



## Notice of meeting of

### **Executive Members for Housing & Adult Social Services and Advisory Panel**

- To:** Councillors Greenwood (Chair), Sue Galloway (Executive Member), Sunderland (Executive Member), Fairclough, Nimmo, Fraser, Horton, Hill, Mrs Mildred Grundy (Co-opted Non-Statutory Member) and Ms Pat Holmes (Co-opted Non-Statutory Member)
- Date:** Monday, 26 March 2007
- Time:** 6.00 pm
- Venue:** The Guildhall

## **AGENDA**

### **Notice to Members - Calling In:**

Members are reminded that, should they wish to call in any item on this agenda, notice must be given to Democracy Support Group by:

**10:00 am on Friday 23 March 2007**, if an item is called in *before* a decision is taken, *or*

**4:00 pm on Wednesday 28 March 2007**, if an item is called in *after* a decision has been taken.

Items called in will be considered by the Scrutiny Management Committee.

### **1. Declarations of Interest**

At this point Members are asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on this agenda.

**2. Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)**

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2007.

**3. Public Participation**

At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered their wish to speak regarding an item on the agenda or an issue within the Panel's remit can do so. Anyone who wishes to register or requires further information is requested to contact the Democracy Officer on the contact details listed at the foot of this agenda. The deadline for registering is Friday, 23 March 2007 at 5.00pm.

**BUSINESS FOR THE EXECUTIVE MEMBERS FOR HOUSING  
AND ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES**

**ITEMS FOR DECISION**

**4. Financial Support to Voluntary Organisations 2007/08 (Social Services and Housing) (Pages 9 - 20)**

This report presents requests received from local organisations for financial support in 2007/2008. The Executive Members for Housing and Adult Social Services are asked to agree the recommendations for Financial Support contained within this report.

**5. Housing and Adult Social Services Departmental Plan (Pages 21 - 32)**

This report advises the Executive Members of the key strategic issues facing housing and adult social care in the next few years and how these high level issues link the 6 service plans for 2007-10.

Please note: The Service Plans (Annexes 2 – 7) can be viewed on the Council's website [www.york.gov.uk](http://www.york.gov.uk) under Council Meetings or via the link below:

<http://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.asp?CId=441&MId=1407&Ver=4>

Please note that a revised copy of this report has been attached (with amendments highlighted) and the agenda republished on 22 March 2007

## **BUSINESS FOR THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING**

### **ITEMS FOR DECISION**

**6. Adaptation of Existing Hostel Units (Ordnance Lane Hostel)**  
(Pages 33 - 38)

This report proposes the conversion of a 2 bedroom self contained unit (14 Ordnance Lane) into a 3 bedroom shared unit and convert a 1 bedroom unit (11 Ordnance Lane) into a training facility (primarily for customer use).

**7. Change to Temporary Tenancy and Licence Conditions**  
(Pages 39 - 44)

This report looks at the need to change the following 'tenancy' conditions: travellers licence conditions; non-secure temporary accommodation agreement (shared hostel and non shared hostel); non-secure temporary accommodation agreement (dispersed); and introduction of a under 18's licence for permanent 'tenancies' to incorporate guarantor and support provider.

**8. Review of Former Arrears Incentive Scheme** (Pages 45 - 48)

This report looks at success and value of the former arrears incentive to accepted homeless households and proposes a continuation and expansion of the scheme.

**9. Former Tenants Arrears – Write off** (Pages 49 - 54)

This report seeks agreement to write off a number of former tenants arrears.

**10. Creation of a New Security Grant (Pages 55 - 60)**

This report revises the grants and assistance policy to include a new security grant for vulnerable residents, which keeps a dwelling secure, against unauthorised entry and enable the maintenance of defensible space.

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**11. 17 Almsford Road – Petition Update (Pages 61 - 66)**

This report provides the Executive Member with an update on the council's actions to date concerning the above property following the presentation of a petition to Full Council by Cllr D Horton, and the current course of action being followed.

**12. Any other business which the Chair considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972**

Democracy Officer:

Name: Tracy Johnson

Contact details:

- Telephone – (01904) 551031
- E-mail – [tracy.johnson@york.gov.uk](mailto:tracy.johnson@york.gov.uk)

For more information about any of the following please contact the Democracy Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports

Contact details are set out above.

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If you would, you will need to:

- register by contacting the Democracy Officer (whose name and contact details can be found on the agenda for the meeting) **no later than 5.00 pm** on the last working day before the meeting;
- ensure that what you want to say speak relates to an item of business on the agenda or an issue which the committee has power to consider (speak to the Democracy Officer for advice on this);
- find out about the rules for public speaking from the Democracy Officer.

**A leaflet on public participation is available on the Council's website or from Democratic Services by telephoning York (01904) 551088**

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All the reports which Members will be considering are available for viewing online on the Council's website. Alternatively, copies of individual reports or the full agenda are available from Democratic Services. Contact the Democracy Officer whose name and contact details are given on the agenda for the meeting. **Please note a small charge may be made for full copies of the agenda requested to cover administration costs.**

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If you have any further access requirements such as parking close by or a sign language interpreter then please let us know. Contact the Democracy Officer whose name and contact details are given on the order of business for the meeting.

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### **Holding the Executive to Account**

The majority of councillors are not appointed to the Executive (38 out of 47). Any 3 non-Executive councillors can 'call-in' an item of business from a published Executive (or Executive Member Advisory Panel (EMAP)) agenda. The Executive will still discuss the 'called in' business on the published date and will set out its views for consideration by a specially convened Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC). That SMC meeting will then make its recommendations to the next scheduled Executive meeting in the following week, where a final decision on the 'called-in' business will be made.

### **Scrutiny Committees**

The purpose of all scrutiny and ad-hoc scrutiny committees appointed by the Council is to:

- Monitor the performance and effectiveness of services;
- Review existing policies and assist in the development of new ones, as necessary; and
- Monitor best value continuous service improvement plans

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- Relevant Council Officers get copies of relevant agenda and reports for the committees which they report to; and
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City of York Council

Minutes

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MEETING	EXECUTIVE MEMBERS FOR HOUSING & ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES AND ADVISORY PANEL
DATE	15 JANUARY 2007
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS GREENWOOD (CHAIR), SUE GALLOWAY (EXECUTIVE MEMBER), FAIRCLOUGH, LIVESLEY (SUBSTITUTE), FRASER, HORTON AND HILL
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS SUNDERLAND, NIMMO, MRS MILDRED GRUNDY AND MS PAT HOLMES

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**64. Declarations of Interest**

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

Cllr Sue Galloway declared a personal non prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 5 (Proposal to Designate Acomb Wood & Acomb Meadow as a Statutory Local Nature Reserve) as a member of the Friends of Acomb Wood.

**65. Minutes**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 11 December 2006 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**66. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak under the Council's Public Participation scheme.

Sue Lister, from the Older Peoples Assembly, spoke on Agenda Item 7 (Long Term Commissioning Strategy for Older People in York). She highlighted that older people needed to be recognised as a resource and to utilise their skills. Ms Lister also emphasised that hobbies helped to occupy their time but if they deteriorate into a downward spiral, for example as a result of illness, it was then that they became a burden on the system. She informed Members of the various activities which had been organised, such as the 50+ festival, 50+ games and 50+ food and drink, which opened possibilities for involvement to older people. A copy of the 50+ newsletter from the York Older People's Assembly was circulated around Members for information.

**67. Rechargeable Repairs**

Members considered a report which asked the Executive Member to approve a new approach to the recovery of rechargeable repairs.

Members were presented with two options:-

Option 1 - Identify the most regularly ordered rechargeable repairs and put a fixed value on the charge based on historic cost data and officer experience. The charges would be increased annually in line with the building index. Raise the invoices using the iworld IT system. The recovery process would be done through the financial ledger by housing services. The list of repairs would be updated on a regular basis to ensure that it reflected the most common rechargeable repairs.

Option 2 - Retain the existing system of recovery.

Members welcomed the new approach, in particular the requirement for payment, or an agreed payment plan, in advance of the repairs being carried out, unless the work was deemed necessary to ensure that the property remained wind or weather tight, or was of a health or safety nature.

Members queried about what charges would be made for cases where the damage was not wilful damage or wear and tear, such as damage as a result of illness. Officers reported that each case would be looked at individually and a decision to charge or not would be based on its own merits.

Members requested the following changes to the proposed charges contained in Annex 1:-

Glazing – separate prices for single glazing, double glazing, and size of glass up to 0.5m<sup>2</sup>, 0.5-1m<sup>2</sup>, and over 1m<sup>2</sup>.

Washing machine **and dishwasher** leaks, tap connectors, hoses (tenants responsibility) - £30.00

### Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member for Housing be advised to approve Option 1 to identify the most regularly ordered rechargeable repairs and put a fixed value on the charge based on historic cost data and officer experience, with the following amendments to Annex 1:-

Glazing – separate prices for single glazing, double glazing, and size of glass up to 0.5m<sup>2</sup>, 0.5-1m<sup>2</sup>, and over 1m<sup>2</sup>.

Washing machine **and dishwasher** leaks, tap connectors, hoses (tenants responsibility) - £30.00

### Decision of the Executive Member for Housing

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory panel as set out above be accepted and endorsed.



REASON: It would lead to an improved service to, and greater clarity for, customers. It would also result in greater efficiency for the council.

**68. Proposal to Designate Acomb Wood & Acomb Meadow as a Statutory Local Nature Reserve**

Members considered a report which proposed that Acomb Wood and Acomb Meadow be declared a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) as part of the development of a city wide network of Local Nature Reserves. As parts of the site were in differing Executive portfolios the report was presented to both the Executive Members for Housing and Leisure and Culture for approval.

Members were presented with two options:-

Option 1: Declare Acomb Wood & Acomb Meadow as a Local Nature Reserve.

Option 2: Do not declare Acomb Wood & Acomb Meadow as a Local Nature Reserve.

Members requested officers to investigate the split management of other sites and the implications of changing the management to being under one Executive portfolio.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member for Housing be advised to approve Option 1 and Acomb Wood & Acomb Meadow be designated as a Local Nature Reserve.

Decision of the Executive Member for Housing

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel as set out above be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: The designation as an LNR would bring positive benefits to the local community and to the site itself. It would help preserve & enhance the site for future years, send a positive message to the local community, and ensure good management practices were followed in consultation with Natural England.

**69. Results of the 2006 Annual Housing Service Monitor**

Members considered a report which provided the Executive Member with the headline results of the 2006 Annual Housing Service Monitor and was supplemented by a presentation to Members at the meeting.

The Annual Housing Services Monitor was a tenant satisfaction survey which had been carried out in York every year since 1990. During September 2006 a postal survey was mailed to 1800 council tenants

selected at random. A total of 878 tenants returned the questionnaire which represented a good response rate of 49% of the sample.

Officers reported some amendments to the figures in the report. Under bullet point 24, the figure for satisfaction with neighbourhoods in 2005 should be 84% and not 74%, and it did not reverse a downward trend. Under bullet point 32, the perceived helpfulness of staff remained static at 81%, and had not risen from 74% in 2005.

The presentation to Members gave a more detailed analysis of the results, including breakdowns according to estate management areas. It was reported that the satisfaction with the overall service remained high, with 80% of tenants stating that they were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied. However, there was a steady decrease in the agreement that City of York Council was a good landlord, and a decline in satisfaction regarding value for money, and action taken about nuisance or disturbances. More tenants were dissatisfied with their neighbourhood than in 2005.

Some members raised concerns about the results of the survey, stating that the figures showed a downward trend. Officers reported that there had been variations in satisfaction over the past few years and that there was a need to reconnect with customers, whose involvement was at a low level. It was reported that the survey would be used as a tool to improve the services provided. Members requested officers to scrutinize these figures and look into the underlying issues.

Cllr Horton proposed a motion that the recommendation be amended to "That the advisory panel advise the Executive Member for Housing to note **with concern** the summary results of the 2006 Annual Housing Service Monitor." This motion was seconded by Cllr Fraser. The motion was put to the vote and the motion was lost.

Cllrs Fraser, Horton and Hill requested that their votes against the decision be recorded.

#### Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member for Housing be advised to note the summary results of the 2006 Annual Housing Service Monitor.

#### Decision of the Executive Member for Housing

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel as set out above be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To inform the Executive Member.

### **70. Long Term Commissioning Strategy for Older People in York**

Members considered a report which informed Members of the development of a long term commissioning strategy for older people and sought agreement to the framework for the development and delivery of

this strategy. Members received a short presentation on the details contained in the Annexes to the report.

Members were presented with two options:-

Option 1 - Continue providing services in the same way, but increase capacity and funding to meet growing demand. This option was unlikely to meet the challenges of the Government's White Paper, and was unlikely to meet the vision contained within the joint strategy for York Never Too Old. It was unlikely that funding would increase in line with demographic growth to make this option affordable.

Option 2 - Embark on a longer-term programme to reshape services and to target interventions where they were most needed and most effective. This would include a new emphasis on prevention and inclusive services, which offer control and choice and which allow statutory services to focus on those with the most complex needs.

The presentation covered a range of key issues including why have a Long Term Commissioning strategy, our approach, key messages, population change, need for services, cost, capacity, alternatives, dementia and carers. It was reported that current services were not sustainable and cross cutting action involving a wide range of stakeholders, including providers, the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Older Peoples Assembly was required. Members were informed that the cost of meeting the projected future needs in 2020 would be at least £7million more than what the cost was in 2005. Officers highlighted that there was a need to provide earlier, more effective intervention and support.

Members commented that earlier intervention could be difficult to achieve as a lot of carers struggled on their own for a while before seeking help. Officers reported that they were exploring ways of how to work with the PCT and GP surgeries to identify earlier any support required. The Executive Member for Adult Social Services informed members that the PCT had given categorical assurance that they would work with the council to develop the strategy. Furthermore the voluntary sector and independent sector would be invited to work with the council on the strategy as well.

Members queried about how robust the projections were and commented that some projections were based on pro rata's of existing take up which might shift over time as carers get older and were less able to do the caring. Officers reported that there were a lot of variables which could alter the projections, but these predictions were a starting point for developing the strategy.

### Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member for Adult Social Services be advised to agree Option 2 which recommends embarking on a longer-term programme to reshape services for older people in York and to target interventions where they are most needed and most effective.

Decision of the Executive Member for Adult Social Services

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel as set out above be accepted and endorsed.

REASONS:

- i) Government messages are clear that strategic commissioning should become a core activity for both local authorities and health.
- ii) There will be major challenges in the next 15 years to meet the needs and aspirations of the growing older population in York.
- iii) Government policy and local strategy has identified that the current service models need to change to meet these major challenges.
- iv) It is essential that we engage user and carers, providers and other stakeholders in identifying the way forward and the long term commissioning strategy will help that dialogue develop.

**71. Review of Non Residential Charging Policy**

Members considered a report which recommended that the Executive Member agreed an updated charging policy for non residential care services subject to approval of the 2007/08 budget by the Executive in January.

Members were presented with two options:-

Option 1 - To agree the updated non residential charging policy as attached at Annex 1.

Option 2 - To not agree the updated policy and continue with the current situation where there was no formal policy document that could be shared with customers.

The main changes included within the revised policy were charging on planned care, disability related benefit disregards, and clarity of policy.

Members requested that officers make the application process as transparent as possible to reduce the level of bureaucracy involved. Officers reported that a welfare benefits advisor would be sent out to the customer to help them fill in the application form.

The Labour Group reserved their position in relation to the disability related benefit disregards until the Budget.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member for Adult Social Services be advised to agree option 1 and the introduction of the revised non residential charging policy with effect from April 2007 subject to the agreement of the budget proposals at the Executive in January and full budget council in February.

Decision of the Executive Member for Adult Social Services

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel as set out above be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To ensure clarity and equity for customers and to ensure the department has a balanced budget for 2007/08.

**72. Approval of proposals for implementation of the Mental Capacity Act**

Members considered a report which informed the Executive Member of action that had been taken and was required to implement the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 was due to come into force in England and Wales in April 2007. The Act provided, for the first time, a statutory framework for assessing whether a person has capacity, for acting and making decisions on behalf of individuals who lack capacity and for empowering and protecting vulnerable people who were not able to make their own decisions. It made it clear who could take decisions, in which situations and how they should go about this. It enabled people to plan ahead for a time when they may lose capacity. It addressed the issue of providing care and treatment for people who lack capacity. Its scope was wide-ranging, involving decisions regarding personal welfare and financial affairs.

The Local Authority was responsible for commissioning an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate service (IMCA). The IMCA had a clear role in supporting a person lacking capacity who had no-one else to act on their behalf. There was a specific grant of £6,306 for 2006/07 and £18,975 for 2007/08, for the commissioning of the IMCA service in York.

Officers reported that a process was underway to pool resources with North Yorkshire County Council for the setting up of the IMCA service.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member for Adult Social Services be advised to note the contents of this report.

Decision of the Executive Member for Adult Social Services

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel as set out above be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: The Mental Capacity Act 2005 would be implemented on 1 April 2007 and Local Authorities would be required to make the appropriate arrangements for systems to be in place by this time.

CLLR SUE SUNDERLAND  
EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING

CLLR SUE GALLOWAY  
EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES

CLLR JANET GREENWOOD  
Chair of Advisory Panel  
The meeting started at 5.05 pm and finished at 7.30 pm.



HASS07

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**Meeting of the Executive Members for Housing and Adult Social Services and Advisory Panel**

26 March 2007

Report of the Director of HASS

**Financial Support To Voluntary Organisations 2007/2008 (Social Services and Housing)****Purpose of Report**

1. This report presents requests received from local organisations for financial support in 2007/2008. The Executive Members for Housing and Adult Social Services are asked to agree the recommendations for Financial Support contained within this report.

**Background**

2. The budget for Financial Support for the voluntary sector has been set at £83,810 for social services and £8,420 for housing related services. This is in addition to the approximate £4.0 million that the Council invests in commissioning social care services from the voluntary and Independent sector.
3. Applications for Financial Support have been received from 8 social care organisations, totalling £79,499. One application was received from a housing organisation with a request for £8,673.
4. In addition funding has previously been agreed by Members for the Independent Care Group. This will be the final year of its three year Service Level Agreement. Details are included within this report. The organisation is due to receive £15,000 support this year meaning the total value of applications to be considered for social care organisations is £94,499.
5. Criteria for the awarding of financial support is listed at **Annex One**.
6. The arrangements for financial support for voluntary organisations aim to be simple and explicit. They are focused on a single application form which is considered by the relevant Executive Member, with the Chief Executive's Department acting as post office for applications.
7. It is proposed that over the next twelve months a more strategic review be undertaken to analyse and assess the strategic relevance and outcomes delivered by services funded through this financial support.

**Consultation**

8. Officers from the Council where appropriate have met with, or discussed, the applications with the organisations listed within this report. The process and timetables for applications was publicised by the Council in September 2006.

9. Voluntary and community sector representatives of the York Compact Group also met with Council officers in December as part of the Council's wider consultation prior to finalising the Council's budget proposals for 2007/08.

### **Options**

10. Option 1 – To award Financial Support as indicated in paragraphs 46 and 48 to all organisations including Survive.
11. Option 2 – To award Financial Support to organisations as detailed at paragraphs 46 and 48 with the exception of Survive. The balance of the budget to be utilised for funding small one-off grants during the financial year.

### **Analysis**

#### York Citizens' Advice Bureau (Housing)

12. The York Citizens' Advice Bureau assumed responsibility for the Bond Guarantee Scheme in December 2002 from the Detached Youth Work Project when that project closed much of its services. The scheme works with young people who are homeless, sleeping rough or in temporary or insecure accommodation. The project has a deposit guarantee scheme where bondholders' underwrite a fund to enable young people who haven't enough money for a deposit to secure a tenancy. The grant application is for finance to administer the Bond Guarantee Scheme, identifying landlords and setting up the Guarantee with customer and landlord. The Bond Guarantee scheme is accessible to staff within both the Children's and Adults' Services divisions of Housing & Adult Social Services to support young people.
13. During the past quarter the organisation has received 106 referrals and secured 11 tenancies, the target per annum is 30.
14. The organisation has requested a total of £8,673 Financial support in 2007/8 having received £8,477 in 2006/7 and it is proposed that Financial Support of £8,420 is awarded which is the total budget available to the Executive Member in 2007/8.

#### York Community Furniture Store (Social Care)

15. The York Community Furniture Store is a non profit making organisation that aims to relieve real needs through the provision of low cost and donated furniture and electrical appliances to individuals and families on low incomes. This service has developed and grown over a number of years and continues to provide a much appreciated service for customers. Last year they worked with a total of approximately 2000 customers in York. In addition the service has recycled 90,000 KG of unwanted goods that might otherwise have gone to land-fill with a significant cost saving to the authority. The growth of the service has been measured and sustainable to date and has grown through grants from the Community Fund, Lloyds TSB and a small grant from NYCC for extending the service into Ryedale. Unfortunately these additional grants ceased in 2005/6.
16. The Store is still viable due to income from sale of goods, the Council's small grant and significant reserves. However the Store is projecting a £27,000 deficit in 2006/7 and a possible £32,000 deficit in 2007/8. The Store has taken the decision to change it's constitution and open to the general public to increase income and will be increasing it's advertising to inform people of the services available. The



decision will not affect customers referred by the Council and it's partners as they will operate a tiered pricing system.

17. Funding for this service was £5,000 in 2006/7 and they have requested £10,000 in 2007/08. It is proposed that the Council commits to £10,000 support in 2007/8 in order that this essential service remains financially viable in the York area. This additional funding will allow the service to remain viable and look towards attracting additional finding and setting a balanced budget in 2008/9. Officers have asked to have further discussion in the summer to review the long term viability of the service and progress towards attracting additional funding.

York Blind and Partially Sighted Society (Social Care)

18. York Blind and Partially Sighted Society advocates, develops and provides services for blind and partially sighted people, their friends, relatives and carers. The Society successfully manages a range of services for customers on behalf of City of York Council. Along with many charities they have had to deal with funding reducing in recent years but have been relatively successful both in attracting additional funding and controlling expenditure. During the last year the organisation directly helped 150 people at York Hospital eye clinic, over 1250 people visited the Resource Centre, it achieved the Duke of York Community Initiative Award and also received a separate grant to develop a service for people unable to visit the Centre.
19. The Society was awarded Support of £16,247 in 2006/7 and has requested £16,734 in 2007/8. It is recommended that Financial Support is provided to York Blind and Partially Sighted Society of £16,621 including an inflationary award for 2007/8.

Disability Information and Advice Centre (DIAC) (Social Care)

20. The Executive Member(s) will recall that officers have been working alongside the Trustees and Management of DIAC to ensure the continuing stability and viability of the organisation. Members will recall previous reports which have shown the organisation had been successful in identifying efficiency savings, securing additional funding and had submitted an agreed business plan mapping a way forward for the organisations future. Members will also recall that the Selby & York Primary Care Trust withdrew approximately £6,000 funding from DIAC in 2006/7 which regrettably placed the organisation in a deficit position. However Council Officers continued to work with DIAC and the organisation remained viable this financial year.
21. DIAC have again approached the new North Yorkshire and York PCT to replace the funding withdrawn last year but are not hopeful of a positive response. The organisation will therefore still be facing a funding deficit in 2007/8 and have requested an increase in Financial Support from the Council. The organisation received £16,905 in 2006/7 and has this year requested £24,600.
22. DIAC received a total of 2100 enquiries in the past year across a number of areas including benefits, aids and adaptations and independent living. Through the Income Maximisation Service provided under contract to the Council, DIAC referrals made a total of £236,010 annual benefits gain for the year ending March 2006.
23. Council Officers have again worked with DIAC during the past financial year to attempt to resolve the financial difficulties facing the organisation. DIAC have

submitted a bid to the Lottery but the outcome of this will not be known until into the new financial year as will be the case for other funding applications they have submitted. DIAC continue to look at all funding options available to them and Officers will continue to support the organisation

24. Recent meetings with the organisation have indicated that a reduced sum of £20,000 will ensure viability in 2007/8. It is recommended that Financial Support of this sum is awarded. DIAC are a widely accessed organisation, any reduction in the support they can provide will no doubt lead to an increase in referrals to the Department. It is proposed that whilst the additional funding is agreed, it is made clear that if DIAC are successful in any alternative applications for additional funding, the Council's funding will in future years be reviewed in line with levels previously awarded.
25. Whilst DIAC meet the criteria for a longer term Service Level Agreement of up to 3 years. It is recommended however that an agreement is awarded for 2007/8 at this present time whilst we ensure and monitor the continuing viability of the organisation, and undertake the strategic review of the funding to voluntary organisations

York Deaf Society (Social Care)

26. York Deaf Society provide a range of social, spiritual, sporting, educational and welfare services and activities for deaf people in York, their families and children. The Society has worked in close collaboration with staff from City of York Council HASS and the Social Policy Research Unit at York University to establish the views of Deaf People through surveys and discussion groups. The organisation received £5,000 in 2006/7 but have requested £11,000 for 2007/8.
27. It is proposed that the additional funding is used to develop a project to set up an IT and Internet Centre for the Deaf Society. Whilst it is recognised that such a facility is not available currently at the York College of Further and Higher Education or the City Library it is felt that the organisation should have further discussions with partner agencies and that a more appropriate funding source is Education grants or the Learning Skills Council.
28. It is recommended that Financial Support of £5,000 is awarded for 2007/8.

York MIND (Social Care)

29. York MIND promote mental health services for persons experiencing emotional and mental distress. They also promote and encourage awareness of mental health issues amongst professionals and the general public with advice, information and support. They have a contract with City of York Council and Selby & York Primary Care Trust to provide advocacy services for people with mental health problems and also provide a Carers Advocacy Service to the Council. In addition to this service, the areas where MIND has the most requests for help are in information and support and counselling services. Mind have this year developed a supported volunteering scheme for people recovering from mental illness who assist in running the information service. Members will recall that we reported last year that the organisation has been going through a difficult financial period and Council officers had expressed concerns about longer term viability. The organisation has worked hard during 2006/7 to produce a detailed business plan and provide a balanced budget. The organisation now appears to be on a more stable and viable base.

30. In 2006/7 they received £8,217 in financial support and have requested £8,465 in 2007/8.
31. It is proposed that financial support of £8,406 including an inflationary award is provided to York & District Mind in 2007/8.

Alzheimer's Society (Social Care)

32. The Alzheimer's Society provides carers groups and social activities, a 24 hour help line, an advice and information service and a sitting service to people suffering from Alzheimer's and their carers. The Society also provides a Befriending Service for carers of those with Alzheimer's under contract to HASS and a carers education service funded by the Carers Grant.
33. In 2006/7 they received £3,500 in financial support and they have applied for £3,500 in 2007/8.
34. It is proposed that financial support of £3,500 is provided to the Alzheimer's Society 2007/8.

Survive (Social Care)

35. The Executive Member(s) will recall that HASS has previously awarded Financial Support to Survive but withdrew it's support when the organisation received specific grant funding for it's services. Survive submitted an application for support in 2006/7 but it was agreed not to re-instate support as the Service had faced a number of problems in the past 18 months and a new board of Trustees were faced with rationalising the service to ensure continued delivery as well as dealing with financial concerns. The service has restructured and has successfully attracted grant funding from a number of partners. Some concerns remain about the viability of Survive but Officers are confident that the measures taken by the Trustees will ensure full compliance with Charity Commission requirements.
36. Survive promotes and supports the recovery of survivors of childhood sexual abuse via self help and peer support, to improve their health, wellbeing and independence and support their inclusion into their local community. The organisation provides a telephone helpline, supportive groups, 1:1 support, website, library and information services. In 2005/6 they received a total of 1336 calls on the helpline, mainly from people with diagnosed mental health problems. The service is used by statutory staff with over 400 enquiries in 2005/6.
37. The organisation is looking to employ a second part time worker to enable them to increase and maintain levels of service provision whilst freeing up time to focus on maintaining stability and development of the service. It would enable the number of 1:1 appointments to be doubled, provide 4 support groups and provide support, supervision and training to volunteers which would increase the time available for other contact work for paid staff.
38. Survive have applied for Financial Support of £5,000 in 2007/8. Whilst it is recognised that this is a valued service and one which meets the criteria for support, it is considered that the Primary Care Trust are a more appropriate funding body and that the organisation should approach health services for increased funding to meet the growth in demand for service.
39. It is however proposed that Members may wish to consider under option 1 of this report awarding Financial Support of £5,000 to Survive to enable them to increase

the support they can provide on a one-off basis for 2007/8. Option 2 of this report proposes that whilst Members may wish to consider that this is a re-instatement of Financial Support, Survive should be encouraged to approach health services for additional funding and that the funding should be utilised for smaller one-off grants during the financial year.

REMAP (Social Care)

40. REMAP provide technical equipment for Disabled People. The local York REMAP panel founded in 1990 is one of 109 throughout the country. The local organisation receives support but is not funded by the National body and makes specialist devices for disabled people that are provided free of charge.
41. The work undertaken by them is mainly in York but a majority of their members live out of the city and REMAP continue to find difficulty in re-imbursing travel costs. They have requested Financial Support of £200 to cover the travel costs of work undertaken for York customers in 2007/8.
42. It is proposed that financial support of £200 is provided to REMAP for 2007/8

Independent Care Group (ICG) ( Social Care)

43. The Independent Care Group represent the majority of Residential/Nursing and Home Care Providers in the City of York. The organisation also represent homes in North Yorkshire and has a contractual agreement with the County Council. The ICG were awarded a three year Service Level Agreement in April 2005 with the funding reducing over the three year period. The Service Level Agreement in place sets out the requirements of the Council from the ICG and these include;
  - Providing a forum for all Independent care providers and the Council to discuss issues affecting the sector including Fair Price for Care, Fees, Commissioning Plans.
  - Endure effective feedback, objective and representative consultation on all appropriate developments and issues affecting social care in York.
  - Liaise with HASS and all other relevant organisations to discuss matters of mutual interest including training, service development and innovation in care
  - Organise an annual conference
  - Work with statutory agencies to create the best possible environment for supporting a range of outcome based service provision.
44. The funding for the agreement is now part of the Financial Support budget and as such reported within this report. The funding previously agreed for 2007/8 is £15,000.
45. It is proposed that the Council looks to revise the Service Level Agreement for 2007/8 and amend the objectives of the ICG. The Council would wish to see the organisation becoming a key partner in promotional campaigns within care and improving the health for residents within care settings. These would include an active role in promoting issues such as Hydration and Nutrition. It is proposed to award support of £15,000 subject to the organisation signing a revised Service Level agreement.

## Corporate Priorities

The award of financial Support will help to deliver the following of the Council's 13 priorities:

- Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest.
- Improve the way the Council and its partners work together to deliver better services for the people who live in York

## Implications

### Financial

46. £8,420 is available to the Executive Member for Housing to provide Financial Support to the Voluntary Sector in 2007/8. It is proposed that this funding be awarded to the Citizens Advice Bureau for the continued provision of the Bond Guarantee Scheme.
47. £83,810 is available to the Executive Member for Adult Social Services to provide financial support to the voluntary sector in 2007/8.
48. If the Executive Member were to agree the proposals listed above, the financial implications for 2007/8 are:

Organisations (Social Services)	2006/7 Award	2007/8 Request	2007/8 Proposed Award OPTION 1	2007/8 Proposed Award OPTION 2
York Community Furniture Store	£5,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000
York Blind & Partially Sighted Society	£16,247	£16,734	£16,621	£16,621
Disability Information and Advice Centre	£16,905	£24,600	£20,000	£20,000
York Deaf Society	£5,000	£11,000	£5,000	£5,000
York Mind	£8,217	£8,465	£8,406	£8,406
Alzheimer's Society	£3,500	£3,500	£3,500	£3,500
Survive	Nil	£5,000	£5,000	Nil
Remap	£200	£200	£200	£200
Independent Care Group (ICG)	£17,500	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000
Provision for small One-Off grants during financial year	Nil	Nil	Nil	£5,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£72,569</b>	<b>£94,499</b>	<b>£83,727</b>	<b>£83,727</b>

Organisations (Housing)	2006/7 Award	2007/8 Request	2007/8 Proposed Award OPTION 1	2007/8 Proposed Award OPTION 2
Citizens advice Bureau (Bond Guarantee Scheme)	£8,477	£8,673	£8,420	£8,420

<b>Totals for Social Services &amp; Housing</b>	<b>£81,046</b>	<b>£103,172</b>	<b>£92,147</b>	<b>£92,147</b>
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## **Human Resources**

49. There are no Human Resource implications arising from this report.

## **Equalities**

50. All applications were from a wide range of organisations providing Services to Older People, People with a Learning Disability Physical Disabilities and Customers with a Mental Health problem. The proposals are intended to ensure they receive the service they require in the best possible way.

## **Legal**

51. There are no legal implications arising from this report

## **Crime & Disorder**

52. There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## **Information Technology**

53. There are no IT implications arising from this report.

## **Property**

54. There are no property implications arising from this report.

## **Other**

55. The proposals relating to the grant to the Community Furniture Store could have implications for sustainability, if it is not agreed. The service supports the reuse of furniture and reduces the amount of landfill as a result.

## **Risk Management**

56. The potential risks in grant funding external bodies range from failure of the organization to deliver the agreed service at the appropriate standard, to the closure of the organisation as a whole with consequential loss of funds.

57. These types of risks have been considered and are dealt with through the application, assessment and agreement process put in place by the Council. This includes a financial assessment of the organisation and a requirement that organisations meet the relevant standards for their type of service and that appropriate insurances are held.

58. It should also be noted that funding is not released to an individual organisation until a service level agreement has been agreed and a signed copy returned to the Council, payments under the agreement are also made monthly in arrears.

### **Service Level Agreements**

59. In order to ensure that the money which the Council spends on supporting voluntary sector activity is spent wisely and on activities and services which York people want, each grant paid in 2007/8 will be dependent upon the organisation agreeing to, and signing, an appropriate service level agreement with the Council. Each service level agreement will spell out, in clear and plain English:

- the services which the organisation provides - showing number of customers, characteristics of customers and quantifiable outcomes wherever possible;
- the services which the council's funding supports;

- the number of paid staff employed and the number of volunteers who are active in the organisation;
- key performance standards for the organisation's services and activities - with targets set and achievement of targets reported regularly;
- specific objectives or tasks for the year - with timescales for achievement and the names of partners clearly stated.

60. Longer term Service Level Agreements of up to three or more years may be offered where organisations meet additional criteria specified by the Council. DIAC meet the criteria, however for reasons outlined in paragraphs 9, 22 and 23, a one-year agreement is proposed. It should be noted that the Independent Care Group (ICG) will be in the final year of a three year agreement.

61. If the organisation does not wish to agree to a service level agreement they will not receive financial support from the Council.

### **Recommendation**

62. That the Executive Members agree with Option 2 of this report and award Financial Support as detailed in paragraphs 46 and 48 of this report.

Reason: To continue Financial Support to the Voluntary Sector.

### **Contact Details**

**Author:**

Gary Brittain  
Commissioning & Contracts Manager  
Housing & Adults Social Services

**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

Bill Hodson  
Director of Housing and Adult Social Services

**Report  
Approved**



**Date**

8 March 2007

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)**

Financial  
Debbie Mitchell  
Head of HASS Finance  
554161

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:** Financial Support files held by the Commissioning & Contracts Manager.

**Annexes:** Annex 1 Criteria for Financial Support





**Annex One**

**CRITERIA FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

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**Housing and Adult Social Services**

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**Housing and Adult Social Services'** funding objectives are guided by the various social care and housing strategies adopted by the Council. They are aimed at helping disadvantaged people throughout the City of York Council area.

Adult Social Services directs resources to organisations that provide services for:

- older people
- people with physical or sensory impairments
- people with learning difficulties
- people with mental health problems

Adult Social Services will prioritise new applications as follows:

- Short-term grants which enable the applicant to develop or provide a service which complements the priorities of Housing and Adult Social Services, and which may become subject to a contract in future years
- Grants which will allow the applicant to help other organisations to provide effective services which meet identified needs
- Funding for services provided in partnership with Housing and Adult Social Services.

Applications for funding for an organisation's core services will be considered, providing that these services meet the social care objectives laid down in the various social care strategies adopted by the Council. These objectives must be clearly identified, spelt out in service level agreements and effectively monitored. Applications for Discretionary Rate Relief may also be made under these same criteria.

Housing Services will direct resources to organizations which address housing needs in York and which can measure progress in meeting those needs.

Priority will be given to applications which help to address social care as well as housing concerns. This will complement the focus of the Council's Housing and Adult Services directorate, which seeks maximum benefit for residents by combining housing and social care activities.

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## Agenda Item

HASS 20
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### Executive Member for Housing and Adult Social Services and Advisory Panel

26<sup>th</sup> March 2007

Report of the Director of Housing and Adult Social Services

## Housing and Adult Social Services Departmental Plan

### Purpose of Report

1. To advise the Executive Members of the key strategic issues facing housing and adult social care in the next few years and how these high level issues link the 6 service plans for 2007-10.

### Introduction and Vision

2. One of the difficulties in describing the work of Housing and Adult Social Services (HASS) is the diversity of the activities. Six service plans are produced for approval to cover the period 2007-10 and attached as annexes to this report. However, the danger is that these are seen as separate plans and that the links are not apparent.
3. There are strong reasons why housing and adult social services are managed together:
  - An integrated approach to support people e.g. one route in for adaptations and equipment
  - Housing is often key to independence and the safe delivery of community care e.g. extra care housing and supported living schemes
  - Long term commissioning strategies are needed to meet rising demand and these need to reflect both housing and care needs
4. To try and make this clearer and more explicit the departmental management team have identified 5 High Level themes that summarise the future developments in HASS :
  - Long Term Planning for Change
  - Independence, Choice and Control
  - Preventative Strategy
  - Quality and Excellence
  - Customer Involvement and Participation

These are set out in more detail in Annex 1 with key examples of work-streams in the 6 service plans that need to be seen as linking across the department.

## Vision

5. To try and express this more plainly the departmental management team have also drafted a vision for Housing and Adult Social Services in York:

### ***To enable people in York to live independent, healthy lives in decent, affordable homes.***

*We will focus our work on providing well managed and maintained homes, supporting communities, ensuring that all customers have equality of opportunity to access services, and supporting people to remain active and independent in their own homes.*

*Our role is to act as the commissioner or provider of services to work with our partners so that people are enabled to achieve these outcomes in their lives :*

- Improved health*
- Improved quality of life*
- Making a positive contribution*
- Exercise of choice and control*
- Freedom from discrimination or harassment*
- Economic well-being*
- Personal dignity*

## Context

6. In considering the service plans for 2007-10 we need to be aware of the key contextual issues both nationally and locally. These include:

### **a) The White Paper – Our Health, Our Care Our Say**

An outline implementation document has been published by the Department of Health which gives key milestones for some of the initiatives promised by the White Paper. Our service plans for 2007-10 will need to anticipate these changes and move in the direction set out in the White Paper e.g. more work is being done to promote direct payments and to develop individualised budgets for self directed support (the 'In Control' project for people with a learning disability) whereby people directly manage the money for their care costs.

The White Paper has also confirmed the shift to achieving outcomes for adults – broad concepts that focus on basic aims that all people want to achieve e.g. choice and control over the way they live, freedom from harassment, economic well being and dignity. This presents a challenge to how services are provided and how community support networks function.

### **b) The Respect Standard for Housing Management**

The Respect Standard sets out that all residents must respect their neighbours and the local environment and be aware of and abide by the conditions of their tenancy. It states that social landlords should be accountable to residents, so everyone is clear about what they can reasonably expect of each other.

Signing up to the standard will mean considering the level, quality and scope of services we provide and whether this meets the benchmark set by the Standard. This will be done in close consultation with residents. Through creating a more accountable model where residents are clear about what they can expect they will be better able to hold landlords to account. Critical to its success within York will be engaging with RSL landlords and gaining their commitment to signing up to the standard.

**c) Increasing demand for services and the need for long term commissioning decisions**

The work on the long term needs of older people in York and the gap analysis (i.e. what needs to be put in place to meet those needs) was presented to the January HASS EMAP meeting. This will be key to determining some of our long term commissioning decisions and we will want to work on this in partnership with the PCT, care providers and customers/carers.

This has set out the growth in the number of people over 85 ( from 3,700 to 6,000 by 2020) and the potential impact on services (e.g. 700 more people with dementia). If services remain as they are it would cost over £7m more to provide care in the current way. That is why the next step will be to look at alternative means of supporting people in the community. York is not alone in facing this challenge but we will need to agree solutions that meet our local situation. Alternative forms of extra care housing, possibly through private sector partners, is likely to be key as well as the use of assistive technology in the home.

Work is also well underway on a commissioning strategy for people with a learning disability. There are significant demographic issues here as well with a clear trend for customers in transition from children's services having increasingly complex support needs. The number of 'transitions' customers is expected to increase by 70% by 2010. This will encompass a 55% increase in customers with complex support needs. There are currently approximately 70 customers in transitions, half of whom have complex support needs. There is also an aging population of both customers and carers which presents a different range of issues but cumulatively also adds to the number of people remaining in need of services.

There is a clear link across housing and social care in responding to these challenges e.g. the opportunities that the redevelopment of the Discus bungalow sites offers to commission new homes that will meet future care needs.

**d) Affordable Housing**

It is one of the council's 13 corporate priorities "to improve the quality and availability of decent, affordable homes in the city".

The council is showing the way as a landlord and is on course to hit the government's target for decent homes by 2010/11.

Affordability is a key issue that underpins the social and economic

life of the city and is inextricably linked to supply and demand issues e.g. the shortage of affordable homes has a direct link to the levels of homelessness and the availability of locally based staff to deliver key services in the city. The outcome of key planning enquiries and the planning for other key brownfield sites will be key to the supply issue.

There is also a key role to play in the regulation of private rented homes (especially homes in multiple occupation – HMO's) and the condition of privately owned homes – through the use of grants for adaptations and repairs. The Housing Act 2004 brought the statutory the licensing of HMO's, a new fitness standard, the Housing Health & Safety Rating System. April 2007 see the introduction of a Tenancy Deposit scheme for private landlords. Major consultation is also underway looking at the future of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's).

**e) Health Improvement and the Local Area Agreement**

This is also one of the council's 13 corporate priorities – to improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest. Increasing importance is being given to tackling the social, economic and lifestyle issues that affect the demand on health and social care services. The ban on smoking in public places in 2007 and the rising concerns about obesity and diabetes are examples of this. Without changes to some of these factors the demands will become unworkable in terms of the finance and staffing required. The Local Area Agreement offers an opportunity to bring all the key statutory and voluntary partners together to work on joint objectives and programmes.

**f) The need to continue the momentum to modernise and improve services for customers**

The extensive work done in 2006 to reconfigure home care services arose from the need to improve efficiency and sharpen the focus of services. A major piece of work is underway to modernise day care for people with disabilities to build on the success of previous projects e.g. the re-provision of Hebden Rise. This is being linked to the opportunity to enable people to take more control of their care by determining their own care package and having the money to purchase it (see 2a) above). The replacement of the Peasholme hostel will provide residents with en suite facilities and space for training and support within the building.

**g) The introduction of improved IT systems to enable the council to meet statutory requirements and improve efficiency**

The first phase of the implementation of the new social care system, Frameworki, is due to take place in July 2007 with 2 further phases until completion in Summer 2008. This is the biggest project in the department and will have very significant impacts on staff time in the run up to July. The departmental management team have identified the benefits that need to be realised by this investment and there will be a major programme of staff training to

prepare people for the new ways of working.

The development of mobile working within the Housing Services area is critical to the long-term delivery of the service to our customers and the way in which staffs working practices will change. Currently the Housing Services have 40 staff that operate out in the field. It is envisaged that tenancy management, income management, repairs, homeless support and verification of housing registrations could all be carried out in the customers home resulting in significant improvements in customer satisfaction.

## Issues and Mechanisms

7. More details can be found in the 6 HASS service plans for 2007-10 which are attached as annexes to this report but I have picked out the following themes in terms of how the council could tackle the key housing and social care issues facing York in the next 15-20 years:

### a) A corporate approach

The statutory post of Director of Adult Social Services (fulfilled in York through the post of Director of HASS) has a parallel role to the other statutory post Director of Children's Services – but is less well developed. It is based on the recognition that the health and well being of adults is not primarily determined by health and social care services but by broader issues such as quality of housing, safe neighbourhoods, good transport systems, education and training, employment, air quality etc.

Progress has been made on corporate planning in 2006 and a number of the corporate improvement statements reflect the need to plan across departments to achieve broader community outcomes. This approach needs to be supported and strengthened. The service plans also pick up relevant issues from the council's Organisational Effectiveness Programme (OEP) covering issues such as partnership, customers, efficiency and leadership.

### b) A community based approach

The concept of community is less well developed for health and social care than it is for safety, housing or physical improvements to neighbourhoods. We need to do more to work in some local communities where there are isolated, vulnerable people or a lack of community infrastructure to engage local people in what they can do. The long term commissioning work on the needs of older people will enable us to present information on needs within wards and to concentrate efforts on those where inequalities are most evident.

The government is asking authorities to move forward on what has become known as the RESPECT agenda that includes tackling anti-social behaviour but also seeking to address the root causes. Housing has a particularly key role to play in this.

**c) A commissioning approach**

The recent work on the long term strategy for older people has demonstrated the need to understand the challenges ahead so that we can begin to plan for them now. This also raises fundamental issues about the need for new approaches to service provision as the current framework is not sustainable in the longer term. By defining outcomes that need to be achieved we can be more confident about specifying what services are required and which organisations are best placed to deliver them.

However, it has also highlighted the challenge of carrying out this analysis in a small authority. Even with support from the Department of Health and Oxford Brookes University it has taken about 18 months to pull together the key data into a coherent picture. Some good work (on a much smaller scale) is also being done for the needs of people with a learning disability but there are not sufficient staff resources to extend this approach to other areas e.g. physical and sensory disabilities.

**d) A Value for Money approach (Gershon Efficiencies)**

Given the council's low funding base it is essential that progress continues to be made on finding efficiencies. Increasingly this will come from fundamental changes to systems and work processes and so will be closely linked to our commissioning strategy, partnership working and use of new technology. Effective procurement will also remain central to the department's work including the use of regional or sub regional partnerships (e.g. for the purchase of assistive technology and the e-procurement of building materials.)

**e) A partnership based approach**

Much will depend on the effectiveness of our partnerships with the NHS and although the latest restructuring has been predicated on a clear separation between commissioners (the Primary Care Trust) and providers (e.g. York Hospitals Trust) we have made it clear that the council wants to plan in partnership with both as part of the whole health and social care system.

Integration is sometimes the key to success and that has been true in mental health and learning disability services. However, more progress needs to be made in terms of work with primary care staff working in the community and in the areas of older people and people with long term health conditions and disabilities. More integration may be appropriate in these areas to achieve better outcomes and greater efficiencies.

There is also a need to strengthen the relationship with the key private providers who have expressed an interest in having more involvement in shaping the future direction for services so that they can adapt their businesses accordingly.

Voluntary sector partners have a vital role to play but there is a need to look across services at what role they fulfil at a community



level given the increasingly corporate approach the council is taking to issues such as homelessness, social exclusion, health improvement and community sustainability in the broader, social sense.

The Local Area Agreement can be the vehicle for delivering much of this partnership agenda as it focuses on high level objectives.

**f) A preventative approach**

We need to get the balance right between intensive services for people with complex and long term needs and the benefits of investing in services or community infrastructure that can reduce or delay the need for intensive services. The council is likely to have to prioritise its support to people with substantial care needs but there is a role for other organisations to be commissioned to provide more social support and advice.

Our partnerships need to look at improvements to health and care systems that can prevent breakdowns in care. The new Promoting Independence Team (PIT) in home care is focussed on care plans that will enable some people to manage without long term care. We believe that more can be done in collaboration with primary care colleagues to support vulnerable people and carers to remain independent as well as looking at safety in the broadest sense e.g. preventing falls in the home, smoke detectors etc.

**g) An inclusive approach (Equalities)**

York is changing. People from ethnic minorities are beginning to form a more substantial proportion of the population which will in time increase the demand for culturally sensitive services. We need to be preparing for that by talking with community representatives about future needs. Equally we need to be championing the cause of people with disabilities to take a full part in the life of the city. The move to more individualised budgets is likely to enable people to access community facilities more easily and to raise expectations about their quality of life. The council needs to be ready to respond to that positively. One concept that has been discussed at the Social Inclusion Working Group is a Centre for Independent Living which could include being a venue for social contact as well as place where people can get advice, support and some services. This concept would be of a user led and independent centre rather than a council service.

**h) A caring approach (Customer based)**

Quality of care needs to be at the forefront of our work but is not always easy to reflect in the way we report on performance. We need to engage with customers and carers about the future shape of social services and enable them to comment on and influence the way care is provided. In particular we need to do more to recognise the role that informal carers fulfil and develop the support they need to continue in their caring role. Important steps have been taken in the last 12 months to involve carers and

develop new services but more could be done in partnership with the PCT and the voluntary sector in terms of advice, practical help and support.

We know from the Annual Housing Service Monitor that levels of satisfaction from tenants need to be improved but to do that we must re-connect to the needs of tenants and their priorities. This is a key part of the service improvement plan for housing.

## **Consultation**

8. There has not been any specific consultation on this report but elements of the service plans will have been consulted on e.g. the long term commissioning strategy was formulated with the input of key stakeholders.

## **Options**

9. Options are not part of this report which is intended to set out the high level issues that influence the departmental service plans.

## **Corporate Priorities**

10. The strongest links are to the corporate priorities to
  - Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of healthy are the poorest.”
  - Improve the quality and availability of decent, affordable homes in the city

## **Implications**

### **Financial**

11. None arising specifically from this report.

### **12. Other Implications**

#### **Human Resources (HR)**

None arising specifically from this report.

#### **Equalities**

None arising specifically from this report.

#### **Legal**

There are no immediate implications to report.

#### **Crime and Disorder**

There are no immediate implications to report.

#### **Information Technology (IT)**

None arising specifically from this report.

**Property**

There are no immediate implications to report.

**Other**

None

**Risk Management**

13. This report focuses on high level issues that the Executive Members should be aware of in the future and therefore does not analyse more detailed risks that would be dealt with through service planning.

**Recommendation**

14. That the Executive Members note and comment on the content of this briefing.

Reason : So that the Executive Members are briefed on the key challenges facing housing and adult social care in the next few years.

**Author:**

Bill Hodson  
Director of Housing and Adult  
Social Services  
Tel. 554001.

**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

Bill Hodson  
Director

**Report Approved**  **Date**

Bill Hodson  
Director

**Report Approved**  **Date**

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)**

None

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:** None

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<b>Housing and Adult Social Services Vision and Departmental Service Plan Framework</b>				
<b>Long Term Business Change</b>	<b>Independence, Choice &amp; Control</b>	<b>Preventative Strategy</b>	<b>Quality and Excellence</b>	<b>Customer Participation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Commissioning strategies for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older People</li> <li>• Learning Disabilities</li> <li>• Long term health conditions</li> </ul> </li> <li>□ Housing Revenue Account Business Plan</li> <li>□ Affordable Housing Strategy</li> <li>□ Social Care IT system replacement</li> <li>□ Workforce Planning and Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Review of accommodation and support for older people</li> <li>□ Redevelopment of the Discus Bungalow sites</li> <li>□ Home Care Review</li> <li>□ Self directed support (individualised budgets)</li> <li>□ Learning Disabilities Accommodation review (with Joseph Rowntree Trust)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Commissioning of voluntary sector support services</li> <li>□ 'Refresh' of the Supporting People Strategy</li> <li>□ Use of assistive technology in the home</li> <li>□ Reduction in the numbers of homeless presentations</li> <li>□ Reduction in the number of people in temporary accommodation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Improvement plan for housing to achieve service excellence</li> <li>□ Day Services modernisation at Yearsley Bridge and Huntington Road</li> <li>□ Closure and re-provision of the NHS 'campus' at Easingwold</li> <li>□ Implementing the RESPECT agenda (tackling anti-social behaviour)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Developing the Carers strategy and support services</li> <li>□ Increasing the involvement of tenants in housing strategy &amp; management</li> <li>□ Linking partnership boards into service planning (e.g. via the Local Area Agreement)</li> <li>□ Developing an outcomes based approach to service delivery</li> </ul>





HASS09

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**Meeting of the Executive Members for  
Housing and Adult Social Services and  
Advisory Panel****26<sup>th</sup> March 2007**

Report of the Director of Housing and Adult Social Services

**Adaptation of Existing Hostel Units (Ordnance Lane Hostel)****Summary**

1. This report proposes the conversion of a 2 bedroom self contained unit (14 Ordnance Lane) into a 3 bedroom shared unit and convert a 1 bedroom unit (11 Ordnance Lane) into a training facility (primarily for customer use).

**Background**

2. Supporting People fund the temporary accommodation staff to provide support to homeless customers. The new Homelessness Code of Guidance published in September 2006 emphasises the need to provide support to single young people but staff are currently unable to offer a full range of service at Ordnance Lane due to a lack of communal space (group / training room).
3. This provision exists for residents in Howe Hill, Holgate Road and Crombie House and works effectively.

**Consultation**

4. This proposal has emerged from a staff suggestion.
5. This would be a positive move in respect of Supporting People requirements to consult with customers.
6. Housing Standards and Adaptations Team have given advice regarding the conversion of unit 14 has in relation to requirements as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

**Options**

7. Option A. To convert unit 14 from one 2 bedroom property into 3 shared units (3 bedrooms, shared kitchen and shared bathroom) and to convert unit 11 into a training facility. This proposal would provide 1 additional unit. Total units at Ordnance Lane would be: 8 bed-sits (shared), 14 self contained bed-sits, 4 self contained 1 bed units, 4 self contained 2 bed units, 1 self contained 3 bed unit, plus existing office

space.. Unit 14 would primarily be used to accommodate young people in preference to Bed and Breakfast.

8. Option B. to retain existing units and continue to offer a limited support service.

## **Analysis**

9. This proposal would help assist in meeting Communities and Local Government (CLG) guidance and / or targets to :
  - a. reduction in the number of repeat homeless presentations through improved support and preparation for independent living BVPI 214
  - b. offer additional units for young people in preference to B&B accommodation. We are anticipating a future CLG target / order preventing local authorities from using B&B for young people other than in emergencies.
  - c. assess the independent living skills and support needs of customers and offer them suitable accommodation in accordance with Housing Act which impacts on the wider target to reduce use of temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010
10. This proposal would increase the units of shared accommodation while at the same time providing a training room, training kitchen and WC facilities primarily for use with Ordnance Lane residents and other relevant customer groups (eg young people living elsewhere).
11. The additional training space would enable staff to provide a training room for group sessions (eg sexual health, drugs awareness, introductory tenancy training, art sessions, informal discussions, cookery classes) plus a room for residents meetings.
12. The benefits of this proposal would be to provide a comprehensive range of training and assessment sessions, to better prepare people for independent living, thus preventing repeat homelessness, to make an assessment of suitable accommodation, to enable customers to have residents meetings and be involved in the development / provision of services offered to homeless people. This would meet Supporting People and Audit Commission (KLOE's) targets of user involvement
13. Similar support is already provided by existing staff but a training room would enable the introduction of a more formal training programme with emphasis on group activities. Many of the sessions will be staffed by existing support workers under the Supporting People contract and for specialist sessions by external agencies such as Future Prospects, PMS, Scarcroft Road Project, Foundation Housing, CYC Estate Managers and YOT.
14. This facility focuses on the needs of customers and has been designed with them in mind.
15. It is suggested that this adaptation to accommodation at Ordnance Lane may have some effect on BVPI 183a (length of stay in hostels) but this cannot be considered in isolation as other significant changes have occurred in the past 12 months affecting this calculation – i.e. the use of Crombie House has changed from long term support for expectant mothers to more general shared hostel accommodation, we have also



reduced the numbers of shared properties at Crombie by 3 with unit 6 being returned to a 3 bed house. We have created 5 shared units at Holgate Road and the continued refurbishment of Howe Hill has again changed the number of shared units from 13 in 2004 to 17 in 2007 (when refurbishment completed).

## Corporate Priorities

16. By creating this training facility at Ordinance Lane this will contribute to the following corporate objectives to improve the health and lifestyles of the people of York by equipping customers with basic skills training to help cope with independent living.
- **Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces** ~ this is met in a number of ways including preparing young people for independent living, understanding the responsibilities of being a tenant the enforcement of any tenancy / licence conditions in relation to maintenance of properties.
  - **Reduce the actual and perceived impact of violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour on people in York** ~ through focused training / support sessions as required.
  - **Increase people's skills and knowledge to improve future employment prospects** ~ through support work and encouraging young people to access education, training opportunities.
  - **Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest** ~ Provision of suitable accommodation and suitable support and training opportunities, in particular cookery sessions, sexual health sessions.

## Implications

### Financial

17. Based on the 2006/07 financial year the revised rent for these units would be as follows;

	Current Rental income per week £	Proposed Rental income per week £
Unit 14	44.69	3 x 38.78*
Unit 11	37.61	Nil
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>82.30</b>	<b>116.34</b>

\* calculated applying rent restructuring principles

18. The proposal to convert unit 14 into 3 shared bed-sits and unit 11 into a training facility would increase the potential weekly income by £34.04 (or £1,770.08 pa assuming 100% occupancy).

19. Housing subsidy – there will be no direct effect on the housing subsidy calculation.
20. Rent re-structuring – rent restructuring of all CYC hostels is due to commence in 07/08 and the above rental calculations use rent restructuring principles.
21. Only a small amount of work will be required on conversion. It is anticipated that replacement doors and additional locks (estimated at £500) could be funded through existing the Ordnance Lane budget. Furniture (estimate £2000) can be purchased out of homeless strategy monies as it will be beneficial to the wider homeless audience.
22. There are also potential gross Bed and Breakfast savings of £9125 pa (1 room at £25pppn for 365 days per year). This saving would be offset by reduced bed and breakfast income so the net effect on the Housing General fund budget would be minimal.
23. There are no implications regarding Supporting People income as the numbers of temporary units fluctuate on a regular basis. This facility would enable staff to offer an improved support service and assist in streamlining young persons move on process.

#### **Equalities**

24. No implications for information only.

#### **Legal**

25. No implications as temporary accommodation agreements are already in place.

#### **Crime and Disorder**

26. This proposal has the potential to have a positive impact on crime and disorder by providing a wider range of support sessions to customers at risk of offending and causing anti social behaviour

#### **Information Technology (IT)**

27. No significant implications as existing IT remains operational. We may require additional phone line in Unit 11 (above existing office) in future (quote provided at a cost of approximately £400).

#### **Risk Management**

28. No implications as same customer group would be living at Ordnance Lane.

#### **Recommendations**

29. The Executive Member is asked to:
  - Approve Option A and convert units 11 and 14 into training facilities and shared accommodation units.

Reason: to improve services for hostel residents by providing a communal area for residents meetings and training facilities

**Contact Details**

**Author:**

Becky Ward  
Service Manager,  
Homelessness,  
Housing Service  
Tel No.554040

**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

Steve Waddington – Head of Housing  
Services

**Report  
Approved**



**Date**

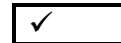
12<sup>th</sup> March 07

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** *List information for all*

Financial  
Jayne Close  
Accountant – Housing Services  
Tel No. 01904 554175

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All



**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:**

Homeless Code of Guidance for local authorities July 2006 ISBN 978-1-85112-860-0

**Annexes:** None

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HASS10

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**Meeting of the Executive Members for  
Housing and Adult Social Services and  
Advisory Panel**March 26<sup>th</sup> 2007

Report of the Director of Housing and Adult Social Services

**Change to Temporary Tenancy and Licence Conditions****Summary**

1. This report looks at the need to change the following 'tenancy' conditions:
  - travellers licence conditions;
  - non-secure temporary accommodation agreement (shared hostel and non shared hostel);
  - non-secure temporary accommodation agreement (dispersed);
  - Introduction of a under 18's licence for permanent 'tenancies' to incorporate guarantor and support provider

**Background**

2. The current temporary accommodation agreements and travellers licences need updating to streamline and to incorporate conditions previously omitted.
3. There is a need to introduce a requirement for a guarantor for under 18's in both temporary accommodation and permanent housing as by law a person under 18 cannot be issued with a tenancy or hold an interest in land but can be placed on a licence to occupy or can be granted a tenancy status with a guarantor.

**Detailed changes**

4. There are a number of changes to travellers licence agreements:
  - Details of CYC responsibilities including assessment of support needs, provision of support, information about former arrears;
  - Removal or requirement to pay a deposit;
  - Inclusion of clause regarding payment of former arrears, electricity, permission for visitors to stay, to request written permission before any exchange of pitches, the number of dogs is dependent on RSPCA requirements, fraudulent misuse, interference or modification of electricity supply, requirement to install white

goods by a registered engineer, expansion of definitions of anti-social behaviour and nuisance, property condition when terminating, provision of support;

- Requirement for under 18 to have a guarantor;

5. There are a number of changes to temporary accommodation agreements (shared and non shared hostels):

- Addition of clause 'If there is a change in your family circumstances please advise staff immediately';
- Details of CYC responsibilities including assessment of support needs, provision of support, information about former arrears;
- Information about housing benefit entitlement;
- Additional clauses including to pay former arrears, participate in support, not to cause anti-social behaviour and nuisance around consideration to all residents, visitors and neighbours (including those in the local area), not to be verbally or physically abusive, not to tamper with CCTV equipment, not to use the premises for illegal activities, not to operate a business from temporary accommodation, that alcohol and smoking is not permitted in shared areas;
- To return keys at end of tenancy with details about rental charges;
- To attend introductory tenancy sessions if invited;
- To leave the property in a clean and tidy condition;
- That customers under 18 will require a guarantor ;
- That the notice period of shared accommodation will be 'reasonable';

6. There are a number of changes to temporary accommodation agreements (dispersed)

- Addition of clause 'If there is a change in your family circumstances please advise staff immediately'
- Details of CYC responsibilities including assessment of support needs, provision of support, information about former arrears
- Information about housing benefit entitlement
- Additional clauses including to pay former arrears, participate in support, not to cause anti-social behaviour and nuisance around consideration to all residents, visitors and neighbours (including those in the local area), not to be verbally or physically abusive, not to use the premises for illegal activities, not to operate a business from temporary accommodation,
- To return keys at end of tenancy with details about rental charges
- To attend introductory tenancy sessions if invited

- To leave the property in a clean and tidy condition
- That customers under 18 will require a guarantor

## Consultation

7. Detailed consultation has taken place with CYC legal department to draw up these new agreements.
8. A copy of the new agreements have been circulated to the Tenants Fed and discussed at the meeting on 15/2/07. The Fed did not have any concerns regarding the legal changes.
9. A copy of the new travellers licence agreement has been circulated to Travellers Trust who have no concerns about the proposals and consideration has been given to previous suggestions made by travellers in the consultation (August 2005)
10. A copy of new young persons 'tenancy' agreement has been sent to young persons projects including the Scarcroft Road Project and Foundation Housing for comment.

## Options

11. Option A. To adopt the new agreements in line with legal requirements
12. Option B. To continue operating using the old agreements, some of which are not legal

## Analysis

13. These changes will streamline the legal agreements between CYC departments and occupants and introduce a more consistent approach.

## Corporate Priorities

14. City of York Council has agreed 7 Improvement Statements. Homeless Services contribute to these objectives in a number of ways including:
  - **Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces** ~ this is met in a number of ways including preparing young people for independent living, understanding the responsibilities of being a tenant the enforcement of any tenancy / licence conditions in relation to maintenance of properties. The new accommodation agreements have more clearly defined anti social behaviour so that occupants are aware of their responsibilities.
  - **Reduce the actual and perceived impact of violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour on people in York** ~ as part of the agreements we have arranged for the support providers to sign the agreements to ensure that they work with vulnerable groups ongoing support work.

- **Increase people's skills and knowledge to improve future employment prospects** ~ through support work and encouraging young people to access education, training opportunities.
- **Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest** ~ Provision of suitable accommodation is one of the keys to ensuring people are able to access services such as health visitors, PMS, drug and alcohol services, young persons mental health and counselling services.
- **Improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected young people in the city** ~ through liaison with support, education, social services.

## **Implications**

### **Financial**

15. No financial implications

### **Human Resources (HR)**

16. Requirement to advise all households living in temporary accommodation of the change in conditions with 28 days notice. Introduction of new under 18's licence after 2/4/07

### **Equalities**

17. No implications

### **Legal**

18. New agreements have been developed in conjunction with legal department.

### **Crime and Disorder**

19. Elements of the new agreements should encourage responsibility amongst customers in accommodation and give CYC specific clauses against which legal action can be taken if necessary

### **Information Technology (IT)**

20. No implications

### **Risk Management**

21. No implications



## Recommendations

22. That the Executive Member:

- Approve option A to adopt the new terms and conditions and that they take effect from 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007.

Reason: to streamline conditions of tenancies and licences wherever possible, to include new conditions which are necessary to the safe and effective management of CYC accommodation

## Contact Details

**Author:**

Becky Ward  
Service Manager,  
Homelessness,  
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Tel No.554040

**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

Steve Waddington  
Head of Housing Services

**Report  
Approved**

**Date**

12<sup>th</sup> March 2007

**Specialist Implications Officers:**

**Legal Implications:**

Rachel Barker  
Principal Housing Lawyer  
01904 551043

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:**

Copies of both current and proposed 'tenancy' agreements can be obtained from Becky Ward on request

**Annexes:** None

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HASS13

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**Meeting of the Executive Members for  
Housing and Adult Social Services and  
Advisory Panel**

March 26th 2007

Report of the Director of Housing and Adult Social Services

**Review of Former Arrears Incentive Scheme****Summary**

1. This report looks at success and value of the former arrears incentive to accepted homeless households and proposes a continuation and expansion of the scheme.

**Background**

2. The pilot former incentive scheme was agreed at Housing EMAP on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2006 and was introduced on 1/4/06.
3. The aim of the scheme is to encourage accepted homeless households to make regular repayments off their former arrears (permanent, temporary and B&B) in order to achieve the Communities and Local Government (CLG) target of reducing use of temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010 (from 260 households to 130). The scheme allows homeless households with former tenant arrears the opportunity to fulfil the requirements of the allocations policy (introduced May 2006) that places people on pending 'until the money owed to the Council or RSL is less than £500 or a firm agreement had been kept to for a period of at least 26 weeks'.
4. CLG is aware of the scheme and recognise its value in assisting the authority in meeting temporary accommodation targets.
5. To be eligible for the scheme a customer must 'sign up' to the scheme. A weekly payment must be made for 13 consecutive weeks to be eligible for the incentive scheme. The scheme can continue until the arrears are cleared or a permanent tenancy is offered.
6. During 2006/7 16 people signed up to the former arrears incentive scheme, of whom 8 made regular payments of 13+ weeks entitling them to an incentive payment. This amounted to £3666.86 arrears recovered and £1080.25 incentive given. We acknowledge that this was a slow start but believe that there is significant value in the continuation of the scheme.

## **Consultation**

7. Not applicable.

## **Options**

8. Option A. To continue with the incentive scheme for accepted homeless only until offer of permanent accommodation.
9. Option B. To continue with the incentive scheme for accepted homeless and to extend the incentive scheme to those who 'sign up' and are living in hostels / supported housing projects that are actively engaging in the re-settlement programme until offer of permanent accommodation.
10. Option C. To cancel the scheme at the end of the pilot.

## **Analysis**

11. The scheme is one element of the process which is currently being improved to streamline arrears recovery within Housing.
12. This scheme assists in meeting CLG guidance and / or targets to :
  - reduce use of temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010 by enabling homeless households to move into permanent accommodation.
  - Ensuring effective use of temporary / supported housing stock
13. By offering customers who are going through the resettlement process the opportunity to benefit from the scheme, there is potential to reduce the bed blockages problems that are experienced from time to time. It would also ensure that these customers are being treated equitably.

## **Corporate Priorities**

14. By offering customers incentives to reduce their former tenant arrears, the department will be contributing to an improvement in the health and lifestyles of the people of York by reducing use of temporary accommodation.
15. By encouraging homeless persons to repay former tenancy arrears and therefore accessing more permanent stable accommodation, this scheme is improving the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children and young people.
16. By increasing the income to the authority by reducing former tenant debt and reducing the reliance on temporary accommodation, this scheme is improving the organisation's effectiveness and efficiency.

## **Implications**

### **Financial**

17. The pilot scheme resulted in £3666.86 arrears being recovered at a 'cost' of £1080.25 in write offs.
18. If the take up of this scheme increased to 100 customers, each paying £5pw then anticipated recovery would be £26,000 pa and 'write off costs' £13,000. If this prevented only 4 customers either requiring or living in temporary accommodation (B&B) for 1 year this could generate a saving of £58,400 per annum.

### **Human Resources (HR)**

19. At present this is a staff intensive scheme relying on manual account checks. Discussion is currently occurring with Housing iworld team to look at computer reporting systems to monitor the incentive scheme.

### **Equalities**

20. To improve access to permanent accommodation homeless customers.

### **Legal**

21. No additional implications to pilot scheme.

### **Crime and Disorder**

22. No implications.

### **Information Technology (IT)**

23. No significant implications (see point 19).

### **Property/Other**

24. No implications.

### **Risk Management**

25. There are no risks associated with this report.

## **Recommendations**

26. That the Executive Member:
  - Approve Option B, to continue the former arrears scheme and to extend to re-settlement customers.

Reason: to encourage and assist customers to repay any former arrears in order to meet CLG temporary accommodation targets and to prevent blockages in resettlement accommodation

**Contact Details**

**Author:**

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Service Manager,  
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Housing Services  
Tel No.554040

**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

Steve Waddington  
Head of Housing Services

**Report  
Approved**

**Date** 12<sup>th</sup> March 2007

**Specialist Implications Officers:**

**Financial Implications**

Jane Close  
Accountant  
01904 554175

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:**

Former incentives scheme Housing EMAP 6/3/06  
Tenant Incentive Scheme HASS EMAP Sept 06 (amendment to payment times only).

**Annexes:** None



HASS16

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**Meeting of the Executive Members for  
Housing and Adult Social Services and  
Advisory Panel**

26 March 2007

Report of the Director of Housing and Adult Social Services

**Former Tenants Arrears – Write Off****Summary**

1. To seek agreement to write off a number of former tenants arrears.

**Background**

2. The district auditor requires existing balances to be examined and uncollectable debts to be written off each year. In the Audit Commission's Housing Inspection report dated October 2002, the need to write off bad debts more promptly was highlighted.
3. Former Tenant Arrears (FTAs) have had a significant effect on the additional contribution made each year within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) towards bad debts. This has had an adverse effect on resources available for expenditure.
4. Where a debt is written off this does not mean that it can never be recovered. The debt is written back on to a rent account if the customer is located. This may be because the customer has made contact with Housing Services. Debts are written back on each month and this is reported on monthly. In January 2007 £2542.69 was written back on to rent accounts.
5. In addition to this Housing Services is in the process of implementing two improvements in this area. The management of former debt for customers in temporary and permanent accommodation is being simplified and a formal system for checking on debts owed by newly accepted homeless customers is to be implemented from the beginning of April 2007. In addition, a system for doing periodic traces on customers who have had their debt written off is now in place.
6. Officer delegated powers are restricted to writing off debts of £2000 or less.
7. As previously agreed by EMAP, write off reports will be brought to EMAP every 6 months. This will assist officers and members in the monitoring process and should give a clearer view on performance throughout the year.

8. FTAs are monitored weekly. The level of activity involved in recovery is based on the size of the debt. The Authority makes use of a tracing database which conforms to Data Protection requirements to locate former tenants. Where a former tenant is found efforts are made to recover the debt in traditional ways, including letters, phone calls and visits. Legal action is taken in appropriate cases. The Authority also employ debt collection agents to chase debts from people who have moved away from York.
9. Details of individual cases are set out in Annex A.

### **Consultation**

10. None

### **Options**

11. Option A: Maintain these FTAs on accounts. This would lead to an increase in the bad debt provision and would go against good practice as commented on in the Housing Inspectors report of October 2002.

Option B: Write the debts off on the understanding that if necessary they can be reinstated at a later date.

### **Analysis**

12. It is recommended that FTAs are written off totalling £20450.77. This represents 0.09% of the total debit. These are cases where Housing Services have attempted a number of traces but have been unable to obtain a forwarding address or any information on the whereabouts of the former tenant. It also includes cases where the tenant has died and there were insufficient funds in the deceased's estate.

### **Corporate Priorities**

- 13 This report supports the corporate priority of improving the organisational effectiveness of the council through good financial management.

### **Implications**

14. The implications arising from this report are as follows:
  - **Financial** - These write offs can be contained within the bad debt provision of the Housing Revenue Account. The current provision is £1241K.
  - **Human Resources (HR)** - None
  - **Equalities** - None
  - **Legal** - None
  - **Crime and Disorder** - None



- **Information Technology (IT)** - None
- **Property** - None
- **Other** - None

## Risk Management

15. Writing off debts that can not currently be recovered will help reduce the bad debt impact on the HRA. This reduces high risk financial implications for the HRA.
16. The risk of these debts never being recovered is high but has been improved due to the use of tracing IT package and more robust systems on checking for former debts when customers want rehousing.

## Recommendation

17. That the Executive Member:
  - Approves option 2 which involves writing off FTAs of £20450.77 as detailed in Annex A.

Reason: This is in line with the recommendations of the audit report detailed in paragraph 1 and also for the financial implications listed above.

## Contact Details

### Author:

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Leader / Support Services  
Manager  
Tel No. 01904 551277

### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Steve Waddington  
Head of Housign Services

Report Approved

Date 12<sup>th</sup> March 2007

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** - None

**Wards Affected:** None

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

**Background Papers:** None

## Annexes

Annex A: List of individual debts over £2000 to be written off

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ACCOUNTS FOR WRITE OFF

**Feb-07**

OVER £2,000.00						
NAME	ACCT NO	ADDRESS	TCD	ARREARS	REASON	DATE ON SYSTEM
	60039336		12/02/02	2646.11	No trace	
	60040688		16/03/03	2346.60	No trace	
	60036196		06/02/05	2053.03	No trace	
	60036628		29/05/05	2056.15	No trace	
	1900381636		26/02/01	3145.52	No trace	
	1900402483		01/07/02	4530.26	No trace	
	1900375689		30/11/00	3673.10	Unrecoverable due to severe health & disability issues	
				20450.77		

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HASS18

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**Meeting of the Executive Members for  
Housing & Adult Social Services and  
Advisory Panel**26<sup>th</sup> March 2007

Report of the Director of Housing and Adult Social Services

**Creation of A New Security Grant****Summary**

1. To revise the grants and assistance policy to include a new security grant for vulnerable residents, which keeps a dwelling secure, against unauthorised entry and enable the maintenance of defensible space.

**Background**

2. The Safer York Partnership approached the council wanting to promote the use of the York Repair Grant to help vulnerable customers fund security measures in areas, which they had identified as high crime hot spots. However, given that there is often a significant waiting list for this grant it would not have provided a speedy solution for these residents. By working in partnership the provision of this new simple ring fenced grant will help to ensure that vulnerable residents who are in fear of crime are not placed on a waiting list but are assisted quickly.
3. The proposed security grant will provide a small grant of up to £1000 to carry out prescribed measures. £40,000 of funding will be set aside from the York Repair Grants to fund this type of work.
4. The Executive Coordinator for the York Community Watch (Safer York Partnership), a qualified crime prevention officer, will determine the type of works required and provide a written schedule of works for the customers who will then follow the same process as the York Repair Grant.
5. Full details of the new grant are outlined in Annex 1 but Members will note that the criteria for vulnerable persons follow the principles outlined in the existing York Repair Grant.
6. The grant will be available to all residents who meet the criteria however it intended that the Safer York Partnership will promote the grants to residents in high crime hot spots and in particular to victims of repeat burglaries. This will complement interventions in those high crime areas planned by the Safer York Partnership Burglary Task Group, funded through Safer Stronger Communities and Local Public Service Agreement.

7. This will ensure that we are maximising our resources to have the biggest impact in reducing crime and increasing security by targeting properties which are most affected.
8. It should be noted that there would be an implication for residents. We estimate that potentially 7 York Repair grants would be lost but a minimum of about 40 residents will benefit from this new grant.

### **Consultation**

9. Consultation regarding the amendments has taken place with Housing Standards and Adaptations staff and partnering organisations namely Safer York Partnership, York Home Improvement Agency and Age Concern who see this as a very positive move.

### **Options**

10. Option 1 To revise the existing policy in line with the proposal  
Option 2 Maintain the current policy with no revisions

### **Analysis**

11. Option 1 - by changing the grant this will benefit vulnerable customers linked into other crime prevention initiatives. However there will be a reduction in the YRG of about 40K, which will affect about 7 customers. This will help contribute to the Home Office target of reducing burglaries by 36% by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2008 and the mandatory local area agreement outcome to reduce crime.
12. Option 2 - without the changes to the grants and assistance policy the Housing Standards and Adaptations team will not be able to target help at customers who fear or are at risk of crime quickly.

### **Corporate Priorities**

13. The development of a Security grant will support the priority outlined in the Corporate Strategy
  - “Improve the quality and availability of decent, affordable homes in the city”
  - “Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city’s streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces”
  - “Reduce the actual and perceived impact of violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour on people in York”

### **Implications**

14. The implications arising from this report are:
  - **Financial** - Changes to the policy will be accommodated within the current capital programme
  - **Human Resources (HR)** - *None*

- **Equalities** - None
- **Legal** - None
- **Crime and Disorder** - This will help contribute to the Home Office target of reducing burglaries by 36% by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2008 and the mandatory local area agreement outcome to reduce crime.
- **Information Technology (IT)** - None
- **Property** -None
- **Other** - None

### **Risk Management**

15. The risks in not implementing the proposed changes outlined in option 1 is that the council will not be able to provide an effective and timely solution for vulnerable residents.

### **Recommendations**

16. The Executive member is ask to:
- Approve option 1 to revise the grants and assistance policy to include a new security grant which will help vulnerable residents.

Reason: To help vulnerable customers in fear of crime more quickly.

### **Contact Details**

**Author:**

Ruth Abbott  
Housing Standards &  
Adaptations Manager

**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

Steve Waddington  
Head of Housing Services

**Report Approved**  **Date** 12<sup>th</sup> March 2007

### **Specialist Implications Officer(s)**

Implication Crime and Disorder  
Name Simon Hornsby  
Title Improvement Officer  
Tel No. 01904 551075

**Wards Affected:** List wards or tick box to indicate all

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

### **Background Papers:**

Grants Policy

### **Annexes:**

Annex 1 – Security Grant





## Security grants

### Purpose of Grant

To provide a new grant for vulnerable groups, which keep a dwelling, secure against unauthorised entry and the maintenance of defensible space.

### Who is eligible for the grant?

To qualify for assistance an applicant must normally: -

- a) Be aged 18 or over
- b) Be an owner or private tenant or an occupant with a right of exclusive occupation for a period of more than five years
- c) Be either 60 or over, disabled, or have a child under 16 living with them **and** be in receipt of one of the following benefits:
  - Council tax benefit
  - Housing benefit
  - Working tax credit, excluding child tax credit
  - Guaranteed pension credit
  - Income based job seekers allowance
- d) Have a power or duty to carry out the works
- e) Have lived in the property for 12 months prior to making the application (or three years if applying under an exclusive right of occupancy). Where an applicant lives in a mobile home (park home) on a licensed site or on a houseboat with mooring rights they must satisfy a three-year qualification period.

### What work will the grant cover?

A recommendation is required from The Safer York Partnership that the work is necessary & appropriate.

The types of work which normally can be grant aided include

- Fencing to provide defensible space around a dwelling
- Doors and windows – fitting locks to vulnerable windows
- To provide substantial doors with adequate locks.
- Door viewers
- Burglar alarms
- Security lighting

The Safer York partnership will provide to the applicants a schedule of works, which will be eligible for the grant.

### How much grant will be given

The maximum grant will be normally £1000 and restricted to one application within ten years.

There will be a limited budget each year for this assistance and enquiries will be dealt with in date order in a waiting list system.

### **Fees**

For the Security grant local authority administrative fee of £200.00 will be included in all grant applications.

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HASS17

## Meeting of the Executive Members for Housing and Adult Social Services and Advisory Panel

26<sup>th</sup> March 2007

Report of the Director of Housing and Adult Social Services

### 17 Almsford Road – Petition Update

#### Summary

1. This report provides the Executive Member with an update on the council's actions to date concerning the above property following the presentation of a petition to Full Council by Cllr D Horton, and the current course of action being followed.

#### Background

2. The above property is a semi-detached two bedroom bungalow. The Council (council tax) were advised in late 2001 by the owner that the property had been empty since 10<sup>th</sup> August 2000. In April of 2002 the property was empty, unfurnished and on the market for sale.
3. Records show that it was first brought to the attention of the Private Sector Housing team in 2003. At that time, the owners indicated that they intended to let the property.
4. The property, which was initially in reasonable condition, has been the subject of continuous and serious damage by vandals. On a number of occasions, information has been received that the property has become open to trespass, and where this has happened, the Council has enforced Section 29 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 to ensure that the building made secure.
5. After a long history of representations (see below for chronology of events) by the Council, during which we have discussed with the owner all the options open to him, he has stated that he wishes to take advantage of the Empty Homes Grant to bring the bungalow back into use and lease it to York Housing Association for five years, (a requirement of the scheme).

#### Chronology of Events

Date	Comment
7 <sup>th</sup> March 2003	Complaint from neighbour that property is open to

	trespass. Visit to confirm above and attempts made to trace ownership.
17 <sup>th</sup> March 2003	Section 29 served on owners to secure property.
19 <sup>th</sup> March 2003	Above notice complied with.
30 <sup>th</sup> April 2003	Re-visit in response to complaints of rubbish and vermin
2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2003	Owners approached in writing regarding complaints.
28 <sup>th</sup> May 2003	Further complaints regarding property, no response from owners, no evidence of vermin confirmed.
18 <sup>th</sup> July 2003	Complaint that vandals had broken in to property and were removed by police. Now open to trespass. Contacted owners who stated he would secure property the following day.
21 <sup>st</sup> July 2003	No action taken by owners
23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2003	No action taken by owners. Section 29 served on owners and further contact by phone. He agreed to secure and to meet to discuss options for future use.
29 <sup>th</sup> July 2003	Notice complied with
6 <sup>th</sup> August 2003	Contact made with complainant to ascertain situation
5 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2004	Property undergoing extensive renovation, UPVC windows fitted etc. This appears to be following a fire in the bungalow.
22 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2004	Further damage by vandals who have smashed new windows but not open to entry.
11 <sup>th</sup> March 2004	Letter to owners informing of continued vandalism and requesting if it is his intention to continue improvements
21 <sup>st</sup> May 2004	Section 29 served; property open to trespass.
1 <sup>st</sup> June 2004	Contact with owners re above and lights left on in bungalow.
8 <sup>th</sup> June 2004	Section 29 works carried out in default.
22 <sup>nd</sup> Nov 2004	Letter to owners regarding future use and advice re. Empty Homes Grant.
29 <sup>th</sup> June 2005	Contact from local councillor regarding attempts to get property reoccupied.
4 <sup>th</sup> July 2005	Property vandalised again; section 29 and letter re Empty Homes Grant sent to owners.
25 <sup>th</sup> July 2005	Quote obtained from contractor despite owners stating he will take action.
5 <sup>th</sup> August 2005	No action from owners despite representations; works carried out in default.
6 <sup>th</sup> April 2006	Further complaints re property; visit paid to confirm that severe damage had been caused by a gang who had forced entry, demolished internal walls and moved all fittings etc. Concern re. Safety of building; Building Control informed. Letter to owners re incident advising property must be secured, and advising of increase to Empty Property Grant sum. Matter was reported to police at time by neighbour. Police did not respond. Property secured by Building Control under dangerous buildings legislation.

24 <sup>th</sup> April 2006	Letter to owners requesting meeting re Empty Homes Grant.
28 <sup>th</sup> April 2006	Meeting with owners re Grant. He agreed to go ahead with application.
2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2006	Inspection of property to compile schedule of works to bring property up to 'Decency Standard'
5 <sup>th</sup> May 2006	Visit to owners to discuss application
12 <sup>th</sup> May 2006	Visit to York Housing Association to obtain their consent to manage property.
19 <sup>th</sup> May 2006	Visit with York Housing surveyor to confirm above
22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2006	Application forms etc sent to owners.
28 <sup>th</sup> July 2006	Visit to owners who is having problems getting contractors
31 <sup>st</sup> July 2006	Letters to contractors on owner's behalf
8 <sup>th</sup> August 2006	Contract refused by two builders.
1 <sup>st</sup> Sept 2006	Contact with owners re grant application.
18 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2006	Estimate from contractor submitted to owners
16 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2006	Visit paid with contractor to prepare estimate
20 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2006	Visit paid with contractor to prepare estimate
20 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2006	Estimate from contractor submitted to owners
1 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2006	Visit to owners to discuss application; prices excessive, owners to try more contractors.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2007	Visit; decayed tree blown over into 19 Almsford Road Owners advises tree is owned by York Council. Street Environment informed.
5 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2007	E-mail to arboricultural officer
8 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2007	Some dispute to ownership of tree
10 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2007	Further representations to owners who is adamant tree is not his. Further damage to property; Section 29 served Meeting with owners to discuss grant application Still financial problems with quotes. Owners to submit quote to include him doing some works
11 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2007	Contractor met on site re boarding up Street Environment advise above is not their remit, this department to carry on investigation
12 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2007	Contractor met on site re grant works
16 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2007	Search by Council revealed responsibility for the tree is the Council's
22 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2007	Works carried out in default.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Feb 2007	Further estimate from contractor submitted to owners.
22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb 2007	Letter to owners requesting decision re application for grant.
26 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2007	Boards removed by vandals; Section 29 served. Owners advised Contractor requested to carry out works in default
1 <sup>st</sup> March 2007	Section 29 works carried out in default.
2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2007	Contact from owners to confirm that they intend to submit application for Empty Homes Grant by 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2007.

## **Empty Homes Policy**

6. In December 2004, EMAP approved the council's current empty homes policy. The policy aims to improve empty homes and bring them back into use via a number of different yet complementary courses of action:
  - Free advice and assistance including advice on how to get any necessary repairs, safety or modernisation works completed;
  - The availability of grant funding and leasing schemes with local housing associations;
  - Forums for discussion of particular issues or concerns through the York Residential Landlord Association (for private landlords) and the York Housing Liaison Group (for housing associations);
  - The availability (from 2003/04) of grants to be used for the repair and modernisation of properties owned by private landlords. Grants are channelled through housing associations that lease the homes for a minimum of ten years (reduced to 5 year from April 2006) with the council nominating homeless families to them;
  - Enforcement powers to bring properties back to a reasonable condition (although this doesn't necessarily mean bringing them back into use);
  - Decent Home Grants which are aimed primarily at Houses in Multiple Occupation to bring them up to the Decent Home Standard. This can include an empty flat, for example, within a larger house of multiple occupation (HMO);
  - In 2004/05 information on empty homes, including an online enquiry form was added to the council website;
  - From April 2004, for example, the council tax discount on empty and 2<sup>nd</sup> homes was reduced from 50% to 10%.
  - The rent bond guarantee scheme give confidence to private landlords that rents will be paid if they do let their property.

## **Empty Homes Grant**

7. The Empty Homes grant was introduced in 2003 to enable private owners to access grant funding to improve their property in exchange for the council, via a Housing Association, securing the use of the property for a period of 10 years for affordable rent.
8. Given the rise in property values within York, uptake of the grant was not as high as was originally hoped. During 2005/6, six enquires regarding the empty grant were received but none proceeded to full approval. Consultation with the owners of the property and with our partner, York Housing Association, who take on the role of leaseholder, indicated that the main

reason for the lack of uptake is the length of the lease. The current climate of increasing house prices and private rents means that many owners don't wish to tie up their properties in ten year leases.

9. In February 2006, EMAP approved a revised policy, increasing the grant limit from £10k to £20k, to provide a more realistic grant which will cover the cost of the work to reach the decency standard and to reduce the length of lease from 10 years to 5 years.

### **Options**

10. This report is information only.

### **Analysis**

11. Significant work has taken place to try and ensure that this property is brought back into use. Following the most recent contact the owners confirmed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2007 that they wish to apply for an Empty Homes Grant and that they will submit their application by 17<sup>th</sup> March 2007. Once approved the applicant has 12 months in which to claim the grant, however we will be working with the owners to ensure that work is carried out as soon as possible.

### **Corporate Priorities**

12. Bringing empty properties back into use supports the councils improvement priority to "Improve the quality and availability of decent, affordable homes in the city".

### **Implications**

13. Implications arising from this report are:
  - **Financial** - There are no financial implications.
  - **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no HR implications
  - **Equalities** - There are no equalities implications
  - **Legal** - There are no legal implications
  - **Crime and Disorder** – There are no Crime & Disorder implication
  - **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no IT implications
  - **Property** - There are no Property Implications
  - **Other** - No other known implications

### **Risk Management**

14. There are no risks associated directly with this report.

### **Recommendations**

15. That the Executive Member:

- Notes the contents of this report and the action taken to date.

Reason: To inform the Executive Member.

### **Contact Details**

**Author:**  
Steve Waddington  
Head of Housing Services

**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**  
Steve Waddington  
Head of Housing Services

Report  
Approved



Date 4<sup>th</sup> March 07

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** None

**Wards Affected:** Acomb

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

**Background Papers:** None

**Annexes:** None