

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

AGENDA

HEALTH AND HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL

Date: Thursday, 16 January 2014

Time: 6:00 pm

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

Members:

Councillor Mrs M E Ellerton (Chairman)

Councillor T G Knight (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Miss S M Bell
N R Gregory
D L Steadman
Mrs K K Trott
D M Whittingham

Deputies: P J Davies
G Fazackarley



1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Health and Housing Policy Development and Review Panel meeting held on 14 November 2013.

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. Welfare Reform Update (Pages 5 - 12)

To consider a report by the Director of Finance and Resources which gives an update on the Welfare Reform.

7. Review of Impact of Removal of Spare Room Subsidy (Pages 13 - 16)

To consider a report by the Director of Community which reviews the Impact of the Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy.

8. Housing Initiatives (Accessing the private rented sector) (Pages 17 - 22)

To consider a report by the Director of Community on Housing Initiatives, (Accessing the private rented sector).

9. Preliminary Overall Review of Work programme 2013/14 and Draft Work Programme 2014/15 (Pages 23 - 28)

To consider a report by the Director of Community, on a Preliminary review of the Work Programme for 2013/14 and the Draft Work Programme for 2014/15.

P GRIMWOOD
Chief Executive Officer

Civic Offices
www.fareham.gov.uk
8 January 2014

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FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Health and Housing Policy Development and Review Panel

(to be confirmed at the next meeting)

Date: Thursday, 14 November 2013

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

Mrs M E Ellerton (Chairman)

T G Knight (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: Miss S M Bell, N R Gregory, D L Steadman and
D M Whittingham

**Also
Present:**



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Mrs K K Trott and G Fazackarley.

An apology of absence was also received from Councillor B Bayford, Executive Member for Health and Housing who asked the Director of Community to update the Panel on the outcomes of the recent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) meeting, which were:

A report was presented to the CCG on a review of cardiovascular services. Following the report the likely recommendation will be that all cardiovascular services are dealt with at Southampton General Hospital.

It was reported to the CCG that there were concerns from residents who were registered with GP practices outside of the Borough and CCG area regarding access to health visitors and nursing services.

Councillor Bayford would like members to share with him any health complaints or issues that they are informed of by residents so that he can address these with at the CCG meetings.

Members raised concerns over the increasing problem of patients accessing GP appointments at their local surgeries and the impact that this is having on the A&E departments at local hospitals. The Director of Community addressed the Panel to inform them that Councillor Bayford continues to address this issue with the Clinical Commissioning Group.

2. MINUTES

It was AGREED that the minutes of the Health and Housing Policy Development and Review Panel held on 12 September be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman addressed the Panel regarding the sad news of the passing of Alderman Ernest Crouch. The Panel's thoughts are with his family.

The Chairman also highlighted to the Panel, the Homelessness Event taking place in Ferneham Hall on 9th December 2013.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISCLOSURES OF ADVICE OR DIRECTIONS

There were no declarations of interest or disclosures of advice or direction made at this meeting.

5. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made at this meeting.

6. PUBLIC HEALTH GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION

The Panel received a presentation from the Community Development Manager on a recent Public Health Grant funding application submitted by the Council in respect of Fareham Park.

The presentation provided members with information on the public health and well-being funding bid submitted by the Council for use in the Fareham Park area and which will specifically focus on young people in this neighbourhood. The presentation explained that the Fareham Park area was chosen because it ranks in the top 3% nationally for skills deprivation and that the Fareham Park Project is a key corporate priority for the Council.

The presentation gave information on the Fareham Park 'Clued up 2 Go' project which aims to provide support to young people through three key areas;

1. the establishment of accessible health and wellbeing sessions including sexual health screening and drug and alcohol services,
2. the development of neighbourhood youth opportunities; and
3. initiatives and opportunities to challenge attitudes towards domestic violence and improving relationships among young people.

The Panel were also informed that there will be opportunity for second phase in the New Year to bid for funding for other initiatives.

It was AGREED that the Community Development Manager be thanked for her comprehensive presentation.

7. ALLOCATIONS POLICY - SIX MONTH REVIEW

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Community which gave a Six Month Review of the Allocations Policy.

The Housing Options Manager presented the report to the Panel and highlighted the proposed changes to the allocations policy and the reasons for them.

The Panel expressed concern over the quality of medical information being provided by GP's in respect of medical applications and over the cost being charged for this information, and requested that Councillor Bayford address this issue with the Clinical Commissioning Group.

It was AGREED that the Panel approves the proposed amendments to the Allocations Policy, for these to be subject to consultation before implementation on 1 April 2014.

8. REVIEW OF HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING IN THE BOROUGH

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Community which reviewed homelessness for the past year and outlined the approach to preparing the next Homelessness and Housing Options Strategy for the period 2014-2017.

The Panel asked how the Strategic Housing division is dealing with the increasing number of parental evictions. It was explained to the Panel that a more active approach in dealing with parental evictions has been adopted by the Housing Options team with the Housing Options Officers working more closely with families to try and prevent these evictions.

It was AGREED that the content of the report be noted.

9. REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Community which reviewed the Work Programme for 2013/14.

The Panel were informed that since the report had been published a further change to the work programme had been made, and that the report due in January 2014 on the New Tenancy Agreement has now been moved to the March 2014 meeting.

It was AGREED that, subject to the revisions above, the Work Programme for 2013/14 as set out in Appendix A of the report, be approved.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 7.13 pm).

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Health and Housing Policy Development Review Panel

Date **16 January 2014**

Report of: **Director of Finance and Resources**

Subject: **WELFARE REFORM UPDATE**

SUMMARY

Further to the report brought to the Panel in September 2012, this paper provides Panel members with an update on the progress of the Government's reform of welfare, the implications for the Council and the impact on our residents currently living in social housing and the private rented sector and receiving assistance towards their rent and Council Tax.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Panel notes the information contained in the report.

INTRODUCTION

1. This paper will look to review a number of changes to Housing Benefit since April 2013 as a consequence of the Welfare Reform Act 2012. These include:
 - (a) Under-occupation in Social Housing properties
 - (b) The household Benefits Cap
 - (c) Changes to the Local Housing Allowance
2. The second section will look at the Introduction of the Council Tax Support Scheme, its impacts and how we have assisted those most affected by the changes.
3. The final part will look at the introduction of Universal Credit, the progression of the pilots and the intended abolition of Housing Benefit.

CHANGES TO HOUSING BENEFIT

Under-occupation in Social Housing properties

4. From April 2013 a 14% reduction is being applied to those who are deemed to have one spare bedroom and a 25% reduction for those with two spare bedrooms or more.
5. The assessment of requirements is the same criteria currently used in the calculation of the Local Housing Allowance applicable to the private rented sector: a bedroom will be allocated for a single adult or couple; every two children under the age of 10 or each child over 10 if they are different genders; a carer (or group of carers) providing overnight care.
6. Precedent set down within case law post April 2013 and emergency legislation being enacted has led to some further conditions being applicable to the size criteria which includes allowing a sole bedroom for a disabled child if their disability is such that it will disturb the sleep pattern of the other child if they were to share on a regular basis, a room allowed for adult children serving in the armed forces and one room allowed if the customer is a registered foster carer.
7. All social landlords with properties in the borough were contacted during late 2012 to share information held by us identifying those tenants who would be affected. Many commenced work with their tenants to help them prepare for the changes and they continue to assist new tenants and existing tenants as they become affected as household circumstances change.
8. As of the end of September 2013 we presently have 112 council tenants affected by the spare room subsidy of which 92 are affected by the 14% reduction and 20 are affected by the 25% reduction. Although we have seen a drop in the overall predicted cases, household changes appear to have led to an increase in those tenants affected by the 25% reduction.
9. We presently have 126 tenants affected by the spare room subsidy renting from a Housing Association. Of this 126, 115 are affected by the 14% reduction and 11 are affected by the 25% reduction.

10. We continue to work with existing customers who become affected by the spare room subsidy. We have continued to assist those most severely affected by these changes via our Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Fund where they are not in a position to find work or to move due to illness, disability or unexpected financial crisis.
11. In total we have assisted over 38 customers via DHP since April 2013 due to the spare room subsidy with an expenditure of around £24,500.

The household Benefits Cap

12. There is a limit on the total amount of benefit that most people aged 16 to 64 can get. This is called the benefit cap. This was introduced to our area in July 2013 after the national roll out in April 2013 was delayed.
13. Prior to this, work was done to identify those customers expected to be affected which included joint working with the housing department in order to contact and meet with those customers, to give joint benefit and housing advice along with the offer of money advice referrals to the CAB.
14. We presently have 12 households affected by the Benefits Cap within Fareham, none of which are council tenants. The cases are predominantly split between the private and social housing association sector.
15. Most customers have spoken directly with a Job Centre Plus Advisor and responded to help from both the benefits and housing services with regards to their options. Some have taken steps to remove themselves from the cap by applying for exemption benefits, finding work or seeking advice on moving to cheaper accommodation. Some customers have decided that through budgeting they can meet the shortfall.
16. We have assisted one customer to date via DHP and this award was to help the customer while she sought and accepted debt advice as she was in severe debt and was struggling to meet all of her creditor payment arrangements and meet the shortfall in her rent.
17. Recent feedback from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is that the Wessex Region is the top performer in the South for getting Benefit Cap households back into work and are placed 6th nationally. A figure of 25% of cases has been quoted as being successful in getting back into work.

Changes to the Local Housing Allowance

18. From April 2013, the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates have been set annually at the lower of a) the previous LHA rate increased by Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation amount based on the previous September CPI figure or b) the thirtieth percentile of local market rents as the previous September.
19. We have not seen any major impact this financial year specifically due to this change.
20. We have seen no real draw on our DHP fund to date specifically due to the changes to the LHA. We continue to see claims made at numbers similar to those before the changes specifically due to there being a shortfall between the LHA rate and the contractual rent.

21. However as the LHA rates continue to be reviewed on an annual basis and set outside of any direct alignment to current market rents we could start to see an impact in future years.

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT

22. Since April 2013 we have been administering our own Council Tax Support scheme which has replaced Council Tax Benefit.

23. We have continued to ensure that those of pension age are protected and they remain entitled to the same level of support as before.

24. We have protected the most vulnerable and again they have seen no change in their support level.

25. Those of working age who are not protected under our vulnerable scheme have seen a 8.5% minimum reduction in the level of their support.

26. During March 2013 over a three week period we provided a dedicated team of officers at Ferneham Hall to deal directly with enquiries due to these changes along with other welfare reform changes.

27. We were able to assist customers who began to pay council tax for the first time by spreading payments over a 12 month period rather than the usual 10 month period to help with their budgeting. We were also able to give advice on different payment options.

28. We also introduced a Hardship Fund for those customers most severely affected by the changes. We also funded a Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) officer post in order to provide independent assistance to those seeking debt and budgeting advice.

29. To date we have seen only a few applications made to the Hardship Fund as many customers have managed to accommodate having to pay Council Tax for the first time.

30. The proposals for year two of our Council Tax Support Scheme include a reduction to the lower of either 20% of the liability or a Band C property.

31. We hope to keep the present Hardship Fund at its present monetary level in year two as we expect to see an increase in demand from those who may struggle to meet the higher charge.

32. The impact of the higher charge in year two could affect a tenant's ability to pay their rent. We will look to work closely with Housing Officers and the CAB offering money and budgeting advice.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

33. Universal Credit (UC) is intended to simplify and streamline the existing welfare benefits system by bringing together a range of benefits and credits (including HB) into a single system.

34. UC did not go live nationally in October 2013 as originally planned. Currently a UC

'Pathfinder' programme is taking place in 4 Local Authority areas. The findings from the Pathfinders will be used to make changes (where necessary) to ensure the new service is reliable when UC goes live nationally.

35. The timescale for a national rollout is still unclear and we have not been given any indication as to when Fareham can expect to see any claimants moving onto UC. Current pilots still appear to only be taking new claims from single non householder Job Seeker Allowance claimants and the focus is mainly on the capability of the I.T.
36. The Department of Work and Pensions and Local Government Association will continue to work together reviewing the pilot schemes to inform the eventual UC delivery.
37. A recent announcement from the DWP has confirmed by the summer of 2014, there will be 10 pilot sites ready to accept UC claims for couples followed by claims for families in late autumn 2014. Lord Freud, the Minister for Welfare Reform, has outlined that no transfer of existing claimants will commence until sometime in 2016.
38. A further recent announcement has made it clear that Local Authorities will continue to deliver Housing Benefit for those of pension age up to 2017 and beyond as progression of this reform to include housing costs within Pension Credit has been delayed.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The following risks remain the same:

39. Under-occupation in Social Housing properties:

Issues	Consequences	Possible Mitigation
Tenant unable to meet the shortfall between their rent and HB entitlement & falls into arrears	Additional collection costs for social landlords. Increased arrears and arrears maintenance work for social landlords	Early communication of changes to tenants. Encouraging tenants to downsize Provision of money advice Discretionary Housing Payments
Shortage of smaller properties	Tenants unable to move from no longer affordable properties	Provision of money advice Discretionary Housing Payments Review and publicise policies on taking in lodgers Continue to review

		downsizing policies
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40. The Household Benefits Cap

Issues	Consequences	Possible Mitigation
Families move, no alternative accommodation available	LA to fund temporary or B&B accommodation	Early communication of changes to affected households Provision of money advice Identification of alternative accommodation
Families move to smaller/shared accommodation locally	Overcrowding	Identification of families at risk of displacement early and where possible work with them to identify suitable alternative accommodation in same locality
Families move to a cheaper locality	Children having longer journey to school Longer travelling distances to find work Displacement of families support networks	Identification of families at risk of displacement early and where possible work with them to identify suitable alternative accommodation in same locality Work with receiving councils to minimize disruption to education and to identify suitable permanent accommodation

41. Changes to the Local Housing Allowance

Issues	Consequences	Possible Mitigation
Rent Inflation	Gap between LHA and rents increases	Work with landlords to encourage the inflation of rents by no more than the rate of CPI

42. Council Tax Support

Issues	Consequences	Possible Mitigation
Further reduction in budget with protection for pensioners	Working poor disproportionately affected	Introduction of Hardship Fund
Increase in council tax arrears	Unplanned reduction in income for the council	Continue our work with the CAB making money referrals where necessary and advising on the Hardship Fund.
Increase in collection costs	Increased financial pressures on the council	Continue to work with our customers and the CAB to ensure payment arrangements are manageable.
IT system availability	Difficulties in administering localised support	Engage with IT suppliers to ensure timely production of revised software as scheme changes occur and new developments are required.

43. Merger of HB into Universal Credit

Issues	Consequences	Possible Mitigation
Rundown of Council Benefits Service	Possible redundancy costs Possible TUPE issues	Undertake early planning to reduce staff as much as possible through re-deployment or natural wastage however taking into account possible need to continue service beyond 2017 due to project delays.
Increase in housing rent arrears	Cost of collecting arrears Cash flow challenges	Early publication by benefits service to housing providers of changes to HB, to enable them to

		mitigate impact
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CONCLUSION

44. With the significant changes detailed above, there continues to be the need for us to work closely with internal housing teams and other housing providers within the borough to ensure that all parties are fully informed of the impact to tenants as they become affected. This is not always easy as legislation changes have sometimes been brought in at short notice and some national reform projects have experienced delays.
45. Alongside the work being carried out relating to the changes to HB and the localised Council Tax Support scheme, a project group, led by the Director of Finance and Resources continues to review and monitor the progress of Universal Credit and its impact on the Council and its customers.

Reference Papers:

[Welfare Reform Act](#)

[Report to Full Council 12 December 2013](#)

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Zoey Hillary. (Ext 4402)

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Health and Housing Policy Development Review Panel

Date **16 January 2014**

Report of: **Director of Community**

Subject: **REVIEW OF IMPACT OF REMOVAL OF SPARE ROOM SUBSIDY**

SUMMARY

This report provides Panel members with a summary of the impact that the removal of the Spare Room Subsidy (RSRS) has made to Council Housing.

RECOMMENDATION

That Panel members note the contents of the report and endorse the proposal to organise an event for those tenants affected by the RSRS who may be interested in moving to smaller accommodation.

INTRODUCTION

1. As part of the Government's Welfare Reforms from April 2013 tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit (HB) that under-occupy their home saw a reduction in their weekly benefit entitlement, as a result of the removal of the spare room subsidy (RSRS).
2. As a result of the RSRS those tenants that under-occupied their home by one bedroom saw a reduction in their HB entitlement of 14% and those tenants that under-occupied their home by two or more bedrooms saw a reduction in their HB entitlement of 25%.
3. Prior to the RSRS many of those tenants affected would have had their rent in full covered by HB and thus had nothing to pay.
4. Officers monitor the rent accounts of those tenants affected by the RSRS on a monthly basis to gauge the impact this is having.

IMPACT OF REMOVAL OF SPARE ROOM SUBSIDY

5. As at 1 December 2013 there are 112 tenants that are affected by the RSRS, 92 of these are under-occupying by one bedroom and 20 by two or more bedrooms.
6. Rent arrears have increased by £7,989 between April and December 2013 for these cases.
7. 64 of the tenants affected by the RSRS were in rent arrears (equivalent to 57%) as at 1 December 2013, the remainder showing either a clear or credit balance on their rent account. 20 of these tenants were in arrears prior to the RSRS.
8. 34 of the 64 tenants in arrears are paying and either clearing or reducing their arrears. In the remaining 30 cases arrears are increasing. This in the main is as a result of erratic or insufficient payments. In 2 cases the tenant has made no payments at all since the RSRS, this has resulted in a Notice of Seeking Possession being served on the tenants which might result in referral to court.
9. A breakdown of the level of rent arrears owed by those tenants affected by the RSRS is shown in the table below:

Number of Cases	Arrears Banding
10	< £25
6	>£25 but <£50
10	>£50 but <£100
10	>£100 but <£200
5	>£200 but <£300
18	>£300 but <£500
4	>£500 but <£1000
1	>£1000 but <£2000

10. Tenants with arrears of between £300 and £500 that have not made an arrangement to repay or reduce the level of arrears are likely to be served with a Notice of Seeking Possession.

DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT (DHP)

11. Some of the tenants affected by the RSRS may be entitled to receive further financial assistance in making up the shortfall in HB by making a claim for Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP).
12. DHP however is short term as funds are limited. As a result claims are reviewed every 3 months.
13. Claims for DHP are assessed by the Council's Revenues and Benefits team. There are currently 7 tenants affected by the RSRS in receipt of DHP.
14. In 4 of the 7 cases the payment of DHP has meant the tenant has nothing to pay. In the remaining 3 cases the tenants are making payments and arrears are reducing.

REHOUSING

15. Since April 2013 7 tenants affected by the RSRS have moved to smaller accommodation; 6 by way of an exchange and 1 through the Housing Waiting List (HWL).
16. As at 6 December 2013 there were 26 tenants under-occupying their home registered on HomeSwapper looking to exchange to smaller accommodation. 23 of the 26 were under-occupying by one bedroom and 3 were under-occupying by 2 or more bedrooms. In contrast there are 24 tenants registered on HomeSwapper that are overcrowded so looking for larger accommodation.
17. Of the 26 tenants registered on HomeSwapper as under-occupying their home 15 are affected by the RSRS.
18. As at 16 December 2013 there are 18 tenants registered on the Council's Housing Waiting List looking to move to smaller accommodation. Of these 3 are affected by the RSRS and 5 are also registered on HomeSwapper.
19. Tenants affected by the RSRS who downsize via the HWL can receive payment of up to £500 from the Council to assist them with the cost of moving home.

PROPOSED EVENT

20. In view of the fact that there are a number of tenants affected by the RSRS that may wish to pursue a move to smaller accommodation officers are proposing to hold an event in January/February 2014 to which the following would be invited:
 - (a) All tenants that are affected by the RSRS;
 - (b) Tenants registered on the Council's Waiting List who are looking to move to smaller accommodation; and
 - (c) Tenants that are registered on HomeSwapper and currently overcrowded and looking for a move to larger accommodation.
21. Fareham's Housing Association partners are to be notified of the event in order that they can publicise this to their tenants affected by the RSRS.
22. Such an event would enable officers to:

- (a) Make those tenants that are affected by the RSRS aware of the possibility of claiming DHP and assist them in making an application as necessary;
- (b) Make those tenants that are affected by the RSRS aware of their housing options should they wish to move either through HomeSwapper or the Housing Waiting List, assisting them in making applications as necessary and;
- (c) Make those tenants that are under-occupying their home and registered on the Housing Waiting List aware that they can also register on HomeSwapper, assisting them to register as necessary.

23. The event would also provide an opportunity for tenants who are under-occupying and those that are over-crowded to meet and potentially discuss exchanging with one another.

24. It is anticipated that officers would be present from the Tenancy Services, Housing Options and Revenue and Benefits teams with access to PC's to enable any applications or claims to be made.

RISK ASSESSMENT

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

CONCLUSION

26. This report has provided Panel members with information on the impact on Council Housing as a result of the removal of spare room subsidy.

27. The report has also highlighted a proposed event to increase tenants' awareness of the options available in dealing with the impact of the RSRS including making claim for DHP and applying for a move to smaller accommodation.

Background Papers: None

Reference Papers: None

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Jon Shore. (Ext 4540)

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Health and Housing Policy Development Review Panel

Date **16 January 2014**

Report of: **Director of Community**

Subject: **HOUSING INITIATIVES (ACCESSING THE PRIVATE RENTED
SECTOR)**

SUMMARY

Following changes in the welfare system, the demand for the Housing Options service and for temporary accommodation (TA) has increased significantly. In response to this, work has been carried out with private sector landlords in order to develop three new private rented sector (PRS) schemes with the aim of encouraging more landlords to work with the Council and allow their properties to be let through Strategic Housing.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Panel supports the development and publication of the private rented sector (PRS) schemes described in the report.

INTRODUCTION

1. Due to the changes brought about by the recent welfare reform, the Housing Options service is seeing more customers who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Many are unable to afford to find their own accommodation in the private rented sector due to increasing rents and fees charged by letting agents. Therefore, the demand for temporary accommodation (TA) is increasing. The greater numbers in bed and breakfast (B&B) establishments over the last few months confirm the need for more TA; customers are only placed in B&B accommodation if there is no other solution available. The use of B&B also comes with legally imposed time restrictions and is very expensive, with a six week family placement costing around £3,000.
2. In order to reduce the reliance on B&B accommodation, the council needs to be able to access more private sector properties to use as TA, but this has become increasingly difficult. In order to increase the supply, the council has to offer something new to landlords, so officers from the Housing Initiatives Team met with a group of local landlords to discuss ideas for a number of new PRS schemes. The schemes described below are those which generated the most interest.

THE PROPOSED SCHEMES

3. Two of the three proposed new schemes are closely based on schemes already operated by the council; the AFFORD scheme and the Private Sector Lease (PSL) schemes. The landlord focus group felt that although these schemes were still attractive, they could be improved to appeal to more landlords. A comparison table showing all of the schemes is attached at Appendix 1.

SCHEME 1 - THE TENANT FINDING SERVICE

4. This scheme is almost identical to the current AFFORD scheme. The Council matches a tenant with a landlord, provides a bond guarantee equivalent to one month's rent in lieu of a deposit and guarantees the rent for the term of the tenancy. The difference is that the AFFORD rent guarantee period is six months, but in the new scheme the rent guarantee period will be twelve months. In order to discharge the homelessness duty into a private rented sector offer, a tenancy of twelve months must be provided. Guaranteeing the rent for the full tenancy period provides additional safeguards for the landlord should the tenant default on the rent. This scheme would continue to be free of charge to landlords.

SCHEME 2 – THE PSL PLUS SCHEME

5. The Private Sector Lease (PSL) Plus scheme is very similar to the current PSL scheme in that the Council takes on the lease of a private property for a period of at least twelve months and possibly up to five years. During the lease period, the Council is responsible for finding tenants, managing the tenancy, paying rent to the landlord and arranging repairs. The property owner has very little input. The rent is guaranteed for the term of the lease and the property is returned to the landlord at the end of the lease in the same condition as it was taken on, aside from fair wear and tear.
6. The existing PSL scheme is free to landlords, but it is proposed to charge a fixed fee of £300 for the PSL Plus scheme on taking out the first lease. On the annual renewal of the lease, there will be a £100 renewal fee. In return for the fee, the landlord will receive a gas safety certificate every 12 months, an electrical safety certificate every

five years and a carbon monoxide detector free of charge. They will also have access to the council's empty property loan and a separate loan of up to £2,000 in order to bring the property up to the required standards if needed. This loan will be repaid through the monthly rental income.

SCHEME 3 – THE FULL MANAGEMENT SCHEME

7. The full management scheme is very similar to the service offered by high street letting agents in that a monthly fee is charged for the service provided. The proposal is to charge 8% of the monthly rental income, plus VAT as this is comparable but competitive with the existing market. For this fee, the Council provides a bond equivalent to one month's rent in lieu of a deposit and will fully manage all aspects of the property including tenant finding, tenancy support and rent collection processes. Landlords will also receive the free safety certificates and the carbon monoxide detector, and have access to the empty property and property improvement loans as in the PSL Plus scheme. In addition, they will be eligible for repairs to the value of £150 per year and up to £100 in insurance excess costs for damage proven to be the responsibility of the tenant. The Council can also discharge its' homelessness duty into properties let under this scheme, as long as a twelve month tenancy is provided.
8. These three schemes offer private landlords an enhanced service with significant protection and safeguards against the traditional concerns with tenants claiming benefits.

RESOURCES

9. The proposed new schemes will require publicity and leaflets will need to be printed to explain the services offered. The estimated cost for a radio advertising campaign is £3,000 and printing costs are estimated at £1,000. These outgoings can be covered by the existing Homelessness Grant Funding awarded to Fareham Borough Council from the Department of Communities and Local Government. The three schemes can then be developed and managed within existing funds and aim to become self-financing within twelve months.
10. In order to recruit new landlords and manage the new schemes a new post of Tenancy Support Worker will be needed. Initially it is proposed that this post is offered on a one year fixed term contract funded from the Homelessness Grant Funding. If the scheme is successful, it is hoped that the fee income generated from the management of the properties will provide continued funding for the post.

TIMESCALES

11. The aim is to have the new schemes available from 1st April 2014. In the first year, the target is to take on forty five new properties across the three schemes.
12. The schemes will be fully monitored throughout the first twelve months and a further report produced at the end of that period to update Members on progress.

RISK ASSESSMENT

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

CONCLUSION

14. Due to the increased use of B&B establishments and rising demand for temporary accommodation in the private rented sector, new schemes have been developed in order to encourage more landlords to work with the council and increase the supply of TA available. These are based on existing PRS schemes, but have been enhanced with incentives to make them more attractive to landlords. The schemes can be set up and managed within existing funds and will also generate income which can be used to fund an additional post.

Appendix 1 – [FBC Private Rented Property Options](#)

Background Papers:

Review of Temporary Accommodation – 12th September 2013

Reference Papers:

None

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Andrea Howells. (Ext 4370)

FBC PRIVATE RENTED PROPERTY OPTIONS

WHAT DO WE OFFER?	TENANT FIND	PREMIUM SERVICE (Full management)	PSL PLUS (Lease from landlord)
Find tenant	✓	✓	✓
Accompanied viewings	✗	✓	✓
Tenant referencing	✓	✓	✓
Tenancy agreement & inventory template provided	✓	✗ Carried out by FBC	✗ Carried out by FBC
Sign agreement with tenant	✗	✓	✓
Complete inventory with photographs	✗	✓	✓
Provide standard notice templates	✓	✗ Carried out by FBC	✗ Carried out by FBC
Serve notices as required	✗	✓	✓
Bond equivalent to 1 month rent	✓	✓	✗ return at end of tenancy in same condition
Rent guaranteed	✓ First 12 months of tenancy	✓ First 12 months of tenancy	✓ Full term of lease
Assist tenant with HB claim	✗	✓	✓
Notify utilities and Council Tax	✗	✓	✓
Tenant induction pack	✓	✓	✓
Arrange for repairs	✗	✓ Free up to £150/year	✓ at LL cost
Access to empty property loan *	✗	✓	✓
Free gas safety certificate	✗	✓	✓
Free electrical safety check	✗	✓	✓
Free CO detector	✗	✓	✓
Interest free loan up to £2,000 to improve property standards	✗	✓	✓
Cover up to £100 insurance excess for any claim resulting from tenant behaviour	✗	✓	✗
Monthly management statements and invoices	✗	✓	✗
Cost to landlord	✗ £0	✓ 8% + VAT per month	✓ £300 fixed fee (£100 renewal)

*Conditions apply

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Health and Housing Policy Development Review Panel

Date **16 January 2014**

Report of: **Director of Community**

Subject: **PRELIMINARY OVERALL REVIEW OF WORK PROGRAMME
2013/14 AND DRAFT 2014/15**

SUMMARY

At the meeting of the Panel on 13 March 2014, members will be asked to review the outcome of the work programme for the current year, 2013/14. Also at that meeting, the Panel will need to finalise the draft work programme for next year, 2014/15.

The report contains details of the position of the Panel's existing work programme for the current year, in order to allow an early assessment of progress. It also gives some background information to assist members in drawing up the work programme for 2014/15.

RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is invited to give initial consideration to the outcome of the 2013/14 work programme and to the draft work programme for 2014/15.

INTRODUCTION

1. The outcomes from the work programme for the current year (2013/14) will be reviewed at the Panel's meeting on 13 March 2014. At the same time it will be necessary for the Panel to finalise its work programme for the next municipal year (2014/15).
2. In order to assist the process, members are invited to consider both issues at this meeting.

REVISIONS TO THE WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

3. Members are requested to endorse the following revisions to the work programme for the current year:-
 - (a) the report titled "New Tenancy Agreement" has been removed from the agenda for 16 January 2014 and the Panel's work programme; and
 - (b) the report titled "Review of Housing Arrears" has now been changed to "Review of Impact of Removal of Spare Room Subsidy"
4. A copy of the updated Work Programme, incorporating the above revisions, is attached at Appendix A. It is suggested that the current work programme for 2013/14 is completed.

WORK PROGRAMME – NEXT YEAR 2014/15

Scrutiny Board Responsibilities

5. Members are reminded that the Scrutiny Board is generally responsible for:-
 - maintaining an overview of the discharge of the Council's Executive functions.
 - exercising the right to call-in, for reconsideration, any decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive (and individual Executive Members) or key decisions made by officers in exercise of their delegated powers.
 - reviewing and/or scrutinising any decisions made or actions taken in connection with the performance of any of the Council's functions.
 - reviewing and/or scrutinising any matters affecting the strategic plans and financial affairs of the Council.
 - considering matters affecting the area or local people and, in so doing, reviewing and scrutinising the performance of other public bodies in the area.

Role of the Policy Development and Review Panels

6. The Policy Development and Review Panels are responsible for preparing their own work programmes. Those programmes should take account of the role of the Panels to:-
 - assist in the development and formulation of policy.
 - report and advise upon policies and proposals relating to their particular service

interest.

- review the performance of services provided directly or indirectly by the Council.

7. There are six planned meetings of the Policy Development and Review Panels in the next municipal year, to deal with ordinary business.

Planning Next Year's Work Programme

8. Members are invited to consider items for the draft work programme for 2014/15. It has been previously suggested that a few items of major significance be chosen.
9. In addition to any other matters which members may wish the Panel to look at, the Executive may decide it wishes the Panel to carry out specific tasks during the next municipal year.
10. At this stage, particular items which are known to be coming before the Panel during the next year are:-

<u>MEETING DATES FOR 2014/15*</u>	<u>ITEMS</u>
8 May 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of Work Programme 2014/15•
17 July 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of Work Programme 2014/15•
11 September 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of Work Programme 2014/15•
13 November 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of Work Programme 2014/15•
15 January 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preliminary Review of Work Programme 2014/15 and Draft 2015/16•
12 March 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final Review of Work Programme 2014/15 and 2015/16•

11. Other general items may arise during the year, such as responding to consultation requests by the Government.

12. Statutory strategies and policy framework items will need to be reported to any combination of the Review Panels, the Scrutiny Board, the Executive and the Council, as appropriate.

RISK ASSESSMENT

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

CONCLUSION

14. Members are invited to give preliminary consideration to the outcomes of the Panel's work programme for the current year. In addition, members are asked to start drawing up an outline of a draft work programme for next year. Further consideration can then be given to these matters at the meeting on 13 March 2014.

Appendix A Health and Housing Policy Development and Review Panel
Work Programme 2013/14

Background Papers:

None

Reference Papers:

Health and Housing Policy Development and Review Panel Work Programme 2013/14

Report to Council – 12 December 2013 – Schedule of Meetings 2014/15

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Martyn George, Director of Community. (Ext 4400)

**HEALTH AND HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL
PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2013/14**

<u>MEETING DATES FOR 2013/14</u>	<u>ITEMS</u>
23 May 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the role of the Panel • Review of the Work Programme 2013/14 • Review of Sheltered Housing Stock • Hampshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy • Development of Land at Palmerston Avenue
18 July 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Work Programme 2013/14 • Affordable Housing Programme • The Government's Green Deal • Floating Support Service for Older Persons • Fareham's Eco-Housing Exemplar • Review of Tenancy Agreements
12 September 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Work Programme 2013/14 • Presentation on Local Health Priorities (invitation to Director of Public) • Presentation on Fareham & Gosport Clinical Commissioning Group • Review of Temporary Accommodation • Discharging the Homelessness Duty through Accommodation in the Private Rented Sector
14 November 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Work Programme 2013/14 • Nominations Policy - Six monthly review • Review of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in the Borough
16 January 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary overall review of Work Programme 2013/14 and draft 2014/15 • Welfare Reform - update

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Impact of Removal of Spare Room Subsidy • Housing Initiatives (Accessing the private rented sector)
13 March 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final review of work programme for 2013/14 and draft for 2014/15 • Empty Homes - Update • Collingwood House Update • Health Update • Homelessness Strategy 2014-17