

# FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

## AGENDA

### HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL

**Date:** Thursday, 21 September 2017

**Time:** 6.00 pm

**Venue:** Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

**Members:**

Councillor F Birkett (Chairman)

Councillor B Bayford (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Mrs M Brady  
Mrs C Heneghan  
Mrs C L A Hockley  
Ms S Pankhurst  
D L Steadman

**Deputies:** S D Martin  
Mrs K K Trott



**1. Apologies for Absence**

**2. Minutes (Pages 5 - 8)**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Housing Policy Development and Review Panel meeting held on 20 July 2017.

**3. Chairman's Announcements**

**4. Declarations of Interest and Disclosures of Advice or Directions**

To receive any declarations of interest from members in accordance with Standing Orders and the Council's Code of Conduct and disclosures of advice or directions received from Group Leaders or Political Groups, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

**5. Deputations**

To receive any deputations of which notice has been lodged.

**6. Tenancy Management Report (Pages 9 - 22)**

To consider a report by the Director of Operations on Tenancy Management.

**7. Empty Properties Update (Pages 23 - 26)**

To consider a report by the Director of Operations on empty properties across the Borough.

**8. Review of the Work Programme (Pages 27 - 30)**

To consider a report by the Director of Operations, which invites the Panel to review the Work Programme for 2017/18.



P GRIMWOOD  
Chief Executive Officer

Civic Offices  
[www.fareham.gov.uk](http://www.fareham.gov.uk)  
11 September 2017

**For further information please contact:  
Democratic Services, Civic Offices, Fareham, PO16 7AZ  
Tel:01329 236100  
[democraticservices@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@fareham.gov.uk)**

# FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Housing Policy Development and Review Panel

**(to be confirmed at the next meeting)**

**Date:** Thursday, 20 July 2017

**Venue:** Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

**PRESENT:**

**Councillor:** F Birkett (Chairman)

**Councillors:** Mrs M Brady, Mrs C Heneghan, Mrs C L A Hockley,  
Ms S Pankhurst and D L Steadman

**Also Present:** Mrs K Mandry, Executive Member for Housing (for item 7)



**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor B Bayford.

Councillor F W Birkett was not present at the start of the meeting. In the absence of both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Mrs C L A Hockley was invited to chair the meeting.

**2. MINUTES**

It was AGREED that the minutes of the Housing Policy Development and Review Panel meeting held on 25 May 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISCLOSURES OF ADVICE OR DIRECTIONS**

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

**5. DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations made at this meeting.

**6. COUNCIL HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE REPORT**

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Operations on Council Housing Repairs and Maintenance.

Councillor F W Birkett arrived at the meeting during consideration of this item (6.10pm) and took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Members were advised that as a result of issues highlighted by the Grenfell Tower disaster, officers are undertaking reviews of fire safety risk assessments carried out on Council owned properties in the Borough and will work with partnership agencies on work to be done in the coming months. A special edition of the tenant's' newsletter has been produced and circulated to tenants to highlight fire safety issues and provide fire prevention guidance.

It was AGREED that Members note the content of the report.

**7. REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Operations which reviewed the Panel's Work Programme for 2017/18.

In response to Members' questions regarding ASPECT developments, Councillor Mrs K Mandry, Executive Member for Housing, addressed the Panel on this item.

The Director of Operations advised that following a presentation by Two Saints at a recent Scrutiny Board meeting, the Update on Homelessness will now be brought to the November meeting of the Panel.

Members requested that an update on Fire Issues and Precautions be brought to the November meeting of the Panel.

It was AGREED that:-

- (a) the Update on Homelessness be added to the Work Programme report for the meeting scheduled to take place in November;
- (b) an Update on Fire Issues and Precautions be added to the Work Programme report for the meeting scheduled to take place in November; and
- (c) the Panel notes the content of the report.

(The meeting started at 6.05 pm  
and ended at 6.35 pm).



# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### **Report to Housing Policy Development and Review Panel**

**Date**                    **21 September 2017**

**Report of:**            **Director of Operations**

**Subject:**              **TENANCY MANAGEMENT**

#### **SUMMARY**

This report provides Panel members with information in regard to housing management services covered by the Tenancy Services team. The report includes information about the Council's housing stock, staffing structures and an overview of housing service functions with particular attention to the management of Empty Council properties, Sheltered Housing service, Exchanges, Modernisation work and Right to Buy.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Panel notes the information contained within the report.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Tenancy Services team is responsible for the day to day management of council housing tenancies. Housing service functions provided by the Tenancy Services team include the following:
  - Housing Rent Collection;
  - Tenancy Management;
  - Estate Management;
  - Sheltered Housing;
  - Tenant Involvement;
  - Leasehold Management;
  - Right to Buy;
  - Empty Property Management;
  - Exchanges; and
  - Kitchen/Bathroom modernisations
2. This report provides panel members with some general information about the Council's Housing Stock and the staffing structure for Tenancy Services but also focuses on five service function areas: Sheltered Housing, Empty Property Management, Right to Buy, Exchanges and Kitchen/Bathroom modernisations. A further report on the remaining service function areas will be presented to the panel in March 2018.

## **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - HOUSING STOCK**

3. As at June 2017 there are 2394 properties. This figure is broken down into 1703 general needs properties and 691 sheltered properties. Properties sold under shared ownership and on a leasehold basis through Right to Buy are not included in these totals.
4. A breakdown of the general needs properties by size, type and area is illustrated in the table marked appendix A to this report, and a breakdown of the sheltered properties by size, type and area is illustrated in appendix B.
5. The stock figure is affected by right to buy sales, re-purchases, new build, demolitions and other disposals such as sale on the open market or change of use.
6. The Council also owns 582 garages which are let to tenants and private residents.

## **RIGHT TO BUY**

7. Most tenants who hold a secure tenancy for at least 3 years are eligible to purchase their home through the Right to Buy (RTB) scheme. This however does not apply to tenants who do not have a secure tenancy and those tenants who live in accommodation which is designated for the elderly and accommodation which is designated for the disabled.
8. Under the RTB scheme tenants can claim up to 70% discount off the purchase price subject to a maximum discount amount of £78,600.
9. Over the past 5 years a total of 51 homes have been purchased through RTB; 28 three bed houses; 17 two bed properties and 6 one bed properties. In the same period the Council purchased 12 properties using RTB receipts and built 99 new homes.



## **STAFFING STRUCTURES**

10. There are two separate staffing structures in place for Tenancy Services, one covering Tenancy Management, as illustrated in appendix C of this report and the other covering Sheltered Housing illustrated in appendix D.
11. Officers in the Tenancy Management team are all based at the Council's Civic Offices on Floor 5, whereas the Sheltered Housing team is based at sheltered schemes throughout the borough.

## **SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICE**

12. The sheltered housing officer team provides a sheltered housing service to tenants living in sheltered accommodation but also provides a service to a small number of elderly tenants living in general needs accommodation and elderly residents in the private sector.
13. The service for elderly and vulnerable tenants living in the council's sheltered accommodation is based on a CORE and CLUSTER model.
14. The service provided to 227 tenants living in the Council's CORE sheltered schemes is the presence of an onsite Sheltered Housing Officer during office hours Monday – Friday. Emergency assistance is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week throughout the year.

The CORE sheltered schemes are at the following sites:

- Assheton Court, Castle Street, Portchester
- Barnfield Court, Butser Walk, Fareham South West
- Collingwood Court, Stow Estate, Fareham North West
- Crofton Court, Bells Lane, Stubbington
- Downing Court, Churchill Close, Titchfield Common
- Sylvan Court, Jerram Place, Sarisbury

15. The service provided to 464 tenants living in the Council's CLUSTER sheltered schemes is dependent on the support needs of the individual tenant. The service options include a weekly visit from a mobile Sheltered Housing Officer; an alarm and monitoring service with emergency response by a member of the sheltered housing officer team or an alarm and monitoring service only. All three service options include an alarm linked to a central control centre which is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week throughout the year.
16. In addition to tenants living in sheltered housing accommodation, the Sheltered Housing Officer team also provides a service to approximately 25 elderly tenants living in general purpose accommodation and over 200 elderly residents living in their privately owned accommodation in the Borough.
17. The cost of the sheltered housing service is recovered in full from those tenants who receive the service. The cost of the service is made up of two charges; a sheltered housing management charge (eligible for housing benefit) which covers the cost of management and administration associated with the service and the other, a sheltered housing support charge (not eligible for housing benefit) which covers the cost of support provided to tenants by a Sheltered Housing Officer.

## MANAGEMENT OF EMPTY POPERTIES

18. The Council generally re-lets between 150 and 200 empty council homes each year. In 2016-17 a total of 186 homes were re-let. A breakdown of lettings by property size, type and designation are shown in the following tables

### General Needs Properties

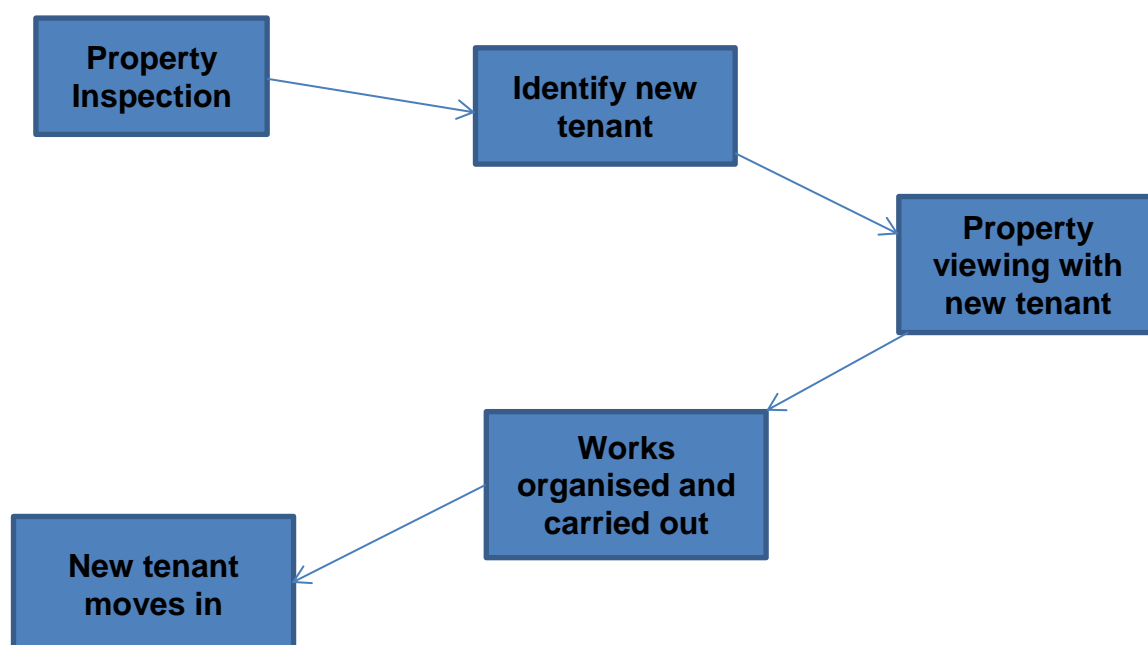
Property size and type	Number of Lettings
Bedsit/Studio Flats	11
1 Bedroom Flats/Maisonettes	24
1 Bed Bungalow/House	7
2 Bed Flats/Maisonettes	44
2 Bed Bungalow/House	4
3 Bed Flat	1
3 Bed House	24
4 Bed House	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>

### Sheltered Properties

Property size and type	Number of Lettings
Bedsit/Studio Flats	6
1 Bedroom Flats/Maisonettes	53
1 Bed Bungalow	7
2 Bed Flats	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>

19. The way in which empty homes are managed has changed in recent years with more emphasis placed on matching the right person to the vacant property and carrying out works to empty homes that have been identified and agreed with the new tenant, rather than reinstating the property to a prescribed standard.

20. The process of managing empty properties is summarised in the flowchart below:



21. In terms of performance measures, although we monitor the void period (Date when keys are returned by the outgoing tenant to the date when the new tenancy begins), the main focus is ensuring the right person is allocated the right property. Factors which help determine this are that:

- The property attributes meet the needs of the household – Right size, right area, property accessible and rent is affordable.

22. It is believed that by ensuring a good match of person to property, the new tenant will be happy in their new home, look after the property, pay their rent on time and show consideration to their neighbours. Monitoring of cases show that the majority of new tenants were not falling behind with their rent or reporting repairs after moving in. This contributes toward more sustainable tenancies in the longer term and the freeing up of officer time in managing tenancies.

## **EXCHANGES**

23. Tenants who hold a secure tenancy have a right to exchange (swap) their home. This is a mutual agreement with two or more parties who must have the written consent from their landlord.

24. Exchanges are a preferred housing option for many social housing tenants who may be adequately housed but want to move to a different area or are looking for a move to larger or smaller accommodation but don't want to wait years on any housing list.

25. The Council has signed up to a national exchange scheme called HomeSwapper and all secure tenants are eligible to apply through the scheme to exchange with another social housing tenant almost anywhere in the Country. On applying to HomeSwapper tenants are asked to provide information about their present property and say what property they are looking for.

26. At the time of writing, 178 council tenants are registered on Homeswapper. Of these, 22 are under-occupying their home and 69 are overcrowded.

27. The HomeSwapper scheme will match applicants' needs and notify them of potential exchange opportunities. When tenants believe they have identified a property they are interested in they contact the Council to obtain our written consent. The Council has 42 days in which to consider and respond. However in reality, if there are no issues arising, most exchanges are processed within 4 weeks.

28. On receipt of exchange application and confirming eligibility, housing officers arrange an inspection of the property together with a property surveyor and both parties to the exchange. The purpose of the visit is to identify and agree work that will be carried out by the Council and any work that the outgoing tenant needs to carry out prior to the exchange. In some cases the ingoing tenant may accept responsibility for the future maintenance and upkeep of any non- standard fixtures and fittings.

29. In the event that other parties to the exchange are social housing tenants of another local authority or housing association there will be an exchange of tenant references before any consent is given to the parties.

30. In 2016/17 a total of 21 exchanges took place; a third of these with other exchange parties living outside the Borough.

## **KITCHEN AND BATHROOM MODERNISATIONS**

31. Historically, the former Building Services team procured kitchen and bathroom replacements in occupied properties on a planned programme basis. Following the Systems Thinking intervention, the delivery of such works transferred to the Tenancy Services team.
32. In the event of a repair issue being reported to the Responsive Repairs team by the tenant, an operative will visit and assess whether it is necessary and proportionate to replace the kitchen or bathroom. If so, this is then referred to the Tenancy Services team to organise the works.
33. For the period August 2016 to May 2017 a total of 29 kitchens and 44 bathrooms were modernised in tenanted homes.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

34. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report.

## **CONCLUSION**

35. This report has provided panel members with some general information about the council housing service and in particular some of the service areas provided by the Tenancy Services team.

**Appendices:**        [Appendix A](#) - Stock breakdown for General Needs properties  
                              [Appendix B](#) - Stock breakdown for Sheltered properties  
                              [Appendix C](#) - Staffing structure for Tenancy Management  
                              [Appendix D](#) - Staffing structure for Sheltered Housing

**Background Papers:**    None

**Reference Papers:**     None

**Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please contact Jon Shore. (Ext 4375)

## Council Housing – General Needs Accommodation –Breakdown by Size/Type/Floor Level &amp; Property Area

	Locks Heath	North Fareham	Park Gate	Portchester	Salisbury	South Fareham	Stubbington	Titchfield	Warsash	Totals
Ground Floor Bedsit Flat		11				12		2		25
Upper Floor Bedsit Flat		27				27		8		62
1-Bedroom Bungalow				2	8	37	16	30	3	96
1-Bedroom Ground Floor Flat	15	20		20		46	13	2		116
1-Bedroom Upper Floor Flat	10	34		19		64	13	2		142
1-Bedroom House								1		1
2-Bedroom Bungalow		2	1	8		2	2			15
2-Bedroom Ground Floor Flat		46	8	54	12	3	4		6	133
2-Bedroom Upper Floor Flat		49	8	62	5	8	5		6	143
2-Bedroom Ground Floor Maisonette		9				63				72
2-Bedroom Upper Floor Maisonette		49		6		74				129
2-Bedroom House	8	9		17	9	1	24	1		69
3-Bedroom Bungalow				1						1
3-Bedroom Ground Floor Flat				1			1			2
3-Bedroom Upper Floor Flat							1			1
3-Bedroom Ground Floor Maisonette							1			1
3-Bedroom House	19	141	8	113	56	157	54	81	30	659
4-Bedroom House	1	4	1	6	4	8	3	6	2	35
5-Bedroom House		1								1
<b>Totals</b>	53	402	26	309	94	502	137	133	47	1703



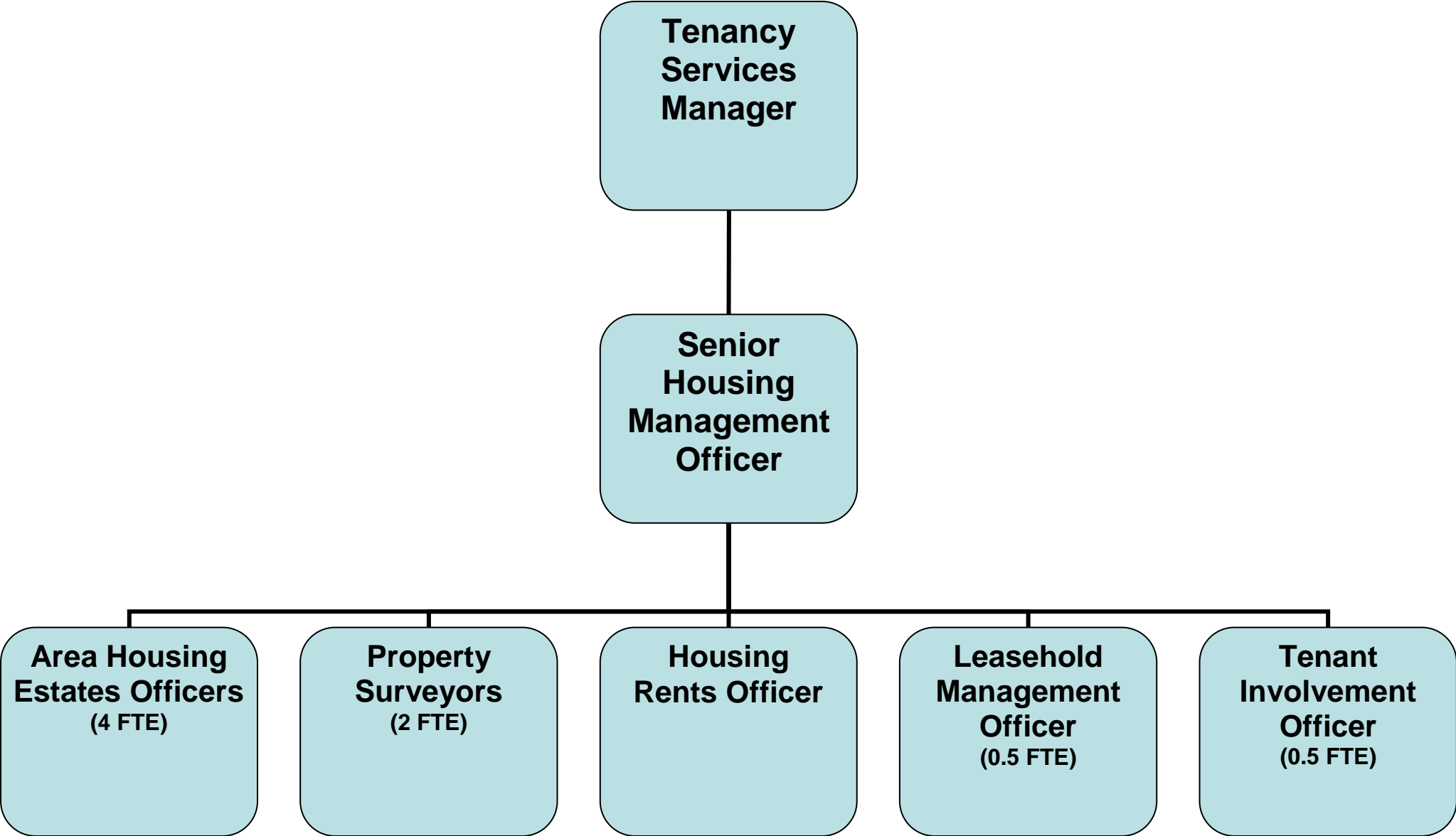
## Council Housing – Sheltered Housing Accommodation – Summary Breakdown by Size/Type & Property Area

	Locks Heath	North Fareham	Park Gate	Portchester	Salisbury	South Fareham	Stubbington	Titchfield	Warsash	Totals
<b>Bedsit Flat</b>				14	2		12	2		30
<b>1-Bedroom Bungalow</b>		18	9	15	1		6			49
<b>1-Bedroom Maisonette</b>				11						11
<b>1-Bedroom Flat</b>	36	105	14	49	36	126	91	92	20	569
<b>2-Bedroom Bungalow</b>		4								4
<b>2-Bedroom Flat</b>		17			11					28
<b>Totals</b>	36	144	23	89	50	126	109	94	20	691



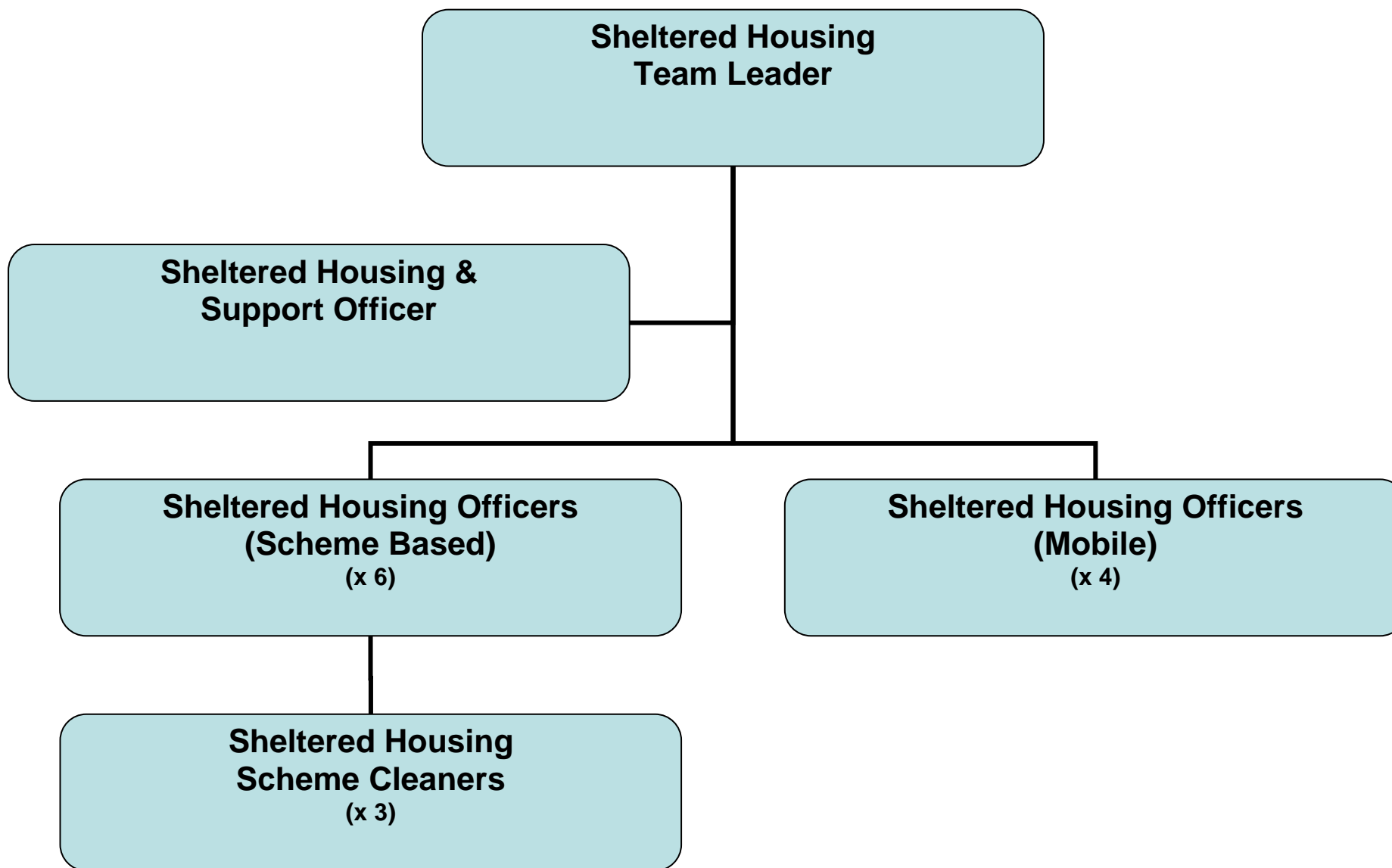


TENANCY SERVICES STAFFING STRUCTURE AS AT AUGUST 2017





**SHELTERED HOUSING STAFFING STRUCTURE AS AT AUGUST 2017**





# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### **Report to Housing Policy Development and Review Panel**

**Date**                    **21 September 2017**

**Report of:**            **Director of Operations**

**Subject:**              **EMPTY PROPERTIES**

#### **SUMMARY**

This report provides the Panel with an update on the activities being undertaken to bring empty properties across the Borough back into use.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Members are asked to note the information contained within the report.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Section 3 of the Housing Act 2004 requires local authorities to keep under review the housing conditions (including empty properties) in their district with a view to identifying what, if any, course of action should be taken. Properties become empty for many different reasons. In most cases, they remain empty for a short period, for example during a change in ownership, completion of probate or necessary renovations to enable occupation.
2. However, there are some homes that remain empty for long periods of time and are potentially a wasted resource. If left unoccupied they can quickly fall into disrepair, attract anti-social behaviour, encourage vandalism and reduce property values in the local area.
3. Bringing an empty property back into use is of benefit to the individual owner as it provides them with a tenant who becomes housed and/or a new owner with a home for them and their family, plus has advantages to the wider community and encourages economic activity.
4. The total number of empty properties in Fareham, including those currently exempted from council tax due to undergoing repairs, is 321. 147 of these fall into the definition of an empty dwelling under the Housing Act 2004, of which 51 have been empty for over two years (as of 31st July 2017).

## **HOW THE COUNCIL IS HELPING TO RETURN EMPTY PROPERTIES TO USE**

5. The Council's approach to bringing empty homes back into occupation is through the provision of advice and support to owners. This can take the form of advice on selling the property to a private purchaser or developer, letting (either privately or through our Farelets scheme), as well as the provision of information on how and where to get financial help.
6. In some circumstances, an interest free loan will be offered to enable the owner to carry out essential works to a property which they will then lease to the Council until the loan is repaid. Two loans have been agreed in the last 12 months (details of which can be found later in this report), and whilst uptake remains relatively low, we have found this initiative to be a useful mechanism for engaging with owners who may otherwise be reticent to bring their property back into use. Following these interventions, several properties have been brought back in to use where the owners have decided not to apply for a loan but have funded renovation work themselves.
7. However, there will be some instances in which an empty property is having such a detrimental impact on a neighbourhood that more formal and direct enforcement action must be considered where it is evident that owners are unwilling or unable to participate in the voluntary measures detailed above. Whilst Councils have compulsory purchase powers, many take the view that the procedures for this are not practical in the context of empty homes as the approach requires a change in ownership before the issue of reuse can be addressed. The process can be drawn out and complicated, particularly if the proposed action is opposed. Therefore, it is generally more appropriate to pursue an Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO), as provided for in the Housing Act 2004, which can bridge the gap between voluntary measures and compulsory purchase powers.

8. EDMO's are designed to operate along similar principles to private sector leasing arrangements however will only be granted if a Residential Property Tribunal are satisfied that the Council has exhausted all other alternatives.

## **RECENT SUCCESS – CASE STUDIES**

### **Property One**

9. The owner of a three bedroom, end of terrace Victorian property in Gosport Road which had been empty for over a year, responded to a mail shot as he was interested in our loan scheme. The property required modernisation but there was also the potential to convert it into two flats. Officers worked with the owner on the conversion because, apart from returning an empty property to use, the Council would ultimately acquire two flats to house homeless families and benefit from the new homes bonus payment.

### **Property Two**

10. Due to complaints from neighbours, officers became aware of a one bedroom 1990's property in Locks Heath that had been empty for nine years. The garden was overgrown and strewn with rubbish, rats had been seen regularly and there was evidence of rising damp on the party wall of the adjoining property.
11. The owner had abandoned the property and was difficult to trace. Once eventually traced, the owner did not respond to any council correspondence until he was advised that we were considering an EDMO. The owner decided to hand us the keys and asked that we deal with everything required to bring the property back into use, he also suggested that we keep 100% of the rental income until our outlay was recouped.
12. Due to the condition, it took four months to renovate the property, but now complete, the Council has another property for a homeless household, the area is improved and the owner and neighbours are pleased with the outcome.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

13. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report

## **CONCLUSION**

14. Officers will continue to take steps to bring empty properties in the Borough back into use, including the use of enforcement action where necessary.

**Background Papers:** None

**Reference Papers:** None

**Enquiries:** For further information on this report please contact Giles Hearn. (Ext 4404)





# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### **Report to Housing Policy Development and Review Panel**

**Date**                    **21 September 2017**

**Report of:**            **Director of Operations**

**Subject:**                **REVIEW OF WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18**

#### **SUMMARY**

At its meeting on 20 July 2017, the Housing Policy Development and Review Panel reviewed the Work Programme for 2017/18.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Panel further review the Work Programme for the year 2017/18.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. At the last meeting of the Panel on 20 July 2017, Members reviewed the Work Programme for 2017/18. A copy of the 2017/18 Work Programme is attached as Appendix A.

## **REVISIONS TO CURRENT WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18**

2. Members are asked to note the following revisions to the Work Programme:-
  - i. the addition of an item entitled 'Empty Properties Report' to the agenda for the meeting scheduled to take place on 21 September 2017.
  - ii. the addition of an item entitled 'Update on Homelessness' to the agenda for the meeting scheduled to take place on the 16 November 2017; and
  - iii. the addition of an item entitled 'Update on Fire Issues and Precautions' to the agenda for the meeting scheduled to take place on the 16 November 2017.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

3. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report.

## **CONCLUSION**

4. The Panel is invited to review the Work Programme for 2017/18 and, as appropriate, add to the programme any proposed additional items agreed generally by the Panel or put forward by individual Members and accepted by the Panel.

### **Appendices:**

**Appendix A** – Housing Policy Development and Review Panel Work Programme for 2017/18.

### **Background Papers:**

None

### **Reference Papers:**

None

### **Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please contact Paul Doran. (Ext 4572)

**HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL  
WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2017/18**

<b><u>MEETING DATES FOR 2017/18</u></b>	
25 May 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Work Programme 2017/18</li> <li>• Introduction to the Panel, achievements, priorities &amp; challenges</li> <li>• Annual review of Discretionary Housing Payments</li> </ul>
20 July 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Work Programme 2017/18</li> <li>• Council Housing Repairs and Maintenance Report</li> </ul>
21 September 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Work Programme 2017/18</li> <li>• Tenancy Management Report</li> <li>• Empty Properties Report</li> </ul>
16 November 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Work Programme 2017/18</li> <li>• Update on Homelessness</li> <li>• Update on Fire Issues and Precautions</li> </ul>
18 January 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary Review of Work Programme 2017/18 and Draft 2018/19</li> <li>• Review of Farelets</li> <li>• Council Housing Repairs and Maintenance Report</li> </ul>
08 March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Review of Work Programme 2017/18 and 2018/19</li> <li>• Tenancy Management Report</li> </ul>

**Unallocated items**

New Allocations Policy (draft)  
 New Allocations Policy -Consultation results  
 New Homelessness & Housing Options Strategy (draft)

