall satisfaction rates for cases dealt with by both the ASB team and Tenancy Management for the year to date (2020 - 2021) are:

- Satisfied with how the case was handled = 98.4%
- Satisfied with outcome of case = 96.8%

### 2.6 Equalities' data

Equalities' data was captured for the first three months of the pilot. Where customer information is known or has been disclosed, it is detailed below. No equalities' issues have been identified during this evaluation.

Profile / characteristic of complainant	Total no. of new cases in pilot area	No. of cases in pilot area referred to TO	% of new cases referred to TO
<b>Age:</b>			
0-18	1	0	0%
19-21	4	2	50%
22-25	10	4	40%
26-35	47	16	34%
36-50	79	14	18%
51-65	54	17	31%
66+	38	15	39%
<b>Gender:</b>			
Male	136	35	26%
Female	197	51	26%
Transgender	0	0	0%
<b>Religion:</b>			
Buddhist	1	1	100%
Christian	69	32	46%
Hindu	3	1	33%

Muslim	11	1	9%
Sikh	1	0	0%
<b>Sexual orientation:</b>			
Bisexual	0	0	0%
Gay	0	0	0%
Heterosexual	107	39	36%
Lesbian	0	0	0%
<b>Ethnic origin:</b>			
British/British Asian – Indian	6	1	17%
British/British Asian – Pakistani	3	0	0%
British/British Asian – other	7	1	14%
Black/Black British – African	7	3	43%
Black/Black British – Caribbean	6	3	50%
Middle Eastern	2	0	0%
Mixed any other background	1	0	0%
Mixed White & Asian	1	0	0%
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	10	2	20%
White British	162	67	41%
White Irish	1	1	100%
<b>Disability:</b>			
Yes	45	17	38%

### 3.0 Recommendations

#### 3.1 It is recommended that:

- The investigation and management of all low level ASB / nuisance by TOs relating to Wolverhampton Homes tenancies continues.
- Responsibility for triaging reports of ASB remains with the specialist ASB team. This will ensure that all cases are dealt with appropriately, urgent matters are responded to quickly which, in turn, will mitigate the risk of harm to victims of ASB.
- The ASB Policy is amended to reflect the above.
- A communications' plan is developed with the aim of managing the expectations of customers and other stakeholders; work has already commenced on the WH website.
- Further training is undertaken with customer services staff on resolving low level ASB / nuisance at the first point of contact where advice only is provided.

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# Board Report

	<b>Agenda Item 6</b>
	<b>12 March 2021</b> <b>Revenue Budget 2021 - 2022 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy Update 2021 - 2022 to 2025 - 2026</b>
	<b>Open Report</b>
<b>Status:</b>	For Decision
<b>Author and job title:</b>	Julie Haydon: Assistant Director – Corporate Services
<b>Contact No:</b>	01902 552956
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>Board Members are asked to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>approve the Outline Revenue Budget for the financial year 2021 – 2022</b></li> <li>• <b>note the contents of the report</b></li> </ul>
<b>Key risks and contentious issues:</b>	<p>Effective financial management is a critical part of our business assurance framework.</p> <p>During 2021 - 2022 it is the intention to operate within our proposed total income of £49.6m.</p> <p>This draft budget has made some assumptions about achievable efficiencies. It proposes that reserves will not be used to contribute to 'day to day' operational activities, but it does anticipate that £1m of reserves could be used during the financial year 2021 - 2022 to support Wolverhampton Homes in the delivery of "Our Future" as part of its redesign of services.</p> <p>The Board will receive regular updates on the position of this revenue budget during the next financial year, with updates to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy alongside the 'Our Future' redesign proposals.</p>

## Management Summary

### 1.0 Purpose

1.1 An annual budget is presented for approval by the Wolverhampton Homes Board before 31 March each year in accordance with financial regulations. The budget is prepared in the context of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, which is reviewed and updated at least annually. This strategy and revenue budget reflect the four-year Business Plan 2019 - 2023 and is also set within the context of the Council's 30-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan.

### 2.0 Income Forecast for 2021 - 2022

- 2.1 The annual Management Fee from the Council provides around 80 percent of Wolverhampton Homes' income. The council have approved a Management Fee for 2021 - 2022 of £39,425,000 for the delivery of core landlord services and Homelessness services. This includes an adjustment to reflect where shared services SLA charges for services that benefit all managing agents and tenants will in future be retained in the HRA.
- 2.2 The company also receives income for the provision of general fund services; Anti-Social Behaviour, Independent Living, Telecare, Out of Hours Service, Housing Assistance and Affordable Warmth.
- 2.3 The company also earns income from delivering capital schemes on behalf of the Council's Capital Programme and from third parties for Asbestos removal services. The cost of staff working on the Capital Projects is also recharged to the Capital Programme and is a source of income. The budgeted income in this report reflects planned work programmes for 2021 - 2022 and estimated demand for services in the next 12 months. Where possible, budget forecasts are reflected in corresponding reductions in expenditure budgets.
- 2.4 Additional miscellaneous income streams include fees and charges, grant income and Private Sector Leasing rental income. Income has also been built into the budget for the rental income from the 19 investment properties purchased during 2020-2021.
- 2.5 Table 1 below sets out the forecast income for 2021 - 2022.

**Table 1 – Income Forecast 2021 - 2022**

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>2021 - 2022 £000s</b>
Base Management Fee from Wolverhampton City Council	39,425
General Fund Services	1,409
Trading Income	7,661
Private Sector Leasing Income	725
Income from Investment Properties	130
Miscellaneous Income	250
<b>Total income for the year</b>	<b>49,600</b>

### 3.0 Expenditure Forecast 2021 - 2022

- 3.1 Employee costs make up just over half of Wolverhampton Homes' expenditure. As well as direct pay costs, the budget includes occupational health, recruitment and training expenses. The budget incorporates the cost of salary increments.
- 3.2 In relation to non-pay budgets, where possible, managers are expected to apply a value for money approach to fund contract uplifts by identifying efficiencies in existing budgets. There is no general provision built in for inflation into the base budget. However, some budget increases have been required to reflect increased costs; for example, in relation to communal fuel.
- 3.3 The budget for fleet has increased over the previous two years to reflect the expected increased costs after delivery of new vehicles. This budget has been underspent due to a phased approach to delivery. The budget is considered sufficient for 2021 – 2022, however, it is noted that the cost of the replacement electric vehicle fleet is not yet known so an estimated provision has been included. Further updates will be made to Board in due course.
- 3.4 Budgets for shared services provided by the council have been reduced by £795,000 to reflect where these will be directly charged to the Housing Revenue Account where they relate to all managing agents and HRA tenants from 2021 - 2022.
- 3.5 A programme of budget review meetings held with each budget holder, provided the opportunity to scrutinise the budgets in line with in-year forecasting, existing commitments and the proposed budget setting for 2021 - 2022. This identified a number of efficiencies and some additional pressures. This exercise will be repeated at regular intervals to ensure that budgets are monitored effectively to allow individual budgets to be accurately forecast. As at Q3, although the exercise resulted in some budget reductions that will be carried forward as efficiencies, there were also a number of pressures that were more accurately reflected.
- 3.6 Further work will be undertaken to aim to balance the budget and has identified the opportunity to review the realignment of internal financial controls and functions.

### 4.0 Budget Summary and Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 4.1 Table 2 below sets out the forecast budget position 2021 - 2022

**Table 2 – Summary Budget Position**

<b>Budget for 2021 - 2022</b>	
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Pay	27,726
Non-pay	21,874
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>49,600</b>
<b>Total income</b>	<b>49,600</b>
Contribution from reserves (investment)	1,000

- 4.2 It is proposed that during the financial year 2021- 2022 a contribution £1.0m from reserves will be used for investment opportunities to support and underpin the redesign of services “Our Future”. It is intended that this will be used for one off costs that will see potential investment in the company’s post Covid-19 transformation journey #goodtogreat. This will include ICT, digital development, further modernisation of an agile modern workforce, efficiency savings by driving Value for Money, maximising opportunities for business income diversification and a review of the Company’s accommodation portfolio. It is intended that value for money implications and digital and automated processes will be considered through invest to save opportunities.
- 4.3 This approach will start to realise the Board’s commitment to reducing the use of reserves for day to day operational activities: something that cannot be sustained in the medium to longer term. These proposals will be subject to further detailed discussions with Board members and regular updates through Our Futures.
- 4.4 It is noted that the management fee for 2021-2022 has not been increased to reflect that there is no expected pay award increase.
- 4.5 The updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy is illustrated in Table 3 below. The 2020 - 2021 forecast position is as reported in the Q3 revenue report.

**Table 3 – Medium-Term Financial Strategy Summary**

	Outturn 2019- 2020 £000	Q3 2020- 2021 £000	Budget 2021- 2022 £000	Forecast 2022- 2023 £000	Forecast 2023 - 2024 £000	Forecast 2024- 2025 £000	Forecast 2025- 2026 £000
<b>Expenditure</b>	51,587	51,113	49,600	50,096	50,597	51,103	51,614
<b>Income</b>	49,567	49,817	49,600	50,096	50,597	51,103	51,614
<b>Reserves Contribution</b>	2,020	1,216	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Opening</b>	11,016	8,996	5,238	4,238	3,488	2,988	2,988
<b>Contribution to revenue</b>	2,020	1,216	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Investment – Our Future</b>	-	2,542	1000	750	500	0	0
<b>Closing</b>	8,996	5,238	4,238	3,488	2,988	2,988	2,988

- 4.6 Table 3 above demonstrates that income and expenditure will be brought in line, so that the reserves contribution will be zero by 2025 - 2026, leaving sufficient reserves funding for contingency. It is intended that with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April that every effort will be made to consider new initiatives and ways of working that offer innovative and value for money approach in how we deliver our services. This will underpin the aim to balance the budget and to use reserves only for service improvement and investment purposes.
- 4.7 The current MTFs means that Wolverhampton Homes will aim to hold reserves from 2023 - 2024 at around £3million – which equates to around 6% of the actual income.

## **5.0 Financial and value for money implications**

- 5.1 As this is a financial report, these can be considered to be contained within the body of the report.
- 5.2 Wolverhampton Homes is committed to driving efficiencies by implementing new ways of working with a focus on delivering fit for purpose core services to meet customer needs.
- 5.3 In line with the Social Housing White Paper, Wolverhampton Homes will be required to provide a clear breakdown of how their income is being spent.

## **6.0 Legal implications**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications identified in this report.

## **7.0 Human resources implications**

- 7.1 As part of the redesign of services and new ways of working, Wolverhampton Homes will focus on creating fit for purpose structures and services in line with its budget. This could have an impact on the establishment head count.

## **8.0 Health and safety implications**

- 8.1 There are no proposals within this report with health and safety implications.

## **9.0 Equalities implications**

- 9.1 Has an equality impact assessment been carried out? **Not applicable.**

Explanation: This is financial budget setting which is required annually.

## **10.0 Impact on the environment and community**

- 10.1 In line with the Social Housing White Paper, Wolverhampton Homes will continue to work with the City of Wolverhampton Council to provide adequate access to high quality green space for the local community.
- 10.2 Wolverhampton Homes will embed corporate social responsibility as part of its procurement considerations.

## **11.0 Long term consequences for the company**

- 11.1 Tight control and regular monitoring of budgets and getting the best use of our cash reserves is essential to ensure the company is sustainable and has sufficient resources for the long term.

## **12.0 Impact on business relationships with suppliers, customers and others**

- 12.1 Careful financial planning is required to ensure the company can continue to provide more efficient service delivery to its customers, and to support local suppliers.

12.2 To ensure that strategic procurement and financial decisions reflect and support Wolverhampton's 'Relighting Our City' principles.

### **13.0 Impact of Covid-19**

13.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has, and will continue to have, an impact upon the services WH offers and ultimately on the company finances in both the short and foreseeable medium term.

### **14.0 Impact on Wolverhampton Homes' Management System**

14.1 Will any new policy or policy updates have an impact on the management system? **No**

# Board Report

	<b>Agenda Item 7</b>
	<b>12 March 2021</b> <b>Revenue Monitoring Quarter 3 Outturn to 31 December 2020</b>
	<b>Open Report</b>
<b>Status:</b>	For Information
<b>Author and job title:</b>	Jo McCoy – Head of Financial Management, City of Wolverhampton Council
<b>Contact No:</b>	01902 554415
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>Board members are asked to note the Revenue forecast outturn position for the financial year 2020 - 2021 as at 31 December 2020.</b>
<b>Key risks and contentious issues:</b>	<p>The current forecast outturn position for 2020 - 2021 is predicting an underspend against the budget of £1.4 million.</p> <p>This position would result in a contribution from reserves of £1.2 million against a budgeted contribution of £2.6 million.</p> <p>This forecast is made towards the end of the financial year, so is made with a reasonable amount of certainty. However, with the potential for challenging weather and ongoing impact of Covid-19 on Wolverhampton Homes, its customers and staff could still have an impact up to 31 March.</p>

## Management Summary

### 1.0 Purpose

1.1 This report is to inform the Board of the revenue forecast quarter three outturn position for the 2020 - 2021 financial year as at 31 December 2020.

### 2.0 Revenue Forecast as at 31 December 2020.

2.1 Wolverhampton Homes is forecasting an overall underspend against budgets of £1.4 million at the end of March 2021. This based on the actual expenditure at 31 December 2020 and the forecast spend for the remainder of the financial year.

2.2 Income forecasts are broadly in line with budgets, the main underspending areas are employee costs, facilities and transport costs with overspends against repairs and maintenance and supplies and services budgets. The forecast would result in a contribution from reserves of £1.2 million against a previously predicted budgeted contribution of £2.6 million. A breakdown of the figures is shown in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1 – Income and Expenditure Budget Position at 31 December 2020**

	Actual 31 Dec 2020			Forecast to 31 March 2021		
	Budget £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	Budget £000	Forecast £000	Variance £000
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Employees	21,228	20,366	(862)	28,304	27,557	(747)
Premises related – housing stock	10,741	9,757	(984)	14,807	15,004	197
Private Sector Leasing Payments to landlords	398	440	42	530	598	68
Facilities Costs	564	315	(249)	938	566	(372)
Transport Related	1,326	758	(568)	1,768	1,260	(508)
Supplies & Services	2,565	2,534	(31)	3,302	3,585	283
Support Services	100	(53)	(153)	2,571	2,543	(28)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>36,922</b>	<b>34,117</b>	<b>(2,805)</b>	<b>52,220</b>	<b>51,113</b>	<b>(1,107)</b>
<b>Income</b>						
Management Fee	(30,035)	(30,035)	-	(40,047)	(40,047)	-
Trading Income	(6,619)	(2,469)	3,650	(8,158)	(8,299)	(141)
Private Sector Leasing Rental Income	(450)	(405)	45	(600)	(748)	(148)
Other Income	(611)	(430)	181	(815)	(803)	12
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(37,215)</b>	<b>(33,339)</b>	<b>3,876</b>	<b>(49,620)</b>	<b>(49,897)</b>	<b>(277)</b>
<b>Balancing Contribution from Reserves</b>	<b>(293)</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>2,600</b>	<b>1,216</b>	<b>(1,384)</b>

**Table 2 – Directorate Budget Position at 31 December 2020**

Directorate	Actual 31 Dec 2020			Forecast to 31 March 2021		
	Budget	Actual	Variance	Budget	Forecast	Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Corporate Services</b>	4,028	3,331	(697)	7,688	7,046	(642)
<b>Asset Management</b>	4,359	4,791	432	6,484	5,939	(545)
<b>Building Services</b>	11,865	11,821	(44)	15,821	15,656	(165)
<b>Housing Management</b>	7,712	7,380	(332)	10,283	9,930	(353)
<b>Housing Options</b>	1,778	3,490	1,712	2,371	2,692	321
<b>Management Fee</b>	(30,035)	(30,035)	-	(40,047)	(40,047)	-
<b>Balancing Contribution from Reserves</b>	<b>(293)</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>2,600</b>	<b>1,216</b>	<b>(1,384)</b>

- 2.3 The forecast outturn position has been produced following a review of non-pay budgets by budget managers alongside the Assistant Director of Corporate Services which has also looked to identify where budgets can be reduced as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 2.4 Employee budgets are forecast to underspend by £747,000. The underspend includes a £300,000 saving against the lump sum budgetary provision made for the People Deal and the pay award after making provision for early retirement and pension strain costs expected to be incurred before 31<sup>st</sup> March.
- 2.5 The balance of the pay underspend, around £450,000 is against vacant posts, net of agency costs. The vacancies have been across all areas of the business and have not been filled as the company looked ahead to redesign services. In particular there were vacant posts in corporate services which did not have any impact on front line services or put additional pressure on staff delivering these services.
- 2.6 Another significant variance is a £196,000 forecast overspend against the Repairs and Maintenance non pay budgets. The previous forecast reported an underspend in this area due to non-essential repairs being delayed due to COVID. However, in order to re-let void properties as soon as possible additional spend on contractors has been incurred.

- 2.7 The Facilities budget is forecast to underspend by £372,000. This consists of a saving from the budget to upgrade office accommodation of £320,000 and savings against rent, service charge and business rates budgets. The upgrade budget was a one-off sum and does not form part of the based budget.
- 2.8 Transport related costs are forecast to underspend by £508,000. £380,000 is due to budget being set aside for expected increased costs for new vehicles in the process of being re-procured by the council. As not all vehicles are yet in service the full additional costs will not be incurred. There is a £70,000 underspend against budgets for mileage allowances which is attributable to agile working reducing the costs.
- 2.9 There is an overspend forecast against budgets for supplies and services of £283,000. This is made up of expenditure on PPE for Covid-19 protection (£88,000), professional fees and consultancy (£200,000) which includes procurement support, and medical fees and financial assistance payments (£104,000), which will mostly be offset by grant income. There are also underspending areas such as subscriptions and general equipment which are offset by a proportion of the overspend.
- 2.10 Income forecasts are broadly in line with budgets. The number of private sector leasing properties continues to increase and higher than budgeted income of £148,000 is forecast. This is partly offset by payments to landlords; however it now includes income from the properties purchased from WV Living, which is retained.
- 2.11 Additional trading income of £141,000 is forecast, the company has been paid a fee for managing Springfield Horseshoe TMO and for providing a Housing First service to the council. It is currently expected that the trading income budgets for property services will be largely achieved.

### **3.0 Summary of Financial Position**

- 3.1 The overall forecast is for a revenue underspend of £1.4 million against the budget for 2020-2021. This will reduce the contribution required from reserves from £2.6 million to £1.2 million and demonstrates the company's track record of controlling expenditure. This is a reduction of £0.2 million on the position reported previously. Overall, due to the challenges faced in 2020 and those that continue to be faced in 2021 this is an excellent achievement.
- 3.2 In March 2020, the Board approved the purchase of 19 properties from WV Living for market rent. 18 of the properties were purchased using reserves for £2.362 million plus £70,000 stamp duty land tax, with the 19<sup>th</sup> property purchase for £180,000 due to be completed before the end of March 2021. It was initially planned to finance the purchase using a combination of reserves and borrowing from the council, but with the company's level of cash reserves it was prudent not to incur interest costs from loan financing. The properties provide the company with balance sheet assets and the rental income will generate an annual rental surplus.
- 3.3 At 01 April 2020, the reserves balances total was £9.0 million. At 31 March 2021 this is expected to be around £5.2 million after the property purchase and contribution to

revenue. This leaves funding available as planned for one off investment as the company looks to decrease costs overall in line with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

3.4 The updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy includes the forecast expenditure against reserves in 2020-2021.

#### **4.0 Financial and value for money implications**

4.1 These are covered in detail with the report. Wolverhampton Homes has a long-term record of effective budgetary control and retains significant reserve balances.

#### **5.0 Legal implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications of the contents of this report.

#### **6.0 Human Resource implications**

6.1 There are no proposals within this report with Human Resource implications.

#### **7.0 Health and safety implications**

7.1 There are no proposals within this report with health and safety implications.

#### **8.0 Equalities implications**

8.1 Has an equality impact assessment been carried out: **No.**

8.2 Explanation: There are no proposals within this report.

#### **9.0 Impact on the environment and community**

9.1 The report does not contain any proposals that affect the environment or the community.

#### **10.0 Long term consequences for the company**

10.1 Tight control of budgets and getting the best use of cash reserves is essential to ensure the company has sufficient resources in the long term.

#### **11.0 Impact on business relationships with suppliers, customers and others**

11.1 Careful financial planning is required to ensure we can continue to provide the same level of service for customers and support local suppliers.

#### **12.0 Impact of Covid-19**

12.1 To support the impact of Covid-19, Wolverhampton Homes staff and contractors have access to an in-house facility where they can receive a Covid-19 lateral flow test. The testing site has been set up at the WH Stowlawn Hub and has seen a steady influx of both staff and contractors since it opened on 26 January 2021.

12.2 The centre is manned by WH employees.

12.3 There are potential costs of around £5k in relation to the provision of the centre in relation to the collection of waste from Stowlawn and the cost of PPE.

### **13.0 Impact on the Wolverhampton Homes' Management System**

13.1 Will any new policy or policy updates have an impact on the management system: **No**

# Board Report

	<b>Agenda Item 8</b>
	<b>12 March 2021</b> <b>Rents and Service Charges</b> <b>(Annual Update)</b>
	<b>Open Report</b>
<b>Status:</b>	For Information
<b>Author and job title:</b>	Darren Baggs, Assistant Director – Housing
<b>Contact No:</b>	01902 552956
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>Board members are asked to note the content of the report.</b>
<b>Key risks and contentious issues:</b>	<p>Not applying a rent increase would reduce the resources available to the City of Wolverhampton Council to fund services and future capital programmes.</p> <p>Any increase in costs may impact on our customers. Wolverhampton Homes is fully committed to providing support to customers who are facing financial difficulty.</p>

## **Management Summary**

### **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 This report sets out the rent and service charges to be applied by the City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) for the year 2021 - 2022, which will be effective from 05 April 2021.

### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 CWC are required to undertake an annual review of its rents and service charges, which are associated with social housing tenants, leaseholders, and other customers in the city.
- 2.2 In previous years, consultation for rents and service charges has been undertaken at Wolverhampton Homes (WH) 'Get Togethers', via Wolverhampton Federation of Tenants' Association, and through CWC's four other managing agents – Bushbury Hill Estate Management Board (EMB), Dovecotes Tenant Management Organisation (TMO), Springfield Horseshoe Tenant Management Co-operative (TMC) and New Park Village Management Co-operative (TMC).
- 2.3 Covid-19 presented a number of challenges for this year's consultation and this was subsequently undertaken through an online survey.
- 2.4 The Regulator of Social Housing, in line with the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 and government policy set out in the Rent Standard 2020, that social and affordable rents would be based upon the consumer price index (CPI) plus 1%. The CPI figure in September 2020 was 0.5%.
- 2.5 The CWC Cabinet held on 20 January 2021, approved an increase in social and affordable rents of 1.5% (this increase is also applicable to garage rents).
- 2.6 There were no increases to service charges, other than the previously agreed incremental charges associated with concierge / CCTV services (Boscobel High rise tenants).

### **3.0 Rent and Service Charges Consultation 2021 - 2022**

- 3.1 CWC undertook an online survey, seeking views of tenants and other service users in relation to rent and service charges. The consultation also invited views towards the 2021 - 2022 priorities for CWC as follows:
- Continue to improve repairs and maintenance services
  - Customer experience – making communication easier and listening to their views
  - Community focused – being visible out in the neighbourhoods, taking services to customers through the Estate Custodian approach and enhanced digital channels
  - Smart working – development of digital platforms and enhanced websites
  - Helping communities to stay safe and secure
  - Keep neighbourhoods clean and tidy

- Planned maintenance, investment and improvement to homes – responsive and planned repairs, improvements and adaptations, Asbestos and fire reviews, materials used and specifications
- Supporting the City Housing Strategy to provide more homes
- Working to make the city a more environmentally friendly city

3.2 70% of the responses received agreed with the priorities set out within the consultation. Those that did not agree with the priorities referred to repairs, fencing, parking and investment in existing stock, as additional themes for consideration. Communication, Customer Service and the Allocations Policy were also mentioned.

3.3 61% of responses agreed that the amount of rent paid offered value for money, with additional commentary from some respondents that repairs, heating and property conditions did not offer value for money.

#### **4.0 Rent and service charges 2021 - 2022**

4.1 As set out at point 2.5, it is the City of Wolverhampton Council's intention to increase social and affordable rents by 1.5% from 05 April 2021.

4.2 Appendix 1 sets out the City of Wolverhampton Council's intention for intended non-dwelling rents and service charges that will be effective from 05 April 2021.

4.3 Appendix 2 sets out the template letter CWC has sent to social housing tenants ahead of the 05 April 2021 implementation.

#### **5.0 Legal implications**

5.1 CWC are required to undertake an annual review of its rents and service charges.

#### **6.0 Human resources implications**

6.1 There are no human resources implications identified within the content of this report

#### **7.0 Health and safety implications**

7.1 There are no health and safety implications identified within the content of this report.

#### **8.0 Financial Implications**

8.1 The proposed rent increase of 1.5% is chargeable in line with Government policy set out in the Rent Standard 2020. Not applying an increase would reduce the resources available to fund services and future capital programmes. The approved service charges are consistent with existing policy to recover the cost of services.

8.2 An alternative option could have been to reduce the charges, in which case the cost would not be recovered, and a subsidy required from general rents.

- 8.3 The Council could have decided not to plan to increase capital expenditure in response to the abolishment of the HRA borrowing cap and instead use the HRA net surplus to pay off debt instead of financing borrowing. However, it would not then be using available resources to improve and increase its housing stock, as well as the requirement to respond to national building safety requirements.
- 8.4 Cabinet (20 January 2021) approved the 1.5% increases, which were subsequently endorsed by Full Council, 03 February 2021 using its 'Special Urgency Notice'.

## **9.0 Equalities implications**

- 9.1 Notwithstanding the legal requirement to increase rents by no more than Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) plus 1%, there is a difficult balance to be struck by CWC in deciding the levels at which rents, and service charges are set and the income required to maintain and to improve services and properties. This is based upon a thirty-year forecast, which sets out indicative levels of future rental income and forecast changes to expenditure levels. This is applicable to all tenants regardless of their protected characteristics.
- 9.2 The Council has always operated on a very open and consultative approach to service and rent reviews.
- 9.3 Whilst usually face-to-face consultation opportunities would be provided (via Get Togethers hosted by WH, Tenant Management Organisation facilitated opportunities and Wolverhampton Federation of Tenants' Association), this year due to the Covid-19 restrictions these events have not been possible.
- 9.4 The council conducted consultations online via the Council's webpage (04 November to 03 December 2020), promoted the opportunity using social media and sent survey invitations by email to approximately 10,000 (45.7%) council tenants.
- 9.5 As part of the council's commitment to involving all tenants and other service users in the management of housing services, the City of Wolverhampton Council invited views from tenants and leaseholders in respect of rent and service charges and the Council's priorities for 2021 - 2022.

## **10.0 Impact on the environment and community**

- 10.1 The increase of HRA rents will support the forecast expenditure of £2.2 billion of capital works over the next 30 years, whilst providing resources required to manage and maintain council housing stock.
- 10.2 WH is fully committed to the Council's green agenda and will use every opportunity to support strategies targeted to achieve its carbon reduction agenda.

## **11.0 Long term consequences for the company**

- 11.1 This report identifies the council's commitment to the management and maintenance of its housing stock in the City, whilst highlighting the priorities for 2021 - 2022. As a key

partner to its shareholder the City of Wolverhampton Council, WH is fully committed to supporting the delivery of the council's priorities.

## **12.0 Impact on business relationships with suppliers, customers and others**

12.1 Any increase in costs to our customers could have some impact in a number of different situations or scenarios. WH is committed to supporting customers and in particular where they are facing financial difficulties via contact with our Income team, Money Smart, Housing Support and Tenancy teams.

## **13.0 Impact of Covid-19**

13.1 As set out at point 9.3, alternative methods of consultation were adopted, from which a significantly greater number of customers had the opportunity to take part in the consultations.

13.2 Approximately 10,000 email invitations were sent out, together with additional social media adverts to alert customers to the consultation, which was open from 04 November to 03 December 2020.

## **14.0 Impact on Wolverhampton Homes' Management System**

14.1 Work has commenced to amend rent accounts on WH's Northgate system ahead of 05 April implementation.

## **15.0 List of appendices**

15.1 Appendix 1: Non-dwelling rents and service charges 2021 - 2022

15.2 Appendix 2: Template letter to tenants – Notice of rent increase and review of service charges from 5 April 2021

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## Appendix 1: Non-dwelling rents and service charges 2021 - 2022

### Non-dwelling rents

#### Garage rents

1. The table below sets out recommended garage rents to take effect from 01 April 2021 (before VAT).
2. Under VAT rules, garages that are let along with a dwelling do not attract VAT, whereas those that are let separately do. Furthermore, exemption from VAT only extends as far as two garages per tenant / leaseholder. Therefore, there are three different levels of garage rents.

	Rent per week 2020 – 2021 (excl. VAT)	% increase 2021 – 2022	Rent per week 2021 – 2022 (excl. VAT)	Rent per week 2021 – 2022 (incl. VAT)
Dwelling tenants and leaseholders (No VAT)	£4.53	1.5	£4.60	
Dwelling tenants and leaseholders – three or more garages (VAT)	£4.53	1.5	£4.60	£5.52
Privately let garages	£6.52	1.5	£6.59	£7.91

## Service charges

Service Charge	Services funded	Rationale for charge	Charge paid per week 2020 - 2021	Proposed change	Charge paid per week 2021 - 2022
Communal Facilities	Communal facilities in former sheltered schemes	Cost of service is fully covered by current	£2.88	No change	£2.88
Concierge with CCTV (Phased)	Essential caretaking duties and remote CCTV and door entry	Cost of service will be fully recovered at £9.43	£7.36	£2.07 (agreed stepped increase)	£9.43
Concierge with CCTV (full cost recovery)	Essential caretaking duties and remote CCTV and door entry	Cost of service fully recovered with stepped increase	£9.43	No change	£9.43
Concierge with CCTV	Essential caretaking duties and remote CCTV and door entry	Cost of service is fully recovered by current charge	£9.43	No change	£9.43
Communal cleaning	Cleaning services in communal areas in certain properties	Cost of service is fully covered by current charge	£3.12	No change	£3.12
Digital TV	Installation and maintenance of the wiring required to convey digital TV signals to certain high-rise blocks	Cost of service is fully covered by current charge	£0.62	No change	£0.62
Fencing	Replacement of boundary fencing delivered by Wolverhampton Homes. All funds raised by this charge are ring-fenced to replacement fencing	Sufficient income raised to fund fencing programme	£1.92	No change	£1.92

## Service Charges and other charges – Heating

Service Charge	Services funded	Rationale for charge	Charge paid per week 2020 – 2021	Proposed change	Charge paid per week 2021 - 2022
District Heating maintenance	Maintenance of boilers and district heating at Heath Town	Cost of service fully covered by current charge	£4.33	No Change	£4.33
District Heating maintenance owner occupiers*	As Above	As above – annual charge	£255 p.a	No Change	£255
District Heating maintenance	Maintenance of boilers and district heating at Hickman Estate	Cost of service fully covered by current charge	£4.33	No Change	£4.33
District Heating Usage (Heath Town)	Provision of heating and hot water at Heath Town Estate	Cost of full recovery of fuel costs based upon current metered usage	5.8p per kw/h	Increase of 0.5p	6.3p per kw/h
District Heating Usage (Lincoln and Tremont)	Provision of heating and hot water at Lincoln House, Tremont House and Wednesfield Road, Heath Town	Cost of full recovery of fuel costs based upon current metered usage	4.9p per kw/h	Increase of 0.5p	5.4p per kw/h
District Heating Usage (Hickman Estate)	Provision of heating and hot water at Wodensfield and William Bentley Courts	Cost of full recovery of fuel costs based upon current metered usage	6.7p per kw/h	No	6.7p per kw/h
Central Heating – Gas	Servicing, maintenance and replacement of gas central heating systems	Current charge increasing until recovers 100% of costs. Raise by 50p per week each year until 2019 - 2020	£3.85	No change	£3.85
Central Heating - Electric	Servicing, maintenance and replacement of electric heating	Charge reducing to reflect actual costs of service	£0.96	No change	£0.96

## Supported Housing Charges

Service Charge	Services funded	Rationale for charge	Charge paid per week 2020 – 2021	Proposed charge	Charge paid per week 2021 - 2022
Digital TV	Service provision at Trent Gardens	Cost recovery	£1.27	No Change	£1.27
Communal cleaning	Communal cleaning at Tap Works	Cost recovery	£3.43	No Change	£3.43
Communal cleaning	Internal communal cleaning at Trent Gardens	Cost recovery	£9.35	No Change	£9.35
Communal Heat, Light and Water	Tapworks / Trent Gardens	Cost recovery	£1.70	No Change	£1.70
Fencing	Tap Works boundary fencing	Provision for replacement	£0.30	No Change	£0.30
Capital Replacement – Tap Works	Capital equipment in communal areas	Provision for replacement	£8.00	No Change	£8.00
Capital Replacement – Trent Gardens	Capital equipment in communal areas	Provision for replacement	£16.00	No Change	£16.00
Window Cleaning	Tap Works	Charge for service	£0.20	No Change	£0.20
Window Cleaning	Trent Gardens	Charge for service	£0.71	No Change	£0.71

## Hostels and temporary accommodation rents and charges

1. No changes are proposed for 2021 - 2022

Hostel and Temporary Accommodations charges	2020 - 2021 White House £pw	2021 - 2022 White House £pw	2020 – 2021 Other* £pw	2021 – 2022 Other* £pw
Self-Contained standard rent and service charges	-	-	73.53 - 112.91	74.52 - 114.29
Self-contained management fee	-	-	34.33	34.33
Self-contained Furniture replacement 1	-	-	25.69	25.69
Self-contained Furniture replacement 1	-	-	33.07	33.07
Water / light / heat	18.97	18.97	13.45	13.45
Whitehouse Room Rate - Reduced	206.97	206.97	-	-
Whitehouse Room Rate 1	265.06	265.06	-	-
Total minimum charge	225.94	225.94	133.55	134.54
Total maximum charge	284.03	284.03	175.82	176.94

\*Properties at Ellerton Walk, Lathe Court and Heath Town. Rent and service charges consistent with neighbouring properties will vary dependent on location, furniture replacement charge applied dependent on property size.

### Charges for Land Enquiries

The following fees are chargeable for land enquiries:

- £150 land enquiry processing fee
- £350 land valuation fee

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February 2021

Dear

Payment Reference

Permitted number for your property is

**Notice of rent increase and review of service charges from 5 April 2021**

The City of Wolverhampton Council has completed a review of rent and service charges following consultation with tenants and leaseholders through an online survey and Wolverhampton Federation of Tenants' Association. We would like to thank tenants for taking the time to provide us with their thoughts and opinions. A summary of the consultation findings are provided on the Council's website: [wolverhampton.gov.uk/housing-rent-consultation](http://wolverhampton.gov.uk/housing-rent-consultation).

Feedback from Council's managing agents: Wolverhampton Homes, Dovecotes TMO, New Park Village TMC, Springfield Horseshoe TMC and Bushbury Hill EMB also contributed to the review.

In line with Government guidelines, the Councils Cabinet' or CWC, at its meeting on 20 January 2021 have decided to increase rents by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at 0.5% plus 1%, meaning rents will increase by 1.5%.

The only increase in service charges relate to the concierge charge for residents at Boscobel high rise moving to £9.43 per week, in line with other high rise in the City and for district heating energy consumption for residents at Heath Town, where the cost per K/WH increased by £0.05p.

This letter gives you notice under Sections 102 and 103 of the Housing Act 1985, that from Monday 5 April 2021, your total weekly rent will be £      per week.

If you do not accept the above changes to your rent or service charges, you have the right to give up your tenancy, in which case you must give four weeks' written notice before Monday 5 April 2021.

If you accept the changes and have agreed a payment plan with your managing agent, please continue with this. If you haven't, please contact your managing agent to agree a payment plan.

**How your new rent is made up**

Basic Rent	
Conditional Garage	
District Heating Maintenance	
District Heating Consumption	
Heating Improvement	
Concierge	
Communal Facilities	
Digital TV	
Communal Area Cleaning	
Fencing	

**Total Weekly amount payable from 5 April 2021 £**

**Total Monthly amount payable £**

**Claim benefits to help pay your rent?**

- If you receive Housing Benefit, the team will write to you.
- If you receive Universal Credit, you will need to provide the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) with the information below so that they can update your claim. You can do this yourself online by updating your Universal Credit claim journal, as soon as possible after 5 April 2021.

Basic Rent	
Eligible service charges	
Ineligible service charges	
Total Weekly amount due, charged over 52 weeks	

**Get help and support with your finances**

If you're having difficulty paying your rent, then please speak to your managing agent, as soon as you are able. There are other people who can help, like Citizens' Advice, the Money Advice Service and the National Debt line. You can find lots more information about the support available on Wolverhampton Homes' website at [www.wolverhamptonhomes.org.uk/money-advice](http://www.wolverhamptonhomes.org.uk/money-advice).

If you have any questions or concerns about this letter, please contact your managing agent.

Yours sincerely

Ross Cook  
 Director of City Environment  
 City of Wolverhampton Council