



Meeting	Business and Housing Policy Committee
Date and Time	Thursday, 6th October, 2022 at 6.30 pm.
Venue	Walton Suite, Winchester Guildhall

Note: This meeting is being held in person at the location specified above. In line with relevant legislation and public health guidance the following arrangements apply. Members of the public should note that a live audio feed of the meeting will be available from the council's website (<http://www.winchester.gov.uk>) and the video recording will be publicly available on the council's [YouTube](#) channel shortly after the meeting.

For members of the public who are unable to utilise this facility, a limited number of seats will be made available at the above named location however attendance must be notified to the council at least 3 clear working days before the meeting (5pm Friday, 30 September 2022). Please note that priority will be given to those wishing to attend and address the meeting over those wishing to attend and observe.

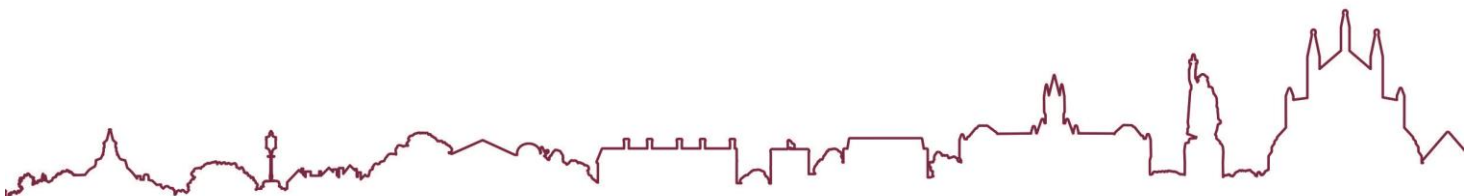
AGENDA

- 1. Apologies and Deputy Members**
To note the names of apologies given and deputy members who are attending the meeting in place of appointed members.
- 2. Declarations of Interests**
To receive any disclosure of interests from Members and Officers in matters to be discussed.

Note: Councillors are reminded of their obligations to declare disclosable pecuniary interests, and non disclosable interests in accordance with legislation and the Council's Code of Conduct.

If you require advice, please contact the appropriate Democratic Services Officer, prior to the meeting.

- 3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 June 2022 (Pages 5 - 10)**
That the minutes of the meeting be signed as a correct record.



4. **Chairperson's Announcements**
5. **Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy** (Pages 11 - 36)
Report reference BHP31
6. **Findings and future plans following the Street Markets Review** (Pages 37 - 54)
Report Reference BHP37
7. **To note the Work Programme for 2022/23** (Pages 55 - 56)

Laura Taylor
Chief Executive

All of the Council's publicly available agendas, reports and minutes are available to view and download from the Council's [Website](#) and are also open to inspection at the offices of the council. As part of our drive to minimise our use of paper we do not provide paper copies of the full agenda pack at meetings. We do however, provide a number of copies of the agenda front sheet at the meeting which contains the QR Code opposite. Scanning this code enables members of the public to easily access all of the meeting papers on their own electronic device. Please hold your device's camera or QR code App over the QR Code so that it's clearly visible within your screen and you will be redirected to the agenda pack.



28 September 2022

Agenda Contact: Matthew Watson, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 01962 848 317 Email: mwatson@winchester.gov.uk

**With the exception of exempt items, agendas, reports and previous minutes are available on the Council's Website <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/councillors-committees>*

MEMBERSHIP

Chairperson: Bronk (Liberal Democrats)

Vice-Chairperson: Fern (Liberal Democrats)

Conservatives
Isaacs
Miller
Scott

Liberal Democrats
Cramoysan
Radcliffe
Small

Deputy Members

Brook and Horrill

Batho and Edwards

Quorum = 4 members

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A public question and comment session is available at 6.30pm for a 15 minute period. There are few limitations on the questions you can ask. These relate to current applications, personal cases and confidential matters. Please contact Democratic Services on 01962 848 264 at least three days in advance of the meeting (5pm Friday, 30 September 2022) for further details. If there are no members of the public present at 6.30pm who wish to ask questions or make statements, then the meeting will commence.

FILMING AND BROADCAST NOTIFICATION

This meeting will be recorded and broadcast live on the Council's website. The meeting may also be recorded and broadcast by the press and members of the public – please see the Access to Information Procedure Rules within the Council's Constitution for further information, which is available to view on the [Council's website](#).

DISABLED ACCESS:

Disabled access is normally available, but please phone Democratic Services on 01962 848 264 or email democracy@winchester.gov.uk to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place.

This page is intentionally left blank

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3

BUSINESS AND HOUSING POLICY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 21 June 2022

Attendance:

Councillors
Fern (Chairperson)

Cramoysan Small
Isaacs

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Bronk, Miller, Radcliffe and Scott

Deputy Members:

Councillor Batho (as deputy for Councillor Bronk) and Councillor Horrill (as deputy for Councillor Miller)

Other members in attendance:

Councillors Bronk, Ferguson, Thompson and Tod

[Audio and video recording of this meeting](#)

1. **APOLOGIES AND DEPUTY MEMBERS**

Apologies for the meeting were noted as above.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

No declarations were made.

3. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRPERSON FOR THE 2022/23 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

RESOLVED:

that Councillor Fern be appointed Vice-Chairperson for the 2022/23 municipal year.

Councillor Fern proceeded to chair the meeting as Councillor Bronk could only attend this meeting virtually.

4. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Bronk made the following announcements:

1. he apologised for not being able to attend the meeting in person
2. he suggested that an item for the future work programme of the committee could be the results of a forthcoming Tenants Satisfaction Survey
3. he advised the committee of a proposal that the cabinet would be considering in due course to establish a distinct housing committee and would provide further details when these were known
4. he informed that the University of Winchester had approached him regarding the Global Entrepreneurship Week taking place in November and contact had been made with the cabinet member to progress this. He suggested that a presentation from the University may be appropriate before November.

5. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 1 MARCH 2022**

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 March 2022 be approved and adopted.

6. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The chairperson welcomed the three members of TACT who were present at the meeting and confirmed that they would be invited to speak on agenda items 7 and 8 of the meeting.

Regarding the Housing Services Compensation policy (BHP029), Mr Light informed the committee that in general, he was supportive of the policy. He further advised that he felt that £15 seemed a reasonable payment for a missed appointment but asked that compensation payments where a tenant was without heating or plumbing needed to be considered further. In addition, Mr Chafe believed that the key concern regarding the level of compensation for missed appointments was where a tenant had missed a day's work for the appointment and whether the proposed payment was appropriate compensation for that.

Regarding the Empty Homes Strategy 2022 - 2027 (BHP030), Mr Light advised the committee that TACT was generally supportive of the draft strategy.

7. **HOUSING SERVICES - COMPENSATION POLICY (BHP029)**

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community and Housing and the Property Services Manager introduced the report, ref BHP029, ([available here](#)) which set out proposals for the Housing Services Compensation Policy.

The committee was recommended to review the draft policy and comment on:

1. the appropriateness of the proposed policy
2. the levels of specific awards
3. any other factors which should be included within the policy.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report. In summary, the following matters were raised:

1. how would the policy apply to claims for issues where roofs had been exposed for extended periods
2. appointment time bandings
3. compensation following a missed appointment
4. the process for compensation payments being made and the anticipated timescales
5. the anticipated timescales for repairs being undertaken
6. the consultation undertaken with tenants on the proposed policy
7. the plans for future communication of the policy
8. how the policy applied to exceptional items not specified in the schedule
9. whether larger payments had to be referred to the cabinet member
10. whether a longer period of time for claims to be submitted should be provided
11. specifying the standards of repair expected so it was clear whether compensation would be appropriate
12. the treatment of repetitive faults for example lifts, how the policy applied to where a repair was no longer cost-effective
13. the risk that the policy drove the wrong behaviours for example to do "quick fixes"
14. turning the document into an accessible, tenant-focused document.

These points were responded to by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community and Housing, the Corporate Head of Housing, the Property Services Manager and the Responsive Maintenance Manager accordingly and were noted by the cabinet members present at the meeting.

RESOLVED:

that officers and the cabinet member consider the comments of the committee as part of the next stage of policy formation.

8. EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY 2022 - 2027 (BHP030)

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community and Housing and the Senior Private Sector Housing Officer introduced the report, ref BHP030 ([available here](#)) which set out proposals for the Empty Homes Strategy 2022 – 2027.

The committee was recommended to:

1. review the draft strategy which addressed empty homes within the Winchester district
2. review and comment on the aims and objectives set out in Appendix 4.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report. In summary, the following matters were raised:

1. the typical timeframes between the initial correspondence being issued to an owner of an empty property and the subsequent reoccupation of the property
2. the impact of unusual external factors such as the impact of COVID-19 on the rental market, and how properties could become empty in these unusual circumstances and how council policies such as council tax premium were used
3. the potential to review the council tax premium policy to ensure its relevance in current market conditions
4. whether sufficient resources currently exist to manage the empty properties caseload
5. benchmarking the council's performance against near neighbours or similar authorities
6. clarifying the subset of the total number of empty properties to understand where the genuine problems exist
7. confirming the main changes between the previous policy and this draft
8. the timing of the letters notifying property owners of a rise in council tax
9. the use of local ward member knowledge in identifying long term empty properties.

These points were responded to by the Strategic Director, the Corporate Head of Housing and the Senior Private Sector Housing Officer accordingly and were noted by the cabinet members present at the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. that the Cabinet Member and officers note the comments of the committee
2. that officers respond to several questions regarding the use of any available discretions of the council tax premium policy, in particular the use of the charge in exceptional circumstances.

9. **GREEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - DRAFT ACTION PLAN (BHP033)**

The Cabinet Member for Business and Culture and the Service Lead - Economy & Tourism introduced the report, ref BHP033 ([available here](#)) which set out proposals for the Green Economic Development Strategy (GEDS) - Draft Action Plan.

The committee was recommended to:

1. note the approach to project prioritisation and the process to identify actions for 2022-2024
2. review and comment on the GEDS Action Plan 2022-2024
3. support the approach to create a web-based action plan that could be accessed, updated and promoted via the council website.

Councillor Wallace addressed the committee. In summary, Councillor Wallace welcomed the range of actions planned as part of the strategy but felt that the action plan could be improved through additional work to the performance

indicators so that they easily show where attention was required and where progress had been made.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report. In summary, the following matters were raised:

1. the management approach and processes required to embrace and embed the changes needed across the whole organisation to achieve the stated actions
2. the potential, competing priorities of an area's economic and environmental needs
3. the economic issues arising from a lack of affordable housing and insufficient parking provision
4. the impact of the local lettings policy not applying to larger settlements
5. how it was felt that the strategy would reduce inequality in the district
6. identifying and dealing with those actions that the city council had full control over
7. Whether the GEDS Key Performance Indicator (KPI) review be undertaken as part of the wider council plan KPI refresh
8. clarifying the membership of the Programme and Capital (PAC) board
9. whether the implementation group in paragraph 3.17 of the report should include officers responsible for new homes delivery.

These points were responded to by Cabinet Member for Business and Culture, the Strategic Director and the Service Lead - Economy & Tourism accordingly and were noted by the cabinet members present at the meeting.

RESOLVED:

that the Cabinet Member and officers note the comments of the committee.

10. **WINCHESTER DISTRICT HIGH STREETS PRIORITY PLAN - UP-DATE AND PROGRESS REPORT (BHP034)**

The Cabinet Member for Business and Culture and the Service Lead - Economy & Tourism introduced the report, ref BHP034 ([available here](#)) which set out proposals for the Winchester District High Streets Priority Plan, Up-Date and Progress Report.

The committee was recommended to:

1. note the progress made against the actions in the one-year High Streets' Priority Plan
2. make comments on the proposed options for a new plan to March 2024 or 2025.

The Cabinet Member for Business and Culture provided the committee with details from a recent presentation given by the Winchester Business Improvement District (BID) regarding current High Street footfall and shop vacancy rates.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report. In summary, the following matters were raised:

1. the risk of losing focus on the broader district if this plan were to be incorporated into other strategies in the future
2. the plans for the promotion and support to areas on the edges of the city
3. the inclusion of Whiteley within the priority plan
4. the proposed consultation strands concerning the distribution of the shared prosperity fund and associated timescales.

These points were responded to by Cabinet Member for Business and Culture and the Service Lead - Economy & Tourism accordingly and were noted by the cabinet members present at the meeting.

RESOLVED:

that the Cabinet Member and officers note the comments of the committee.

11. **WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2022/23 (BHP032)**

RESOLVED:

Following discussion, the committee put forward several items for inclusion in the work programme which Mr Botham agreed to discuss with the relevant officers and cabinet members. The items were:

1. the sustainable tourism strategy
2. the review of street markets
3. the cultural strategy
4. a presentation regarding global entrepreneurship week
5. the renewal of the housing cleaning contract
6. the new homes strategy
7. the void standards review
8. the estate improvement plan
9. the review of tenant involvement and engagement.

12. **TO NOTE THE DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THIS COMMITTEE**

The following dates were noted:

1. 29 Sep 2022 6.30 pm
2. 29 Nov 2022 6.30 pm
3. 28 Feb 2023 6.30 pm.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 9.00 pm

Chairperson

REPORT TITLE: PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY

6 OCTOBER 2022

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Councillor Ferguson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community and Housing

Contact Officer: John Easey Tel No: 01962 848429 Email jeasey@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

To consider and comment on the direction and priorities of an early draft of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2022-2027.

The draft strategy has one variation from the existing strategy to charge fees for formal notices served under various legislation.

The Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy supports the council's broader strategic housing aims:

- a) To maximise the supply of high-quality affordable housing in urban and rural areas
- b) To improve the housing circumstances of vulnerable and excluded households
- c) Supporting local people accessing high quality and affordable housing which meet their needs

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Policy Committee review and provide comment on the direction and priorities of an early draft of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2022-27.
2. That Members support the council exploring the possibility of implementing a private sector housing 'Grant Assistance Fund' targeted at providing financial assistance through grants or loans to fund essential repairs for owners and landlords who qualify under agreed criteria.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Introduction

- 2.1 The improvement of poor condition privately owned or rented property is a key priority for the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy. Properties left in poor condition can have a harmful effect on the health, safety and well-being of its occupants and the local community and environment.
- 2.2 The council is required to review the condition of its private sector housing stock and establish the most appropriate course of action to bring properties up to a satisfactory standard. The council has a wide range of powers and practical options to assist through support and guidance up to enforcement powers by doing the work and recovering the costs, when owners or landlords fail to carry out their responsibilities. The council's preferred approach has been to encourage and support owners and landlords to undertake the work needed to improve the quality of its private housing stock.

Background

- 2.3 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 provided local authorities with the ability to offer grants to improve housing conditions. The Order repealed all of the previous legislation relating to grants and gave councils wider powers to choose how they provide assistance and for what. To exercise this power, a council must prepare and publish a Private Sector Renewal Strategy.
- 2.4 The Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy is part of a family of strategies that underpin the council's overarching Housing Strategy.
- 2.5 The council approved the last Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy in 2016.
- 2.6 The Better Care Fund allocation methods changed in 2017 in that a proportion of the funding was diverted from the NHS to local housing authorities with the specific intention of local authorities to use the fund interventions in housing to reduce hospital admissions, enable prompter discharge from hospital, and delay the need for individuals to transfer to a care setting. Receipt of this funding from central government is combined with the existing Disabled Facilities Grant allocation, resulting in a substantial increase of grant funding from approximately £450k in 2016 to the current grant of £1.2m for 2022.
- 2.7 Mandatory HMO Licensing expanded in September 2018 to include all HMOs occupied by 5 or more people in 2 or more households, rather than only those of 3 storeys or more
- 2.8 The 'City Lets' Private Sector Housing scheme closed to new landlords in 2020, due to financial viability issues caused by large claims made on the council's Security Bond and due to landlords leaving the scheme.
- 2.9 Since 2016 there have been legislative changes that have provided additional enforcement tools within the Housing and Planning Act 2016, the Electrical

Safety in the Private Rented Sector (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, changes to the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations (which come into force on 1st October 2022), the Mobile Homes (Requirement for the Manager of a Site to be Fit and Proper Person) (England) Regulations 2020.

Priorities of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy

- 2.10 Insecurity in the private rented sector is a growing problem and the cost of living crisis is likely to have a further impact with challenging rent increases and the potential of increased evictions. A recent recruitment of a Private Sector Housing Sustainment Officer will provide tenancy support, advice and discretionary financial assistance to help with household costs to prevent the threat of homelessness.
- 2.11 The broader aims of the strategy, which can be found in the tables at the end of the strategy document, have not significantly changed, but a strategy revision allows for the inclusion of new revenue streams, and for the provision of further targeted support to the private sector to improve private sector housing conditions generally.
- 2.12 The proposed strategy also suggests creating a stand-alone Fees Policy to cover all aspects of the service for which fees may be charged, in one live document. These are currently detailed in the various separate policies and an overview of each are detailed as below;

Fees for Notices (proposed): The Housing Act 2004 and other legislation under which the private sector housing team may take enforcement action against landlords or HMO or Caravan Site licence holders, allow for the charging of a fee for the service of notices. To date the council has not adopted this practice. The number of formal notices served each year by the council is small (10-15 in a typical year). The purpose of imposing a fee is twofold: first it recovers the council's reasonable costs in serving the notice and thereby reducing the council's expenditure and secondly the imposition of a charge encourages the offender to take the required action before a formal notice is deemed necessary, resulting in prompter resolutions of unhealthy housing conditions.

HMO Licensing and accreditation: There are currently 361 licenced HMOs within the district. Renewal fees (at current rates) for these over the 5 years of this Strategy document is $361 \times £776 = £280,136$. New licences attract a 5 year fee of £984. There are currently 100 accredited properties for which the 3 yearly renewal fee is £94, producing an income of approximately £15,000 over the period of this Strategy document. A new accreditation is charged at £138 for the 3 years.

- 2.13. Complaints Handling: From 2016 to September 2022 the service dealt with 567 private sector landlord complaints. Detailed in the table below are the complaints broken down by number and type;

Nature of Complaint	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022 to date
Boiler/Heating	1	4	2	6	4	8	3
Damp & Mould	25	17	12	27	20	21	8
Vermin / Garden	13	7	11	14	14	11	3
HHS	11	6	1	0	2	0	2
General Disrepair	20	11	17	15	12	6	5
Empty Homes	3	2	5	4	7	9	3
Other	6	15	30	34	32	20	10
Drainage/Sanitation					2	5	1
Energy Efficiency					0	1	0
Gas/Electric					4	13	3
Fire Safety					3	1	0
HMO Management					0	14	1
TOTAL	79	62	78	100	100	109	39

2.14. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG): Government grant allocated to the council by Hampshire County council as the administrating authority is available to pay for essential housing adaptations to help people, living with disabilities to remain living independently in their own home.

2.15. In the year 2021/22 the council approved 97 DFG applications with a total value of approximately £1.1m. Of these:

- 6 grants were approved under the mandatory part of the Disabled Facilities Grant and are means tested which means that some people may have to pay a contribution towards the grant.
- 86 grants were discretionary grants of under £15,000, awarded to applicants that would not have qualified for assistance under the mandatory part of the Disabled Facilities Grant. The discretionary element of the grant funding ensures housing need is met and reduces the need for residential care and hospitalisation.
- 5 grants are discretionary grants specifically targeted to prevent hospital admission or care breakdown.

- Comparable approvals in preceding years:

Financial Year	Case Numbers	Grant Allocated
2017/18	80	£580k
2018/19	73	£785k
2019/20	70	£1.34 m
2020/21	78	£888k

2.16. The Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy is a legal requirement to enable the council to determine how it spends financial assistance in the form of grants to assist people directly living in the private housing sector. The strategy is also about setting priorities to enable that housing renewal services are effective and appropriate. In addition to grants this will involve the council providing assistance via third parties and signposting to ensure it can support the council's ambitions to reduce carbon emissions within the private rented housing stock through joint initiatives as set out below.

2.17. LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership)

In autumn 2020 a partnership agreement was signed with Agility ECO to promote the LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership) initiative. This is a free of charge energy and money saving support service offered to fuel poor and vulnerable households. It is a nationally run programme with its associated infrastructure and training. The LEAP service is completely funded by energy suppliers under the Warm Home Discount Industry initiatives and is available to owner occupiers / private tenants and social tenants who meet certain eligibility criteria:

Since April 2021 LEAP figures for Winchester are:

- 17 referrals
- 10 in-depth energy advice calls
- home energy visits
- 2 in depth calls

LAD (Local Authority Delivery) Scheme (1a and 1b)

The council, as part of a partnership with Portsmouth City Council and other local authorities entered an agreement to promote the installation of energy efficiency and carbon reduction measures across the district under LAD 1a. This included fully funded Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Panels / solid wall Insulate on to owner occupiers and the installation of park home insulation for both external wall insulation and underfloor insulation. (LAD 1a came to an end on 31st August 2021).

The LAD 1b programme ran until the end of March 2022 and 226 applications were received with 55 installations completed of which 30 were solar PV Panels.

The council has agreed to continue its partnership with Portsmouth City Council and Agility ECO who have been successful in securing £15.7 million of funding under LAD 3 which they anticipate will help improve up to 1,661 on-gas households (these are households with an existing gas connection) across the entire local authority consortium area.

The LAD 3 period of funding commenced in January 2022 and will run until March 2023, and supports on-gas EPC D, E, F & G rated Households with ASHP (air sourced heat pumps), insulation and solar PV with up to £10,000 of funding.

- 2.18. Winchester Area SuperHomes: The council supports this initiative run by Winchester Action on Climate Change in partnership with the National Energy Foundation and Petersfield Climate Action Network, funded by the Energy Redress Scheme. The initiative is to create a new service that supports homeowners across Winchester District to transform the energy performance of their properties by retrofitting to reduce their carbon emissions, as energy in the home is responsible for around 20% of direct carbon emissions. Their target is to turn 25 or more existing homes in the Winchester District into retrofit SuperHomes show homes and support another 125 homes to be assessed and retrofitted. The project will provide help with some costs for homeowners on low and middle incomes. This will include some of the survey and design costs, plus a proportion of the cost of installing solar panels. All homeowners will be helped to apply for any available government grants, such as the Renewable Heat Incentive.
- 2.19. The Private Sector Housing team in liaison with the council's Energy Officer and the Climate Emergency Team will actively monitor available funding streams and initiatives through partnership engagement with Portsmouth City Council and Agility ECO and other bodies which present themselves. This is to improve the energy efficiency of the entire private housing stock and to try to reduce carbon emissions from private housing to achieve the ambition of a carbon neutral district by 2030.
- 2.20. This paper also wishes to explore the consideration of a 'Grant Assistance Fund'. The council recognises that primary responsibility for maintaining privately owned properties lies with property owners and stopped offering any discretionary grants to assist homeowners or landlords with works of repair more than a decade ago. In the current cost of living crisis, officers would like to explore adopting an emergency fund to provide grants or loans to owner occupied households struggling to carry out essential repairs to their homes, such as roof repairs, heating system replacement, replacement of doors or windows. The linked, draft Financial Assistance Policy (see below) outlines the qualification criteria and terms and conditions of such a scheme. This

paper and the policy currently makes no recommendation as to a level of funding available and seeks the comments of the committee on the principal and the potential commitment.

Conclusion

- 2.21. The revised Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy updates the council's approach to delivering the varied services provided by the private sector housing service to improve the quality of privately owned or rented property across the district. The strategy now incorporates and promotes wider energy efficiently work within the private sector housing stock through its enforcement and Disabled Facilities Grant work to reduce carbon emissions and to help reduce fuel poverty.

The strategy is an early draft and seeks the views of Members to help inform strategic direction and the setting of key priorities.

3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The proposed strategy does not require any extra staffing resources, as any additional administrative requirements will be minor and can be absorbed within the current staffing resource. The delivery of the strategy action plan is also supported and in partnership with wider housing teams and the council's stakeholders.

Should the committee support in principle the suggestion of a 'Grant Assistance Fund' additional financial resources will need to be identified.

4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 4.1 The council could consider not having a Private Sector Renewal Strategy. This option is rejected as the terms of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 requires a local authority to have such a strategy in place if it wishes to use its discretionary powers to provide funding assistance to private owners and landlords. The council already uses these powers successfully to deliver the discretionary funding element of Disabilities Facilities Grants and Better Care Funding.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports (2016):-

[https://democracy.winchester.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet%20\(Housing\)%20Committee/201603221600/Agenda/CAB2789-HSG-.pdf](https://democracy.winchester.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet%20(Housing)%20Committee/201603221600/Agenda/CAB2789-HSG-.pdf)

Other Background Documents:-

Current Private Sector Renewal Strategy - [Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2016 to 2021.pdf \(itss.local\)](#)

Enforcement Policy (currently under revision) –
<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/assets/attach/24727/PSH-Enforcement-Policy-2020.pdf>

Empty Homes Policy (recently approved) -
<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/assets/attach/33276/WCC-Empty-Homes-Strategy-2022-27.pdf>

Caravan Licensing Policy 2021 - [Camping and Mobile Home Sites - Winchester City Council](#)

DFG Policy - <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/assets/attach/19843/DFG-Policy-and-ProcedureV11-August-2019.pdf>

APPENDICES:

A Draft Private Sector Renewal Strategy 2022-2027



PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY (Draft)

2022-2027

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Private Sector Housing sits within Housing Services and has a vital role to play in the Council's wider strategic housing activity. There is a direct relationship between our housing environment and our health. It is a general principle that housing should always provide an environment which is safe and healthy for the occupants.

1.2 This strategy, and the policies supporting it, applies to all privately owned homes, i.e. all dwellings (houses, flats, caravans etc.) that are not owned by the Council, including those owned or run by housing associations and it specifically outlines the Council's strategic approach to:

- Identifying and dealing with unsatisfactory or unsuitable housing conditions
- Providing advice and assistance with regard to unsatisfactory or unsuitable housing conditions
- Taking enforcement action with regard to unsatisfactory or unsuitable housing conditions
- Maintaining standards by operation of licensing schemes for Houses in Multiple Occupation and Caravan Sites
- Improving the energy efficiency of the private sector housing stock
- Providing adaptations to meet the needs of disabled residents in their homes through Disabled Facility Grants, or by
- Providing grants and loans under the Better Care Fund
- Providing financial assistance to achieve other housing policy aims of the Council
- Reducing the level of long term Empty Homes in the district
- Handling comments and complaints in relation to any of the Council's housing renewal functions

1.3 This strategy provides the outline – the framework – to which the Private Sector Housing department operates. The strategy is then supported by several Policy documents, namely:

- Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy – which details how the various legislative powers relating to housing conditions will be applied
- Disabled Facility Grant and Better Care Fund Policy – which details how applications for grant or other assistance for people with disabilities will be managed, and the additional financial support available through the Better Care Fund and the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.
- Empty Homes Policy – which details how owners of empty property will be encouraged to return the homes to use.
- Financial Assistance Policy – discretionary assistance for essential repairs, DFGs and provisions under the Better Care Fund
- Fees Policy – details of fees for licences and services

2.0 The Private Rented Sector – the context for identifying unsatisfactory or unsuitable housing conditions

- 2.1 The private rental sector (PRS) is an important part of the provision of housing in Winchester, as it is across England. It is not only vital in providing a home for the approximately 20,000 people that live in it, and a living for those that are landlords, but also has a wider impact upon the economy and community of the city.
- 2.2 The legislative and policy framework which surrounds the renting of private homes is complex and has developed over a number of years, with a focus on health and safety, home standards and the requirements surrounding tenancies. Government has clearly indicated that more legislation can be expected, particularly with the ending of Section 21 ‘no fault’ evictions.
- 2.3 The licencing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) has been a major change in recent years but only covers a part of the HMO sector, and whilst mandatory licencing has enabled the council to focus on the standards within in-scope properties, there are still many HMOs that are not licensable and which may have a detrimental effect on the neighbourhoods in which they are typically located, particularly with regards to waste management and anti-social behaviour.
- 2.4 Winchester’s private rented sector is still largely a suppliers market with demand continuing to gradually rise, partly as a result of the student population and partly due to increasing numbers not able to own their own home and the slow shrinkage of the social rented sector. 2022 has also seen an influx of Ukrainian refugees to the UK with Winchester taking a larger number than many similar authorities. These refugees are likely to need to access the private rented sector when the initial hosting arrangement ends. In many cases market rents are significantly above local housing allowance rates, what those on benefits can reasonably be expected to afford, and access often requires a significant deposit, rent in advance and/or a guarantor.
- 2.5 Maintaining a healthy private rented sector is vital to the broader local housing strategy and in providing safe secure and affordable homes for all, and the Private Sector Housing team has a central role to play in encouraging landlords to provide such housing.
- 2.6 The Private Sector Housing Team also has a role to play in encouraging tenants to play their part by ensuring that they pay their rent on time, take care of their home, act within the terms of their tenancy agreement, be good neighbours, and, most

importantly, communicate with their landlord or landlord's agent during the time of their tenancy.

- 2.7 Many of the landlords with properties in the city are individuals with small portfolios or even single properties to let, and are doing so either as an investment or have obtained property unintentionally as a result of family bereavement or work taking them elsewhere. The additional regulations imposed in recent years have been complex and have added overheads to the cost of letting their properties, not all of which may have been passed onto tenants in the rent.
- 2.8 For many small landlords, keeping up with the ever changing regulations has proved difficult and they are consequently the most likely to fall foul of them. It is vital that the Private Sector Housing Team provide guidance and advice to help educate all landlords and drive standards up.
- 2.9 However, regardless of a landlord's portfolio size, the council should be actively making every effort to expose landlords who intentionally or through ignorance put the health safety and welfare of their tenants at risk, and where necessary taking appropriate enforcement action and imposing financial sanctions to deter other landlords from taking a similar approach.
- 2.10 In dealing with landlords the Private Sector Housing Team will encourage landlords to act in a fair and considerate way towards their tenants, offer suitable tenancy arrangements, work with their tenants to resolve problems that arise during the period of the tenancy, and end tenancies in a legal and appropriate way should that be required.
- 2.11 The Private Sector housing team therefore plays a supporting role in preventing homelessness and in assisting the housing options team in maintaining tenancies where possible.

3.0 Identifying unsatisfactory or unsuitable housing conditions

- 3.1 There are several statutory provisions relating to housing conditions which provide both the framework for identifying unsatisfactory or unsuitable conditions, and the powers by which to enforce improvement where required. Principal of these is the Housing Act 2004 which deals with general housing conditions, the licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation, Empty Homes and the supporting regulations that include the method of assessment for conditions, the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). There are additional regulations related to smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and electrical safety, minimum energy efficiency standards, and other primary legislation including the provisions of the Mobile Home Acts, Public Health Acts, Building Acts and Environmental Protection Act that are available to the private sector housing department to use. The detail of how enforcement will be used is detailed in the Private Sector Enforcement Policy.
- 3.2 The Housing Act 2004 places a duty on the council to keep the housing conditions in their area under review with a view to identifying any action that may be required under the provisions (of the Act).
- 3.3 The private sector housing department will therefore:
 - Respond to complaints received regarding housing defects or poor housing conditions, particularly from tenants in private rented accommodation. Complaints from social landlord tenants will initially be referred to the social landlord, however the Housing Act 2004 and other legislation can be used to enforce on social landlords, and action will be taken when appropriate.

- Respond to requests from landlords and owner-occupiers for assistance in respect of tackling housing defects or poor conditions, or concerns regarding the suitability of their housing for their needs.
- Carry out regular routine inspections of housing subject to licensing schemes
- Carry out surveys of the housing stock to respond to the general duty under the Act
- Take appropriate enforcement action where unsatisfactory or unsuitable housing conditions are identified
- The council will impose a charge for enforcement action as detailed in the Fees Policy

3.4 Housing conditions in the private sector in Winchester are generally better on all measures than the national average (see Executive summary BRE Stock Modelling Report 2021) and there are no wards or other sub-divisions of the district which have significant levels of poor housing conditions. Such matters of disrepair as there are exist on an individual property level across the district and as such strategies such as neighbourhood or area renewal programmes are inappropriate.

4.0 Advice in respect of unsatisfactory or unsuitable housing conditions

- 4.1 In addition to carrying out inspections and, where necessary, using enforcement powers, the private sector housing team will provide advice and assistance to tenants, landlords and owner occupiers.
- 4.2 The appropriate response to complaints or requests as detailed in 2.3 may be solely to provide advice, particularly when a tenant has not raised the matter of their complaint with their landlord before contacting the council.
- 4.3 Advice may be provided verbally, by direct communication by letter or email, or by the provision of appropriate information on the council's website.
- 4.4 The private sector housing department will maintain a library of appropriate advisory documentation and legislation available via the council's website to tenants, landlords and owner-occupiers alike.
- 4.5 The council's strategy is to provide advice and encouragement, and to engage landlords and tenants in resolving issues of unsatisfactory housing without the need for the use of enforcement tools in the first instance

5.0 Financial assistance

- 5.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 provided local authorities with the ability to offer financial assistance to improve housing conditions. The Order repealed all of the previous legislation relating to grants and gave Councils wider powers to choose how they provide assistance and for what. To exercise this power, a Council must prepare and publish a Private Sector Renewal Strategy.
- 5.2 The Council recognises that although primary responsibility for maintaining properties lies with the owners, there are occasions when owner occupiers are unable to readily finance necessary repairs to their homes and may need financial assistance not available to them through other sources.

- 5.3 In certain circumstances financial assistance with unsatisfactory or unsuitable housing conditions may be available where the occupier is disabled or where assistance would meet the aims of the Better Care Fund. This is explained in more detail in the section on Disabled Facility Grants, and in the DFG Policy, but in broad terms the Better Care Fund may be used to:
- enable vulnerable individuals to stay living independently in their own home.
 - reduce the need for admission to a care home.
 - reduce the likelihood of hospital admission
 - reduce the cost of necessary domiciliary care
 - enable prompt discharge from hospital to a safe home
- 5.4 Discretionary grants or loans may be available, subject to available funding, to assist owner occupiers with essential repairs to remedy Category 1 Hazards and Category 2 Hazards assessed at band D or E under the HHSRS.
- 5.5 Assistance may be available to owner occupiers in receipt of means tested benefits or on low incomes and with limited savings
- 5.6 Funding may be available provided no other source of grant or low cost loan being available.
- 5.7 Applications will be assessed in strict order of receipt subject to funding and when funding becomes limited, priority will be given firstly to the most vulnerable applicant and then to the most serious hazards, as assessed by officers.
- 5.8 Parameters including the overall funding available, the financial limits and qualification criteria will be reviewed annually and published in the Financial Assistance Policy.

6.0 Houses in Multiple Occupation and licensing

- 6.1 The Housing Act 2004 covers licensing of certain properties:
- Mandatory licensing – HMOs occupied by 5 or more occupants forming 2 or more households.
 - Additional licensing – which can be adopted at the council’s discretion to include all HMOs (mandatorily licensable or not) in areas where large numbers of HMOs in a given area are demonstrated to be the source of anti-social behaviour or other problems.
 - Selective licensing – which can be adopted at the council’s discretion to cover all privately rented housing in an area where problems of crime or widespread housing condition problems are recognized. Selective Licensing schemes involving more than 20% of the geographical area of the district or 20% of the housing stock would require DLUHC approval.
- 6.2 The council currently only imposes Mandatory licensing and does not believe any Additional or Selective licensing scheme is required within the district, although this will be kept under review.
- 6.3 Control on the spread of HMOs within the Stanmore and Winnall estates has been successfully managed through the implementation of Article 4 directives, a planning tool requiring consent to be sought for any change to HMO use which would otherwise be allowed under permitted development rules.
- 6.4 Non-licensable HMOs are still subject to the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Regulations) England 2006. The council maintains a register of known non-licensable HMOs and will carry out inspections of these on an irregular basis as resources allow, and will update this register as new information is received.

- 6.5 Private Sector Housing continues to operate an Accreditation scheme jointly with Winchester University. The scheme is a gateway for landlords to advertise their properties through the student accommodation service of the University and to be accredited the property must meet an acceptable standard, similar to the licensing standard.
- 6.6 The council applies national statutory licence conditions and room-size standards where applicable and has, with neighbouring authorities, adopted a local Hampshire-wide standard for amenity provision in HMOs.
- 6.7 As with general housing conditions, the council will aim to firstly advise and encourage landlords to maintain standards in HMOs without recourse to enforcement tools.
- 6.8 The council will similarly maintain a library of appropriate advisory documents and legislation on the website available to tenants and landlords alike.
- 6.9 The council will charge fees for HMO Licences and for the Accreditation scheme as detailed in the Fees Policy.
- 6.10 The council will impose a charge for enforcement action as detailed in the Fees Policy

7.0 Caravan and Camping Sites and licensing

- 7.1 The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 requires the licensing of certain caravan sites. Such licences will attach suitable conditions which are based on a set of national model standards relating to the standards of facilities that ought to be provided, suitably adapted for the individual site.
- 7.2 Permanent residential mobile home parks (Park Home sites) are also subject to the Mobile Homes Act 2013 and The Mobile Homes (Requirement for Manager of Site to be Fit and Proper Person) (England) Regulations 2020
- 7.3 The council will continue to carry out annual inspections of licensed permanent residential sites.
- 7.4 Site owners will initially be given advice and encouragement to maintain sites to the standards required by the licence conditions prior to recourse to enforcement action.
- 7.5 The council will similarly maintain a library of appropriate advisory documents and legislation on the website available to residents and site owners alike.
- 7.6 The council will regularly review the extent and location of new caravan sites in the district to ensure that all sites are appropriately licensed and, where appropriate, a fit and proper person is managing the site.
- 7.7 Camping sites will require licences issued under the Public Health Act 1936 to ensure that suitable amenities are provided for the size and nature of the site.
- 7.8 The council will impose fees for licencing and fit and proper person applications as detailed in the Fees Policy.

8.0 Energy Efficiency

- 8.1 The recent BRE stock modelling report identifies that the average SAP rating of housing stock in the Winchester district is slightly worse than the national average, and that, as with other housing conditions, the less energy efficient housing is scattered throughout the district on an individual dwelling basis rather than focused in particular areas. Winchester has a relatively large rural area and city and town centres comprising a high number of older, and harder to heat, dwellings.
- 8.2 In addition to the BRE modelling, the council commissioned a dataset of modelled EPC ratings for all housing in the district from Absolar.

- 8.3 The enforcement tools available to the private sector housing department can deal with the more extreme cases of energy inefficiency through Housing Act 2004 powers and the identification of Excess Cold Hazards through the HHSRS, and the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Regulations (MEES) which currently disallow the private letting of any dwelling with an EPC rating of F or G (unless exempt).
- 8.4 Government have signaled an intent to change the MEES regulations from 2028 such that new lettings must achieve a Band C or better EPC. This new target will then apply to all lettings from 2030. The updated regulations are also expected to tighten the rules on exemptions.
- 8.5 The Absolar dataset has been used in providing addresses to target the financial assistance provided through the department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for providing energy efficiency improvements to dwellings with a current Band D or lower EPC – the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) schemes and Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) schemes.
- 8.6 The council is, and will continue to be, part of the Warmer Homes Consortium of 21 local authorities, led by Portsmouth City Council which bids for this funding stream from BEIS, or of other schemes and bidding processes in the future. The delivery of grants is managed by a third part contractor.
- 8.7 These schemes are targeted at low income households in dwellings with a low EPC rating, including privately rented housing where the household income rather than the landlord's is the determining factor.
- 8.8 For households who do not qualify for these schemes the council will maintain a library of appropriate advisory documents and legislation on the website available to tenants landlords and owner occupiers alike, with the clear aim of encouraging all households to improve their domestic energy efficiency either by the installation of better insulation and more efficient heating and hot water systems, or through management of energy use generally.
- 8.9 In certain circumstances, as detailed in 5.0, financial assistance to improve energy efficiency may be provided through the Better Care Fund if the provision of such assistance meets the criteria for which the fund is intended.

9.0 Empty Homes

- 9.1 Full details of the council's empty homes strategy is contained in the supporting Empty Homes Strategy document
- 9.2 The prevalence of long term empty homes in Winchester is low compared to the national average, with market demand for housing acting to keep the numbers low. However, there are still a small number of potentially problematic empty homes which may become detrimental to their immediate neighbourhood.
- 9.3 Regulatory tools available to the Private Sector Housing Team are limited and set a high bar regarding the length of time a property is empty, and its condition and effect on neighbours, before action may be considered.
- 9.4 The approach is therefore one of monitoring and provision of advice and guidance and the council will maintain a library of appropriate advisory documents and legislation on the website available to property owners and the public in general.
- 9.5 The adoption of an increased rate of Council Tax has had a positive effect on the number of long term empty properties and will continue to do so while in place.
- 9.6 The Private Sector Housing Team will maintain close links with Revenue Services to receive a regular list of all properties known to have been empty for 6 months or more.

This enables close monitoring of the changing list of addresses and direct contact with owners to encourage them to bring homes back into use.

10.0 Providing Adaptations to meet the needs of disabled and vulnerable residents in their homes

- 10.1 The council has a statutory duty to provide Disabled Facility Grants (DFG) to residents who qualify for such assistance due to disability, subject only to a prescribed means test.
- 10.2 Such grants are available to owner-occupiers and social and private tenants alike and the terms under which mandatory grants are provided are set by Government in the Housing Grants Construction and Renewal Act 1996 (as amended) and supporting Regulations. Adaptations for Winchester City Council tenants are provided by Property Services through the Housing Revenue Account and not through DFG funding.
- 10.3 In addition to mandatory grants, the council can provide discretionary grants and loans, through its powers under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002, provided it has a policy in place for doing so.
- 10.4 Since 2017, the funding the council receives from Government to provide DFGs has been combined with Better Care Fund provision which has enabled the council to provide discretionary grant funding to a much broader range of residents, either through addition discretionary funding for those who qualify for DFGs, or for other vulnerable residents for whom the provision of assistance meets the key aims of the Better Care Fund as detailed above at 5.3.
- 10.5 Full details of how the council will provide both mandatory DFGs and discretionary assistance using the Better Care Fund under the Regulatory Reform Order is in the Disabled Facility Grant Policy.
- 10.6 The Private Sector Housing Team will maintain a library of appropriate advisory documents and legislation on the website available to all residents in order to raise public awareness of the facility.
- 10.7 The Private Sector Housing Team will develop and maintain contacts with healthcare teams in the NHS and the occupational therapy service at Hampshire County Council to ensure that the availability of assistance is widely promoted to and understood by associate professional services.
- 10.8 Financial assistance may also be provided from the Better Care Fund to local projects whose purpose meets one of the key aims of the fund as detailed above at 5.3.

11.0 Working with local partners

- 11.1 The Private Sector Housing Team works in partnership with other agencies in the Hampshire area to achieve both national and regional strategic aims with the private housing sector. These include Hampshire County Council Social Services, Hampshire and IOW Fire and Rescue Service, Winchester University and the Private Sector Housing functions of other district and unitary authorities through the Hampshire wide Housing Action Group of senior officers.

12.0 Strategic Priorities

- 12.1 Improving energy efficiency in the private housing stock
- 12.2 Improving housing conditions in the private rented sector
- 12.3 Improving conditions in both licensable and non-licensable HMOs

- 12.4 Using the Better Care Funding to best effect to reduce the number of hospital admissions and care home admissions, and to enable prompt discharge from hospital to safe accommodation.
- 12.5 Improving conditions on caravan and park homes sites in the district.

19. Action Plan

ACTION NO:	TARGRET DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE Officer	RESOURCES NEEDED	TASKS/STEPS:	TARGET OUTCOME:
PRIORITY 1: Improving Energy Efficiency in the private housing stock					
1	2022-2027	PSH team	Existing staff resources and government targeted funding streams	Utilise central government funding schemes providing grants for energy efficiency improvements, either unilaterally or, as currently, in partnership with other local authorities	Reduction in properties with a Band D-G EPC in the private sector.
2	2022-2027	PSH team	Existing staff	Use enforcement tools available to improve energy efficiency, where appropriate	Reduction in properties with a Band D-G EPC in the private sector.
3	2022-2027	PSH Team	Existing staff	Use the Better Care Fund to install energy efficiency measures alongside DFGs and other discretionary Better Care Fund grants	Targeted energy efficiency improvements in vulnerable households
4	2022-2027	PSH Team	Existing Staff	Ensure the departmental webpages are maintained with the latest information and guidance	Readily available information for landlords tenants and owner occupiers

ACTION NO:	TARGRET DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE Officer	RESOURCES NEEDED	TASKS/STEPS:	TARGET OUTCOME:
PRIORTY 2 Improving housing conditions in the private rented sector					
1	2022-2027	PSH team	Existing Staff	Encourage landlords and homeowners to repair, improve and maintain their homes to meet acceptable standards (no Category 1 or high Category 2 Hazards) through information, advice and assistance.	Improvement in general housing conditions in the private sector
2	2022-2027	PSH team	Existing Staff	Use enforcement tools where appropriate to ensure landlords meet minimum standards and regulatory requirements	Improvement in general housing conditions in the private sector
3	2022-2027	PSH team	Existing Staff	Ensure the departmental webpages are maintained with the latest	Readily available information for landlords tenants and owner

				information and guidance	occupiers
--	--	--	--	--------------------------	-----------

ACTION NO:	TARGET DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE Officer	RESOURCES NEEDED	TASKS/STEPS:	TARGET OUTCOME:
PRIORITY 3: Improving conditions in both licencable and non-licencable HMOs					
1	2022-2027	PSH team	Existing Staff	Monitor and randomly inspect the existing HMO licences, and inspect all licenced HMOs at their renewal	Continuity of standards in the existing licenced HMOs
2	2022-2027	PSH team	Existing Staff	Use available information sources to identify licensable and non-licensable HMOs and carry out inspections	To reduce the number of unknown HMOs in the district
3	2022-2027	PSH team	Existing Staff	Maintain and develop the accreditation scheme operated alongside Winchester University	To encourage landlords to accredit non-licensable HMOs and meet and maintain accreditation standards
4	2022-2027	PSH team	Existing Staff	Ensure the departmental webpages are maintained with the latest information and guidance	Readily available information for landlords tenants and owner occupiers

ACTION NO:	TARGRET DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE Officer	RESOURCES NEEDED	TASKS/STEPS:	TARGET OUTCOME:
PRIORTY 4: Using the DFG/Better Care Funding to best effect to reduce the number of hospital admissions and care home admissions, and to enable prompt discharge from hospital to safe accommodation.					
1	2022-2027	PSH team	Existing Staff	Continue to provide discretionary grants and loans to meet the criteria of the Better Care Fund and to reduce the number of hospital admissions and care home admissions, and to enable prompt discharge from hospital to safe accommodation	Reduction in healthcare costs within local NHS and social services.
2	2022-2027	PSH team	Existing Staff	To continue to provide discretionary grants of up to £15,000 for all applicants who qualify, by reference to their condition and needs, for a disabled facility grant.	To ensure that those in need are provided with adaptations suitable for those needs regardless of financial status, to reduce the number of hospital admissions and care home admissions.
3	2022-2027	PSH team	Existing Staff	To continue to offer discretionary assistance over and above the mandatory £30,000 maximum for all applicants who qualify, by reference	To ensure that those in need are offered financial assistance with adaptations suitable for those needs regardless of financial

				to their condition and needs, for a disabled facility grant.	status, to reduce the number of hospital admissions and care home admissions.
4	2022-2027	PSH team	Existing Staff	Ensure the departmental webpages are maintained with the latest information and guidance	Readily available information for landlords tenants and owner occupiers

ACTION NO:	TARGET DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE Officer	RESOURCES NEEDED	TASKS/STEPS:	TARGET OUTCOME:
PRIORITY 5: To improve conditions on caravan sites and park home sites in the district.					
1	2023	PSH team	Existing Staff and external contractor	To investigate and assess all known caravan sites in the district, and where necessary, issue licences with appropriate conditions	To ensure the council is correctly licencing this element of the private sector, and collecting all appropriate fees, and to improve conditions on licenced sites
2	2022-2027	PSH team	Existing Staff	To take appropriate enforcement action where caravans/park homes are let through private tenancies/licences	To improve conditions in privately rented caravans/park homes
3	2022-2027	PSH team	Existing Staff	Ensure the departmental webpages are maintained with the latest	Readily available information for site owners and occupants

				information and guidance	
--	--	--	--	--------------------------	--

This page is intentionally left blank

REPORT TITLE: FINDINGS AND FUTURE PLANS FOLLOWING THE STREET
MARKETS REVIEW

6 OCTOBER 2022

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr Lucille Thompson

Contact Officer: Andrew Gostelow Tel No: 07980732149 Email
agostelow@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

This paper introduces for consideration The Winchester District Street Markets Review 2022 (see Appendix 1). It summarises the findings and recommendations of the review along with a plan to action these. The actions make particular reference to the street market in the city and how the recommendations will influence the future operation of this street market including the procurement process to secure an ongoing market management contractor.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Policy Committee are asked to:

- 1) Review and comment on The Winchester District Street Markets Review 2022.
- 2) Note the findings and recommendations outlined in the review.
- 3) Support the approach to action the recommendations outlined in the review.

These include:

- a) development of branding, promotional materials and marketing activity,
- b) improvements to market appearance derived from investment in signage and street dressing, branded gazebos, pitch layout/customer flow,
- c) number of market stalls and additional themed markets

1 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 1.1 A budget allocation of £8,000 was made to carry out a review from a combination of a contribution of £2.5k from the Winchester Business Improvement District and the remainder from the general fund and the Return to the High Street Safely/Welcome Back Covid recovery funding programme.
- 1.2 The staffing resources required to implement the recommendations outlined in The Winchester District Street Markets Review will come primarily from the Economy & Community Service teams, with staff resources specifically deployed from the Economy & Tourism teams with support from Officers in the Estates team who are responsible for the management of the City Street Markets contract.
- 1.3 The delivery of a number of the recommendations outlined in the Review will be made possible subject to funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) bid, the success of which is likely to be confirmed by October 2022.
- If UKSPF funding does not become available then alternative funding for a number of the recommendations would need to be secured, as outlined in 2.12.
- 1.4 Market operators across the district will be required to support and help implement the approach outlined to action the recommendations made in the Review.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

2.1 Purpose of the Review

- 2.2 The purpose of The Winchester District Street Markets Review was to provide the council with a better understanding of the current markets offer and what development opportunities might be available. The scope required the study to cover markets in Winchester City Centre and the market towns of Alresford, Bishop's Waltham and Wickham.
- 2.3 A procurement exercise was undertaken which resulted in The Retail Group being commissioned to undertake the review with a budget of £8,000. This work took place between October 2021 and March 2022 and the final review received in March 2022, see Appendix 1.
- 2.4 The Retail Group have been at the forefront of evolving and changing markets in city and town centres for over 25 years. The consultancy has been providing markets advice, developing future strategies, improving current performance, developing new markets and identifying new market models, changing market management and trader operations and providing training and business support to market traders.

- 2.5 The brief required The Retail Group to undertake:
- a) Audit of current markets offer including overall experience,
 - b) Feedback from businesses, traders and consumers,
 - c) Assessment of opportunities to increase the choice and range of markets as well as the additive nature of markets,
 - d) Economic Impact,
 - e) Review of locations, frequency and type of markets,
 - f) Benchmarking against similar destinations/exemplar markets,
 - g) GAP analysis and recommendations for improvement.

- 2.6 The findings of the final report were required to provide valuable insight and information to the council and the operators of the street markets across the district to:

- a) Support their street markets,
- b) Enhance the visitor experience after the COVID-19 pandemic,
- c) Ensure the district's High Streets remain vibrant.

2.7 Findings Highlights

The findings and recommendations for each street market reviewed can be found in Appendix 1. The review found overall:

- a) the offering across the district is well established, creating a positive impact including increasing the sense of appeal in terms of the overall place with local residents considering street markets on a par with permanent retail (shops) as a reason to visit the place,
- b) there is a mixed offering in terms of product quality and range of traders at the markets across the district and this is reflected in feedback where visitors rated the offer as "quite good" or "neither good or bad",
- c) that no one location would be appropriate for the development of a "destination market", similar to, for example, Portobello Road, London, but there is opportunity for some markets to increase the number of market traders taking a pitch,
- d) that the location of the street markets were appropriate with potential for improvement in some locations,

- e) there was little churn in market traders and new traders taking pitches were limited with most having traded in excess of five years,
- f) the typical visitor profile was local at an age demographic of 45+, with limited engagement with younger audiences.

2.8 There are some common areas for improvement across all markets and these include:

- a) development of branding, promotional materials and marketing activity,
- b) Improvements to market appearance, delivering a stronger sense of place, arrival and customer experience derived from investment in signage and street dressing, branded gazebos, pitch layout/customer flow,
- c) number of market stalls and additional themed markets offering a wider product range and pricing point to meet the needs of all customers with an emphasis on locally sourced.

2.9 Communications and Consultation

The Winchester Street Markets Review has been shared and discussed with the market operator in Alresford, Alresford Parish Council and Bishop's Waltham Parish Council, Wickham Parish Council, the Winchester Business Improvement District and Cabinet Members Cllr Tod, Cllr Thompson and Cllr Kelsey.

2.10 Next Steps

In order to action the findings and recommendations in the review it is proposed that a funding allocation will be made from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The city council will hear the outcome of its investment plan to access £1m of funding over the next three years in September.

2.11 The investment plan included an indicative project with an allocation of £30,000 to take place in the first year (22/23) of the three year programme. The project would:

- a) focus primarily on points a) and b) of 2.8 above,
- b) fund activities to drive footfall, raise awareness, create a recognisable brand, improve arrival and overall visitor experience delivered through a range of marketing and place making interventions.

- 2.12 In the event that UKSPF funding does not become available alternative funding streams would need to be secured in order to deliver activities which would underpin improvements to the markets appearance and delivering a stronger sense of place, such as street dressing and branded gazebos. Some marketing activity, work around developing the number of market stalls and additional themed markets along with adopting the recommendations within the procurement of a City Street Market contract can still be delivered from within existing work programmes and budgets.
- 2.13 As a consequence of this investment it is anticipated that the reputation and footfall to the markets would be improved. This would better enable market operators to tackle point c) of 2.8 above.
- 2.14 The council is reviewing the operating policies and will be re-tendering the city centre street markets contract in the coming months with the aim that this street market becomes an exemplar of the findings and recommendations outlined in the Review.
- 2.15 The council will work with the district's market operators and traders to influence the development of their offer with particular emphasis on achieving the council's priority of a carbon neutral district by 2030. This may include supporting initiatives and campaigns that reduce waste, use sustainably-made and packaged materials and products etc. Activity will also need to support the priorities of Living Well and Vibrant Local Economy.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3.1 Alternative options considered:

- a) No action is taken in respect of the recommendations outlined in the Winchester District Street Markets Review: this option was rejected as the importance of quality street markets to the overall economic health of high streets, the reputation of and ability to attract footfall to the city and market towns, as well as a platform for fledgling businesses to test their products in a relatively low risk environment, is well recognised and supported in the Winchester District High Streets' Priority Plan,
- b) Expect the market operators to take the lead and action the findings and recommendations: this option was rejected as market operators lack the resource required in order to action the findings and recommendations independently.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

None

Other Background Documents:-

CAB3356 UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Investment Plan Proposal

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Winchester District Street Markets Review 2022: Executive Summary



informed solutions

Winchester District Street Markets Review 2022

Executive Summary Report

September 2022



Contents

Introduction	2
Overview of the Market Offer	3
Stakeholder Feedback	8
Economic Impact	9
Conclusions	11

Introduction

Winchester City Council commissioned The Retail Group to undertake a research consultancy study to provide it with a better understanding of the benefits and economic value of street markets in the Winchester district including the potential to develop the current offer. The scope covered markets and opportunities in Winchester city centre and the market towns of Alresford, Bishop's Waltham and Wickham. The objective was for the findings to provide valuable insight and information to the council and operators of street markets to:

- Support street markets' growth and development.
- Enhance the visitor experience after the COVID-19 pandemic, and
- Ensure the district's High Streets remain vibrant.

The study needed to include several aspects of research; these were:

- Audit of current markets' offer including overall experience.
- Feedback from businesses, traders, consumers.
- Assessment of opportunities to increase the choice and range of markets.
- Establish the additive nature of markets.
- Assess the economic impact.
- Review of locations, frequency and types of markets.
- Benchmarking against similar destinations / exemplar markets, and
- Gap analysis and recommendations for improvement.

This is an executive summary of the detailed research and surveys undertaken and the finding arising from that work.

Summary of recommendations for future development of the street markets

The study made drew a number of conclusions and in particular identified improvement opportunities for the street markets across the district including:

- Better signage.
- More visible impact, improved first impressions from revised pitch layouts, site lines, improved trading equipment including stalls, gazebos and tables.
- Stronger branding, marketing and promotion.
- Extending the offer to complement the wider retail offer in terms of quality and mix including more local and regional producers.
- Introduce early evening markets, themed and touring markets including youth/student, entrepreneur/start up business and independent/local producer themes, and
- Consider street events and offerings to attract a younger adult demographic.

Overview of the market offer

Alresford - current

Alresford Town Centre offers a very appealing and attractive location, a quintessential Hampshire 'market' town with many historic buildings and interesting small scale architecture. The over riding impression is of a good quality, friendly and pleasant experience.

The location review was completed on a market trading day, Thursday. Circa 12 stalls were trading with space for up to 20 stalls, possibly more with smaller pitches. The market offered a diverse mix of categories, including florist and plants, pies, breads and baked goods, eco packaging groceries and household, olives / deli, fruit and veg, wool and knitted items, gifts, mobile sharpening. Many of these categories are adding to the offer of the town, in some instances expanding the offer, in many simply adding variety. Clearly the majority of stalls are regulars. The market was visibly popular, evident regular customers and several longstanding traders, it felt friendly, welcoming and service oriented.

The research findings would indicate the Thursday street market in Alresford is in the right location, a one day a week market is sufficient and the type and format of the market is broadly appropriate.

Alresford - future

There is an opportunity to develop periodic visiting themed markets or events, although these would need to be in keeping with mix and quality of the town's offer, e.g. themed food markets, international markets, 'makers' markets, vintage and home markets. Formation of an events or visiting markets working group to identify the optimum mix, frequency and location is recommended.

The regular street market will be an attraction and an additional reason to visit, but is unlikely to achieve a destination status market for visitors outside the regular users of the town centre.

Satisfaction with current street market?

Satisfaction Level	%
Satisfied	42
Neither / Nor	39
Dissatisfied	15



Would you Like to See More Markets in This Centre?

Satisfaction	Yes %	No %
More regular markets	12	68
More visiting themed markets	39	39
More occasional event markets	54	34

Overview of the market offer

Bishop's Waltham - current

Bishop's Waltham is a pleasant town, sitting beside the South Downs and at the southern end of Winchester district. The town benefits from attractive buildings, small scale architecture and a busy High Street that is well occupied providing a diverse mix of businesses and attractions.

The town centre has few vacant properties and looks to be withstanding the wider impacts on retail centres quite well. Many businesses were busy with evident footfall and busy car parks.

Bishop's Waltham – future

Visually and aesthetically the town looks as though it could support a regular weekly or fortnightly street market as part of its offer. There are a number of locations that might be suitable, and a street market would need to be highly visible and connected to existing High Street.

A regular market will need to include frequently purchased product categories, food items, clothing, household, catering. It would also benefit from including more home and accessories or gift items. Given the profile of the shops, the product quality would need to be good and the offer should complement the existing retail and extend the choice. Themes could include farmers markets, producers markets, artisan markets, visiting international markets, street food and craft markets.

A feasibility study to outline how, where, what and when to deliver a regular street market within the heart of the town centre would be needed. As with Alresford it will be part of the town's offer and an additional facility, it is not recommended to create a large destination market.

Satisfaction with current street market?

Satisfaction Level	%
Satisfied	32
Neither / Nor	29
Dissatisfied	6



Would you Like to See More Markets in This Centre?

Satisfaction	Yes %	No %
More regular markets	68	19
More visiting themed markets	71	10
More occasional event markets	77	6

Overview of the market offer

Wickham - current

Wickham was the smallest centre in the review, with an offer much smaller than that of Alresford or Bishop's Waltham. The centre felt more practical, probably as a result of the dominance of parking in front of premises. The 2020 LSH Retail Uses Study describes Wickham as having limited footfall and appealing to a limited catchment. Given the size of the offer, the existing mix, the layout and the reliance on parking to attract visitors it is difficult to consider that Wickham could sustain a regular street market. It is understood that street markets have been resisted historically. There are a number of seasonal events and there may be the opportunity to build on these providing they have wide appeal to all consumers.

Wickham - future

In Wickham the opportunity is for irregular visiting markets and events.

Satisfaction with current street market?

Satisfaction Level	%
Satisfied	13
Neither / Nor	27
No Answer	60



Would you Like to See More Markets in This Centre?

Satisfaction	Yes %	No %
More regular markets	27	27
More visiting themed markets	47	27
More occasional event markets	60	20

Overview of the market offer

Winchester - current

Winchester High Street continues to be active, occupied and providing a varied retail, catering and service experience for the city's residents and many visitors. This established mix of chain and independent operators has enabled the city centre to remain well occupied. The city continues to attract new businesses and the recent sign posting for offers on side streets is a good example of delivery that many other locations might look to emulate.

As a result of Covid operating constraints, the market is operating from the wider lower part of the High Street, which has helped to increase visibility of shops along the narrowest areas. Given the time of the year and the emerging from Covid timescale, trading on both days was particularly buoyant and busy. Three days of markets attract circa 95 traders, 25 Thursday, 30 Friday and 40 on Saturday. Thursday stall numbers were almost at capacity, for the restricted space. Saturday trading covers a wider area and again all pitches were occupied. The market is anchored by a good fruit and veg, excellent fishmonger and a butcher. In addition there is an award winning cheese trader, excellent bread, pies and cakes traders and a sprinkling of other food operators. The catering offer is good, with an excellent coffee provider and several hot food specialists. The non-food traders cover a wide variety of categories, from silver plate cutlery to bedlinen, leather goods and artisan producers.

The 2020 LSH Retail Study Report makes a number of references to the existing street market offer. It is recognised as adding to the provision of independent retailers in the core city centre area, something that might not be otherwise be affordable given pressures on space and rents. Through expanding the independent offer, the street market will be increasing the choice and variety of goods available in the city centre.

The existing street market offer is a recognised strength and it is identified as a growth opportunity, both to improve the existing market offer and to add additional themed offers, evening markets, street food markets etc.

The LSH study included research with consumers about the facilities of the city centre, unsurprisingly many aspects were rated as quite good or very good. The street markets were rated mainly as quite good or average; there were some very good ratings (and a few quite poor).

Satisfaction with current street market?

Satisfaction Level	%
Satisfied	75
Neither / Nor	19
Dissatisfied	2



Overview of the market offer

Winchester - future

The street market is in the optimum location with no negative impact to its performance and appeal. It is considered that the current location has helped to create more impact and improve the linkage to The Brooks. On a Saturday / Sunday the trading area extends further toward The Broadway and the wide area outside the Guildhall. This area does accommodate the market well, although the street furniture and planters are limiting the trading area.

The findings of the review research would indicate that the current number of trading days are sufficient. In terms of expanding the market offer on those days, this is something that could be considered. The Thursday, Friday and Saturday markets could all grow and use the space used by the Sunday market, further along the Broadway. This would increase the appeal of the market and all the associated economic benefits, more direct income for the council and many indirect economic benefits.

In terms of its potential to create a 'special or destination market experience', this is limited by the space available and the delivery. The market is already part of the overall attraction of Winchester and it whilst it may be a primary attraction for some visitors, for most it will be a secondary attraction. For it to become a destination it would need to be larger and more dominant within its environment which is likely to meet local resistance. If moved to a dedicated remote space (to allow a significant uplift in stall numbers) it would lose footfall.



Would you Like to See More Markets in This Centre?

Satisfaction	Yes %	No %
More regular markets	46	41
More visiting themed markets	65	26
More occasional event markets	72	18

Stakeholder Feedback

In addition to the views of local businesses and existing market traders, a stakeholder engagement survey was completed via a questionnaire sent to a selection of stakeholders in each of the four centres. This included parish councillors, town clerks, local chambers of trade, town trusts representatives, and market operators.

We issued 43 questionnaires and contacted stakeholders twice.

We are very grateful for the contributions from stakeholders and received 11 responses. The responses are reported as a collective.

Stakeholders were divided as to whether more street markets were needed in a centre, half said yes and half said no. Those with markets clearly felt they had sufficient, those without were keen to have them.

In terms of location it was clear that street markets should remain in existing locations or be in 'the heart of the centre'.

Priority Future Street Market Requirements	
Destination markets to draw people into the centre	9
Good quality stalls	9
Complement the shops	8
Additional themed or specialist street markets	8
Stalls that look good	8
Clear signage and information	7
Good value prices	7
Good customer service	7
Convenient location	6
Good food and beverage offer	6
Good value 'everyday' products	5
Regular weekly market	5
Easy access	5
Customer seating and facilities	4
Occasional fortnightly or monthly street markets	3

Strengths	
Provide variety of goods	Regularity
Attract visitors	Reputation
Quality stalls / traders	
Community feel	
Good management	

Weaknesses	
Impact on parking availability	Cars in market area
Reduced space post Covid	Move to accommodate events
No central location	
Litter	
Negative impact on businesses	

Economic Impact

The commissioned research consultancy reported that there is no recognised industry standard method for assessing economic impact of markets. However from the intelligence sought throughout the review certain assumptions can be made and some of the responses from the businesses, traders and stakeholders to survey questions that indicate economic impact are summarised below:

Impact Benefit Variable	Alresford		Winchester	
	yes (agree) %	no (disagree) %	yes (agree) %	no (disagree) %
The regular street markets in this centre successfully generate additional footfall to the centre	39	39	78	6
This centre's retail appeal is increased by the street market offer	32	32	79	8
Users of the regular street markets also use shops, cafes and services across this centre when they visit the markets	51	22	88	4
The markets generate a positive benefit for my business	37	39	66	9
The street markets provide unfair competition for centre businesses	25	39	9	57
An improved market provision would be an attraction for this location	44	19	41	15
An improved market provision would be beneficial to local businesses	34	22	43	18
An improved market provision in this centre would generate additional footfall	44	22	48	24

Alresford

The existing market is providing a direct economic benefit as a result of the rental income it provides the town council, with an improved offer and increased variety of traders this would increase.

In terms of the impact of an improved future street market offer, this is clearly viewed as a positive impact and benefit generator. The qualitative benefits that had higher response rates include improving attraction, generating additional footfall and benefitting existing businesses.

Beyond the economic benefit to businesses and the location there are additional economic and social benefits in terms of employment of traders and support businesses, retaining local expenditure, entrepreneurship, new business start ups and sustainability through repurposing and upcycling of products.

Economic Impact

Winchester

Responses overwhelmingly indicate a view that the street market brings economic benefit. The findings in the LSH 2020 Retail Study, further support this.

If the street market continues to grow and attracts a thousand additional visitors a week (or contributes to their reason to visit the city centre), the additional economic benefit would be calculated as follows:

- 1,000 visitors, 50% conversion to 500 shoppers.
- Each of the 500 shoppers visit three shops, 1,500 shop visits.
- Spending £10 per shop (very low ATV, average transaction value) equates to £15,000 of additional 'retail income' per week.

Annualised this becomes £780,000 of additional city centre revenue. If this is attributed to a spend per square foot (@£400 / sqft.) it could sustain 1,950 square feet of retail floorspace, a typical small shop unit.

Additional indirect benefits include local employment, job creation, support of independent businesses, support for local artisan producers and start up businesses, entrepreneurship and product sustainability. Given the location in the city centre, the markets provide plenty of opportunities for young people starting on there road to employment and even business creation.

We are aware of at least two businesses now trading from premises in the city that started off as market stalls, providing clear benefit of business start up and business growth.

Conclusions

The existing street market offers are already enhancing the visitor experience. The provision of markets, and improved street markets will enable the district's high streets and town centres to remain vibrant, popular and sustainable places.

The over-riding tone of the feedback is positive about existing street markets and the support for improved street market offers, with the exception of Wickham. Wickham businesses do not require or desire a regular street market offer.

The report has identified that there is clear demand for regular street markets in the three centres.

- In Alresford and Winchester the existing markets should be retained and improved.
- In Bishop's Waltham there is the need for further work to determine how, where, what and when to deliver a regular street market within the heart of the town centre.
- In Wickham the opportunity is for irregular visiting markets and events.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL – BUSINESS & HOUSING POLICY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

	Item	Lead Officer	Date for BHP	Date for Cabinet/ Cab Cttee
Meeting 6 October 2022				
1	Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy (DD51)	Karen Thorburn	29 Sep 2022	
2	Findings and future plans following the Street Markets Review	Susan Robbins	29 Sep 2022	
Meeting 29 November 2022				
3	Housing Strategy (initial discussion and thoughts)	Gillian Knight	29 Nov 2022	21 Mar 2023
4	Disabled Facilities Grant	Karen Thorburn	29 Nov 2022	
5	Sustainable Tourism Strategy - scoping plan	Susan Robbins	29 Nov 2022	
Meeting 28 February 2023				
6	Tenant Engagement and Communication Strategy including the White Paper – Charter for Social Housing Residents.	Gillian Knight	28 Feb 2023	
7	Cultural Strategy - scoping plan	Susan Robbins	28 Feb 2023	
Items to be confirmed				

This page is intentionally left blank