

# Housing Performance Report

## Adult's Health, Adult's Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018

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Author: Head of Housing  
Wards: All  
Parishes Affected: All

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### 1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 The report sets out the key current challenges and successes in the Housing Service.
- 1.2 The report assists members of the Committee to have a wider appreciation of the work undertaken by the Housing Service to enable the Committee to discuss priorities and challenges in the service area.
- 1.3 The links to the Swindon Vision in particular, Priority One: Improve infrastructure and housing to support a growing, low carbon economy and Priority Four: help people to help themselves while always protecting our most vulnerable adults and children.

### 2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Comment on the challenges and successes identified in section 3.0 of this report.

### 3. Detail

- 3.1 **New Affordable Housing:** The redevelopment of Sussex Square completed in 2017 won Best Affordable Housing Scheme in 2017 at the West Region Local Authority Building Control Awards. This significant regeneration scheme delivers Pledge 8 of the Council's Vision for Pledge 7. The wider Phase 1 development programme of 100 additional affordable homes will be completed by April/May 2018. This includes supported housing developments at, Bembridge Close, Linden Ave and the Hawthorns. Plans for a further major regeneration scheme are being developed in Queens Drive, Park South, the final feasibility work is scheduled to be reported to Cabinet in February 2018. These developments also contribute to Pledge 9.
- 3.2 **Homelessness:** The Council has recently applied for and received additional Flexible Homelessness Support Grant to alleviate the pressures described in the previous performance report to this Committee. This funding will assist with the current costs associated with temporary accommodation. The funding is only for two years, therefore plans are in development to deliver a different and affordable temporary accommodation model. The newly allocated funding allocation is shown in the table below:

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Michael Ash, Direct Dial 01793 464377, mash@swindon.gov.uk.

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Year	2017/18	2018/19
Swindon allocation (original)	£807,206	£904,071
Swindon allocation (revised)	£1,645,133	£1,842,549
Difference	£837,927	£938,478

- 3.3 **Temporary Winter Housing Provision:** A significant and exciting new initiative this year is the Temporary Winter Housing Provision. A site has been secured and funded by the Council to deliver a 12 week support programme for a group of 12-18 individuals who have been sleeping rough. This group have for a variety of reasons not engaged with statutory housing, health, care and treatment services. The intent of the Winter Provision is for the Council, its statutory partners and the voluntary sector to establish meaningful relationships with each individual so that they can address immediate health needs, stabilise their welfare benefit and employment status, and plan ahead for a sustainable housing offer at the end of the Winter Provision.
- 3.4 **Tenancy Management.** An ongoing challenge continues to be rent collection. The income of the Housing Revenue Account to meet tenants' service aspirations depends on a high rate of collection. The collection rate stands at 96.25% (as at Nov 2017) a remarkable achievement given the on-going changes to the Welfare System. Swindon went live on the 'full' Universal Credit system on 30th November 2016 as an "Early Adopter" of Universal Credit. This affects all new claims by working age residents including couples and families and may also affect tenants reporting a change of circumstances. Universal Credit is paid monthly in arrears and direct to tenants, Housing Benefit is paid weekly and direct to the tenants rent account.
- 3.5 **Fire Safety** remains a priority. The Grenfell tragedy continues to place a spot light on the Council's processes and procedures. In a previous report to this Committee early improvements were highlighted ahead of the findings from the Grenfell Inquiry. These include, new internal doors to our multi storey accommodation and a detailed survey recording the integrity of the compartmentalisation in the multi storey blocks. Tenders for these works are now at the detailed stage to enable contractors to bid for these works.
- 3.6 **Housing Revenue Account (HRA).** The social housing rent reduction of 1% per year until 2019/20 is a considerable challenge, as it results in a reduction of over £20 million in the housing capital programme. Current reserves and work completed by officers on efficiency savings continue to reduce the immediate

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impact on tenants. The Cabinet Member and the Head of Housing have approached our local MPs and the Minister of State to review the difficult funding arrangements facing Swindon's HRA.

#### **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 The Committee can choose how to operate performance reports from the Housing Service. Feedback on this report is welcomed.

#### **5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management**

##### Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial or procurement implications arising from this report.

##### Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Section 21 of the Local Government Act requires every local authority to establish an overview and scrutiny function to hold the Executive to account, undertake policy development and review, monitor, and improve performance.

##### All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 There are no other direct implications arising from this report. Any further implications will be identified when a topic is reviewed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and in any recommendations made by it.

##### Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 No Diversity Impact Assessment is required at this stage. Any DIA that is required during review of topics included within the work programme will be identified at the appropriate stage.

##### Risk Management

- 5.5 No risk management issues have been identified at this stage. Any risk management issues will be identified at the appropriate time when a topic is under review by the Overview Scrutiny Committee and if it makes any recommendations.

#### **6. Consultees**

- 6.1 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

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**7. Background Papers**

7.1 None.

**8. Appendices**

None.