



Wolverhampton Homes

Open Board Meeting

24 May 2019

Time 9.30 am **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Wolverhampton Homes
Venue WV Active Aldersley, Aldersley Road, Wolverhampton, WV6 9NW

Membership

Angela Davies
Kevin Fearon
Steve Finegan
Peter Knight
Councillor Asha Mattu
Joy McLaren
Linda Middleton
Councillor Rita Potter
Councillor Zee Russell
Councillor Paul Singh
Mark Ward

Information

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

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Agenda

<i>Item No.</i>	<i>Title</i>
1	Apologies
2	Declarations of interest
3	Minutes of previous meeting - 1 March 2019 (Pages 3 - 8)
4	Matters arising

FOR DECISION

5	Risk Management Plan - Jan Lycett (Pages 9 - 12)
6	Community Development Report - Oliver Herrmann (Pages 13 - 32)
7	Review of new policies: Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy & Complaints Policy - Fiona Capel (Pages 33 - 56)

FOR INFORMATION

8	Infrastructure Programme and the outcome of the evaluation of fire safety suppression systems - Simon Bamfield (Pages 57 - 64)
9	Annual People Development Update - Oliver Herrmann (Pages 65 - 82)
10	Revenue Monitoring for the Outturn 2018 - 2019 - Jan Lycett (Pages 83 - 88)

M INUTES



Meeting: OPEN BOARD MEETING
Date: 1 MARCH 2019
Venue: WOLVERHAMPTON HOMES, HICKMAN AVENUE
Time: 9:30 AM

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: -

Ann Bennett
Angela Davies
Steve Finegan
Peter Knight
Joy McLaren
Linda Middleton
Councillor Rita Potter
Councillor Zareena Russell
Councillor Paul Singh
Councillor Asha Mattu

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: -

Shaun Aldis - Chief Executive
Jan Lycett - Director of Business Support
Angela Barnes - Assistant Director - Housing Options
Darren Baggs - Assistant Director - Housing
Kevin Manning - Assistant Director - Property Services
Sophie Munn - Housing Manager (Part Meeting – Item 5)
Eammon McGirr - Head of Business Improvement (Part Meeting – Item 5)
Nicky Devey - Head of Business Services
Catherine Stewardson - Business Assurance Manager
Jessica Whitehouse - Business Assurance Officer
Maya Dhanda - Governance Officer

Tenant - Sandra Fern

1.0	Apologies	
	Apologies were received from Mark Ward and Kevin Fearon.	

<p>2.0</p>	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Tenant related issues – Angela Davies and Joy McLaren.</p> <p>Noted with interest, allowed to remain and join in the debate.</p>	
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Minutes of previous meeting – 7 December 2018</p> <p>The Minutes of the previous meeting – 7 December 2018 were agreed as a true record.</p>	
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>Board noted item 7 from the previous minutes – 7 December 2018 relating to Value for Money (VFM) it was confirmed that this is included within the Agenda item - Business Plan 2019 / 2023.</p> <p>Councillor Brackenridge’s presentation; it was highlighted that the actions recommended for WH to act on have been dealt with by Kevin Manning. These have been presented back to CWC Scrutiny Panel who were more than happy with the work that WH have completed and resolved.</p> <p>Item 5 – References Board Recruitment, to note there is a separate report included on the Agenda.</p> <p>To note: Revised date of 5 July 2019 suggested for the summer Board meeting and realigned to the Board Strategy Away Day on 4 July 2019.</p> <p>Action: Maya to circulate suggested date to Board for agreement and to amend diary invites accordingly.</p> <p>Item 9 – Health, Safety and Wellbeing – It was confirmed that all incidents are recorded in the meeting minutes and are followed up accordingly.</p> <p>Item 9 – Fire Risk Assessment – Kevin Manning has made the required revisions and amendments to all categories.</p> <p>Item 9 – Mental Health – Chief Executive advised that supporting staff with Mental health concerns is an ongoing issue and the importance of continuing to move forward proactively.</p> <p>Item 10 – Highrise Checks - Darren Baggs has produced a summary of the report, which has been sent to the NFA.</p>	<p>MD</p>

<p>5.0</p>	<p>Review of Payment Kiosk Provision at One Stop Shops</p> <p>Eammon McGirr and Sophie Munn presented this item.</p> <p>The report highlighted that the four existing payment kiosks in WH One Stop Shops needed replacement as they neared end of life and unable to meet payment card data protection security standard regulations ahead of 2019. The report highlighted during 2019 a 50/50 split between cash and card payments, resulting in approximately £7m of rent and £2.5m of council tax payments via the kiosks being received. The highest concentration of transactions were those made at Market Street.</p> <p>The Board acknowledged that the report was thorough and provided all the information required to make an informed decision. The first principle being to make it as easy as possible for people to pay.</p> <p>Board discussed the potential impact should kiosks be removed. It was appreciated that the on-line portal and the introduction of payment apps were being progressed and it was understood and accepted that the move to digital and/or automated payments was becoming a national trend across the sector. It was also acknowledged that on – line payments could also result in reduced transaction costs for the business.</p> <p>However, the overall value of payments through kiosks was noted, as was the risk income collection if access to kiosks was significantly reduced.</p> <p>Board also reflected that for some, there was a social aspect to customers using the One Stop Shops and this could add to the health and wellbeing of the community.</p> <p>The Chief Executive expanded on the status of the digital offer and the willingness for WH to maximise this platform. However, it was important to consider the risk to income removal of the current kiosks could create without robust digital alternatives being in place.</p> <p>It was appreciated that wider consultation with customers, the tenant’s federation and other stakeholders would need to be undertaken to support any permanent removal of this facility in the short to medium term. Board welcomed the review of people paying via kiosks as the digital offer develops, but as a longer-term strategy.</p> <p>Board requested that WH reflect on any decisions that are made regarding services to elderly people, that may impact on their wider social aspect & wellbeing. It was agreed that a full Equalities Impact Assessment would be required prior to any fundamental change is made to this service.</p>	
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	<p>Resolved: Board members agreed the recommendation of the report.</p> <p>Sophie Munn left the meeting.</p>	
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Recruitment Plan – Independent Board Members</p> <p>Jan Lycett presented this item.</p> <p>Board were reminded that in line with the Articles of Association, WH will be losing three independent Board members over the next few months, a recruitment process will be undertaken to seek replacement members.</p> <p>Discussion around focussing on the core competences required to encourage recruitment of a wide range of attributes, such as Finance, Transformation, and skills in Resource Planning, Customer Care and demonstrating a strong passion for the City. It was felt that WH should be clear on what we are seeking from the role and not to over stipulate on the desirables of Board members, as this could result in discouragement of proficient candidates.</p> <p>Board member suggested other ways of promoting the vacancies via Council tax letters or other communication that are posted to residents of Wolverhampton.</p> <p>Board members raised the positives of WH using social media to advertise opportunities for those interested becoming an Independent Board member.</p> <p>Action: Jan Lycett to discuss including Board recruitment opportunities within rent letters to reach further potential candidates and to commence the recruitment process.</p> <p>Resolved: Board members agreed the recruitment process for the Independent Board member roles as outlined in the report.</p>	<p>JL</p>
<p>7.0</p>	<p>Business Plan 2019 - 2023</p> <p>Jan Lycett presented this item.</p> <p>Board were made aware that this is a draft version of the Business Plan and there is time to make any amendments, if required. This is a multiple stage process, WH are required to go through CWC to approve the Business Plan, therefore the final version is required to be submitted to the Council by the end of next week.</p> <p>Board members stated that the report overall was an interesting read and an excellent plan.</p>	

	<p>Board members noted the outline of the appendices of the draft Business Plan.</p> <p>Action: Consideration on an alternative to the word 'Commercial'.</p> <p>Board members highlighted that there were two issues, one of which was around the future challenges with finances, the report did not have enough background around the possible future finance issues. The other was around the Community Cohesion and Equality & Diversity, although there is some cover on this subject, it is not emphasised enough in the report.</p> <p>Action: Jan Lycett to address and include further information within the report.</p> <p>Board members were advised that if they have any concerns or suggestions regarding the draft Business plan to contact Jan Lycett by the early part of next week.</p> <p>Resolved: Board members agreed and approved the Business plan for 2019/23.</p>	<p>JL</p> <p>JL</p>
<p>8.0</p>	<p>Revenue Budget 2019/20</p> <p>Jan Lycett presented this item.</p> <p>An order has been placed for WH Fleet – Board queried Item 3.5 and the delays to this and the reasons for the cost of procuring the fleet increasing.</p> <p>It was confirmed that CWC are responsible for procuring the fleet, WH had looked elsewhere outside of CWC across the market. Delays have been unavoidable with CWC having to procure new vehicles for their Waste Services.</p> <p>Board noted that we are not tied into CWC procurement fleet, however it is recommended to keep within the Council procurement process.</p> <p>Board noted that the procurement of fleet is charged to the General Fund - CWC, this works by part of the total fleet being leased to WH and charged back to the Housing Revenue Account. It was suggested to wait for the fleet to arrive and reflect on alternative options in the future. It was agreed that the GPS trackers are an effective tool.</p> <p>White vans have been requested due to the design and delivery of blue vans would take longer.</p> <p>Board enquired about Table 2 from the report on whether the Grant Funded Posts costs of £200,000 should have a minus in front of the figure.</p>	

	<p>Action: Jan Lycett will review Table 2 and action if required and circulate an updated budget to Board.</p> <p>Resolved: Board members approved The Draft Revenue Budget for the financial year 2019 – 2020.</p> <p>Eammon and Sandra Fern left the meeting.</p>	<p>JL</p>
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Board Report

	Agenda Item 5
	24 May 2019 Risk Management Plan
	Open Report
Status:	For Decision
Author and job title:	Jan Lycett, Director of Business Support
Contact No:	01902 553512
Recommendations:	Board are asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the contents of this report. 2. Agree the revised Corporate Risk Register detailed at Appendix 1.
Key risks and contentious issues:	<p>Managing risk and deploying effective business assurance processes are critical to the effective management of Wolverhampton Homes and the services it delivers.</p> <p>It is critical that there is a clear golden thread throughout the organisation where operational risk registers support the mitigation of the strategic risks identified.</p> <p>Our approach to risk management is a critical element of our wider Business Assurance framework.</p>

Management Summary

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The Board agreed to a revised framework and policy for managing risk and business assurance processes in December 2017.
- 1.2 It is appropriate that the Corporate Risk Register was reviewed and revised following the development and approval of our 4-year Business Plan.
- 1.3 This report seeks to outline the changes made to that register as a result of that review work.

2.0 Overview of the Corporate risk register

- 2.1 The revised risk register can be found at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Board members will note that the overarching register has been structured around the core strategic aims detailed within our business plan, which are summarised as:
Transforming the delivery of our services to ensure we continue to:
 - Enhance our community and customer focus
 - Provide safe and secure homes
 - Support people to sustain their tenancies and homes
- 2.3 It should be noted that the number of risks from the preceding register have been significantly streamlined to ensure that the Board can focus on the key strategic challenges that we are now responding to.
- 2.4 It also demonstrates that some of the previous risks have been mitigated and are now considered to be part of the operational norm.
- 2.5 It is intended that the operational risk logs will be reviewed and refined to support the successful management of these overarching risks.
- 2.6 It is intended to enhance the wider business assurance framework that supports our approach. This corporate register will be subject to regular review and scrutiny at our Audit and Service Delivery Committee; be a standing item at our Senior Management Team meetings and the owner of each risk will ensure that the wider organisation is contributing to the delivery of the required mitigation activity. Each risk has been aligned to the appropriate portfolio for each Director / Assistant Director.
- 2.7 It is intended that the register will be regularly updated and reported through our governance structures and approval will be sought to include any emerging and new risks as required. The scoring matrix will be kept updated and reported together with an assessment as to the direction of travel on progress to successfully mitigate the risk. It is intended that the current residual risk scores will be finalised following Board approving this new register. It is intended that we will continue to use our 'heat map' approach to support the management and monitoring of the register.

3.0 Financial and value for money implications

3.1 Our approach to the identification and management of risk continues to be an important aspect of ensuring the ongoing success of the organisation. An integral part of our risk evaluation process is to consider the impact of each risk from a financial perspective.

4.0 Legal implications

4.1 There are no immediate legal implications within this report.

5.0 Human resources implications

5.1 There are no immediate human resource implications within this report.

6.0 Health and safety implications

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

7.0 Equalities implications

7.1 There are no immediate equalities implications within this report.

8.0 Impact on the environment and community

8.1 There are no immediate implications within this report.

9.0 Long term consequences for the company

9.1 It is considered essential to have an effective approach to risk management and business assurance as this will help safeguard the long-term viability of the company. It is intended that we will continue to refine our approach to ensure we effectively manage our future challenges.

9.2 As Board are aware it is anticipated that the regulatory environment that WH operates within, is likely to change and this was a key feature within the social housing green paper. It is expected that our ongoing improvements to our business assurance framework will support our compliance with any future regulation.

10.0 Impact on business relationships with suppliers, customers and others

10.1 It is considered essential to have an effective approach to risk management and business assurance to help safeguard these long-term relationships. The Council have clear expectations around these arrangements and they form part of their own ongoing assurance framework about our service and organisational effectiveness.

11.0 List of Appendices

11.1 Appendix 1: Draft Corporate Risk Register.

Appendix 1: Draft corporate risk register

Ref	Owner	Suggested risk title and description	Business Plan Theme	Impact	Likelihood	Score	Mitigation activity	Residual impact	Residual likelihood	Residual score	Direction of travel	Target Score	Comment on progress	Business Assurance mechanism
1	Director of Business Support	Financial Viability & balanced MTFS	Cross cutting	5	3	15	Transformation programme via Lean Modernisation of workforce Enterprise and Innovation					6		SMT Board & Resources Committee
2	Director of Business Support	Effective Governance and compliance framework that meets regulatory standards	Cross cutting	4	4	16	Robust Business Assurance Framework that supports regulatory compliance Customer Voice Consumer Standards					6		SMT Internal & external audit; ASD Risk Management Performance meetings
3	Assistant Director - Property Services	Effective delivery of Asset Management approach	Provide Safe and Secure Homes	5	3	15	Development and delivery of capital programme Fit for purpose Compliance and fire safety programme Optimising return on assets and supply chain					4		SMT AMG Housing Board Board
4	Assistant Director - Property Services	Effective day to day stock management arrangements in place	Provide Safe and Secure Homes	4	2	8	Effective & productive response repairs service Strong planned improvement programmes Mixed economy of delivery					4		SMT ASD Performance meetings
5	Assistant Director - Housing	Supporting community cohesion and ensuring we provide great places to live	Enhance community and customer focus	3	2	6	Estate custodians & community hubs Neighbourhood services including ASB Customer access points					3		SMT ASD
6	Assistant Director - Housing	Support residents to live independent, prosperous and fulfilling lives	Supporting people to sustain their tenancies and homes	3	2	6	Income Management Strategy and Anti-Poverty initiatives Creating mixed tenure opportunities & extend housing choice					3		SMT ASD
7	Assistant Director - Housing Options	Support residents to live independent, prosperous and fulfilling lives	Supporting people to sustain their tenancies and homes	4	2	8	Maintaining an effective safeguarding framework Prevent homelessness and provide excellent housing advice services					3		SMT ASD

Board Report

	Agenda Item 6
	24 May 2019 Community Development Report
	Open Report
Status:	For Decision
Author and job title:	Oliver Herrmann, People and Community Manager
Contact No:	07896 813413
Recommendations:	Board members are asked to approve the Community Development Strategy.
Key risks and contentious issues:	<p>Wolverhampton Homes (WH) failing to respond effectively to the Government's Green paper – A New Deal for Social Housing 2018 and subsequent white paper.</p> <p>Failing to gain quality feedback from residents; not allowing WH to shape their services effectively.</p> <p>WH not taking advantage of closer working relationships in communities and developing thriving hubs in key localities.</p> <p>Delivering a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) scheme that is fair and transparent, driving community cohesion in targeted 'hot spot' areas.</p> <p>Making best use of 100k lottery funding to sustain programmes and build key relationships across the city.</p> <p>Failing to build effective and sustainable relationships between WH and its key resident stakeholder groups.</p> <p>Embedding the customer 'Deal' into the heart of WH, ensuring enhanced customer focus and relationships built on mutual respect.</p>

Management Summary

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Board agreement to adopt and implement the Community Development Strategy April 2019 - March 2021, attached at Appendix 1. The Strategy seeks to ensure that Wolverhampton Homes addresses the challenges of involving tenants as set out in the Green Paper 2018 “A New Deal for Social Housing” and adopts good practice in relation to new requirements likely to emerge in the forthcoming White Paper.
- 1.2 The Strategy sets out Wolverhampton Homes commitment to enhancing community cohesion and opportunities for our tenants and residents as we progress on our journey from good to great. The Strategy feeds into our Business Plan for 2019 - 2023 in enhancing our community and customer focus by developing a coherent framework that delivers thriving community hubs, effective engagement models, valuable scrutiny arrangements and activities that seek to remove the stigma associated with social housing tenants.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Following the publication of the Green Paper in the autumn of 2018, WH has:
 - Responded formally to the Green Paper incorporating the detailed feedback from tenants, leaseholders and residents.
 - Reviewed the previous Tenant Engagement functions.
 - Introduced mobile working and piloted Tenancy Officers taking on an ‘Estate Custodian’ approach. We are now in the process of developing locality-based community hubs to bring services and an enhanced joined-up working approach to our communities.
 - Held informal discussions with all sections of the WH business, including our important staff networks, e.g. Equalities Champions and Proud to Be Me.
 - Held informal discussions with a range of partners from the statutory, community and voluntary sectors within the City as well as our Strategic Construction Partners.

Feedback from this together with emerging good practice locally, regionally and nationally has helped develop the Community Development Strategy.

- 2.2 The Community Development Strategy highlights the importance of strong relationships, built on mutual respect, between WH and all residents of Wolverhampton. The strategy seeks to provide a number of key outcomes:
 - An improved understanding of residents’ needs.
 - Development and transformation of key services as a result of resident feedback.
 - Increased tenant and resident satisfaction rates.
 - Enhanced community spirit and cohesion in key localities.
 - Better quality of life / skills development driven by CSR collaborations with residents.
 - Improved effectiveness and efficiency giving better value for money.

- Create a two-way process of learning that empowers residents to take control over key aspects in their community.

2.3 The Community Development Strategy reaffirms three elements to its success, which are shown in section 2.1 of the strategy:

- *Increase the number and diversity of residents engaged with WH.*
- *Make use of new innovations within community development to drive community cohesion.*
- *Develop key relationships with partners across the city to enhance opportunities.*

2.4 This section of the strategy sets out some of the detail to achieving the above elements such as:

- Increasing engagement through the TPAS engagement maximiser pilot and behavioural insights.
- Driving key activities and multi-agency locality working in thriving community hubs.
- Through ‘Estate Custodian’s’ and key officers, build relationships and bring services closer to communities.
- Making use of 100k lottery funding to drive community cohesion activities.
- Launching a new deal between WH and their customers, built on mutual respect.
- Relaunching WH’s ‘Giving Something Back Community Funds’ to drive key improvements in hot spot areas.
- Refreshing the approach to tenant and customer scrutiny.
- Developing and growing sustainable relationships with key partners in the city.

2.5 Section 3.0 of the strategy outlines a number of ways in which residents can be involved or provide valuable feedback to shape services. The options contained within the menu of involvement reflect different levels of engagement, from opting in to receive information, to shaping the future by making strategic decisions at Board level.

2.6 Appendix 2 sets out the Operating Framework for this Strategy, which sets out how by implementing this strategy, Wolverhampton Homes will strive to meet “excellence” standards required nationally, particularly to meet the standards of:

- The Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Regulation objective; and
- The Local Government Association’s Social Housing Equalities Framework.

3.0 Financial and value for money implications

3.1 The function of the Community Development Team aims to build the capacity of tenants and residents in terms of developing their skills, knowledge and confidence to engage with WH at all levels. This will assist tenants in understanding the importance of effective management of their tenancies – engaging with Tenancy Officers through the “Estate Custodian” way of working; accessing employability, skills and financial training and becoming increasingly confident to engage digitally. In turn, this enables WH to maximise income, protect our capital assets and environment, while enhancing the well-being and life chances of tenants and other residents.

- 3.2 A key feature of the Strategy is the co-ordination and targeting of support and funding through the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. This “Giving Something Back” funding stream of £70,000 per annum will be available within identified hot-spot areas to drive community initiatives. The hot-spot areas will be identified through business intelligence, feedback from our tenancy officers and data collected by WH equality groups.
- 3.3 Residents in the selected hot-spot areas will be encouraged to take part in community development activity to formulate a project brief assisted by the Community Development Team, tenancy officers and associated officers from WH. This will be a further opportunity to enhance community skills by delivering workshops on marketing, accounting and project management. Once the concept has been developed, it will be presented to a co-ordination panel, which is made up of Senior Management Team and Tenant Board Members for approval.
- 3.4 Where possible, developmental work will be undertaken with residents to enable communities to access external funding from a wide range of sources in the future.

4.0 Legal implications

- 4.1 WH is required to comply with the Regulator of Social Housing’s regulatory standards in terms of the Consumer Regulation objective. Full details of the legal requirements or good practice set out below are explained in Appendix 2 – Operating Framework.

Implementing the Community Development Strategy will help to ensure that WH:

- Enables tenants to be involved in all aspects of housing management and hold WH to account; and
 - Contributes to the environmental, social and economic well-being of the area.
- 4.2 It is good practice to adopt the Local Government Association’s Social Housing Equalities Framework (designed for all housing providers including ALMOs). We will strive to meet the “excellence” standards of this guidance.
- 4.3 Building on good practice identified by the National Housing Federation (NHF), WH commits to:
- Valuing the voice and experience of tenants and residents;
 - Being open and transparent in terms of how we act and share information; and
 - Welcoming challenge, being honest about where we need to improve.

The NHF has presented a draft plan “Together with Tenants” – Building a Stronger Relationship. WH supports this vision and will seek to develop a Charter in complying with this good practice for the future.

5.0 Human resources implications

5.1 External funding from the National Lottery Community Funds, to the value of £100,000 (over 3-years) has been secured for developing and promoting independent volunteering services – particularly for tackling isolation within the city. One part-time post of Volunteer Co-ordinator will be created during the summer 2019 for a fixed term period of three years.

6.0 Health and safety implications

6.1 There are no specific health and safety implications contained within the Community Development Strategy.

6.2 All activities within the strategy will have thorough health and safety consideration and risk assessments in place wherever necessary.

7.0 Equalities implications

7.1 There are three broad areas where equalities issues have significant effects:

7.2 Knowing our customers: This Strategy ensures that we will:

- Have good quality information on the equality profile and needs of our customers, both individually and as a community;
- Set equality objectives, targets and outcomes that are reviewed and evaluated promoting the use of equality data to deliver better services for all.

7.3 Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment: We will:

- Complete full Equality Impact Assessments on all elements of this Strategy;
- Measure improvements in outcomes for customers;
- Be seen by other social housing providers and local organisations as a champion of equality and diversity and a source of best practice.

7.4 Involving our customers: Our Community Development Strategy is designed to:

- Ensure a broad cross-section of our service users is involved in setting and reviewing our equality related aims, objectives and outcomes;
- Combine the knowledge and expertise of our internal Equalities Champions Group and Proud to Be Me staff networks to identify hot spot areas of the City, or issues to be promoted, using that pool of talent with other external partners to plan interventions and service developments, preventing community conflict arising and developing more cohesive communities;
- Enable grass-roots community activity through our new “Giving Something Back” Community Funds and provide evidence of outcomes from these projects to ensure we are contributing fully to equality, diversity, community cohesion and development through careful targeting, monitoring and evaluation.

8.0 Impact on the environment and community

8.1 As stated above it is envisaged that there will be positive impact on the local environment, community cohesion and well-being as a result of implementing this strategy. All social research indicates that decisions and programmes designed with and by local communities create greater levels of ownership and sustainability than top-down approaches.

9.0 Long term consequences for the company

9.1 The strategy outlines the potential outcomes for Wolverhampton Homes (point 2.0) as a result of implementing this strategy successfully.

10.0 Impact on business relationships with suppliers, customers and others

10.1 The Community Development Strategy describes and explains a rationale for our work that enables suppliers, customers and key partners to understand and “buy-in” to deliver the planned goals. It provides a comprehensive and coherent framework for each agency to see where and how they can contribute in ways that meet their own strategic aims.

10.2 For example; our Strategic Construction Partners will be assured that their investments under CSR have been subject to detailed analysis of localised demographic information, community need and community ownership and design. The Voluntary and Community Sector will see the benefit of links to volunteering opportunities and the potential for match funding. CWC will see the benefit to the wider community of joined up working and potential to link elected members to key community activity in their areas. The Federation will see advantage in our support and development of existing and new TRAs as part of their growth and sustainability plans for the future.

11.0 Impact on Wolverhampton Homes’ Management System

11.1 Resultant action plans and processes will be inputted on Wolverhampton Homes’ Management System.

12.0 List of Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1 – Community Development Strategy - April 2019 - March 2021

12.2 Appendix 2 – Community Development Strategy Operating Framework – April 2019 – March 2021

Appendix 1 Community Development Strategy

April 2019 - March 2021



1.0 Introduction and Background

The purpose of this Strategy is to set out Wolverhampton Homes' (WH) commitment and determination to enhancing opportunities for our tenants and residents as we progress on our journey from good to great. The Strategy feeds into our Business Plan for 2019 - 2023 in enhancing our community and customer focus by developing thriving community hubs and dovetailing our ongoing skills development support for residents. We have new plans for extending tenant, leaseholder and resident involvement in developing our services and enhancing community living. The Strategy re-affirms that WH will provide support to ensure that our tenants and residents are enabled to achieve their aspirations whatever their tenure.

1.1 Our mission, vision and values

Our mission is "To help people get on in life" and our vision is: "Unlocking people's potential through housing, skills and technology."

Our values are:

- Working together** - *because we achieve more that way*
- Open to new ideas** - *by trying new things*
- Respecting differences** - *by being fair and respectful*
- Delivering our promises** - *because customer service matters*

These elements fit hand-in-glove with the purpose and effects of community development.



1.2 Context

Following the publication of the Government's Green Paper – "A New Deal for Social Housing" in 2018, WH has made progress in the development of our services. We have continued to develop this strategy to ensure our tenants and residents are fully consulted on decisions, which affect them and the quality of services they receive. Since, the Autumn of 2018 WH has:

- Responded formally to the Green Paper incorporating the detailed feedback from tenants, leaseholders and residents at the October 2018 Get Togethers;
- Reviewed the previous Tenant Engagement functions;
- Introduced mobile working and piloted the Tenancy Officers taking on an "Estate Custodian" way of working. We are now in the process of developing locality-based community hubs to bring services and joined-up working closer to communities to support increased communications and networking;
- Held informal discussions with all sections of the WH business, including our Important staff networks, e.g. Equalities Champions and Proud to Be Me;
- Held informal discussions with a range of partners from the statutory, community and voluntary sectors within the City as well as our Strategic Construction Partners.

The Green Paper echoed the call for tenants and residents to have a greater voice with their landlords and for the stigmatisation of social housing tenants to end. Feedback from this together with emerging good practice locally, regionally and nationally has assisted us to develop this strategy.

2.0 The Community Development Approach

WH believes its tenants and leaseholders have rights of involvement in the management of their homes, as receivers of our services and should be at the heart of everything we do.

We do not wish to exclude other residents who live in our communities and believe everyone should have a say in their neighbourhood. WH recognises that community development can lead to positive outcomes for residents, communities and for WH and our partners. These outcomes include:

- Better understanding of residents' needs;
- Improved services;
- Increased tenant and resident satisfaction;
- Enhanced community spirit and cohesion;
- Better quality of life for everyone; and
- Improved effectiveness and efficiency giving better value for money.

The way of working will be closely aligned to our Equalities and Diversity networks, ensuring that our work in communities is always designed to be fully inclusive and welcoming for everyone.

2.1 The Key Elements

We have split the key elements of the Strategy into three themed groups:

Group 1: Increase in numbers and diversity of people engaged with WH

- Implement a new programme of increasing resident engagement through implementing national TPAS programme.
- Develop thorough monitoring and evaluation processes.
- Closer working relationships across WH with each area contributing to community development.
- Re-engage with existing and establish new TRAs in key hub localities
- Refresh the format of Get Togethers and introduction of digital Get Togethers (GTi's).
- Drive engagement through skills training, digital training and our money smart services.
- Increased engagement through activity in our key community hubs – bringing WH services closer to residents.

Group 2: Innovation within Community Development

- Developing multi-agency locality working by identifying key “Hot Spots” driven by business intelligence.
- Developing closer relationships with our residents through a new Estate Custodian approach working in our communities.
- Developing our volunteering offer to residents and enabling independence of groups driven through external funding.
- Launch of a new deal between WH and our customers, based on mutual respect, which builds trust and ensures the customer remains at the heart of everything we do.
- Refresh our approach to tenant and customer scrutiny and improve the link scrutiny has into our wider governance structure.
- Consider Together with Tenants Charter.
- Re-launch of WH's Giving Something Back Community Funds to drive key improvements in Hot Spots.
- Seeking external funding to support sustainability and independence of initiatives.
- Launch of a new scheme to promote the positive influence of social housing tenants.
- Creation of an Annual Impact and Celebration Event for residents as a further mechanism to remove stigmas and celebrate our communities.

Group 3: Key Partnership Arrangements

- Wolverhampton Federation of Tenants Associations.
- Wolverhampton Council & City Partnerships (WMP and NHS).
- Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC).

3.0 How can residents become involved?

To fulfil the aims of this Strategy we have developed a range of options in which people can influence decisions at whatever level suits their lifestyle. Again, split into three broad groupings, the options reflect different levels of engagement with different responsibilities.

3.1 Menu of Involvement

Level 1: Get Involved

Opting In - Register of Individuals

You can “opt in” to receive information and communications by giving us your permission to contact you about up and coming events or activities. We need this permission to comply with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). This will enable you to take part in surveys and questionnaires, if you wish.

Estate Inspections and walkabouts

With the roll-out of our new Estate Custodian way of working and the introduction of mobile working for all staff, there has never been a more responsive and flexible way to engage with WH staff right where you live. Estate Walkabouts enable residents who live on our estates to identify common concerns or areas for improvement. Tenants will have the opportunity to come together and walk areas, with Tenancy Officers and Community Development staff to discuss and consider any housing, environmental or social issue.

Volunteering

We have several opportunities for people who wish to volunteer with us to provide special services for vulnerable people. This includes working in partnership with Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC) around the social prescribing agenda. WH has won Lottery Funding for the next three years to develop this work and to grow volunteering opportunities, whilst seeking independence for these groups.

Fun days and community events

WH will support the work of local resident groups in our schemes and estates. We plan to do this through the promotion of community events to encourage inclusiveness and good relations across our housing areas. The community events might be supported by:

- Staff from the Community Development Team, Tenancy Team, the Equalities Champions and Proud to Be Me network, or other WH staff or our Corporate Social Responsibilities Partners as needed;
- the community events supported will need to be appropriate to the needs and profile of the tenants in that area.

Community Hubs

As part of our transformational journey, many of our services have been co-located across a number of our 'hubs' dispersed across the city. We have several opportunities for our customers to join our skills development programmes such as LEAP or have discussions with our Tenancy Officers about your area.

Level 2: Have Your say

Tenants and Residents Groups

Tenants are encouraged to represent their local community on a wide range of issues by being part of Tenants and Residents Groups in their area. The Community Development Team can help with this and you may also apply for help with running costs.

Wolverhampton Federation of Tenants Associations (WFTA)

Completely independent from WH, the "Federation" as it is known locally, welcomes your individual or Association membership. The Federation acts to support and represent all tenants across the city to have their voice heard independently at local, regional and national level. WH will be developing a renewed partnership approach with the Federation to mutual benefit.

Leaseholder Forum

The Leaseholder Forum deals with issues affecting leaseholders specifically.

Steering Groups for "Hot Spot" working

We will be testing out a range of methods to ensure residents are fully engaged and informed about issues, plans and initiatives in smaller local areas. Close monitoring and evaluation will happen, so that we can develop a model of working that is most efficient and cost effective.

Get Togethers

Get Togethers currently happen three times a year in the three main areas of the city, a total of nine events in all. We will rotate these around our key community hubs ensuring easy access to enable as many people as possible to attend. WH is refreshing the format of Get Togethers to respond to issues you have raised. This will include:

- Links to community “hubs” and active TRAs.
- Location and frequency of meetings.
- Agenda setting.
- More active participation from attendees.
- Invitations to be extended to other key partners, subject to their agreement.

In 2019 / 20, WH will also look to launch their GTi, an online and interactive get together where residents can hear from Senior Management Team and pose any questions directly.

Annual Impact Event

New for this year WH will host an Annual Impact and Awards Event where the achievements of the year are highlighted. Residents will have an opportunity to network and communicate with each other and staff members from various Departments within WH as well as to meet Board members.

Level 3: Shaping the Future

Giving Something Back Community Funds – Co-ordination Panel

New for 2019, funding and / or support will be available within identified hot-spot areas for community-led ideas and projects. Residents in selected hot-spot areas will be encouraged to take part in detailed community development activity and resultant social regeneration ideas will be prioritised into a community plan. Ideas that are fully supported will be assisted to apply for funding or other types of support to drive the community projects. WH have a small budget to facilitate this, and your Community Development Team alongside housing management and our equalities groups will assist you in developing project plans. Once the concept has been developed, it will be presented to a Co-ordination Panel made up of Senior Management Team and Tenant Board Members to ensure we are accountable to our tenants for how the money is allocated. The Panel will meet quarterly.

Focus Groups

These groups are time-limited and are called together for specific reviews of special items, individual service or policy reviews or improvements. Funding has been and will continue to be provided by WH to allow tenants the opportunity to develop their skills by attending conferences, workshops and seminars. These are aimed at increasing tenant’s knowledge and understanding of good housing service practice, sharing ideas and best practice from other parts of the UK and increasing their IT and communication skills and general confidence levels.

Review and Scrutiny

Review and scrutiny work involves time-limited but detailed examination of policies and services provided by WH to its customers and leads to recommendations for improvement being considered by the Board of WH. Full training and expenses are offered. It is usual for there to be two or three areas of the business scrutinised each year.

Board

Our Board of Directors are our ambassadors. They have ultimate responsibility for the whole organisation; they are responsible for making the most important strategic decisions and making sure we follow our mission, vision and values. The Board agrees which services will be delivered each year and monitors their delivery. It sets our annual budgets and decides the priorities of each year's housing improvements programme. It is made up of four Council members, four Tenant members and four Independent members. We will be working towards developing a pool of talent for our potential Board members, which will mean changes to the ways they are recruited and trained.

4.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Strategy will be reviewed and monitored on a monthly and annual basis through reporting performance to:

- Senior Management Team Meetings.
- Tenants and Residents meetings.
- Get Togethers.
- Annual Impact Event Report.

A detailed evaluation will be submitted to the Annual Impact Event to be held each Autumn. The evaluation will focus on the effectiveness of the Strategy and will refer to future requirements. The report will highlight matters of interest to residents such as:

- Range and frequency of topics that are being raised by tenants and residents at Get Togethers (to inform future agenda setting and format);
- Demographic profile of those taking part (to ensure equality of access and participation);
- How we have provided feedback to participants;
- What has changed as a result of consultation and recommendations;
- Range of subjects and recommendations from Focus groups / scrutiny activity;
- Number of people taking part in meetings, Estate Walkabouts and other elements within the strategy;
- Number of grants given and for what purposes;
- Presentations from a selection of grant recipients;
- Any special events held during the year;
- The number of any new resident groups and number of those supported;
- Success stories from employment, skills and support services; and
- Recommendations for the coming year.

5.0 Accessibility

The agreed Strategy will be available on our website and distributed widely through all the layers of our Community Development Structure. A copy will also be made available to all tenants on request. If you require the Strategy in other formats for example other languages, large print or Braille, please contact the Community Development Team at the email address shown below.

6.0 Operating Framework

Appendix 2 sets out the Operating Framework for this Strategy. It sets out how by implementing this strategy, Wolverhampton Homes will strive to meet “excellence” standards required nationally this requires us to meet the standards of:

- The Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Regulation objective; and
- The Local Government Association’s Social Housing Equalities Framework.

7.0 Contact us

To enquire about any aspect of this document or find out more about becoming involved, please contact:

The Community Development Team at:

Email: tenant.engagement@wolverhamptonhomes.org.uk

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Appendix 2 Community Development Strategy

Operating Framework

April 2019 - March 2021



1.0 Community Development

For Wolverhampton Homes (WH), community development is a process that responds to people's aspirations and needs. It promotes individuals' and groups' innovation and independence and maximises the support available to communities by working in partnership with key players from other sections within WH and other statutory, voluntary and community organisations.

These partnerships are built on relationships of trust and mutual respect. It is inclusive and challenges stereotypes, promotes equality and responds to diversity ensuring that there is a culture of fairness, openness and transparency. It is a two-way process of learning that can empower people to take control over their lives and the things in their community that affect them, in ways that suit them.

For Wolverhampton Homes this means that:

Residents will have choices in:

- The areas they want to participate in: for example, by involving themselves in their own community area, or specific subjects of interest;
- The level of participation they want, determining when and how often they want or have time to be involved: for example, from receiving information to attending Get Togethers, Focus Groups or representing tenants at Board level;
- Whether to be involved as an individual or part of a group.

Residents have increased opportunities to influence:

- Policy decisions that will affect them; for example, through reviews of existing policy;
- Decisions that will affect their general area or community: such as refurbishments or community projects;
- Services that they receive as an individual user: such as complaints, repairs or maintenance;
- Our business planning and identification of future priorities: for example, being involved in Focus Groups, Review and Scrutiny or our Board.

Residents, particularly under-represented groups, are encouraged and supported to become involved through training and other support mechanisms:

- We are piloting an Engagement Maximiser programme to increase resident participation at all levels;
- Residents will have increased access to employability, training, support with finances and access to IT learning and other opportunities by us providing mobile, flexible services working closer to communities. For example, utilising libraries, community centres and other local venues to make access to us more convenient.

*“Residents” includes tenants, leaseholders and all other tenure-types. Specific criteria will need to be applied to certain decision-making processes depending on tenure-type.

2.0 Regulatory Framework

This strategy has a commitment to the Social Housing’s regulatory standards in terms of the Consumer Regulation objective. Specifically, WH will:

- Ensure that tenants are involved in all aspects of housing management and hold WH to account through good governance and community development activity; and
- Contribute to the environmental, social and economic well-being of the area by targeted area working and supporting community activity through our CSR responsibilities.

3.0 Equality and Diversity

The strategy has a commitment to the excellence standard in line with the Social Housing Equalities Framework. WH is committed to ensuring equality and recognising diversity and will strengthen this in the following ways:

Knowing our customers: WH will ensure that we:

- Develop working arrangements between Community Development, Housing Management, Customer Insight, Communications and Governance functions;
- Have good quality information on the equality profile and needs of our customers, both individually and as a community;
- Set equality objectives, targets and outcomes that are reviewed and evaluated promoting the use of equality data to deliver better services for all.

Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment:

WH will ensure that:

- We complete full Equality Impact Assessments on all elements of the Strategy;
- There are significant measurable improvements in outcomes for customers;
- We are seen by other social housing providers and local organisations as a champion of equality and diversity and a source of best practice.

Involving our customers:

WH will ensure that:

- There is broad cross section of our service users consulted and involved in setting and reviewing our equality related aims, objectives and outcomes;
- We revise scrutiny arrangements, so that they can regularly make recommendations to improve our work to promote equality and diversity;
- We combine the knowledge and expertise of our internal Equalities Champions Group and Proud to Be Me staff networks to identify hot-spot areas of the city, or issues to be promoted, using that pool of talent with other external partners to plan interventions and service developments, preventing community conflict arising and developing more cohesive communities;
- We provide opportunities for grass-roots community activity through our new “Giving Something Back” Community Funds and provide evidence of outcomes from these projects to ensure we are contributing fully to equality, diversity, community cohesion and development through careful targeting, monitoring and evaluation;
- Information is available in a variety of formats including languages, large print on request and is easily understood;
- Everyone engaged with us do all they can to promote equality and welcome participation from all our communities.

4.0 Good practice for the future

Building on good practice identified by the National Housing Federation (NHF), WH commits to:

- Valuing the voice and experience of tenants and residents;
- Being open and transparent in terms of how we act and share information; and
- Welcoming challenge, being honest about where we need to improve.

The NHF has presented a draft plan “Together with Tenants” – Building a Stronger Relationship. WH fully supports this vision reflecting the feedback from tenants, leaseholders and residents in the Autumn of 2018, who expressed the need for more openness, accountability and transparency.

WH will:

- Seek to develop a Together with Tenants Charter;
- Ensure the Board is accountable to tenants and residents through the Scrutiny function;
- Refresh the Review and Scrutiny function with tenants to ensure compliance with the Charter;
- Continue to follow emerging good practice to ensure WH puts in place the best possible arrangements to keep tenants and residents closely involved with and able to influence our services.

Board Report

	Agenda Item 7
	24 May 2019 Review of new policies: Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy & Complaints Policy
	Open Report
Status:	For Decision
Author and job title:	Fiona Capel, Marketing & Customer Insight Manager
Contact No:	07891541292
Recommendations:	The Board are asked to approve: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Complaints Policy and the Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy. 2. To agree immediate implementation with a 6-month review to be undertaken.
Key risks and contentious issues:	<p>It is important that Wolverhampton Homes provides a robust and effective complaints process to customers. This is a requirement in the government's regulatory standard.</p> <p>The sector are anticipating requirements for increased regulation from the Housing White Paper and the introduction of these new policies will put the organisation in a stronger position to adapt to additional regulation as necessary.</p>

Management Summary

1.0 Purpose

1.1 This report is for the Board to consider the proposed draft new policies for the Wolverhampton Homes Complaints and Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour, to approve the implementation of both policies with a 6-month review to consider feedback from customers and services.

2.0 Background

2.1 Wolverhampton Homes have actively requested feedback on the customers' experience of the complaints process, via Get Togethers, on social media and anecdotal feedback via Tenancy Officers and other frontline staff. To provide a consistent, comprehensive and timely complaints process this was reviewed, resulting in the production of the new policies.

2.2 With this feedback in mind, the new Complaints policy:

- Stipulates that (where possible) a telephone call will be made to the customer upon receipt of their complaint.
- Allows 15 working days for a Stage 1 complaint and 20 working days for a Stage 2 complaint to be responded to. The change to the current process will allow adequate timescales for the investigation to be completed and for the complaint to be fully responded to.
- Clearly details the timeframes involved and what the customer can expect from Wolverhampton Homes at each 'milestone' following the receipt of their complaint.
- Details who will receive the complaint and who will investigate it.
- Sets out the criteria for escalation to a Stage 2 complaint and what the customer needs to do to progress their complaint.

2.3 The Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour policy:

- Details the reasons for the creation of the policy.
- When it is considered appropriate to implement it.
- What the customer can expect if this policy is implemented.
- The arrangements that can be put in place to allow access to our services.

3.0 Financial and value for money implications

3.1 In having an effective Complaints and Unreasonable Complainant Policy in place, this allows Wolverhampton Homes to use the learning from complaints to ensure a right first-time approach is maximised.

4.0 Legal implications

- 4.1 The regulatory standard on tenant involvement and empowerment sets out the minimum requirement for a housing organisation's handling of complaints. It sets out the following required outcome: *'Registered providers shall have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible that ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly.'*
- 4.2 It also sets out the following specific outcome: *'Providers shall offer a range of ways for tenants to express a complaint and set out clear service standards for responding to complaints, including complaints about performance against the standards, and details of what to do if they are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint. Providers shall inform tenants how they use complaints to improve their services. Registered providers shall publish information about complaints each year, including their number and nature, and the outcome of the complaints. Providers shall accept complaints made by advocates authorised to act on a tenant's / tenants' behalf.'*
- 4.3 The new policies clearly meet these requirements and provide information to customers on how their complaint will be processed.

5.0 Human resources implications

- 5.1 There are no human resources implications contained in this report.

6.0 Health and safety implications

- 6.1 The Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour policy has been created to allow us to manage cases on an individual basis, and where appropriate to implement the policy.

7.0 Equalities implications

- 7.1 The new Complaints policy clearly details the multiple ways that a complaint can be made, including via an advocate. This will help to remove barriers and ensure fair and equal access to the process for all customers.
- 7.2 The Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour policy allows for reasonable adjustments be made, if disability is considered to be a factor in a complainants behaviour.
- 7.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed.

8.0 Impact on the environment and community

- 8.1 There is no impact on the environment and community contained in this report.

9.0 Long term consequences for the company

9.1 The new policies will contribute to a culture of continuous improvement within Wolverhampton Homes and maximise the opportunity to use the customer voice in service improvements.

10.0 Impact on business relationships with suppliers, customers and others

10.1 The introduction of these new policies will allow sufficient time for thorough investigation of complaints with a focus on resolution. This should result in a reduced number of complaints progressing to Stage 2 and enquiries via the Housing and Local Government Ombudsman services. We anticipate this will deliver improved relationships with customers and a better overall customer experience.

10.2 An increased focus on learning from complaints to make service improvements will contribute to an improved customer experience.

11.0 Impact on Wolverhampton Homes' Management System

11.1 If yes and approved by board members, update to go on the management system by:

Date: 31/05/2019

Officer responsible: Catherine Stewardson

12.0 List of Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1: Complaints Policy.

12.2 Appendix 2: Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy.

Wolverhampton Homes

Complaints Policy

Draft copy

Version 1.2
May 2019

Contents	
Section No.	Detail
1.0	Purpose
2.0	What is a complaint?
3.0	Who can make a complaint?
4.0	Complaints that cannot be dealt with under this policy
5.0	How to make a complaint
6.0	Complaints process
7.0	What if I am still not happy with the outcome to my complaint?
8.0	Learning from complaints
9.0	Unreasonable complaints
10.0	Policy review

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 Wolverhampton Homes aims to provide great homes in clean, safe neighbourhoods and to help people get on in life. In delivering this the company is also committed to providing a high-quality customer feedback service, dealing with complaints in a fair and impartial way.
- 1.2 By proactively listening to our customers and in dealing with complaints about our services, this allows Wolverhampton Homes to make improvements based on the feedback that you give us. It also allows us to manage, respond to and learn from complaints.
- 1.3 The policy sets out clear processes and timeframes to help you understand how we will investigate your complaint and how we will respond to you. We have developed this policy in line with dispute resolution principles recommended by the Housing Ombudsman, which are to:
 - *Be fair - treat people fairly and follow fair processes*
 - *Put things right*
 - *Learn from outcomes*
- 1.4 In a minority of cases where complainants, either individually or on behalf of someone they represent, pursue their complaints in an unreasonable and persistent way, where this is considered to be unacceptable or habitual. This is covered separately by the Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy and Extreme Unacceptable Behaviour Policy as detailed in Section 9.
- 1.5 The policy aims to set out a clear and fair process for the handling of complaints from all customers of Wolverhampton Homes, relating to services provided by Wolverhampton Homes.
- 1.6 The policy contributes to the overall aim of dealing with all complainants in ways, which are demonstrably consistent, fair and reasonable.

2.0 What is a complaint?

- 2.1 The definition of a complaint recognised in this policy is:

An expression of dissatisfaction or concern by a resident or applicant about the standard of service, conduct, actions or lack of actions by Wolverhampton Homes.

3.0 Who can make a complaint?

- 3.1 You can make a complaint if you are the person who is affected by the action, or you can give consent for somebody else to act on your behalf.

3.2 Complaints can also be made by Designated Persons as defined by the Localism Act 2011. A Designated Person can be an MP, a local councillor, or a tenant panel. They can intervene on your behalf, to help to resolve a complaint.

4.0 Complaints that cannot be dealt with under this policy

4.1 There are certain types of complaints that are not covered by this policy as follows:

- Anonymous complaints.
- A complaint that has previously been fully investigated in line with this policy.
- A complaint made by an employee about any matter relating to their employment.
- When the issue took place more than six months ago.
- Where we have specific arrangements with you, in line with our Extreme Unacceptable Behaviour Policy or Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy.
- Complaints that are being pursued in an unreasonable manner.
- The policy does not cover complaints, which are subject to legal action or which are being dealt with as insurance claims.

5.0 How to make a complaint

5.1 Information about making a complaint or giving feedback can be found on our website: <https://www.wolverhamptonhomes.org.uk/aboutus/contact-us/compliments-complaints-and-suggestions>

5.2 Complaints can be made via a range of methods:

- Online form: - <https://www.wolverhamptonhomes.org.uk/aboutus/contact-us/compliments-complaints-and-suggestions/compliments-form>
- Email us at: - complimentsandcomplaints@wolverhamptonhomes.org.uk
- Through webchat: - <https://www.wolverhamptonhomes.org.uk/>

- In person at any of our One Stop Shops, which are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm:

Bilston Town Hall
Church Street
Bilston
Wolverhampton
WV14 0AP

Market Street
29 Market Street
Wolverhampton
WV1 3AG

(Please note: Market Street is open on Saturday mornings from 9.30am to 1pm)

Wednesfield
Alfred Squire Road
Wednesfield
Wolverhampton
WV11 1XU

- In writing to:

Wolverhampton Homes
Customer Feedback Team
29 Market Street
Wolverhampton
WV1 3AG

- Ask a friend, relative or advocate to contact us on your behalf. In these cases, we will need your consent to discuss issues with them
- Request a compliments and complaints form from one of our One Stop Shops or by calling Homes Direct on 01902 556789

Please let Wolverhampton Homes know if you need any help in making your complaint and they will put you in touch with our Customer Feedback Team who will be able to support you.

- 5.3 Where a complaint raises issues that fall within the responsibility of both the City of Wolverhampton Council and Wolverhampton Homes, both organisations will agree who will lead the investigation. We will let you know how your complaint will be handled and the reply will be approved by both organisations before it is sent.

6.0 Complaints process

6.1 Wolverhampton Homes follow a two-stage complaints process detailed as Stage 1 and Stage 2. If we have made a mistake, there are several ways we can try to put it right. This includes:

- Make an apology.
- Give a full explanation.
- Review a decision we have already made.
- Review our procedures.
- Consider and advise on financial compensation.

We will consider each case on its own merits and offer the most suitable remedy.

6.2 **Stage 1** – Wolverhampton Homes aim to resolve all complaints at this stage.

We will acknowledge the Stage 1 complaint within three working days. Where possible we will also call you to discuss your complaint and how we can work to resolve it. Once your complaint is received this will be reviewed and passed on to the relevant Department Manager to investigate, and we will also try to resolve the matter straight away.

We will respond to you fully within 15 working days from the day your complaint was received.

If the investigation is going to take longer, we'll be in touch to let you know within 15 days – with the reason for the delay and when you can expect a full reply.

6.3 **Stage 2** - If you are not satisfied with the response given at Stage 1 you can ask us to review our original investigation. You will need to explain how your complaint meets one of the following criteria:

- Your issue was not properly addressed at Stage 1 of the process.
- There was something inaccurate in the response given to you.
- You have new information or evidence to give to us, that was not available originally.

You need to do this as soon as possible, preferably within one month of our response to your Stage 1 complaint.

We will acknowledge your Stage 2 complaint within three working days. Where possible we will also call you to discuss your complaint and how we can work

to resolve it. Once your complaint is received this will be reviewed and passed on to the relevant Service Manager to investigate, and we will also try to resolve the matter straight away if this is still outstanding.

The Service Manager will review the initial investigation to ensure it was thorough and that it followed our complaints policy and procedure. If they are satisfied that it did, the original decision will be upheld.

We will respond to you fully within 20 working days from the day your Stage 2 complaint was received to confirm our decision.

If the investigation is going to take longer, we'll be in touch to let you know within 20 days – with the reason for the delay and when you can expect a full reply.

This is the end of the Wolverhampton Homes internal complaints process.

7.0 What if I am still not happy with the outcome of my complaint?

7.1 If you are still not happy with the response you have received, you can choose to refer your complaint to a designated person.

7.2 Alternatively, you can wait for eight weeks from the date of the final decision from Wolverhampton Homes and contact the Housing Ombudsman Service.

8.0 Learning from complaints

8.1 Customer satisfaction is very important to Wolverhampton Homes and we use your feedback, including complaints, to shape improvements to our services and procedures.

8.2 When a complaint is resolved, we will identify any learning opportunities from this. The Customer Feedback Team will discuss with the service manager to decide how the learnings will feed into service improvements.

8.3 These improvements will be reported by the Customer Feedback Manager to our Senior Management Team each quarter, along with details of any trends or themes that have been identified and the steps that have been taken to address these.

9.0 Unreasonable complaints

- 9.1 As detailed above, Wolverhampton Homes is committed to providing a high-quality customer feedback service and dealing with complaints in a fair and impartial way. However, in a minority of cases customers pursue their complaints in an unreasonable and persistent way that can negatively impact the investigation of their complaint and the ability of staff to provide a quality service to other customers. This may involve making serial complaints about different matters, or repeated complaints about the same issue. These actions can occur either while their complaint is being investigated, or once the investigation has been completed.
- 9.2 Wolverhampton Homes consider this type of unreasonable complaint to be unacceptable, and they will be handled in line with our Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy. Where a complaint is considered to be unreasonable, it is still important to ensure that the customer is able to access our services, including the complaints service. There are a number of options available to staff to enable them to manage unreasonable complaints effectively and fairly, with minimal disruption to other customers. Full details can be found in our Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy.
- 9.3 This policy also operates alongside our Extreme Unacceptable Behaviour Policy, which is designed to protect members of staff that are subject to abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands, and unreasonable persistence.

10.0 Policy Review

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. Changes may be made to the policy ahead of the review date in line with changes to legislation or business requirements.

Wolverhampton Homes

Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy

Version 1.2
May 2019

Contents	
Section No.	Detail
1.0	Aims of the policy
2.0	Definition of unreasonable complainant behaviour
3.0	Examples of unreasonable actions and behaviours
4.0	Prior to implementing the policy
5.0	Dealing with unreasonable complainants
6.0	Urgent or extreme cases
7.0	Operating the policy
8.0	Appeal of decision by complainant or their representative
9.0	Reviewing decisions to implement policy
10.0	Policy review

1.0 Aims of the policy

- 1.1 Wolverhampton Homes is committed to providing a high-quality customer feedback service, dealing with complaints in a fair and impartial way.

In a minority of cases complainants, either individually or on behalf of someone they represent, pursue their complaints in an unreasonable and persistent way. Where this is considered to be habitual or persistent, it can negatively impact on any investigation of their complaint and in the ability of staff to provide a quality service to other customers.

Wolverhampton Homes must also ensure that our staff, contractors and partners are protected from unreasonable and abusive behaviour.

- 1.2 The policy aims to set out a clear and fair process for dealing with situations where a complainant, either individually or as a representative might be considered to be unacceptable, persistent or unreasonable and to detail actions that will be taken to restrict or change access to the complaints procedure in order to deal with this type of behaviour.
- 1.3 In applying this policy, it is important to distinguish between those people who are being unreasonable and those who raise a number of issues that are relevant to Wolverhampton Homes' role and remit.
- 1.4 The policy should be applied as a last resort and after all reasonable measures have been taken to try and resolve a complaint and only with the authorisation of the Director or an Assistant Director.
- 1.5 Reasonable adjustments will be made, as appropriate, to this policy where disability may be impacting on a complainant's approach.

2.0 Definition of unreasonable complainant behaviour

- 2.1 This policy explains what Wolverhampton Homes considers to be persistent and unacceptable or unreasonable behaviour. It gives details of the action we may take against customers (or their representatives) who behave in this way.
- 2.2 Wolverhampton Homes have applied the Local Government Ombudsman's definition of unreasonable complainant behaviour and unreasonably persistent complainants:

Unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants are those complainants who, because of the nature or frequency of their contacts with an organisation, hinder the organisation's consideration of their, or other people's, complaints.

- 2.3 The term habitual means 'done repeatedly or as a habit'. The following definitions of habitual or unreasonable complainants will be used for the repeated and/or obsessive pursuit of:
- *unreasonable complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes;*
and/or
 - *reasonable complaints in an unreasonable manner*
- 2.4 To assist in identifying and managing persons who seek to be disruptive to Wolverhampton Homes through pursuing an unreasonable course of conduct, it is important to differentiate between 'persistent' and 'unreasonably persistent' complainants.
- 2.5 Customers might be considered 'persistent' because they feel that their complaint has not been handled correctly. Raising legitimate queries or criticisms of a complaints procedure should not in itself lead to someone being regarded as an unreasonably persistent complainant.
- 2.6 Habitual, unreasonable and persistent complainants may have justified complaints or grievances but may be pursuing them in inappropriate ways, or they may be intent on pursuing complaints, which appear to have no substance, or which have already been investigated and determined. Their contacts with Wolverhampton Homes may be amicable but still place substantial demands on staff, which is time consuming and wasteful of resources in terms of officer time, or it may be that contact is very emotionally charged and distressing for all involved. This can create difficulty in handling such complainants.
- 2.7 While Wolverhampton Homes endeavours to respond with patience and sympathy to the needs of all complainants there are times when there is nothing further, which can reasonably be done to assist or to rectify a real or perceived problem.
- 3.0 Examples of unreasonable actions and behaviours**
- 3.1 Raising of legitimate queries or criticisms of the complaints procedure as it progresses, for example; if agreed timescales are not met, should not in itself lead to someone being regarded as an unreasonably persistent complainant. Similarly, the fact that a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint and seeks to challenge it once, or more than once, should not necessarily cause them to be labelled unreasonable or unreasonably persistent.

3.2 Wolverhampton Homes do not expect staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour by complainants or any customer. Unacceptable behaviour includes behaviour, which is abusive, offensive or threatening and may include;

- Using abusive or foul language either on the telephone or in person
- Sending multiple emails
- Leaving multiple voicemails
- In any situation where physical violence has been used or threatened towards staff or those associated with them at any time

This will cause personal contact with the complainant to be discontinued and the complaint will then only be pursued through written communication. All such incidents should be documented and reported in accordance with Section 5.

3.3 The examples below are not exhaustive and are provided as guidance for staff to identify behaviours and complaints that may be covered by this policy. The behaviours may apply to single or repeated incidents:

- Refusing to:
 - Specify the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of help.
 - Cooperate with the complaint investigation process.
 - Accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaint's procedure.
 - Accept the decision; repeatedly arguing points with no new evidence.
- Insisting on/or displaying behaviours of:
 - The complaint being dealt with in ways, which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice.
 - Making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues and seeking to have them replaced.
 - Changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
 - Denying or changing statements he or she made at an earlier stage.
 - Introducing trivial or irrelevant new information at a later stage.
 - Raising many detailed but unimportant questions, and insisting they are all answered.
 - Submitting falsified documents from themselves or others.
 - To have electronically recorded meetings and conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of the other person(s) involved.

- Adopting a 'scatter gun' approach: pursuing parallel complaints on the same issue with various organisations.
- Making excessive demands on the time and resources of staff with lengthy phone calls, emails to numerous staff, or detailed letters every few days, and expecting immediate responses.
- Harassing or verbally abusing or otherwise seeking to intimidate staff dealing with their complaint, in relation to their complaint by use of foul or inappropriate language or by the use of offensive and racist language or publishing their complaints in other forms of media.
- Submitting repeat complaints with minor additions/variations the complainant insists make these 'new' complaints and expect this to be taken into account and commented on.
- Raising subsidiary or new issues whilst a complaint is being addressed that were not part of the complaint at the start of the complaint process.
- Repeatedly focusing on conspiracy theories and/or will not accept documented evidence as being factual. This may include complainants who do not accept that facts can sometimes be difficult to verify after a long period of time has elapsed.
- Denying receipt of an adequate response despite correspondence specifically answering their questions and/or concerns.

4.0 Prior to implementing the policy

4.1 The policy contributes to the overall aim of dealing with all complainants in ways, which are demonstrably consistent, fair and reasonable.

4.2 Before implementing this policy, the Customer Feedback team must check that:

- The complaint is being or has been investigated in accordance with the Wolverhampton Homes Complaints Policy.
- All records of previous contact are checked to ensure that all appropriate steps have been taken to provide the customer with requested answers or information.
- Whether full and reasonable responses have already been given.
- Checking that new or significant concerns are not being raised that require consideration as a separate case.
- Confidence that the complaint has been dealt with in line with other similar complaints and that the complainant has been kept up-to-date and that communication has been adequate with the complainant prior to them becoming unreasonable.
- Whether the behaviour of the complainant (or their representatives) could be considered unreasonable.

- All relevant departments have met to discuss the complaint where there are cross-team issues highlighted by the complainant.
- The complainant, whenever possible, will be warned that if the specific behaviour or actions continue, consideration will be given to apply restrictions as detailed at 5.4.

4.3 Applying the criteria with care, fairness and due consideration for the complainant's circumstances. This will consider:

- Physical and / or mental health conditions, which may explain difficult behaviour.
- Impact of bereavement, loss or significant / sudden changes to the complainant's lifestyle, quality of life or life expectancy.
- Considering the proportionality and appropriateness of the proposed restriction in comparison with the behaviour and the impact on staff.

4.4 It should also be considered as to whether any further action can be taken prior to designating the complainant unreasonable. This may include:

- Gaining an independent view by raising the issue with a Director / Assistant Director with no previous involvement.
- Considering offering a meeting with staff where this has not been held at a local level as a means to dispel misunderstandings. (This is only appropriate where risks have been assessed).
- Considering a strategy to agree a cross-departmental approach where multiple departments are being contacted by the complainant.
- Considering whether the assistance of an advocate may be helpful. This may particularly be in view of mental or physical disability, cultural and / or language differences.
- Considering the use of ground rules for continuing contact with the complainant.

4.5 At the point of implementation of the policy being considered, the Customer Feedback Team will contact the customer to inform them that Wolverhampton Homes are considering applying this policy and the reasons why. This provides an opportunity to explain to the complainant what the issue is and gives the customer the opportunity to change their behaviour before restrictions are applied.

5.0 Dealing with unreasonable complainants

5.1 The decision to apply this policy will be an exceptional step and must be authorised by a Director or Assistant Director of Wolverhampton Homes, following consultation with the relevant Manager / Head of Service and Customer Feedback Manager.

- 5.2 Any action taken should be proportionate to the nature and frequency of the complainant's current contacts based on considerations in Section 4.0.
- 5.3 Where a complaint is considered to be unreasonable, it is still important to ensure that the customer is able to access our services, including the complaints service. New complaints from people who have come under this policy will be treated on their merits.
- 5.4 There are a number of options available to staff to enable them to manage unreasonable complaints effectively and fairly, with minimal disruption to other customers.

The following options may be suitable, taking the complainant's behaviour and circumstances into account:

- Advising the complainant:
 - That repeated calls regarding the complaint in question are not acceptable and will be terminated; or
 - Their complaint has been responded to as fully as possible and there is nothing to be added:
 - Placing limits on the number and duration of contacts with staff per week or month.
 - Restricting the number of calls that will be taken or agreeing a timetable for contacting the service and offering a restricted time slot.
 - Limiting the complainant to one mode of contact (e.g. telephone, letter, email etc.)
- Requiring the complainant to:
 - Communicate only with one named member of staff (single point of contact) and agreeing when this should be.
 - Allow any personal contacts to take place in the presence of a witness and in a suitable location.
 - Make contact via a third party such as an advocate.
 - Enter into an agreement about their conduct.
- Informing the complainant that future correspondence will be read and placed on file, but not acknowledged or registered where relating to complaints about the same matter.

- Adopting a 'zero tolerance' policy – this could include a standard communication for example; Wolverhampton Homes operates a zero-tolerance policy and the safety and respect of its staff is paramount at all times.
- 5.5 If the situation cannot be resolved, the Customer Feedback Team will seek the required authorisation to apply this policy as detailed at 5.1 and will inform the customer of our decision and the reason behind it. We will explain any restrictions in detail, and how we intend to manage any contact with the complainant or their representative in future.
- 5.6 When the decision has been taken to apply this policy to a complainant, Wolverhampton Homes will aim to arrange a meeting with the complainant to explain:
- Why the decision has been taken.
 - What action has been taken.
 - The duration of that action.
- 5.7 Following the meeting Wolverhampton Homes will write to the complainant to confirm the decision that has been made. A copy of this policy will be enclosed with the letter.
- 5.8 All appropriate staff should be informed of the decision so that there is a consistent and co-ordinated approach across the Company.
- 6.0 Urgent or Extreme Cases**
- 6.1 In the event of an urgent or extreme case, safeguarding of staff is paramount. Zero tolerance policies and procedures should be adopted, and any incident of this nature should be discussed immediately with a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT). An action plan should be developed, and a review should be carried out on the case at the first opportunity after the event.
- 6.2 Consideration should be given as to whether the organisation should take further action. This may be involvement of the police or legal action, where it is believed the complainant has committed a criminal offence, such as harassment, assault on staff or criminal damage. This could include consideration of using the risk management or health and safety procedures to follow up an event in respect of the impact on staff.
- 6.3 This policy operates alongside our Extreme Unacceptable Behaviour Policy, which is designed to protect members of staff that are subject to abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands, and unreasonable persistence.

7.0 Operating the policy

7.1 The decision must be recorded on the complaints system and must be supported by the following information:

- Grounds for applying the policy.
- Any restrictions to be applied, including scope and detail.
- Date for review – typically after six months and not longer than 12-months but in exceptional cases this may be extended. In such cases the restrictions would be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

7.2 Records will be kept of the Name and Address of each complainant who is treated as abusive, unreasonable or persistent, or any other person who so aids the complainant;

- When the restrictions came into force and end;
- What the restrictions are;
- When the person and the Council were advised.

7.3 Employees should notify the Customer Feedback Manager of any contact in breach of the restrictions used so that further steps can be taken to manage future contact. This should also be recorded on the complaints system.

8.0 Appeal of decision by complainant or their representative

8.1 A complainant can appeal against restricted / changes to contact. The appeal will be considered by the Director / Assistant Director who has not been involved in the original decision.

8.2 They will advise the complainant in writing whether the restricted / changes to contact arrangements still apply or a different course of action has been agreed.

9.0 Reviewing decisions to implement policy

9.1 The status of the complainant will be kept under review.

9.2 A decision to restrict contact maybe re-considered if the complainant demonstrates a more acceptable approach.

9.3 The complainant will be informed of the result of this review if the decision to apply this policy has been changed or extended.

9.4 SMT will be provided with a regular report giving information about members of the public who have been treated as unreasonable / persistent as per this policy.

10.0 **Policy review**

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. Changes may be made to the policy ahead of the review date in line with changes to legislation or business requirements.

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Board Report

	Agenda Item 8
	24 May 2019 Infrastructure Programme and the outcome of the evaluation of fire safety suppression systems
	Open Report
Status:	For information
Author and job title:	Simon Bamfield, Head of Commercial Services & Stock Investment
Contact No:	01902 556043
Recommendations:	Board members are asked to note the progress with the delivery of the Infrastructure Programme and the outcome of the evaluation of the fire safety suppression systems.
Key risks and contentious issues:	<p>This is a complex construction project, involving work in tenants' homes, whilst dealing with issues such as asbestos containing materials.</p> <p>The condition of the existing components and associated work to facilitate their replacement, may mean that the current budgetary provision will not be enough.</p> <p>There are also reputational risks should Wolverhampton Homes fail to deliver this project in accordance with the agreed timescales and budgets.</p>

Management Summary

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report is to provide the Board with an update on the progress with the high-rise infrastructure programme and the extent of the potential risks.
- 1.2 The report will also provide the Board with details of the fire-suppression systems (sprinklers) that will be retro-fitted into the high-rise tower-blocks.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The tower-blocks across Wolverhampton were built between 1960 and 1973 to provide large numbers of social housing on tight footprints. Wolverhampton Homes manage 36 tower-blocks on behalf of the City of Wolverhampton Council, and they also have one tower block that is managed by Sanctuary Housing.
- 2.2 The majority of the landlord's mechanical and electrical installations serving these blocks are original and due to their age are starting to fail. Consequently, the decision was made in 2017 to implement a High-Rise Infrastructure Programme, to renew these components in a planned and proactive manner.
- 2.3 Prior to any work commencing, a detailed appraisal of the condition of the infrastructure in each block is undertaken to ensure that they are fit for purpose and will last at least another 30-years. In most instances the components fail to meet this criteria, so will therefore be replaced.
- 2.4 The anticipated work scope includes the renewal of domestic electric supplies (sub-main cables), the landlord's electrical supplies (supplies to lifts, pumps etc.), communal lighting, water supplies (including water storage and pumping), soil & vent pipes, refuse chutes etc.
- 2.5 The work scope also includes the upgrading of the fire protection measures where they are not up to current standards, so will include the replacement of communal fire doors and side screens, reinstatement of compartmentation within service risers within each flat and where appropriate the upgrading of any automatic smoke ventilation.
- 2.6 The programme was prioritised using stock condition information, with the blocks in the worst condition being done first i.e. those where there were concerns over the condition of some aspect of the existing infrastructure.

3.0 Current Programme and progress to date

- 3.1 The initial programme for the Infrastructure Programme aimed to complete all blocks in five years. However, the decision to install sprinkler systems in the City's tower-blocks, created a vast amount of additional design work, which meant it was necessary to revise the original programme.

3.2 The earlier phases of the programme were prioritised to address known defects with the mechanical and electrical infrastructure serving the tower-blocks, namely:

- Phase - 1 (Chetton Green); defective soil pipes, electric cabling & switchgear, plus problems with the water supplies (lack of pressure)
- Phase - 2 (Boscobel); defective electric cabling and switchgear, plus problems with the water supplies (lack of pressure)
- Phase - 3 (Lakefield); defective electric cabling and switchgear
- Phase - 4 (Merry Hill); defective water supply pipework
- Phases 5 to 11 of the programme simply followed the route of the Decent Homes work.

3.3 The sixty-three, 2-bedroom flats in the tower-blocks on the Graiseley estate (Graiseley Court, Grovesnor Court and Russell Court), were designed with a shared escape balcony (so that in the event of a fire, the residents can escape to their neighbour's property). Shared escape balconies are no longer an acceptable means of escape, so it will be necessary to accelerate the installation of sprinklers (and associated fire safety improvements) to these blocks to mitigate the slightly higher potential fire safety risk.

3.4 In addition, it is opportune to accelerate the work to the tower blocks on the Vauxhall's estate to coincide with other work due to be carried out at these blocks, as this will enable us to achieve better cost effectiveness.

3.5 The table below summarises the programme and identifies the various phases of work and the anticipated dates that this work will start and finish.

Phase	Estate	Blocks	Floors	Start	Finish
1	Chetton Green (infrastructure only)	3	8	Apr-18	Mar-19
2	Boscobels	5	11	Apr-19	Mar-20
3	Lakefield	3	9	Oct-19	Jul-20
4	Merry Hill	3	16	Apr-20	Mar-22
5	Graisley	3	11	Jul-20	Mar-21
6	Hickman	2	20	Aug-20	Mar-21
7	Vauxhalls	3	11	Mar-21	Dec-21
8	Millfields	1	10	Jan-22	Jul-22
9	Stowlawn	3	10	Jun-22	Jun-23
10	Whitmore Reans	2	12	May-22	Mar-23
11	Chetton Green (sprinklers only)	3	8	Aug-22	Apr-23

A	Heath Town (tall towers)	3	21-23	Apr-20	Dec-23
B	Heath Town (mid-height towers)	5	8-10	Sep-21	Sep-23

Note - 1: Phases 1-11 to be delivered by Wates Living Space

Note - 2: Phases A & B to be delivered by United Living as part of Heath Town Refurbishment

3.6 The first phase of the programme has been completed at Harrowby Court, Wobaston Court and Patshull Court, Chetton Green. These three tower-blocks have had the following items renewed: the domestic electric supplies (sub-main cables), the landlord's electrical supplies (supplies to lifts, pumps etc.), communal lighting, water supplies (including water storage and the introduction of booster pump sets), soil & vent pipes and new hopper heads to the refuse chutes. Sprinkler systems will be installed in these blocks during 2022 - 23, or sooner if resources allow.

4.0 Sprinkler Systems

4.1 The remaining phases of the programme (phases 2-11 inclusive, plus phases A&B at Heath Town), will incorporate the retrofitting of sprinkler systems. These will be permanently charged "deluge" systems with linked detection. The supply chain for this work is currently being procured and it is anticipated that the installation work will start in Autumn 2019.

4.2 The sprinkler systems to the City's tower-blocks will be designed to comply with *BS 9251: 2014; Fire Sprinkler Systems for Domestic and Residential Occupancies – Code of Practice*. The sprinklers will be designed to meet the most stringent standard; Category-3 (as defined by Table 1, BS 9251: 2014), and the sprinkler systems will cover:

- All habitable (high-risk) areas including bathrooms (BS 9251 excludes bathrooms, but we have included them following advice from the Fire Service, as they have responded to a number of fires that resulted from tea light candles being knocked off the edge of baths, setting clothing alight), however small cupboards (less than 2m²) are excluded.
- All communal rooms (meeting rooms etc.).
- All chute rooms and bin stores.
- The lift lobbies and adjacent communal circulation spaces.
- The ground-floor lobby of the escape staircase (the areas above this will not be covered).

4.3 As stated in the previous report on sprinklers (27 April 2018), there is no current legal requirement to install sprinklers and the communal areas of the tower-blocks are managed robustly and maintained as sterile areas. As the blocks are mainly constructed from concrete, the main risk of a fire in these areas does not come from the building fabric, but the behaviour of individuals; for example, if refuse is fly-tipped in the communal areas, it could then be set alight. The sprinkler systems will be designed to mitigate this risk and cover the areas where fly-tipping, or the temporary storage of furniture (e.g. whilst someone is moving) are more prone.

4.4 The interpretation and application of the relevant standards have been agreed with all relevant stakeholders including West Midlands Fire Service and the Council's Building Control department.

- 4.5 The design and installation of the sprinkler system will be sufficiently robust to minimise the likelihood of activation / interference due to malicious, or accidental events. The sprinkler system will be designed and installed by a third-party certified specialist contractor, who will be fully accredited and experienced in the installation of residential sprinkler systems.
- 4.6 In the event of a sprinkler activation, the sprinkler alarm will automatically alert the fire and rescue service (via an Alarm Receiving Centre), and a secondary signal will alert the Concierge Management Centre at Stowlawn. This will ensure there is no delay in responding to the alarm activation and provide the concierge service with the opportunity to get to site to provide support.
- 4.7 The former sheltered tower-blocks currently have LD-2 fire alarm systems installed throughout. These alarm systems were monitored by on-site staff, who, following changes to service provision, are no longer there. These installations only serve to provide confusion, as when they are activated there should be an evacuation, which is contrary to the publicised stay-put policy (and may expose residents to fire or smoke that they would have otherwise been protected from). Furthermore, these alarms will not work in tandem with the sprinkler alarm system and many of these alarms are now becoming obsolete. Therefore, as part of the sprinkler installation programme these fire alarm systems will be removed.

5.0 Financial and value for money implications

- 5.1 The capital budget identified for the Infrastructure Project is currently £28.8m and an additional £19.2m has been set aside to install sprinklers.
- 5.2 There is a significant risk that the cost of this project may increase as there are a considerable number of variables that could increase the extent of work required. These include the condition of the existing installations, the ease of access (working room) to these services, the extent of asbestos containing materials that are present etc. The scope of works in each block will not become clear until detailed surveys have been completed and due to the nature of the work, there will still be a degree of uncertainty.

6.0 Legal implications

- 6.1 The legislation relating to leaseholders is primarily contained within the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (Sections 18 to 30) and the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002, which enables the Council to only recover a “fair and reasonable” service charge contribution from leaseholders.
- 6.2 Due to the extent of the infrastructure and fire safety work, high-levels of service charges will need to be levied (this could be in the region of £12,000 per leaseholder), however repayments will be interest-free and will be spread over a ten-year repayment period.
- 6.3 There are some significant legal issues that relate to the installation of sprinklers systems and given that sprinklers are currently not mandatory, it will not be possible to charge leaseholders for this aspect of the work.

7.0 Human resources implications

- 7.1 The significant scale of this programme and the vast amount of work needed to design and then deliver it, does create pressure on the existing resources. The demands on the team will be kept under regular review to ensure that support is provided where necessary.
- 7.2 The team will be supported by the relevant professional services personnel as required (architects, structural engineers etc.)

8.0 Health and safety implications

- 8.1 As with any major construction project, each phase of the programme is a large undertaking with some significant potential risks. However, there are robust processes in place to ensure that each phase is designed and delivered safely.
- 8.2 The first phase of works at Chetton Green was delivered well, by Wates Living Space. In recognition of their efforts, they were awarded a Considerate Constructor Gold Award for the project (which is an independent assessment whilst the work is underway that looked at a range of factors including how they minimised the impact on residents and members of the public and how they ensured everyone's safety).

9.0 Equalities implications

- 9.1 Has an equality impact assessment been carried out. **YES**
- 9.2 The Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and was presented to the Equality Circle Forum (ECF) on 7 March 2018 and approved at the next meeting. A progress update was provided to the ECF on 5 March 2019.

10.0 Impact on the environment and community

- 10.1 The focus of the programme is to replace defective mechanical and electrical components. Most modern replacements are far more energy-efficient, for example the new LED lighting will significantly reduce electricity use, which will provide a long-term environmental benefit.
- 10.2 The Wolverhampton Strategic Construction Partnership aims to provide much needed local employment and trading, which provides a stimulus to the fragile local economy.

11.0 Long term consequences for the company

- 11.1 The largest-risks for Wolverhampton Homes in the long-term, stem from the reputational damage in the event this project fails to be delivered in accordance with the programme.

12.0 Impact on business relationships with suppliers, customers and others

12.1 There are no negative impacts that could affect relationships with suppliers, customers or others. It should be noted that the Wolverhampton Strategic Construction Partnership works hard to cultivate strong links to local suppliers, manufacturers etc.

13.0 Impact on Wolverhampton Homes' Management System

13.1 There will be no impact on the management system as no new policy, or changes to existing policies is being proposed.

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Board Report

	Agenda Item 9
	24 May 2019 Annual People Development Update
	Open Report
Status:	For Information
Author and job title:	Oliver Herrmann, People and Community Development Manager
Contact No:	07766 472991
Recommendations:	Board members are asked to approve the content of the report.
Key risks and contentious issues:	<p>Tenants / Leaseholders and their family members are at risk of not being competitive in the current job market due to low attainment levels and poor employability skills. This subsequently could have an impact on income to Wolverhampton Homes.</p> <p>Failing to prepare / support tenants through welfare changes; leaving tenants without the necessary skills to manage effectively.</p> <p>Failing to capitalise on funding streams to drive and inspire community development across the city.</p> <p>Wolverhampton Homes failing to support the City of Wolverhampton Councils strategic vision – to create a city where there are high levels of employment and opportunities for all types of learning through life.</p> <p>Failure to deliver a robust apprenticeship programme could leave future skills gaps within the organisation and fails to contribute to the city-wide objective of creating sustainable employment opportunities for young people.</p>

Management Summary

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The report provides a progress update to Board members on all employability, training and people development initiatives provided for both tenants / leaseholders and family members of Wolverhampton Homes.
- 1.2 The report also highlights future proposals for the service and how it will support key priorities of the city such as increasing attainment levels, improving opportunities for young people, supporting homelessness and providing employability support to young people leaving care.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Over the last 12 months, the People Development Team has continued to work actively in line with the objectives of the Wolverhampton City Strategy 2011 - 2026, to develop a city where there are high levels of employment and opportunities for all types of learning throughout life.

The strategy aims to improve the social, environmental and economic well-being of the city. The team's activities support all age groups and look to target the most deprived areas of the city with training and employment initiatives to break the cycle of unemployment. In partnership with the City of Wolverhampton Council, we aim to close gaps in skills, identify and unlock the key barriers and make considerable progress to support city ambitions:

- In his 'State of Wolverhampton' speech to Wolverhampton City Council in September 2014, Council Leader Roger Lawrence made it clear that tackling unemployment and skills shortages in Wolverhampton is a top priority over the next 10 years.
 - The Wolverhampton City Strategy – Prosperity for all 2011 - 2026 has set ambitious goals to increase jobs, increase employment levels, tackle health inequalities and reduce child poverty. All the key partners across the public, private and voluntary sector have signed up to these priorities.
 - The latest information on Wolverhampton's unemployment statistics is contained at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The People and Community Development Manager continues to sit on the Skills and Employment Board for the city to shape the city-wide provision and strategy. The Board has highlighted several key features shaping the challenge in Wolverhampton:
 - Wolverhampton has a relatively large local economy, but despite new employment opportunities, has seen slower than average growth. Manufacturing and engineering are important sectors locally in terms of employment relative to the national average, but there is increasing diversification of sectors within the local economy.

- Wolverhampton residents are not competing as successfully as they might be for employment opportunities in Wolverhampton (and beyond).
- Wolverhampton has a lower than average skills base, for example a further 20,000 of the working population would need to obtain a qualification for the city to reach the national average.
- While there will be future employment opportunities in most sectors, the most projected growth in occupations is increasingly biased towards higher level skills.
- Wolverhampton currently has the highest number of applications per advert / vacancy than anywhere else in the country.
- Despite the improvements seen nationally, the claimant rate in Wolverhampton has continued to remain high compared to other regions and is currently the 5th highest in England.

2.3 The report details a number of ways that Wolverhampton Homes and its partners are supporting the city and are committed towards achieving the goals set out by the strategy. The success of the strategy will be measured on the below targets:

- By 2026 the number of jobs per head of the population in Wolverhampton will have grown from 0.77 to 0.85.
- By 2026 Wolverhampton will have an employment rate of at least 70% from a baseline of 61.3% in 2010.

2.4 Supporting tenants, leaseholders and family members with employment and training initiatives can have a significant impact on other areas of the organisation. Research from the Housing Associations' Charitable Trust (HACT) has shown that repair bills can be significantly reduced, if tenants are supported into work. Routine maintenance costs the social housing sector in England in excess of £1.8 billion per year and moving people back into work can help reduce this bill by approximately £130 million (*Community Investment and the Bottom Line*). The research found that:

- Tenants in full time employment are more likely to have between 16 - 34% lower responsive repair costs compared to tenants on full housing benefit.
- 31% of tenants are unemployed / inactive and another 11% are in part time employment (English Housing Survey Headline Report 2015).
- Based on these figures, if the differences in repair costs observed by HACT's study were extrapolated across the sector, approximately £130 million per year more is being spent on repairs than would be if these households were in full time employment.

3.0 LEAP

- 3.1 Members will have received previous reports to Board regarding LEAP. Over the last 12 months, the programme has continued to be developed and whilst this continues to be Wolverhampton Homes' overarching employability scheme, LEAP has been able to take advantage of funded opportunities within the region. This has allowed the People and Community Development team to increase the employment and training offer to Wolverhampton Homes' tenants, leaseholders and their family members.
- 3.2 Wolverhampton Homes made a further commitment to supporting tenants to sustain their tenancies and achieve their employment and training aspirations, by employing 3 new employment coaches in 2018:
- Employment Coach – Young people (ages 16-29)
 - Employment Coach – Adults (Ages 30+)
 - Employment Coach – Housing Support (new tenants / those experiencing homelessness)
- 3.3 This new approach has allowed employment coaches to work in the heart of our communities, taking our employment services to tenants' homes and community hubs. This way of working also allows the employment coaches to build strong relationships with individuals and brings the organisation closer to the community.
- 3.4 Each employment coach is experienced in their area and will build a bespoke plan for each individual to meet their goals.
- 3.5 LEAP continues to operate a 'never say no' ethos and the development programme ensures that Wolverhampton Homes' approach to skills development is inclusive to all, no matter their age, ethnicity, attainment levels or prior experience.
- 3.6 The People and Community Development Manager maintains relationships with partners and local organisations to create employment opportunities for tenants. This is in addition to working closely with organisations partnered through Wolverhampton Workbox.
- 3.7 The development programmes that form LEAP have individual performance targets attributed to them either by the funding body or by the Business Improvement team at Wolverhampton Homes.
- 3.8 In the last two financial years, Wolverhampton Homes have supported over 245 tenants / leaseholders (159 in 17 / 18, 86 in 18 / 19) into sustainable employment through this programme. The employment coaches have spent a significant time in the last 12 months working with residents who are some distance from the job market requiring more intense 1:1 support to progress them.
- 3.9 The social value for this work has been calculated using HACT's Wellbeing Valuation calculator. Wellbeing Valuation is the latest thinking in social impact measurement and allows organisations to measure the success of a social intervention by how much it increases people's wellbeing. To do this, the results of large national surveys are analysed to isolate the effect of a particular factor on a person's wellbeing.

3.10 Using this valuation, Wolverhampton Homes have created a wellbeing valuation of over £3 million by supporting 245 tenants into work over the last two years.

4.0 Black Country Impact (for Wolverhampton Homes Tenants aged 15 - 29)

4.1 Members will have received previous information regarding the Black Country Impact Project and associated funding – a reminder of this programme is contained at Appendix 2.

4.2 Over the last financial year, Wolverhampton Homes have continued to work closely with the City of Wolverhampton Council, Connexions and other partners. Since the project commenced it has:

- Engaged with 2583 young people in Wolverhampton
- Supported over 1300 young people into a positive outcome

4.3 The initial impact project was due to end in July 2018, however an extension of the funding has now been approved through to 2021.

5.0 Click Start

5.1 The Building Better Opportunities programme is funded by the European Social Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund. The funding invests in local projects tackling the root causes of worklessness, promoting social inclusion, and driving local jobs and growth.

5.2 Black Country Click Start is one of four projects within the Building Better Opportunities programme that commenced in 2017. Wolverhampton Homes became a delivery partner with the aim of moving tenants into or closer to the labour market by developing their financial and digital skills.

5.3 The objectives of the project are:

- Participants have increased skills and confidence to use the internet
- Participants have improved access to employment, training and volunteering opportunities
- Participants have increased skills and ability to manage and save money
- Participants are able to communicate and connect with others

5.4 Over the last financial year, the Click Start team have:

- Engaged with 220 residents
- Enrolled 108 residents onto the programme
- 94% of residents said that their confidence had improved after completion
- 10 residents gained employment through the programme

5.5 Click Start currently has an end date of December 2019, however an extension bid has recently been submitted for a further 6 months.

6.0 Talent Match (for Wolverhampton Homes tenants or family members aged 18 - 29 with offending history)

- 6.1 The Talent Match / Impact programme is a European Social and Youth Employment Initiative funded programme that sits across the Black Country. The programme is designed to support young people aged between 18 – 29 who have a history of offending.
- 6.2 The programme has recently been retendered to focus on youth offending and Wolverhampton Homes have continued their partnership with Gazebo Theatre in Bilston to deliver this refocused programme until 2022.
- 6.3 Wolverhampton Homes' make referrals to a dedicated mentor who works with a low caseload to provide intense 1:1 support. The employment coaches work closely with Gazebo to support young offenders in the city and Wolverhampton Homes have delivered training sessions as well as work placements.
- 6.4 The new contract has recently commenced and an update on performance will be provided at the next performance briefing.

7.0 Looked After Children

- 7.1 Wolverhampton Homes have worked actively to support the City of Wolverhampton Council's vision of improving the life chances of all children and young people living in Wolverhampton.
- 7.2 The Looked After Children population in Wolverhampton has continued to decline slowly over the last 3-years and in March 2017 stood at 643 from a baseline of 807 in 2014. For many young people, the transition post 18 is increasingly complex, which can mean that they find the acquisition of skills and confidence to live independently difficult to acquire. This in turn can increase vulnerability, and adversely impact on life chance in terms of education, employment and securing and maintaining accommodation.
- 7.3 The People and Community Development Team have worked closely with the City of Wolverhampton Council's Transition Team to provide a pathway into training and employment for a number of young people. The organisation has supported 5 young people in 2018 / 19 of which Wolverhampton Homes appointed a further 2 looked after children into apprenticeship positions.
- 7.4 These apprentices were not only supported with qualifications and onsite training but also life skills, which included cooking classes, budgeting sessions, housing support and bespoke support depending on their requirements.
- 7.5 Wolverhampton Homes have made a commitment to continue to support 5 looked after children with their employment and training schemes in 2019 / 20.
- 7.6 The organisation continues to promote Looked After Children Week and as in previous years, will give young people an opportunity to see the varied roles that are on offer at Wolverhampton Homes.

8.0 Performance and Monitoring

- 8.1 The numerous programmes that now formulate LEAP have specific targets attributed to them either by the funding body or Wolverhampton Homes' Business Improvement Team. These are reported on quarterly at SMT performance reviews. The People and Community Development Team are currently performing well against the majority of targets set.
- 8.2 The programmes are regularly audited by the accountable bodies and external funding bodies. All external audits to date have been favourable to the work done by Wolverhampton Homes.
- 8.3 Brunel University, London released research that claimed Housing providers were more effective than job centres in helping tenants to take their first steps on the career ladder. Following this research, the People and Community Development Team completed their own survey, which showed that 93% of tenants found Wolverhampton Homes more helpful than their job centre and 5% said about they were both equally effective.

9.0 Other Programmes

- 9.1 In addition to the programmes that sit underneath LEAP, the People and Community Development Team also support a number of other programmes across the city.
- 9.2 *City Deal – Working Together Project*

Appendix 3 - contains a reminder for Board members of the working together project. The Working Together project commenced in August 2014 in Bilston East, targeting social housing tenants who are currently out of work and education. The People and Community Development Team partnered with Bilston Resource Centre to engage and deliver the provision within the area. Since the project commenced there has been a 16.6% reduction in the number of people claiming job seekers allowance in the ward. The project has now concluded, and the findings have been used to inform the wider Black Country City Deal.

- 9.3 *Fast Track into Construction*

The People and Community Development team has continued to work in partnership with the City of Wolverhampton Council and Wolverhampton College to deliver fast track courses across the city. Over the last 12 months the programme has been delivered in partnership with Bouygues, Harpers, Spellar Metcalfe and Kier.

As part of the programme, participants receive safety boots, CSCS cards, Health and Safety Level 1 award, Asbestos Awareness Certificate, team building sessions, GOALS confidence building, a Level 1 multi trade certificate, a first aid certificate and work placements with local organisations.

9.4 *The Way – Youth Zone*

The section has continued to support The Way, since its opening on 16 January 2016. Young people have attended a number of construction site visits over the last 12 months to gain a greater insight of the sector.

Wolverhampton Homes' apprentices have spent time contributing to The Way over the last 12 months by working with young people to make improvements to the facility. In addition to this, the organisation has contributed to various career nights held at the facility, promoting the opportunities of Wolverhampton Homes and their partners.

9.5 *Enterprise Adviser Network*

In August 2016, Wolverhampton Council asked for support from Wolverhampton Homes to deliver the above national scheme. The purpose of the scheme is to create a powerful, lasting connection between local businesses and schools in the city. Designated Enterprise Advisors work directly with a school's leadership team to develop effective employer engagement plans.

The People and Community Development team have continued to support Our Lady & St. Chads School in Low Hill. In September 2016, the People and Community Development Manager completed an Audit on the school to look for any gaps in its provision for the employability of their students. Since then, the school has continued to work on an action plan to improve their support to students:

- A guest speaker in assembly's once a month from industry to raise aspiration levels and knowledge of different careers arranged by Wolverhampton Homes.
- Development of enterprise initiatives led by students, which has seen the launch of a school shop, entering a national enterprise competition and the development of an allotment.
- Creation of school wide events such as 'the bake off'.
- Growth of sport provision – sessions now delivered by Worcester Warriors Rugby Club to students.
- Interactive employability sessions delivered by employers, which include job fairs, mock interviews and CV workshops.
- Support to students who are at risk of falling out of education by Wolverhampton Homes' mentors.
- Work placements and site visits to a range of organisations.
- Mock interviews for all year 10 students.
- Introductions to a number of local organisations that can support the school with a range of activities.
- Delivered talks on the behalf of Black Country LEP.

9.6 *Work box and Wolves@Work*

The People and Community Development team continue to support the key projects of City of Wolverhampton Council such as the work box and Wolves@Work. The People and Community Development Manager was assigned to the work box steering group, which was a further recommendation of the Skills and Employment Commission 2015. The work

box aims to develop a fully interactive website to offer residents, businesses and providers improved access to skills, training and employment opportunities. Councillor John Reynolds said, 'the workbox will act as a 'front door' to information, advice and job opportunities.'

The workbox is now widely used by residents as the first point of call for information, advice and guidance. Employment coaches support residents to sign up to the online system to ensure they receive updated job information.

Wolverhampton Homes has several pages within the workbox to ensure tenants are kept aware of their offer.

The People and Community Development Team also continue to support the Wolves@Work initiative within the city by referring tenants and family members to the programme. The programme is a 3-year scheme and aims to support 3000 people into sustained employment. 30 coaches have been employed to work with employers and residents.

Wolves@Work to date has supported 3676 residents into employment and aims to reach 4676 by 2020.

10.0 Strategic Construction Partnership

10.1 People and Community Development are also responsible for working with Wates Living Space and United Living in relation to their employment and training aspirations. The partnership aims to deliver a legacy of supporting the community through local initiatives.

The People and Community Development Manager continues to support the development of new build sites across the city by working with a range of developers to ensure that they are able to achieve their social value targets set in relation to employment and training.

Over the last year, the partnership has delivered:

10.2 *Schools*

- 14 events at local schools such as career fairs, mock interviews and interactive demonstrations.
- 3 enterprise challenges.
- 16 school work experience placements.
- Support to the city skills show hosting over 800 students.
- One city wide apprenticeship showcases at the Molineux Stadium.

10.3 *Wolverhampton University*

- 1 career fairs attended.
- 2 breakfast networking events attended to meet students.
- 4 graduation awards sponsored and presented.

10.4 *Supporting Job Seekers*

- Fast track into construction programmes supported.
- 3 job centre events delivered.
- 1 city wide job fair supported, which attracted over 2000 people.

10.5 *Wolverhampton College*

- 1 job fair held.
- All apprentices through the partnership attend Wolverhampton College.

11.0 Wolverhampton Homes' Apprenticeship Scheme and Levy

11.1 In 2017 / 18 Wolverhampton Homes recruited 17 new construction apprentices. There are currently 14 apprentices remaining from this cohort and are on target to complete on their projected dates. The apprenticeship model is very much a shared approach between Wolverhampton Homes and their partners. This allows apprentices the opportunity to work on varied projects such as new build, infrastructure, commercial and repairs and maintenance creating well rounded apprentices.

11.2 This model also allows Wolverhampton Homes a greater control on the quality of onsite training and development of apprentices and ensures they take the opportunity to give back to their communities when the chance arises.

11.3 The organisation has made use of the apprenticeship levy to fund the training costs of these apprentices and office based LEAP apprentices across the organisation.

11.4 Wolverhampton Homes' apprentices have taken the opportunity to give back to their communities over the last 12 months. Supporting projects such as the recycling project in Rakegate, BBC project at the Big Venture and improvements to the Kingswood Trust.

11.5 Workforce profiling has been completed and a proposal for a 5-year apprenticeship model is being developed to meet potential future skills gaps.

12.0 Graduate Development Programme

12.1 In 2018, Wolverhampton Homes joined the City of Wolverhampton Council in employing a graduate through the National Graduate Development Programme on a 2-year scheme. The graduate has been supporting the development of the Community Strategy and will shortly be transferring to deliver a review on Temporary Accommodation.

13.0 Future Developments

13.1 Over the next 12-months, the employment coaches will continue to be embedded into our communities, working across 10 key hubs. This will be vital support to both tenancy officers and the People and Community Development Team to enhance our presence and services in localities and act as a driver for community cohesion.

- 13.2 The People and Community Development Team will also continue to make best use of funding streams to drive services in our community locations. This will include Maths and English classes, CV writing workshops and interview skills.
- 13.3 Wolverhampton Homes will continue to grow their apprenticeship provision to alleviate future skill gaps particularly within their trade workforce. The People and Community Development Team will seek further 'buy in' from local partners and supply chain to enhance the model.
- 13.4 The service will seek further external funding streams to enhance the provision for residents. This will include securing further funding for Click Start, which currently ends in December 2019.
- 13.5 The team will continue to support the main projects of City of Wolverhampton Council such as Wolves@Work and Impact to grow the employment rate towards the set targets.
- 13.6 2019 / 20 will see the development of Wolverhampton Homes' Women in Construction project as we aim to further enhance the diversity within the trade workforce.
- 13.7 Growing aspirations of young people within the city will remain key for the service. This will see the continuation of supporting school events and the Enterprise Adviser scheme. Again, the team will also continue to support the referrals from City of Wolverhampton Council's Looked After Children's Team.
- 13.8 Wolverhampton Homes have recently signed the 'Give us a chance' pledge. Give us a Chance (GUAC) is the leading consortium of social landlords who are rising to the challenge of helping people into work. It is the only consortium of social housing providers with open and ongoing dialogue with the government with regard to the relationship between housing providers and employment and skills services. The consortium will be used to brokerage funding for the sector and to share best practice.

14.0 Financial and value for money implications

- 14.1 External funding has been gained for Impact until July 2021.
- 14.2 External funding has been gained for Click Start until December 2019, pending further extension.
- 14.3 The People and Community Development Team currently host 1 employee to support the delivery of Impact. This additional staff member is at no cost to Wolverhampton Homes.
- 14.4 The People Development Team represent good value for money and research by HACT evidences savings that can be made across the organisation by supporting tenants with training and employment related activities as well as the wellbeing valuation gained.

15.0 Legal Implications

- 15.1 Work in line with European Social Fund / Lottery guidelines.

16.0 Human Resources Implications

- 16.1 All People and Community Development employees have been DBS checked and have studied for qualifications in safeguarding and prevent. There is a qualified designated safeguarding officer within the directorate.
- 16.2 Human Resources Team continue to produce employment contracts for tenants entering Wolverhampton Homes through LEAP following the necessary procedures.
- 16.3 Mentors and keyworkers continue to support tenants when entering employment for up to 13 weeks, which reduces the risk of any HR interventions.

17.0 Health and Safety Implications

- 17.1 All activities have had health and safety consideration and all trainees receive thorough induction and training. Risk assessments are in place where required.
- 17.2 All programmes have been audited in relation to health and safety by funders and also internal inspection.

18.0 Equalities Implications

- 18.1 An equality impact assessment has been carried out.
- 18.2 Equality statistics are gathered for all programmes and the section works with community partners to address any under representation.

19.0 Impact on the Environment and Community

- 19.1 Local residents are benefiting from investment in skills leading to better employment prospects. Wolverhampton Homes have significantly increased the number of tenants working for the organisation, since the start of LEAP.
- 19.2 Partners such as Continental Landscapes are supporting schemes by recruiting through the programme, which is making a positive impact to Wolverhampton Homes' estates.
- 19.3 Community wide programmes are being implemented across the estates of Wolverhampton.

20.0 Long term consequences for the company

- 20.1 The activities of the People and Community Development Team raise the profile of the organisation as an employer of choice and enhance Wolverhampton Homes' reputation as a training and employment provider.
- 20.2 The People and Community Development section are viewed as one of the leaders in housing in employability of residents. The People and Community Development Manager is regularly asked to deliver talks to the CIH (Chartered Institute of Housing), Housing Conference, APSE and other national conferences.

20.3 Equipping tenants with further qualifications and raising attainment letters promotes their job prospects. This in turn allows them to be better prepared for changes to Welfare.

21.0 Impact on business relationships with suppliers, customers and others

21.1 Wolverhampton Homes' partners and supply chain have pledged support to the programmes being delivered by the People and Community Development Team, providing training, apprenticeships and job opportunities.

22.0 Impact on business relationships with suppliers, customers and others

22.1 None identified – all up to date processes contained within.

23.0 List of Appendices

23.1 Appendix 1 - Unemployment Statistics, Wolverhampton

23.2 Appendix 2 - Black Country Impact Programme

23.3 Appendix 3 - City Deal – Working Together Pilot

Appendix 1 - Unemployment Statistics, Wolverhampton

Out-Of-Work Benefits

Under Universal Credit a broader span of claimants are required to look for work than under Jobseeker's Allowance. As Universal Credit Full Service is rolled out in particular areas, the number of people recorded as being on the Claimant Count is therefore likely to rise.

Claimant count by sex - not seasonally adjusted (February 2019)

	Wolverhampton (Numbers)	Wolverhampton (%)	West Midlands (%)	Great Britain (%)
All People	8,865	5.5	3.2	2.6
Males	5,295	6.5	3.8	3.1
Females	3,570	4.4	2.6	2.1

Source: ONS Claimant count by sex and age

Note: % is the number of claimants as a proportion of resident population of area aged 16-64 and gender

[view time-series](#) [compare other areas](#) [query dataset...](#)

Claimant count by age - not seasonally adjusted (February 2019)

	Wolverhampton (Level)	Wolverhampton (%)	West Midlands (%)	Great Britain (%)
Aged 16+	8,865	5.5	3.2	2.6
Aged 16 To 17	20	0.3	0.2	0.2
Aged 18 To 24	1,700	7.4	4.1	3.4
Aged 18 To 21	955	7.8	4.3	3.6
Aged 25 To 49	4,975	5.6	3.4	2.7
Aged 50+	2,170	4.8	2.8	2.3

Source: ONS Claimant count by sex and age

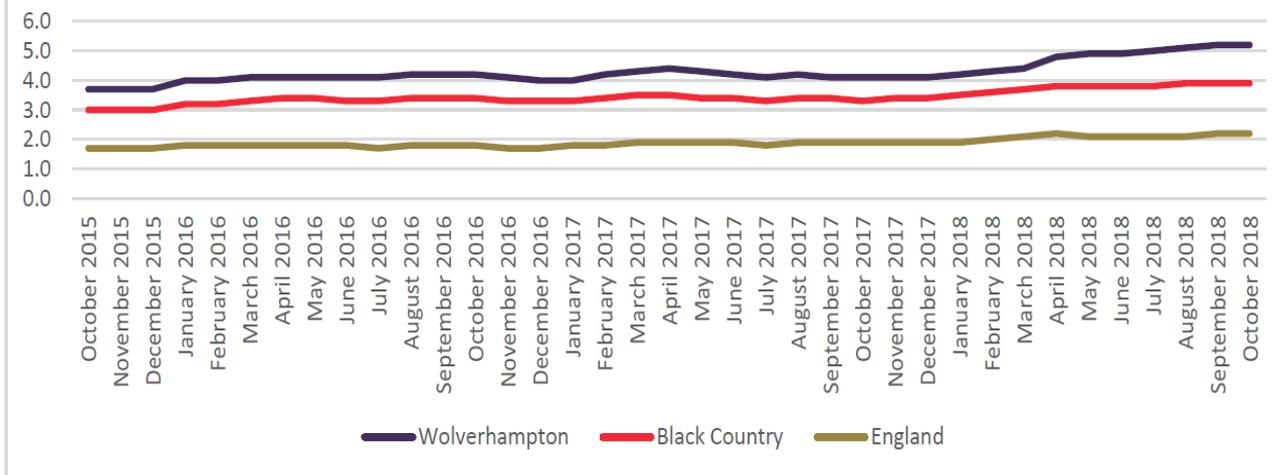
Note: % is number of claimants as a proportion of resident population of the same age

[view time-series](#) [compare other areas](#) [query dataset...](#)

Economic inactivity (Oct 2017-Sep 2018)

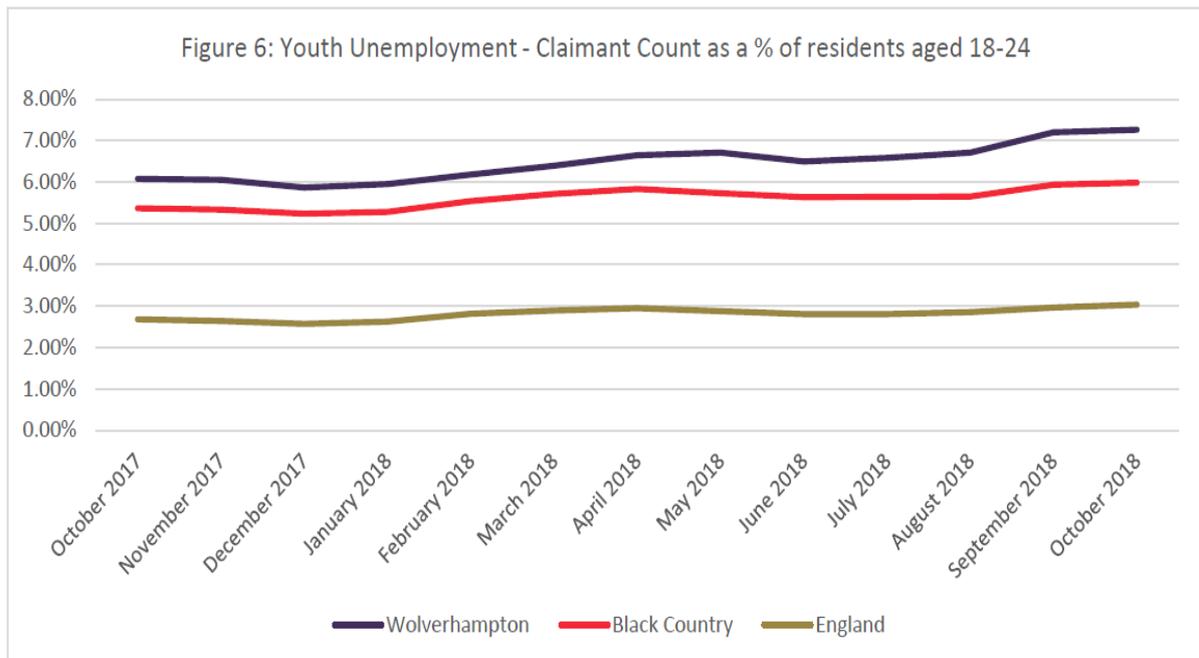
	Wolverhampton (Level)	Wolverhampton (%)	West Midlands (%)	Great Britain (%)
All People				
Total	48,300	30.0	23.0	21.5
Student	13,400	27.8	29.1	27.0
Looking After Family/Home	16,100	33.4	23.8	23.9
Temporary Sick	#	#	1.7	2.0
Long-Term Sick	10,500	21.7	21.8	22.4
Discouraged	!	!	0.5	0.4
Retired	4,400	9.1	12.8	12.9
Other	2,800	5.7	10.3	11.2
Wants A Job	6,600	13.7	17.8	21.4
Does Not Want A Job	41,700	86.3	82.2	78.6

Figure 4: Claimant count as a % of working age, aged 16-64



Claimant Count as a percentage of residents aged 18 to 24 (7.26%) is double the national rate of 3.04% and higher than the Black Country rate of 5.98% (see figure 6 below).

Figure 6: Youth Unemployment - Claimant Count as a % of residents aged 18-24



Seventeen of the twenty wards in Wolverhampton have a claimant count rate at or above the Black Country average of 3.9% (October 2018), see figure 7:

Figure 7: Claimant Count Rate % by Ward as a proportion of residents aged 16-64 (mid-2017 ward level estimates have now been updated.)

East Park	7.3%	Bilston East	6.4%	Bilston North	5.1%	Merry Hill	3.9%
Bushbury South and Low Hill	7.0%	Ettingshall	6.3%	Spring Vale	4.9%	Bushbury North	3.9%
St Peter's	6.8%	Park	6.1%	Blakenhall	4.8%	Tettenhall	2.3%
Heath Town	6.7%	Oxley	5.3%	Wednesfield South	4.1%	Wightwick	2.3%
Graiseley	6.4%	Fallings Park	5.3%	Wednesfield North	4.0%	Penn	2.3%
						Tettenhall Regis	2.1%

Earnings by place of residence (2018)

	Wolverhampton (Pounds)	West Midlands (Pounds)	Great Britain (Pounds)
Gross Weekly Pay			
Full-Time Workers	488.0	536.6	571.1
Male Full-Time Workers	515.4	578.5	612.2
Female Full-Time Workers	443.0	473.1	510.0
Hourly Pay - Excluding Overtime			
Full-Time Workers	12.00	13.27	14.36
Male Full-Time Workers	12.13	13.87	14.89
Female Full-Time Workers	11.57	12.48	13.56

Qualifications (Jan 2017-Dec 2017)

	Wolverhampton (Level)	Wolverhampton (%)	West Midlands (%)	Great Britain (%)
NVQ4 And Above	41,700	26.2	31.8	38.6
NVQ3 And Above	66,300	41.6	50.8	57.2
NVQ2 And Above	95,500	60.0	69.3	74.7
NVQ1 And Above	117,600	73.8	80.6	85.4
Other Qualifications	17,000	10.6	9.0	6.9
No Qualifications	24,800	15.6	10.4	7.7

Workless Households (Jan-Dec 2017)

	Wolverhampton	West Midlands	Great Britain
Number Of Workless Households	17,000	272,900	2,943,800
Percentage Of Households That Are Workless	22.5	15.5	14.5
Number Of Children In Workless Households	10,300	146,600	1,280,500
Percentage Of Children Who Are In Households That Are Workless	20.3	12.8	10.7

Appendix 2 - Black Country Impact Programme

Black Country Impact (for Wolverhampton Homes Tenants aged 16 - 29)

The Impact programme is a Black Country wide initiative to tackle unemployment amongst 16 - 29 year olds in the region. The accountable body for the programme is Dudley MBC and the City of Wolverhampton Council is one of the main strategic partners. The project in Wolverhampton is worth a value of £5.7 million, which is made up of European Social Funding, Youth Employment Initiative and local match funding. The programme was late in starting its delivery and is therefore proposing to meet targets set over a four year scheme in 2-years. There are currently 18-months left to deliver the performance indicators below:

Engage with 3,443 young people between the age of 15 - 29 who are not in employment, education or training over 4-years.

Provide 1,671 young people with a customised support package.

Support 1,170 young people into employment, education and training.

10 key workers were appointed across the city with 2 being hosted initially by Wolverhampton Homes in the People and Community Development Team. Since, the contract extension through to 2021, Wolverhampton Homes now host 1 key worker. In addition to this, Ronnie Fray (Employment Coach – Young People) supports the project and leads on the engagement and outreach of young people. The key workers have access to a central project budget and a 'menu' of procured support to aid young people with training / qualifications, travel, childcare and attire for interviews or for when residents first start a new job.

Wolverhampton Homes are engaging with and being referred to any young people that reside in one of their properties.

Appendix 3 – City Deal – Working Together Pilot

City Deal – Working Together Project

The 'Working Together' pilot project aimed to increase the employability and employment of 2,800 long-term unemployed and economically inactive Black Country social housing tenants and move 900 of them into work over a 5-year period. The pilot operates in the geographical areas listed below:

- Walsall - Darlaston South
- Wolverhampton - Bilston East
- Dudley - Kates Hill
- Sandwell - Princes End

The project targets the following:

- Social housing tenants
- Over the age of 18 with a specific focus on 24+
- Economically inactive
- Long term unemployed for 6 months or more

As part of this programme, Wolverhampton Homes supported the engagement and delivery in Bilston East in partnership with Bilston Resource Centre. In 2014, Bilston East had high levels of unemployment and approximately over 40% of residents within the area had no formal qualifications.

Board Report

	Agenda Item 10
	24 May 2019 Revenue Monitoring for the Outturn 2018 - 2019
	Open Report
Status:	For Information
Author and job title:	Jan Lycett, Director of Business Support
Contact No:	01902 553512
Recommendations:	The Board are asked to note the revenue outturn position for the financial year 2018 - 2019.
Key risks and contentious issues:	<p>The outturn position for 2018 - 2019 is an underspend against the Quarter 3 approved budget of £1.7 million resulting with a contribution to reserves of £0.3 million.</p> <p>This outturn position is draft, subject to the external audit of the accounts.</p> <p>The Company recognise the importance of effective financial management and continues to actively manage and monitor budgets and the wider Medium-Term Financial Strategy.</p>

Management Summary

1.0 Purpose

1.1 This report is to inform Board of the revenue outturn for the 2018 - 2019 financial year.

2.0 Revenue Outturn 2018 - 2019

2.1 Wolverhampton Homes has achieved an overall underspend of £1.7 million against budgets at the end of March 2018. Total Income of £50.1 million is slightly higher than expenditure of £49.8 million, resulting in a contribution to reserves of £321,000. A breakdown of the figures is shown in Tables 1 and 2. The tables also illustrate the variance from the Quarter 3 outturn position.

Table 1 – Income and Expenditure Budget Position at 31 March 2019

	Actual 31 March 2019			Variance from Q3 Forecast		
	Budget	Actual	Variance	Quarter 3 Forecast	Variance	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Expenditure						
Employees	25,846	25,626	(220)	25,735	(109)	
Premises related – housing stock	13,885	14,025	140	14,174	(149)	
Private Sector Leasing Payments to landlords	310	440	130	409	31	
Facilities Costs	1,018	1,146	128	1,014	132	
Transport Related	1,585	1,327	(258)	1,402	(76)	
Supplies & Services	2,983	3,172	189	3,074	98	
Support Services	2,744	2,630	(114)	2,664	(34)	
Total Expenditure	48,370	48,365	(5)	48,472	(107)	
Income						
Management Fee	(39,509)	(39,509)	-	(39,509)	-	
Trading Income	(6,213)	(7,115)	(902)	(6,702)	(413)	

Private Sector Leasing Rental Income	(380)	(513)	(133)	(468)	(45)	
Other Income	(834)	(1,550)	(716)	(1,204)	(345)	
Total Income	(46,936)	(48,687)	(1,751)	(47,883)	(803)	
Balancing Contribution from Reserves	1,434	(322)	(1,756)	589	(911)	

Table 2 – Directorate Budget Position at 31 March 2019

Directorate	Actual 31 March 2019			Variance from Q3 Forecast	
	Budget	Actual	Variance	Q3 Forecast	Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Business Support	7,634	6,854	(780)	7,270	(416)
Property Services	21,721	21,294	(427)	21,601	(307)
Housing Management	9,095	8,654	(440)	8,832	(177)
Housing Options	2,493	2,385	(108)	2,396	(11)
Management Fee	(39,509)	(39,509)	–	(39,509)	–
Total	1,434	(322)	(1,756)	589	(911)

- 2.2 The outturn position has improved by £911,000 compared to the outturn position forecast at Quarter 3, when the overall forecast was for a contribution to reserves of £589,000. The budget and forecast variations are discussed in the following paragraphs.
- 2.3 Employee budgets were underspent by £220,000. This position reflects the £900,000 one off virement approved at Q3 to support the modernisation of our workforce and to pump prime the launch of our new office ‘hubs’. The outturn is around £100,000 less than the Q3 forecast due to some posts becoming vacant in the end quarter.
- 2.4 The final position for the year for Repairs and Maintenance non-pay budgets was an overspend of £140,000, around 1% of a budget of £13.9 million. This is made up of several variances, including an underspend on the responsive repairs budget of £420,000 and expenditure on Independent Living and Small Works Assistance (Home Improvements) programmes of £418,000, which was not included in the budget, or forecast at Quarter 3, but is fully recovered from additional income.

- 2.5 There was an overspend on the Facilities budget of £128,000, this was expenditure to facilitate agile working and planned to be funded from underspends.
- 2.6 Payments to landlords as part of the Private Sector Leasing scheme were £130,000, this was due to an increased number of leasehold properties, since the budget was calculated and is offset by an increase in rental income from the private sector tenants.
- 2.7 Transport related costs were £258,000. This was due to budget being set aside for expected increased costs for new vehicles in the process of being re-procured by the Council. These new fleet vehicles are not yet in service, so there was no additional cost. The underspend is higher than the forecast at Q3, because at this point delivery of the vehicles was expected in Q4.
- 2.8 An additional £901,000 above the budget for trading income was achieved in 2018 - 2019. This includes the £418,000 income to offset the expenditure on Home Improvements referred to in 2.4 above. There was also a further £400,000 to reimburse Wolverhampton Homes for expenditure on Temporary Accommodation costs from budgets retained by the Council.
- 2.9 Additional other income of £716,000 was achieved. This includes transitional grant income of £293,000 passed over from the Council to support the additional burdens of the Homelessness Reduction Act, external income for small works assistance £141,000 and insurance claims of £113,000.

3.0 Summary of Financial Position

- 3.1 The revenue underspend against the budget of £1.7 million for 2018 - 2019 demonstrates Wolverhampton Homes' track record of controlling expenditure and maximising income. The budget included an approved contribution from reserves of £1.4 million to support the budget, but in fact there will be a contribution to reserves of £0.3 million. This is an improvement of £0.9 million on the position forecast at Quarter 3 of 2018 - 2019.
- 3.2 Reserves balances now at a total of £11.0 million, this leaves more funding available than planned for one off investment as the company looks to decrease costs overall in line with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. This strategy is under review and further reports will be made to the next Resources and Board meetings to support some potential 'invest to save' opportunities that are currently being explored.

4.0 Financial and value for money implications

- 4.1 Wolverhampton Homes has a long-term record of effective budgetary control and achieved an under spend of £1.7 million against the base budget in 2018 - 2019. The focus on value for money and the drive to transform services continues and again will be subject to further reports to Resources and Board.

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**

9.0 Long term consequences for the company

9.1 Tight control of budgets and getting the best use of our cash reserves is essential to ensure we have sufficient resources in the long term.

10.0 Impact on business relationships with suppliers, customers and others

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

11.0 Impact on the Wolverhampton Homes' Management System

11.1 Will any new policy or policy updates have an impact on the management system. **NO**

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