

Date: 16 August 2017

Dear Councillor,

**Housing and Community Services Committee**

A Meeting of the **Housing and Community Services Committee** will be held in the **Council Chamber**, on **Thursday, 24 August 2017 at 18:00**. You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,



Chief Executive

To:- **Conservative Group**  
Councillor Hewlett (Chairman), Councillor Smith (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Billings, Coe, Mrs Coyle, Grant, MacPherson, Muller and Mrs Wyatt

**Labour Group**  
Councillors Rhind, Richards, Shepherd and Taylor

## **AGENDA**

### **Open to Public and Press**

- 1** Apologies and to note any Substitutes appointed for the Meeting.
- 2** To receive the Open Minutes for the following Committee meeting:-  
  
Housing and Community Services Committee 14th June 2017 Open Minutes **4 - 7**
- 3** To note any declarations of interest arising from any items on the Agenda
- 4** To receive any questions by members of the public pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No.10.
- 5** To receive any questions by Members of the Council pursuant to Council procedure Rule No. 11.
- 6** Reports of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 7** CORPORATE PLAN 2016-21 PERFORMANCE REPORT (1 APRIL - 30 JUNE 2017) **8 - 25**
- 8** HOUSING POLICY POST ELECTION **26 - 57**
- 9** COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME **58 - 63**

### **Exclusion of the Public and Press:**

- 10** The Chairman may therefore move:-  
  
That in accordance with Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in the header to each report on the Agenda.

- 11** To receive the Exempt Minutes for the following Committee meeting:-  
Housing and Community Services Committee 14th June 2017 Exempt  
Minutes
- 12** To receive any Exempt questions by Members of the Council pursuant to  
Council procedure Rule No. 11.
- 13** DIRECT OFFERS OF ACCOMMODATION AND OFFERS MADE TO  
MEMBERS OF STAFF 2016-17

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

14<sup>th</sup> June 2017

**PRESENT:-**

**Conservative Group**

Councillor Hewlett (Chairman) and Councillors Billings, Mrs Coyle, Grant, Mrs Hall (substituting for Councillor Smith), MacPherson and Muller

**Labour Group**

Councillors Dunn, Rhind, Shepherd and Taylor

**In attendance**

Councillor Atkin (Conservative Group)

HCS/1 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Coe, Smith, Mrs Wyatt (Conservative Group) and Councillor Richards (Labour Group).

HCS/2 **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017 were noted and approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

HCS/3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Committee was informed that no declarations of interest had been received.

HCS/4 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 10**

The Committee was informed that no questions from members of the public had been received.

HCS/5 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 11**

The Committee was informed that no questions from Members of the Council had been received.

HCS/6 **REPORTS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no Overview and Scrutiny Reports to be submitted.

**MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE**

HCS/7 **CORPORATE PLAN 2016-21: PERFORMANCE REPORT (1 JAN – 31 MAR 2017)**

The Director of Community and Planning Services presented the report to Committee.

**RESOLVED:-**

***Members noted progress against performance targets.***

HCS/8 **SERVICE PLANS 2017/18**

The Director of Community and Planning Services and the Housing Performance and Policy Manager presented the report to Committee.

Councillor Dunn queried the collection rate figure and what constituted affordable housing. The Housing Operations Manager provided clarification in relation to the former matter and the Chairman provided a detailed definition in relation to the latter. The Performance and Policy Manager undertook to circulate affordable housing information to Members. Members also queried whether affordable housing status just applied to new homes and how the new flexible working arrangements were progressing, both issues addressed by the Performance and Policy Manager.

**RESOLVED:-**

***Members approved the Service Plans for Community and Planning Services and Housing and Environmental Services as the basis for service delivery over the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.***

HCS/9 **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, SPORT AND RECREATION STRATEGY ADOPTION**

The Sport and Health Partnership Manager presented the report to Committee.

Councillor Atkin referenced the point made about physical inactivity being most prevalent amongst women and girls, but had noted an increase in women jogging and queried how this information was gathered. The Sport and Health Partnership Manager explained the various sources of information and the focus on encouraging female and family participation.

Councillor MacPherson queried the promotion of such activities and public areas / rights of way. The Director of Community and Planning Services confirmed current promotional activity and examples of other options being considered, along with potential funding.

Councillor Taylor commented on the distinct variances between certain area profiles and questioned the knowledge of why this occurred and how it was

being addressed. The Director referred to the campaign undertaken on the Goseley estate that had improved knowledge of the particular issues and would influence how funding was targeted.

Councillor Billings noted the emphasis on education and marketing, but queried how the leisure centre resources would meet the increased demand. The Director acknowledged that the opportunity for growing the leisure facilities was limited, hence the emphasis on use of the local environment. It was added that some local groups were also looking to enhance their facilities at a local level, with funding where available.

**RESOLVED:-**

***Members approved the adoption of the South Derbyshire Physical Activity, Sport and Recreation Strategy.***

HCS/10 **COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

**RESOLVED:-**

***Members considered and approved the updated work programme.***

HCS/11 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

**RESOLVED:-**

***That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.***

**MINUTES**

***The Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017 were received.***

**TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 11**

***The Committee was informed that no questions had been received.***

**HOMELESS SERVICE REVIEW (Paragraph 3)**

***Members approved the recommendations in the report.***

**HOUSING SERVICES – A WAY FORWARD (Paragraph 4)**

***Members approved the recommendations in the report.***

The Meeting terminated at 8.00pm.

COUNCILLOR J HEWLETT

CHAIRMAN

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 7</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2017</b>	<b>CATEGORY: DELEGATED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM</b>	<b>OPEN DOC:</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>GED LUCAS (EXT. 5775) STUART BATCHELOR (EXT. 5820)</b>	
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>CORPORATE PLAN 2016-21: PERFORMANCE REPORT (1 APRIL – 30 JUNE 2017)</b>	
<b>WARD (S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE:</b>

## 1.0 Recommendations

1.1 That progress against performance targets is considered.

## 2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To report progress against the Corporate Plan for the period 1 April to 30 June under the themes of People, Place, Progress and Outcomes.

## 3.0 Detail

3.1 The Corporate Plan 2016 – 2021 was approved following extensive consultation into South Derbyshire's needs, categorising them under four key themes: People, Place, Progress and Outcomes. The Corporate Plan is central to our work – it sets out our values and vision for South Derbyshire and defines our priorities for delivering high-quality services.

3.2 This Committee is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the following key aims:

### **People**

- *Enable people to live independently*
- *Protect and support the most vulnerable, including those affected by financial challenges.*
- *Use existing tools and powers and take appropriate enforcement action*
- *Increase levels of participation in sport, health, environmental and physical activities*
- *Develop the workforce of South Derbyshire to support growth*

### **Place**

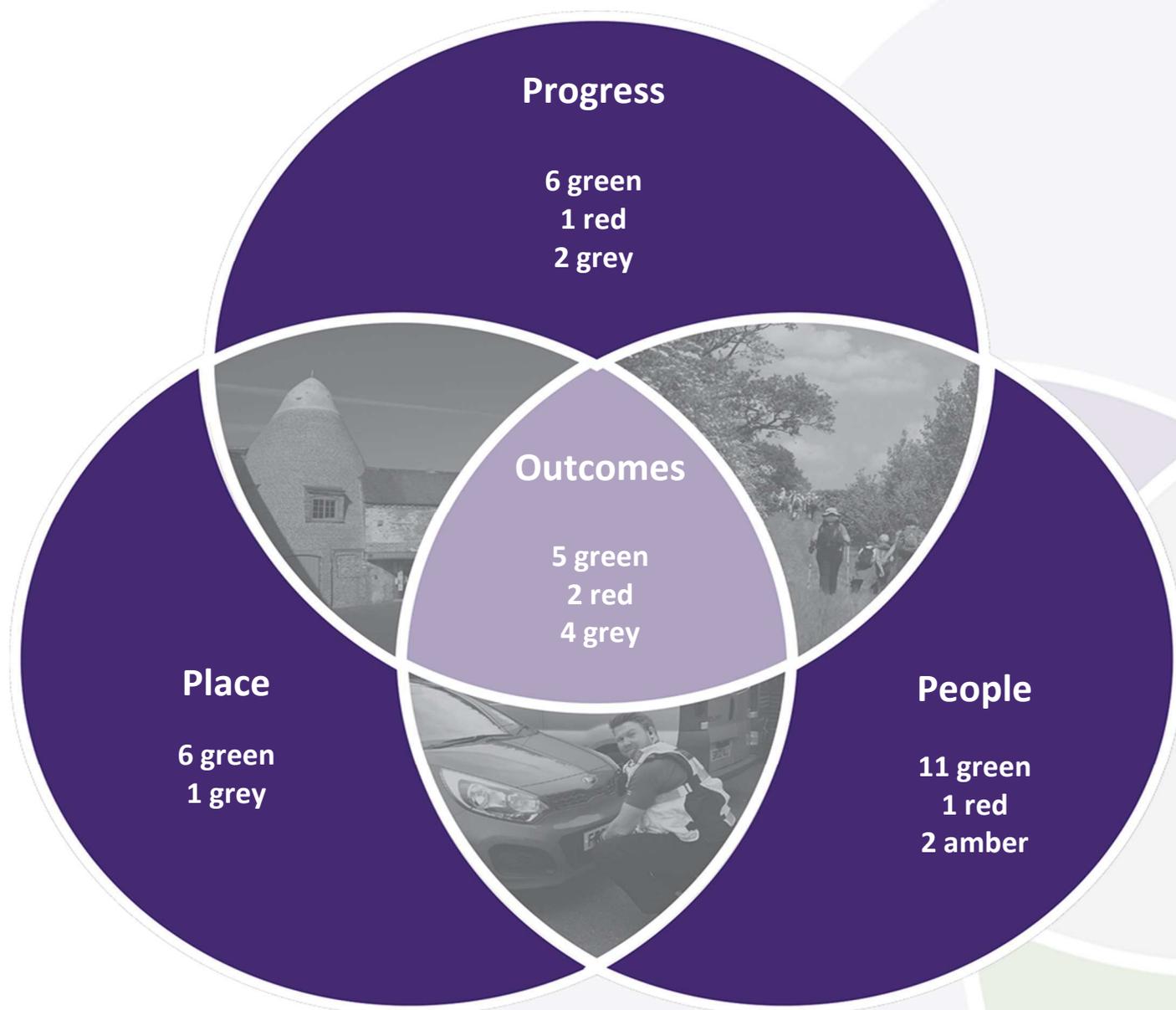
- *Facilitate and deliver integrated and sustainable housing and community infrastructure*
- *Help maintain low crime and anti-social behaviour levels in the District*
- *Support provision of cultural facilities and activities*

These aims are underpinned by outcomes including financial health, improved customer focus, good governance, enhanced environmental standards and maintaining a skilled workforce.

3.3 Of the 13 measures and projects under the jurisdiction of the Housing and Community Services Committee, 11 are showing green, one is red and one is grey.

3.4 More information can be found in the Performance Board in **Appendix A**. A detailed breakdown of performance for Housing and Community Services is available in the Success Areas and Performance Action Plan documents (**Appendices B and C respectively**), while associated risks are contained in the risk registers in **Appendices D and E**.

4.0 **Overall Council performance – Quarter one (April 1 to June 30, 2017)**



5.0 **Financial and Corporate Implications**

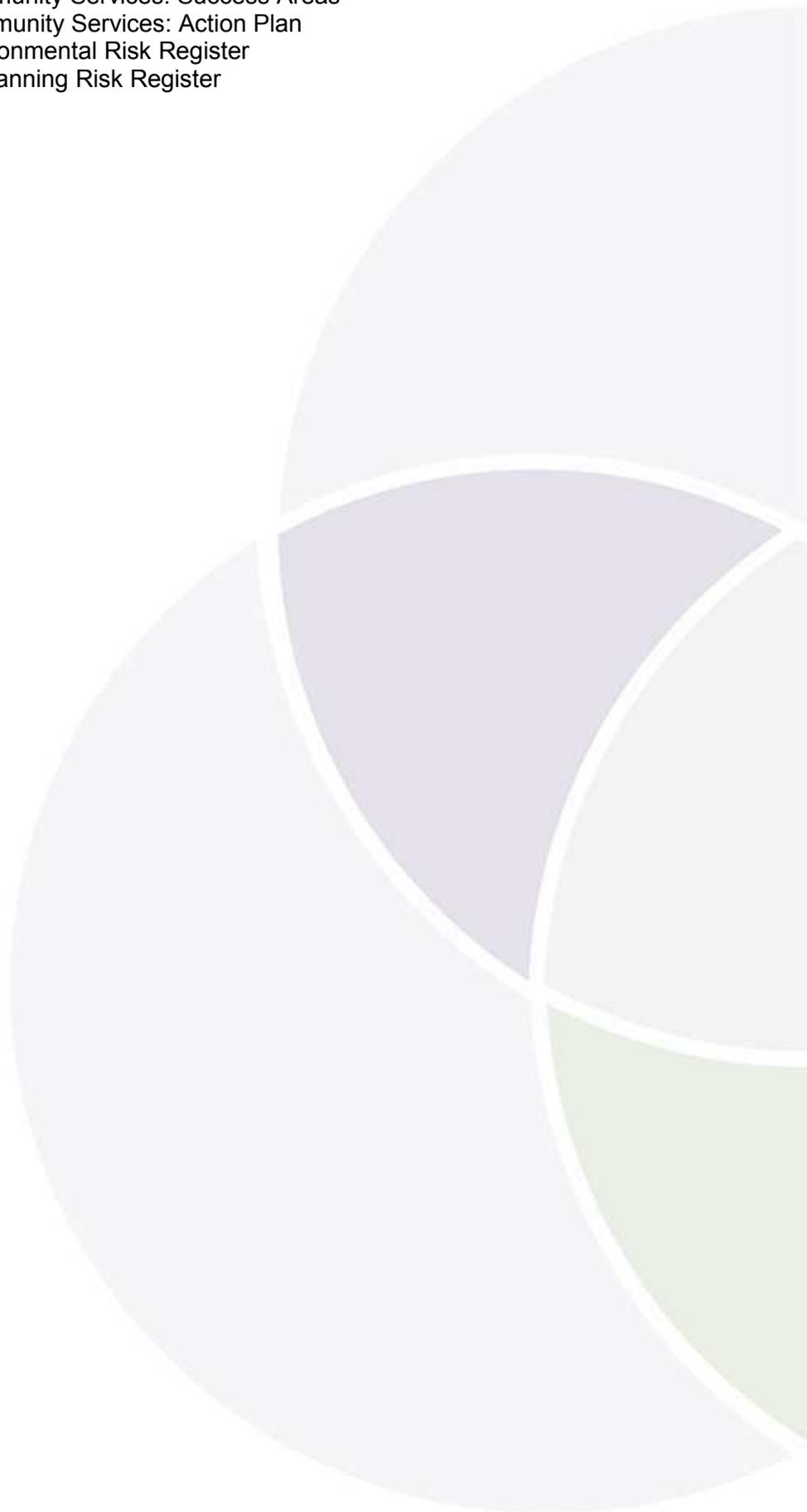
5.1 None directly.

6.0 **Community Implications**

6.1 The Council aspires to be an “excellent” Council in order to deliver the service expectations to local communities. This report demonstrates how priorities under the People, Place and Progress and Outcomes themes contribute to that aspiration.

## 7.0 **Appendices**

- Appendix A – Performance Board
- Appendix B – Housing and Community Services: Success Areas
- Appendix C – Housing and Community Services: Action Plan
- Appendix D – Housing and Environmental Risk Register
- Appendix E – Community and Planning Risk Register



Theme	Ref	Aim	Project	Annual target	Q1 Target	Q1 performance	Q1 detail
Outcomes	O1	Maintain financial health	Generate ongoing revenue budget savings in the General Fund.	O1.1 Identify £850,000 of savings/income by March 31, 2018, through cutting costs, strong procurement, income generation and business improvement. <b>F&amp;M</b>	Annual target, as per the Medium Term Financial Plan	Annual target	Savings of £400,000 approved from Corporate Services, as reported to Committee on June 22 2017.
Outcomes	O2	Maintain proper Corporate Governance.	Compile and publish an Annual Governance Statement in accordance with statutory requirements	O2.1 An unqualified Value for Money opinion in the Annual Audit Letter <b>F&amp;M</b>	Annual target	Annual target	Draft statement, subject to audit, considered and noted by the Audit Sub Committee on June 14 2017
Outcomes	O3	Enhance environmental standards	Demonstrate high environmental standards	O3.1 Maintain ISO14001 certification in Environmental Management. <b>E&amp;DS</b>	Hold annual senior environmental management review	See action plan	See action plan
Outcomes	O4	Maintain a skilled workforce	Ensure ongoing training and development for individuals and groups of employees where applicable	Ensure an annual personal development review and training needs are met for each employee <b>F&amp;M</b>	O4.1 95% of all employees to complete mandatory training. Annual target.	Annual target	Deadline to complete is in Q2. Many employees 4/6 or 5/6.
					O4.2 95% of all employees to have an annual performance appraisal. Annual target.	Annual target	N/A
Outcomes	O5	Maintain customer focus	Ensure services remain accessible to residents and visitors	O5.1 Develop the new website and provide functionality for greater transactional processing online <b>F&amp;M</b>	Website go live	See action plan	See action plan
				O5.2 Develop a Social Media Strategy to provide easy and innovative options for residents to engage with the Council <b>F&amp;M</b>	Liaise with most similar group authorities to establish approach	On track	Benchmarking being carried out with other authorities in Derbyshire. Further research undertaken as part of #BeSocial 17 discussion between councils on Twitter.
				O5.3 80% of telephone calls answered within 20 seconds <b>F&amp;M</b>	Expand services in the Customer Contact Centre and maintain facilities for face to face enquiries where required	77.7%	See action plan
				O5.4 Call abandonment rate of less than 10%. (Number of visitors to Civic Offices to be recorded) <b>F&amp;M</b>	Present Equalities and Safeguarding annual report to Elected Members and agree action plan <b>F&amp;M</b>	6.6%	Number of calls = 18,457. The volume of calls is quite similar to last year apart from April, which decreased. This was due to no changes within Council Tax and Benefits legislation. Number of visitors = 8,970
				O5.5 Deliver the Equalities and Safeguarding Action Plan to demonstrate principles are embedded in service delivery	Present Equalities and Safeguarding annual report to Elected Members and agree action plan <b>F&amp;M</b>	On track	Equalities and Safeguarding Annual Report for 2016/17 presented to F&M in June. Action plan for 2017/18 approved.
Outcomes	O6	Continue to strengthen the ICT platform and ensure that ICT is able to support change.	Be aware of and plan for financial, legal and environmental risks	O6.1 Three year review of ICT Strategy and adoption of action plan to 2020.	External review of requirements undertaken <b>F&amp;M</b>	On track	Completed, including consultation with stakeholders. Strategy being drafted for Committee presentation
People	PE1	Enable people to live independently	Provide an efficient and well-targeted adaptation service (including Disabled Facilities Grants) and make better use of previously adapted dwellings.	PE1.1 Percentage of adapted properties allocated on a needs basis is >90% <b>H&amp;CS</b>	>90%	93.30%	During Quarter one, 51 properties were signed up. Out of the 51 properties, 15 had adaptations present. 14 out of the 15 properties with adaptations were let to customers with an adaptation need. One adapted property was let to a homeless applicant who we had a duty of care to.
				PE1.2 % of residents satisfied with the quality of their new home is >88% <b>H&amp;CS</b>	>88%	96%	Overall customers are satisfied with the quality of their new home (very satisfied (61%), fairly satisfied (35%), neither (4%). Some dissatisfaction has been expressed in the new home satisfaction survey around the cleanliness of the property and condition of the garden. All areas of dissatisfaction are followed up by the Repairs Manager.
People	PE2	Protect and help support the most vulnerable, including those affected by financial challenges	Maintain regular contact with tenants, with a focus on those identified as vulnerable.	PE2.1 Total number of Tenancy Audits completed <b>H&amp;CS</b>	250	266	266 audit visits were completed during quarter one - 16 above the quarterly target. Tenancy audits have been rated as follows: low risk 72% (191), medium risk 17% (44), high risk 6% (15) and acute risk 6% (16)
				PE2.2 Number of successful introductory tenancies <b>H&amp;CS</b>	97%	91%	See Action Plan.
People	PE2	Process Benefit claims efficiently	Provide a service for homeless applicants which is nationally recognised as delivering 'best practice'	PE2.3 Average time for processing new Benefit claims <b>F&amp;M</b>	<18 days	15.8 days	Additional resource has helped to exceed target. Down from 18 days in quarter four for 2016/17.
				PE 2.4 Average time for processing notifications of changes in circumstances <b>F&amp;M</b>	<8 days	5.1 days	Additional resource has helped to exceed target. Down from 5.7 days in quarter four for 2016/17.
				PE2.5 Meet Housing Benefit Subsidy Local Authority error target threshold set by the DWP is <0.48% <b>F&amp;M</b>	<0.48%	0.02%	Targeted training in place following recent subsidy audit.
				PE2.6 To attain NPSS Bronze Standard for Homelessness by 31 March, 2018 <b>H&amp;CS</b>	Review outstanding data/gaps from NPSS peer assessment	On track	Gaps reviewed and continuous improvement project started
People	PE3	Use existing tools and powers to take appropriate enforcement action	Bring empty homes back into use.	PE3.1 Number of empty home intervention plans for dwellings known to be empty for more than two years <b>H&amp;CS</b>	1	2	Two empty properties on Station Street, Woodville, are now on the market for sale due to our intervention.
People	PE4	Increase levels of participation in sport, health, environmental and physical activities	Delivery of sport, health, physical activity and play scheme participations	PE4.1 Throughput at Etwall Leisure Centre, Green Bank Leisure Centre and Rosliston Forestry Centre <b>H&amp;CS</b>	Rosliston = 50,000 Leisure centres = 170,404	Rosliston = 63,550 Leisure centres = 250,774	Good start to year at Rosliston Forestry Centre helped by dry weather and Easter break. Continuing strong performance at both leisure centres. Impact of improvements to facilities being sustained.

People	PE4	Increase levels of physical activity	Tackling physical inactivity	PE4.2 Develop and implement a Sport, Health and Physical Activity Strategy <b>H&amp;CS</b>	Strategy to be adopted by Committee	On track	Strategy adopted at committee
People	PE5	Reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill	Minimise waste sent to landfill	PE5.1 Household waste collected per head of population (kg). Annual <480kgs <b>E&amp;DS</b>	<140kgs	See Q1 detail	Finalised disposal figures not available until mid August. Figures to be reported in quarter two.
				PE5.2 Annual target of >50% of collected waste recycled and composted <b>E&amp;DS</b>	>55%	See Q1 detail	Finalised disposal figures not available until mid August. Figures to be reported in quarter two.
People	PE6	Develop the workforce of South Derbyshire to support growth.	Increase Council engagement to raise aspirations	PE6.1 Provide opportunities for young people to reach their potential. <b>H&amp;CS</b>	Communicate Raising Aspirations Programme to Elected Members and partners	On track	Presentation at Full Council to inform Elected Members. Promotional plan and partner engagement progressing.
Place	PL1	Facilitate and deliver a range of integrated and sustainable housing and community infrastructure.	Increase the supply and range for all affordable housing provision	PL1.1 Increased supply of affordable homes. Annual target of >150. <b>H&amp;CS/E&amp;DS</b>	Annual target	Annual target	N/A
			Deliver an adopted South Derbyshire Local Plan, parts 1 and 2, and key supplementary planning documents (SPDs).	PL1.2 Local Plan and relevant documents adopted <b>E&amp;DS</b>	Examination in public of Local Plan Part 2. Approval to consult on Development Plan and SPDs.	On track	Consultation on Local Plan Part 2 and SPDs commenced. All on course for approval in quarter three.
			Facilitate and deliver sustainable infrastructure	PL1.3 Consider the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy. <b>E&amp;DS</b>	Awaiting information from Government. Elected Members to be kept informed of progress in Q2 and Q4.	N/A	N/A
Place	PL3	Help maintain low crime and antisocial behaviour levels in the District.	Deliver a programme of proactive interventions to reduce environmental crime and anti-social behaviour	PL3.1 Downward trend in fly-tipping incidents. Annual target <720. <b>E&amp;DS</b>	<180	179	Difficult to attribute the improvements in fly-tipping to any one factor, but it is probably linked to Derbyshire County Council removing charges for refuse amenity sites. Our proactive stance on enforcement and the use of fixed penalties has had an impact, along with the increase in interviews under caution.
			Review, publish and deliver the Safer South Derbyshire Community Safety Partnership Plan	PL3.2 Plan published. Actions within the plan delivered. <b>H&amp;CS</b>	Work with schools to develop delivery plan for community safety input in schools in 2017/18	On track	Schools consulted and priority input identified. 'Prison Me, No Way' sessions again requested by schools, as well as CSE input and Cyber Safety.
Place	PL5	Support provision of cultural facilities and activities throughout the District	Implement and manage the leisure facility capital build programme	PL5.1 number of completed projects <b>H&amp;CS</b>	Agree capital investment programme with Forestry Commission for Rosliston Forestry Centre	On track	Investment programme with Forestry Commission agreed and to be reviewed with contractor. Contractor discussions planned for quarter two.
Place	PL6	Deliver services that keep the District clean and healthy	Reduce contamination risk rating of land in South Derbyshire	PL6.1 Number of contaminated land assessments completed. <b>E&amp;DS</b>	1	1	Assessment undertaken on a site in Acresford Road, Overseal.
Progress	PR1	Work to attract further inward investment	Showcase development and investor opportunities in South Derbyshire	PR1.1 Produce an investor prospectus. <b>E&amp;DS</b>	Collate information and prepare materials for investor prospectus	On track	Preparations underway and designer appointed.
Progress	PR2	Unlock development potential and ensure the continuing growth of vibrant town centres	Delivery of Swadlincote Townscape project	PR2.1 Deliver objectives of scheme. <b>E&amp;DS</b>	Completion of construction works to Diana Memorial Gardens. Grants panel to be held.	See action plan	See action plan
			Increase attendance and participation at town centre events	PR2.2 Events, such as a wedding fair, the Christmas Lights Switch On, Festival of Leisure and markets, delivered and/or supported. <b>E&amp;DS</b>	4 events, including Swadlincote wedding fair	7	Events delivered or supported in the town centre included a Wedding Fair, Love Your Local Market (young entrepreneurs), the Festival of Transport, the Festival of Leisure and three Magpie Makers Markets.
			Ensure the continuing growth of vibrant communities and town centres	PR2.3 Vacant premises in Hilton, Melbourne and Swadlincote (proxy) <b>E&amp;DS</b>	To be reported twice a year.	N/A	N/A
Progress	PR3	Work to maximise the employment, training and leisure uses of The National Forest by residents and increase the visitor spend by tourists.	Support the operation and development of the tourism sector	PR3.1 Number of enquiries handled by Swadlincote Tourist Information Centre. <b>E&amp;DS</b>	8,000	10,328	Range of events supported, including National Forest Walking Festival. Summer edition of What's On published.
			Review and procure new management for Rosliston Forestry Centre	PR3.2 Secure sustainable management option. <b>H&amp;CS</b>	Develop an options appraisal for site's future	On track	Options appraisal for the future management of the Centre approved by Committee. Future management options also considered and approved, tender documentation being completed
			Work with Swadlincote TIC to attract evening visitors to the District's leisure, food and drink and retail offer	PR3.3 Further develop and promote South Derbyshire's evening and night time economy. <b>E&amp;DS</b>	N/A	N/A	Project to start in quarter two.
Progress	PR5	Provide business support and promote innovation and access to finance, including in rural areas	Maximise the prosperity of businesses in South Derbyshire	PR5.1 Food businesses which have a Food Hygiene Rating score of five. <b>E&amp;DS</b>	>81%	85.90%	Improvements in food performance is indicative of the continuous work we do with our local food business community to support new businesses and provide support and guidance on hygiene conformance with existing business
				PR5.2 Registered food businesses active in the District. <b>E&amp;DS</b>	>810	814	Improvements in food performance is indicative of the continuous work we do with our local food business community to support new businesses and provide support and guidance on hygiene conformance with existing business
				PR5.3 Guidance offered to businesses or people thinking of starting a business (through the Business Advice Service). <b>E&amp;DS</b>	25	67	67 businesses and entrepreneurs assisted. Service promoted at Swadlincote Jobs Fair. Workshop staged for those thinking of starting a business.

# Housing and Community Services Strategic and Service Success Areas Quarter 1, 2017/18

## Appendix B



**93.30%**

Target >90%  
% of adapted properties allocated on a needs basis



**96%**

Target >88%  
% of residents satisfied with new home



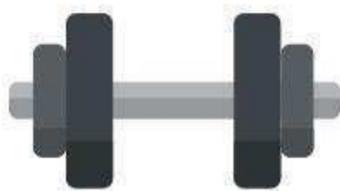
**266**

Target - 250  
Total number of tenancy audits completed



**2**

Target - 1  
Number of empty home intervention plans



**250,774**

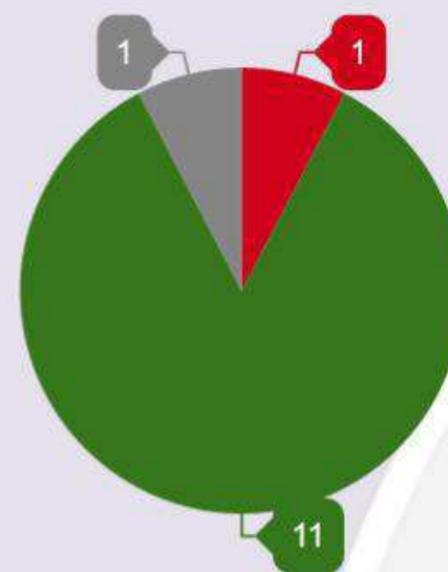
Target - 170,404  
Amount of visitors to the District's Leisure Centres



**63,550**

Target - 50,000  
Number of visitors to Rosliston Forestry Centre

### H+CS Performance Overview



Red (7.69%) Green (84.62%) Grey (7.69%)



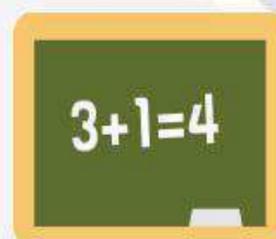
### Strategy

Getting active  
Physical Activity, Sport and Recreation Strategy adopted



### Review

Homelessness Standard  
Gaps reviewed and continuous improvement project started for NPSS Homelessness Standard



### Aspirations

Support for schools  
Raising Aspirations programme presented to Elected Members and partners



### Safety

Plan of action  
'Schools consulted on safety priorities. 'Prison Me, No Way' sessions again requested

# Housing and Community Services Performance Action Plan - Quarter 1, 2017/18

## Appendix C



**91%**

% of tenancies  
sustained after  
the introductory  
period

**Target - 97%**

Theme - People. Action – Outcome 3.1  
% of tenancies sustained after the introductory period  
Target vs performance: 97% target. 91% achieved.

Trend - 98% achieved in quarter one 2016/17

Background – For quarter one, one tenancy failed in 16/17 compared to eight tenancies failing in 2017/18. This was due to three tenants moving in with partners, one leaving to be near family and friends, three tenancies having the introductory period extended as a result of rent arrears and one tenant ending their tenancy with rent arrears.

Key actions underway – This trend can (in part) be attributed to our efforts to reduce tenant evictions. Three tenancies have been extended rather than evicted which means that this indicator has suffered. A review of these three tenancies will be undertaken to see if we could have prevented the arrears from rising any earlier.

Opportunities/risks: Opportunities include an improvement to this performance indicator, savings in officer time and reduced arrears. Risks of continued failure include increased arrears and higher probability of tenancy failure leading to increased homelessness, voids and associated costs.

There is one action for Housing and Community Services

powered by

# Housing and Environmental Services Risk Register

Risk Code	Theme/aim	Risk description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Treatment	Mitigating action	Responsible officer
HES1	Maintain Financial Health	Loss of income to the Housing Revenue Account through 1% rent reduction for general needs tenancies	High	Major	Treat	<p>Restructure housing service to ensure resources deployed appropriately</p> <p>Revise all income policies and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose</p> <p>Invest in I.T. solutions to maximise opportunities to collect income and support those in financial difficulty</p> <p>Review 'back office' functions to ensure frontline staff are able to work effectively</p>	Chris Holloway
HES2	To protect the most vulnerable including those affected by anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse.	Loss of income to the Housing Revenue Account through roll out of Universal Credit	High	Major	Treat	<p>Restructure housing service to ensure resources deployed appropriately</p> <p>Revise all income policies and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose</p> <p>Invest in I.T. solutions to maximise opportunities to collect income and support those in financial difficulty</p> <p>Review Allocations Policy to take into account benefit entitlements to different</p>	Chris Holloway

						client groups	
HES3	Keep residents happy, healthy and safe	Loss of Supporting People funding for the supported housing service	High	Severe	Treat	<p>Conduct full review of supported housing service to ensure financial viability</p> <p>Increase service delivery to private customers</p> <p>Explore new income streams working in collaboration with healthcare partners</p>	Chris Holloway
HES4	Enable people to live Independently	Loss of Supporting People funding for the sheltered housing service	High	Severe	Treat	<p>Conduct full review of supported housing service to ensure financial viability</p> <p>Increase service delivery to private customers</p> <p>Explore new income streams working in collaboration with healthcare partners</p>	Chris Holloway
HES5	To protect the most vulnerable including those affected by anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse.	Increase in homeless applications / presentations as Universal Credit rolls out	High	Significant	Treat	<p>Review staffing requirements in light of the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017</p> <p>Attain National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) standard for Homeless Service</p>	Chris Holloway
HES6	To protect the most vulnerable including those affected by anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse.	Failure to fulfil our requirements relating to the statutory homeless duty	Very Low	Significant	Tolerate	<p>Ensure policies and procedures are compliant with statute</p> <p>Ensure staff are well trained and briefed on changes to the Council's statutory obligations</p>	Chris Holloway

HES7	Maintain Financial Health	Failure to follow Council procedures / policies leading to Ombudsman finding of 'maladministration'	Low	Significant	Tolerate	Ensure procedures are reviewed regularly and staff are well trained	Chris Holloway
HES8	Achieve proper Corporate Governance	Failure to fulfil Resident Scrutiny statutory duty	Very Low	Significant	Treat	Ensure Resident Scrutiny Panel in place and undertakes regular reviews of services	Martin Guest
HES9	Achieve proper Corporate Governance	Failure to meet statutory deadlines when reporting performance and statutory information to Government agencies	Very Low	Significant	Treat	Ensure deadlines are met and that ownership for each reporting deadline is identified and project managed	Martin Guest
HES10	Maintain a skilled workforce	Loss of IT Systems and lack of specialist IT knowledge in department	Very Low	Significant	Treat	Ensure IT disaster recovery plan is in place Have alternative options available with suppliers Restructure services to ensure required resources in place	Martin Guest
HES11	Maintain financial health	Failure to deliver the planned maintenance and new build programme	Medium	Significant	Treat	Ensure that skilled officers are in place to manage the contracts and contractors delivering this programme.	Ged Lucas
HES12	Maintain financial health	Increase in the cost of contracts	Medium	Significant	Treat	Ensure procurement of goods and services deliver on the Council's objectives to deliver value for money. Evaluate the range of contract letting options to deliver good value for money.	Ged Lucas

						Consider efficiencies that can be achieved through better management of supply chains.	
HES13	Maintain a skilled workforce	Failure to recruit and retain staff	Medium	Significant	Treat	Ensure pay and conditions appropriately remunerates staff and ensure training and development opportunities are maximised	Housing DMT
HES14	Facilitate and deliver a range of integrated and sustainable housing and community infrastructure	Lack of funding for development and regeneration programme.	Medium	Significant	Treat	Investigate all avenues for funding new build, acquisition and regeneration via differing routes to ensure stock levels are maintained or increased	Eileen Jackson
HES15	Facilitate and deliver a range of integrated and sustainable housing and community infrastructure	Insufficient supply of affordable homes to meet Council needs relating to allocations and homelessness	High	Significant	Treat	Up-to-date housing needs data. Ensure maximise delivery through planning gain Support Registered Providers with building new homes or increase a supply through Council House building	Eileen Jackson
HES16	Deliver services that keep the District clean and healthy	Major incident (disease outbreak, pollution, severe weather)	Low	Significant	Tolerate	Backfill the staff resources with agency staff	Matt Holford/ Adrian Lowery
HES17	Maintain financial health	Loss of revenue to the Food Safety Business/ Environmental permitting	Low	Severe	Tolerate	Main income streams are from export certificates. Volumes are entirely outside our control. Continue to support local exporting businesses	Matt Holford
HES18	Achieve proper Corporate Governance	Legal challenge over statutory function in Environmental Health	Medium	Significant	Treat	Effective governance and review of officer decisions	Matt Holford

HES19	Deliver services that keep the District clean and healthy	Failure to deliver minimum statutory service duties in Food Safety and Pollution Control	Low	Minor	Tolerate	Continuously keep under review and deploy available resources based on areas of highest potential failure	Matt Holford
HES20	Deliver services that keep the District clean and healthy	Temporary loss of fuel supply at depot	Medium	Minor	Treat	Contingency suppliers in place	Adrian Lowery
HES21	Deliver services that keep the District clean and healthy	National loss of fuel supply	Low	Significant	Treat	Business continuity plan, comply with emergency planning guidance	Adrian Lowery
HES22	Deliver services that keep the District clean and healthy	Loss of vehicle fleet through theft or fire	Low	Significant	Treat	Local and national vehicle hire companies on list of suppliers	Adrian Lowery
HES23	Deliver services that keep the District clean and healthy	Loss of service delivery from contractors	Medium	Significant	Treat	Contingency plans in place to deliver service internally or back-up contractors available	Adrian Lowery
HES24	Maintain financial health	Loss of revenue	Low	Severe	Tolerate	Main income from commercial waste collections cannot compel customers to use our service	Adrian Lowery
HES25	Deliver services that keep the District clean and healthy	Loss of depot operating centre	Low	Significant	Treat	Temporary base for depot Building of a new modern depot is underway.	Adrian Lowery

## Community and Planning Risk Register 2017-2018

Theme/aim	Risk description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Treatment	Mitigating action	Responsible officer
Outcomes/ Maintain Financial Health	Planning Fees – income reduces to below set targets (DM1)	Low	High	Tolerate	Careful attention to forecasts/setting budgets and budget monitoring	Tony Sylvester
Outcomes/ Maintain Financial Health	Judicial review of Planning decisions (DM2)	Low	High	Treat	Weekly case review with all case officers for early identification of high-risk cases, legal opinion sought when necessary.  Ongoing review of new statutory procedures, continued advice from legal when required.  Service Review planned for 2017 to optimise resources	Tony Sylvester
Outcomes/ Maintain Financial Health	Maladministration leading to injustice via LGO (DM3/BC4/PP2)	Very Low	Low	Tolerate	Some documented process of procedures  Training in processes  Close monitoring of report recommendation s	Tony Sylvester

Outcomes/ Maintain Financial Health	Judicial Review of Building Control Decision (BC1)	Low	Low	Tolerate	Ongoing review of new statutory procedures, continued advice from counsel when required.	Tony Sylvester
Outcomes/ Maintain Financial Health	Loss of Market share below sustainable level (BC2)	High	High	Transfer Risk	Review Marketing Strategy. Investigate potential outsourcing of activity to a third party.	Tony Sylvester
Outcomes/ Maintain Financial Health	Negligence resulting in loss to personal property (BC3/DM4)	Low	High	Tolerate	Insurance  Professional training  Maintain sound procedures and act speedily to recover ground when mistakes are made.	Tony Sylvester
Outcomes/ Maintain Financial Health	Failure to collect financial contributions or to enforce the delivery of obligations within Section Agreements (DM5)	High	Very High	Treat	Implementation of new software and process review 2017.	Helen Frazer
Outcomes/ Maintain Financial Health	Poor application performance (DM7)	Medium	High	Treat	New planning officer structure in place, giving better capacity to monitor cases = optimum use of resources  Quarterly monitoring of application performance	Tony Sylvester

Outcomes/ Maintain Financial Health	Lack of knowledge in department relating to specialist: IT solutions; Planning; LLPG; GIS and S106 (DM8)	Medium	High	Treat	Specialist GIS knowledge outside of service e.g. specialist knowledge within IT/Corporately	Tony Sylvester
Place/ Facilitate and deliver a range of integrated and sustainable housing and community infrastructure	Technical and Legal problems/threats leading to delays in the adoption of the Local Plan Documents (including Judicial Review) (PP1)	High	High	Treat	Early liaison with Planning Inspectorate  Maintaining an up to date evidence base  Maintaining cross boundary communication  Taking Legal advice  Ongoing political engagement in process	Tony Sylvester
People/ Increase levels of participation in sport, health, environmental and physical activities	Reduction of council funding into Sport and Health Service Unable to source external funding to service Reserve fund being depleted for other sources other than the sport and health service delivery. (SP1)	High	High	Treat	Forward Budget Planning over a number of years.  Lobby to maintain current funding contribution that the council makes towards the service and for an increased contribution if members want the current levels of service to be maintained.  Continually seek external funding options	Hannah Peate
Place/ Support provision of cultural facilities and activities throughout the District	Managing Large Capital projects (CS1)	Low	High	Treat	Ongoing dialogue with funders  Support from internal and external specialists re legal, technical	Malcolm Roseburgh

					and financial issues Financial monitoring/attendance of CPAM meetings	
Place/ Support provision of cultural facilities and activities throughout the District	Failure of Contracts e.g. leisure centres (CS2)	Med	High	Treat	Contracts in place or held over. Regular (monthly) contract monitoring meetings for main contracts  Project Officer employed (RFC)	Malcolm Roseburgh
Place/ Support provision of cultural facilities and activities throughout the District	Memorial monuments falling causing injury (CS3)	Low	Med	Treat	Informal Checks undertaken and rolling programme of rolling checks reintroduced	Malcolm Roseburgh
Outcomes/ Maintain Financial Health	Accidents at Play Areas (CS4)	Low	High	Treat	Inspections carried out by dedicated member of staff.  Insurance company inspect annually  Park keepers on some sites	Malcolm Roseburgh
Place/ Support provision of cultural facilities and activities throughout the District	Dilapidation of Leisure/Community Facilities (CS5)	Low	Medium	Treat	Control measure in place: - securing internal and external funding, supporting VCS and parish Councils with funding, improving planned preventative maintenance, transferring assets where possible,	Malcolm Roseburgh

					improved monitoring	
Place/ Support provision of cultural facilities and activities throughout the District	Failure of Business Plan for Rosliston Forestry Centre (CS6)	Medium	Medium	Treat	Monthly performance meetings Annual Review of Business Plan Development and implementation of new strategy Increase involvement of Forestry Commission in business planning Contract transition arrangements underway	Malcolm Roseburgh
Place/ Support provision of cultural facilities and activities throughout the District	Urban Core Cemetery Space running out (CS7)	High	Med	Treat	Continued internal meetings with Planning and Property Services to identify land opportunities	Malcolm Roseburgh
Place/ Support provision of cultural facilities and activities throughout the District	Failing Infrastructure at Rosliston Forestry Centre. (CS8)	High	High	Treat	Condition survey has identified extent of problem. Responsibility planned to pass to incoming contractor but cost likely to be expressed through value of management sum.	Malcolm Roseburgh
People/Protect and help support the most vulnerable, including those	Sustainability of the voluntary sector (CM1)	Very high	Med	Treat	Service Development proposal to continue community partnership scheme in future	Chris Smith

affected by financial challenges					years. Continue partnership working with CVS and rest of VCS	
Place/ Support provision of cultural facilities and activities throughout the District	Failure of Sharpe's Pottery Museum (CM2)	Med	Med	Treat	Councillor representation on board  Attendance on board meetings by Officers  Support from Community Partnership Officer when required	Chris Smith

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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 8</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2017</b>	<b>CATEGORY: DELEGATED/ RECOMMENDED OPEN</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>GED LUCAS STRATEGIC DIRECTOR</b>	
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>MARTIN GUEST <a href="mailto:martin.guest@south-derbys.gov.uk">martin.guest@south-derbys.gov.uk</a> 01283 595940</b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>HOUSING POLICY POST ELECTION</b>	<b>REF:</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCS01</b>

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## **1.0 Recommendations**

1.1 That the issues identified and actions to tackle these are noted.

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To provide an update to Members on the progress of the Housing White Paper together with an update on matters outstanding in respect to the Regulations and Guidance under Part 4 of the Housing & Planning Act 2016 in regard to the proposed Higher Value Asset Levy and introduction of fixed term tenancies.
- 2.2 To inform Members of the impact of the outcome of the General Election and Grenfell Tower tragedy on wider Housing Policy and how South Derbyshire is responding to these challenges whilst continuing to maintain the delivery of its housing service.

## **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 National rent policy requires the Council to continue with a reduction in rents by 1% a year for four years (until 2019/20). This continues to have a major impact on long term HRA financial planning for South Derbyshire. To 2020 we are forecasting a reduction in income of £6m and that grows to £19m by 2024. The overall losses have had a negative effect on the capital programme and new build. To help fund the shortfall, we need to build more houses, but without borrowing the potential gap in reserves versus cost of building is an issue. The sector continues to lobby the government for a positive change to this policy and we are hopeful that this will be reflected in the emerging rent policy from 2020/21. However, if rents continue to decline, the Council will need to re-evaluate how sustainable it is for it to continue as landlord and it may need to look at options for the service.
- 3.2 The Government published its Housing White Paper for Consultation on the 7 February 2017. This Consultation ran until the 2 May 2017. This Committee along with Environmental and Development Services agreed the Council's response to this consultation and this was submitted to Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in early May 2017.

- 3.3 The intervening period of election "*purdah*" and the outcome of the General Election with the return of a Conservative Government and appointment of a new Housing Minister have meant there have been no further announcements or developments in regard to this Housing White Paper or the Housing and Planning Act 2016.
- 3.4 Given that the introduction of the High Value Asset Levy and Fixed Term Tenancies, outlined in the Housing & Planning Act 2016, both require debate and approval of the necessary Regulations by both Houses of Parliament under the "*Affirmative Resolution*" process there must be a doubt as to whether the necessary Parliamentary time can be found in this session of Parliament. Although prior to the General Election it was believed that the DCLG were intending to consult on the Fixed Term Tenancy Regulations in the spring/summer of 2017. Once these regulations are approved the Council will need to amend its Allocations Policy and Tenancy Policy so that Fixed Term Tenancies can be introduced for new tenants.
- 3.5 Registered Providers (RP's) are working with the Government to extend the Right to Buy (RTB) to their tenants by way of voluntary agreement instead of legislation. Any extension of this Voluntary RTB and take up of this will reduce the amount of stock available to those in need of rented housing in South Derbyshire.
- 3.6 Rent to Buy is a government scheme designed to ease the transition from renting to buying a home by providing subsidised rent. With Rent to Buy, residents can rent a newly built home at approximately 20% below the market rate for up to five years (exact period of time varies by property). They would then have the option to buy the property or to buy part of the property under a Shared Ownership scheme. When they get to the end of the time period, they either have to buy part of the property or leave.
- 3.7 One element of Housing Policy that the Government do intend to press ahead with is the idea of "*Bespoke Housing Deals*" which was a key element of the Housing White Paper and part of the Conservative election manifesto. It is unlikely that South Derbyshire would be part of these deals as they will be targeted on those Councils with the capacity to deliver large numbers of new affordable housing. Meetings are currently being held between the DCLG and authorities to discuss these deals.
- 3.8 Another element of the Conservative election manifesto likely to feature in the future on the Government's agenda is proposals for "*fixed term council housing*". This included provision of significant low cost capital funding and was linked to a Local Authorities capability and capacity to develop more homes. In return for this Local Authorities will build new fixed-term social houses which will be sold privately after 10/15 years with an automatic RTB for tenants, the proceeds of which will be recycled into further homes.
- 3.9 The Homelessness Reduction Act received Royal Assent on the 27 April 2017, The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 will place new legal duties on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status, as long as they are eligible for assistance. The Act will amend part VII of the Housing Act 1996.
- 3.10 Members at Housing and Community Services on 14 June approved recommendations to enable Housing as a whole and in particular the Homeless Service to change to meet the future needs of tenants and those in housing need moving forward.

- 3.11 During the first quarter of 2017/18, more people are approaching the Council for help including vulnerable people with complex needs at risk of homelessness. This rise has led to the number of households currently in temporary accommodation to 27 households (families and single households) pending enquiries or with a full housing duty as at the 31 July 2017 compared to 11 households as at 31 March 2017. The position is becoming more and more challenging and will continue to do so as a result of legislation restricting automatic entitlement to housing benefit claimants for young people aged 18-21 unless an exception applies. The Council has also increased the number of properties used to a total of 8 from its HRA stock on a short-term basis to supplement traditional temporary accommodation.
- 3.12 The Council is also reliant on RP's to help it discharge the duty it owes to those homeless applicants. Increasingly RP's are reluctant to rehouse some of the more vulnerable tenants where a duty is owed. This is related to increasingly complex needs such as health, drug and alcohol issues and financial distress. The Council will be contacting RP's operating in the district to discuss and resolve this issue.
- 3.13 Single homelessness is increasingly become a bigger issue for South Derbyshire to address. Along with the increased demands on the service highlighted in 3.11, the Council is expecting the number of single person presentations to expand considerably from April 2018 once the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 comes into force. This is being discussed with other Derbyshire Authorities to look at options as to how this issue is addressed.
- 3.14 The Queen's speech delivered at the state opening of parliament on 21 June contained little in the way of new housing legislation, however it did promise that the Government would bring forward *"proposals to ban unfair tenant fees, promote fairness and transparency in the housing market, and help ensure more homes are built"*. Proposals will be brought forward in a draft Tenant Fees Bill.
- 3.15 The tragic fire at Grenfell Tower on the 14 June 2017, in the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea resulted in an as yet unknown number of deaths and was the worst fire of its kind in Social Housing.
- 3.16 Following this tragedy, the Queen's speech confirmed that the Government will initiate a full public enquiry into the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower to ascertain the causes and ensure that the appropriate lessons are learnt.
- 3.17 The primary concern nationally has been around buildings over 18 metres, or six storeys, where people stay at night and we have no buildings that meet these criteria in our housing stock.
- 3.18 Alongside landlords across the country, the Council has been taking proactive measures to make sure its buildings are safe by ensuring that up to date fire safety risk assessments are in place across all housing communal blocks/areas. These assessments have also been reviewed by the Council's Health and Safety Officer who has extensive experience in fire safety. The Council has no cladding similar to that involved or serving the same purpose of that involved in the Grenfell Tower.
- 3.19 A "Smart Meter Bill" will also be introduced through the Queen's speech to continue to support the roll out of smart meters and ensure that "smart meters will be offered to every household and business by the end of 2020" claiming that smart meters will provide annual savings on energy bills of £300 million across all households rising to £1.2 billion per annum by 2030.

3.20 The impact of Universal Credit continues to pose a potential income risk for the Council for the future. Planned full roll out of Universal Credit is scheduled for August 2018 in South Derbyshire. Recent research has been undertaken in May 2017 looking at the impact of welfare reform on households living in council and Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) owned homes at the 31st March 2017. Key messages from the survey (the full survey is attached in Appendix A) were:

- Approximately **2.6%** of households living in council and ALMO owned homes have moved onto Universal Credit (UC)
- Of these nearly three quarters were in arrears (**73%**). The total arrears deficit for UC claimants across 37 respondents were **£6.68 million**, or approximately **10%** of the total arrears bill.
- **40%** of UC claimants in arrears were not in arrears prior to going on to UC.
- On average, UC households in arrears owed **£772.21**.

3.21 New proposals to cut out unfair abuses of leasehold were announced by the government in July 2017 in a major move that will deliver a fairer, more transparent system for homebuyers. These proposals set out plans to ban new build houses being sold as leasehold as well as restricting ground rents to as low as zero. This can often expose homebuyers to unreasonable and long-term financial abuse.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 The annual 1% reduction in rents for the years up to 2019/20 continues, an increase in Right to Buy discounts and welfare reform have all added significant extra cost pressure to the Council's HRA Business Plan.

4.2 The previous Government's proposal to impose a high value asset levy would weaken the financial position of the HRA still further. The detailed regulations around this have not yet been released by the Government so no related assumptions have yet been incorporated into the HRA Business Plan.

#### **5.0 Corporate Implications**

5.1 The Housing White Paper and any further changes to National Housing Policy could have a significant effect on the delivery of housing in the District and the provision of services to vulnerable tenants. In particular this could affect the aims set out in the Corporate Plan

- Facilitate and deliver a range of integrated and sustainable housing and community infrastructure
- Enable people to live independently
- Protect and help support those most vulnerable, including those affected by financial challenges

#### **6.0 Community Implications**

6.1 Housing Policy directly impacts on Council tenants and those in need of housing; however it can also impact on the planning, public health and healthcare sector as well as the communities of South Derbyshire.

#### **7.0 Background Papers**

*Appendix A: Pause for Thought - Measuring the impact of Welfare Reform on tenants and landlords* - [https://www.housingnet.co.uk/pdf/Pause%20for%20Thought%20-%20Welfare%20Reform%20Report%20\(2017\).pdf](https://www.housingnet.co.uk/pdf/Pause%20for%20Thought%20-%20Welfare%20Reform%20Report%20(2017).pdf)



▲ ▲ ▲ National  
▲ ▲ ▲ Federation  
▲ ▲ ▲ of ALMOs

## Pause for Thought

Measuring the impact of Welfare Reform on tenants and landlords – 2017 Survey Results



Author – Lisa Birchall, NFA Policy, Communications and Research Officer

Editor – Chloe Fletcher, NFA Policy Director

The NFA and ARCH would like to thank all their members for their contributions to the survey and the roundtable. These have enabled us to provide a summary of welfare reform, and assess the impact of various welfare reforms on tenants.

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*Whilst all reasonable care and attention has been taken in compiling this publication, the authors, publishers and editorial team regret that they cannot assume responsibility for any error or omission that it contains.*

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# Introduction and Executive Summary

## Introduction

This publication summarises the results of a survey undertaken in May 2017 of stock retaining councils and arms-length management organisations (ALMOs). It looks at the impact of welfare reform on households living in council and ALMO owned homes as of the 31st March 2017. The survey covers a number of aspects relating to welfare reform, including:

- **Overall rent arrears (page 7)**
- **Universal Credit (page 8)**
- **The under-occupancy penalty (page 20)**
- **Discretionary Housing Payments (page 22)**
- **The benefit cap (page 24)**

## Executive Summary

The research shows that the impact of welfare reform on landlord rent arrears has not changed significantly over the last year: There were still worryingly high levels of rent arrears among Universal Credit (UC) claimants in Council and ALMO rented homes with nearly three quarters of claimants in arrears (73%) compared to only 31% of the overall tenant population in arrears. Our research also shows that the under-occupancy penalty and the benefit cap continued to have a considerable negative impact on vulnerable households. There was no significant movement in the proportion of households affected by the under-occupancy penalty and an increase in families being affected by the benefit cap with single parents with 3 or more children being hit the hardest. Discretionary Housing Payments continue to be used as a temporary measure to support households affected by the under-occupancy penalty, the benefit cap and households in temporary accommodation.

At the time our survey was conducted, UC had only rolled out to 2.6% of households across the respondent group. There are significant concerns among landlords about the impact of further rollout, planned for this year, since this 2.6% has already absorbed extensive resources and has considerably impacted on landlords' housing revenue accounts (HRAs).

Members of both the NFA and ARCH are fully supportive of the principles of UC and have introduced new ways of working within their organisations and with tenants to support the rollout. Examples of good practice are emerging locally and this report highlights some of these, with suggestions for improvement to ensure that the impact of welfare reform on households is minimised.

However, we would ask that the government stop or slow down its planned rollout of UC until such time as the issues we have highlighted are resolved satisfactorily in order to prevent further distress and financial hardship to many families, as well as unprecedented levels of rent arrears and demand for support from landlords.

NFA and ARCH key asks:

- End the 7 day waiting period for new claims.
- Slow down the speed of UC rollout until the procedural issues with the existing system have been resolved.
- Create a transitional funding pot for landlords to enable them to effectively manage the rollout of UC and adequately support vulnerable tenants.
- Improve the digital engagement for full service (as well as for older tenants).
- Improve the process of UC for claimants and landlords, including integrating the learning from the Live Service.

## Key headlines

### Overall household debt

- Nearly a third of all households living in council and ALMO owned homes (**31%**) were in rent arrears as at the 31st March 2017.
- The total arrears deficit across 42 respondents was £68.5 million. The average level of arrears per household was **£414.40**.

### Universal Credit

- Approximately **2.6%** of households living in council and ALMO owned homes have moved onto Universal Credit (UC).
- Of these nearly three quarters were in arrears (**73%**). The total arrears deficit for UC claimants across 37 respondents was **£6.68 million**, or approximately **10%** of the total arrears bill.
- **40%** of UC claimants in arrears were not in arrears prior to going on to UC.
- On average, UC households in arrears owed **£772.21**.
- The data for the cohort group shows that there has been an 11% rise in average arrears for UC households in arrears, rising from **£668.68 in March 2016** to **£744.12 in March 2017**.
- **56%** of UC households in arrears had arrears totalling more than 1 month (average arrears of **£890.31**).

### Under-occupancy penalty

- The under-occupancy penalty was affecting **9%** of households as at the 31st March 2017. This position has not altered significantly from 2014/2015, indicating that the policy is not achieving its stated aim of making better use of stock and increasing mobility within the social sector.
- Of those subject to the under-occupancy penalty **40%** were in arrears despite discretionary housing payments being used mainly to support this group of tenants.

### The benefit cap

- On average, **66%** of working age households within our survey group are in receipt of housing benefit or UC.
- The benefit cap has affected **1.5%** of working age council tenants in receipt of housing benefit or UC on average across the country.
- However, it has mainly affected single parents with multiple children: just under two thirds (**63%**) of the cases concerned a single parent with 3 children or more, who are more likely to find it difficult to get into work or be able to make up the difference.

### Discretionary Housing Payments

- The majority of DHP payments in the 2016/2017 period have been made to support tenants affected by the under-occupancy penalty (**60%**).
- There are clear concerns regarding the sustainability of respondents' discretionary housing pots, especially with the new responsibilities around homelessness.

## Research Findings

### Survey methodology

The survey consisted of 58 questions on a range of areas related to welfare reform. It was sent to all members of ARCH (Association of Retained Council Housing) and the NFA (National Federation of ALMOs) in May 2017. The survey reports figures as at the 31st March 2017.

### Respondent Profile

A total of 42 organisations responded to the survey (29 ALMOs and 13 stock-retaining councils) managing a total of 563,985 homes. The breakdown of respondents is shown below:

REGION	Number of Respondents	Number of Homes	% of total
North	10	168,686 <sup>1</sup>	30%
Midlands (comprised of East and West Midlands)	11	183,705 <sup>2</sup>	33%
South (ex. London)	11	96,083	17%
London	10	115, 511	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>563,985</b>	

The NFA and ARCH have tracked a cohort of 20 organisations over the last 2 years. Of these, 16 responded to this survey, with a total of 168,245 households. Where applicable, we have compared the results with previous years' results.

### Universal Credit Roundtable

As part of this year's survey we organised a roundtable discussion to help identify any new concerns and good practice and collect some qualitative data to supplement the quantitative data in the survey. The roundtable was attended by senior staff from 12 stock-retaining Local Authorities and ALMOs and took place in June 2017. This roundtable provided qualitative information to support the survey results.

<sup>1</sup> 15% of these households were attributed to one respondent

<sup>2</sup> 34% of these homes were attributed to one respondent

# 1. Overall performance on rent arrears

There has been little change to the overall levels of rent arrears in the past year. Respondents reported that 31% of their tenant households were in rent arrears as at the 31st March 2017. 41 landlords provided data on the total amount of arrears which stood at **£68.5 million**.

Although the percentage of tenant households in arrears has stayed the same in the last three years, the average amount of household arrears has risen from **£294.57** in March 2016 to **£414.40** in March 2017.<sup>3</sup> Within the cohort group, 30% of households were in arrears, owing on average **£327.31**. This compares with **£321.22** in March 2016 suggesting less of an overall change to the situation.<sup>4</sup>

The table below demonstrates the variations both across England and also within the regions. Respondents in the North have a higher level of tenants in arrears but they owe the least; the Midlands has a lower percentage of tenants in arrears but they owe the second highest amount, possibly attributable to the metropolitan make-up of the respondents; the South has the lowest level of tenants in arrears; whilst London is both the highest for percentage of arrears and the highest average amount of arrears, reflecting both its tenant profile and its high rents.

Average social rents in the North East, West Midlands, South East and London are shown for comparison.<sup>5</sup> Although there is a considerable difference between the value of arrears in each region, this is largely due to the weekly rents charged. Households in London owe approximately an average of 5 weeks' rent, while those in the North owe 4 weeks' rent.

Region	Average % of tenants in arrears	Average level of arrears	Range	Average weekly local authority rents
North	32%	£292	£153.96 – £492.48	£73.78
Midlands (comprised of East and West Midlands)	26%	£441	£215 – £686.23	£77.08
South (ex. London)	23%	£312	£225.27 – £456.18	£82.99
London	42%	£533	£106 – £790	£104.94

3 The size of this increase is in part due to the respondent profile this year, with a significant metropolitan presence, which has driven up the overall average.

4 This is the figure for the 16 organisations from the cohort of 20 organisations who could provide data in March 2017. As such, it differs from the figure in the Universal Credit Progress Update (published November 2016) which was for all 20 organisations.

5 UK Housing Review 2016, Chartered Institute for Housing, p205, table 73a: Average Local Authority rents by region in England

## 2. Universal Credit

*"We have noted the emotional impact Universal Credit (UC) can have. UC can be triggered by a change of circumstances which may often be a relationship breakdown or illness. So tenants are dealing with the stress of this anyway and then have the added burden of UC to deal with."*

Survey respondent

*"One tenant supported by the Tenancy Support Officer and Financial Inclusion Officer, had a series of problems claiming UC. His original online application was submitted with officer assistance, the DWP claimed to have lost it, a waiting period was applied which shouldn't have been and his payments were frequently stopped as they attempted to correct his claim. Eventually he was starving, stressed about having no cash and so fearful of what was happening that he was sectioned. He was held in a secure unit, and during that time his claim was sorted out. Since then he's had few problems as his payments are regular."*

Survey respondent

### Summary of findings

Information in this section is drawn from the survey results and the roundtable discussion.

#### The key messages emerging from the roundtable:

1. Attendees are very supportive of Universal Credit (UC), welcoming the approach for households to be in control of their own finances. However, they have found the rollout difficult in practice.
2. Poor administration, communication between DWP partners, and delays in assessment processes have caused undue stress and hardship for individuals claiming UC. This has led to a higher administrative burden for councils and ALMOs.
3. Within the initial rollout there have been a number of delays and teething problems, but even once these are smoothed out there are still issues of concern within the actual process, including the 7 day waiting period for new claims, and how claimants re-access the service following changes to circumstances.
4. The financial and administrative cost of the rollout has largely been absorbed by the Councils or ALMOs so far. This has been manageable partly because of the small proportion of individuals on UC (an average of 2.6%). There are significant concerns that as UC rolls out fully, landlords will not have sufficient resources to devote to supporting households affected. It is anticipated that the impact on the numbers of tenants falling into arrears, and the overall levels of arrears will rise significantly.
5. Our members are reporting concerns about the continued pace of the UC rollout and the scalability of processes. Essentially, improvements in administrative processes and communications to landlords need to be implemented, and lessons reflected on, before UC is fully rolled out.

#### The key messages from the survey were:

- **2.6%** of all households were on Universal Credit (3% in the cohort group); of these, nearly three quarters were in arrears (**73%**). This compares with **79%** in March 2016.
- UC arrears across the respondents in March 2017 equalled **£6.68 million**. This is approximately 10% of the arrears bill, even though they make up less than 3% of households.
- Tenants across all respondents had average arrears of **£772.21**. This compares with an average of **£611.73** across all respondents in March 2016.
- **56%** of households in arrears had arrears totalling more than a month, with an average arrears of **£890.31**. However, 9 out of 31 respondents to this question had average arrears of between £1,000 and £2,000, and 3 out of 31 respondents (all London based) had average arrears debt of £2,000 or more.

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- **41%** of UC households in arrears had an alternative payment arrangement (APA) in place, but there were concerns about the effectiveness of APAs.
- Of those who could provide data, approximately **22%** of UC households in arrears had been presented with notices of intention to seek possession (NOSPs); approximately **9%** were being pursued with court action; and approximately **1%** were being evicted.

#### In order to improve the rollout of UC, members have identified 5 key asks:

- End the 7 day waiting period for new claims.
- Slow down the speed of UC rollout until the procedural issues with the existing system have been resolved.
- Create a transitional funding pot for landlords to enable them to effectively manage the rollout of UC and adequately support vulnerable tenants.
- Improve the digital engagement for full service (especially for older tenants).
- Improve the process of UC for claimants and landlords, including integrating the learning from the Live Service.

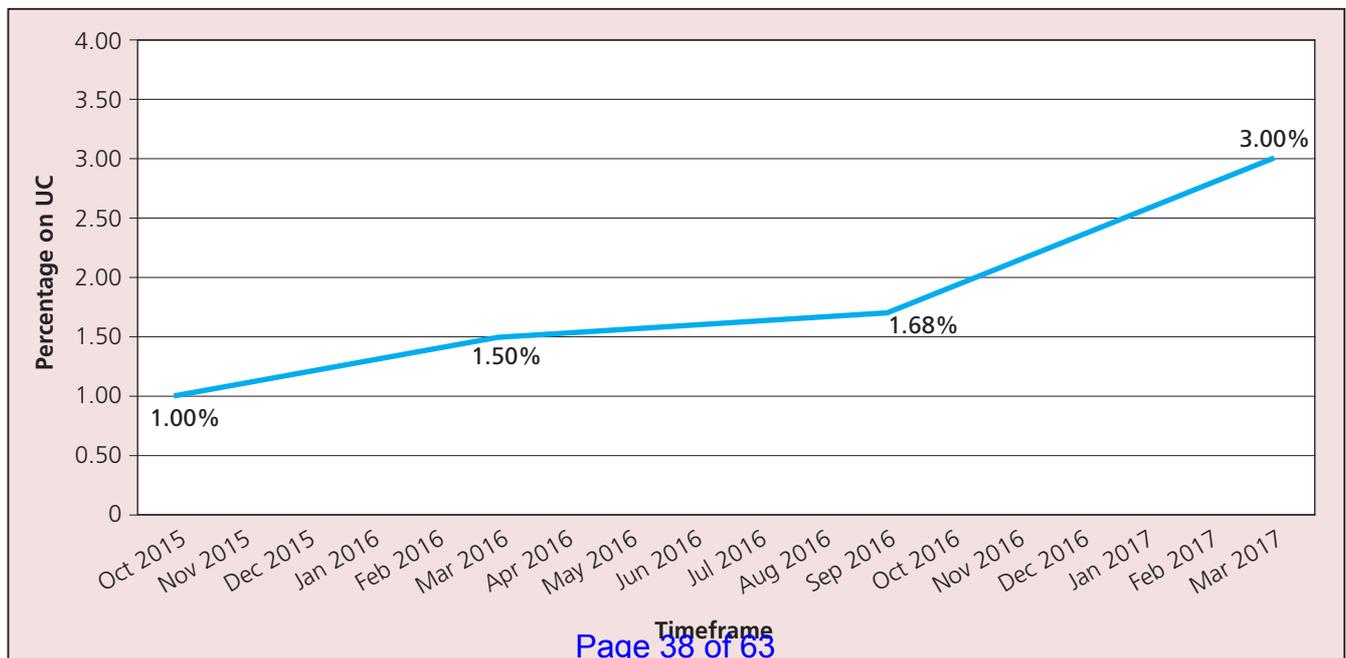
## UC Analysis

### 1. The number of households on UC

We received information from 39 respondents, collectively managing 532,466 households. The majority of respondents had rolled out UC to single people without children claiming the equivalent of job seekers allowance; 8 had extended to couples without children, while 5 were full service areas in full or part.

Full UC service for all claimant types began to rollout nationally in May 2016 with an expected completion date of September 2018.<sup>6</sup> Among all our respondent group, 2.6% of households received UC, which has doubled since March 2016, but is still very low. Within the cohort group it is 3%. Clearly, in order to meet the DWP schedule, there will be a significant scaling up of rollout over the next 2 years.

**Diagram 1: Percentage of households on UC over time: comparison of cohort group**



**2. The percentage of UC households in arrears**

37 organisations (respondents with 500,352 households) could provide information on arrears, stating that nearly **three quarters of UC households (73%)** were in arrears (8,656 out of 11,845). This compares with 31% of all households. The comparison figure was **79%** in March 2016 so there has been some improvement.

Within the responses there was considerable variation, with a range of arrears from 55% to 92%. This range does not reflect regional differences, for example both the highest and the lowest percentage of arrears was in the North. There is also no obvious correlation between the percentage/size of arrears and the date UC went live, or the percentage of households on UC and the percentage of claimants in arrears. The evidence actually shows that there are very different experiences across respondents with the same or similar low level of UC take-up, suggesting the influence of local working relations and practices.

16 organisations from the cohort group responded to the survey in March 2017 enabling us to compare what is happening over time.<sup>7</sup> The cohort group had an average level of arrears of 69% at March 2017. This compares with 76% in March 2016. Although this is a large drop, it is largely due to a significant improvement in arrears for Your Homes Newcastle (YHN), which dropped from 71% to 58%, and which makes up 31% of the households within the cohort group. Without YHN figures, the arrears percentage rises to 75% which is more in line with the March 2016 figure.

**Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) Case Study**

Full service was introduced in Newcastle upon Tyne in one geographical area in May 2016 which expanded to city-wide in February and March 2017. YHN currently has 2,407 customers claiming Universal Credit, of which 26% are currently on Alternative Payment Arrangements.

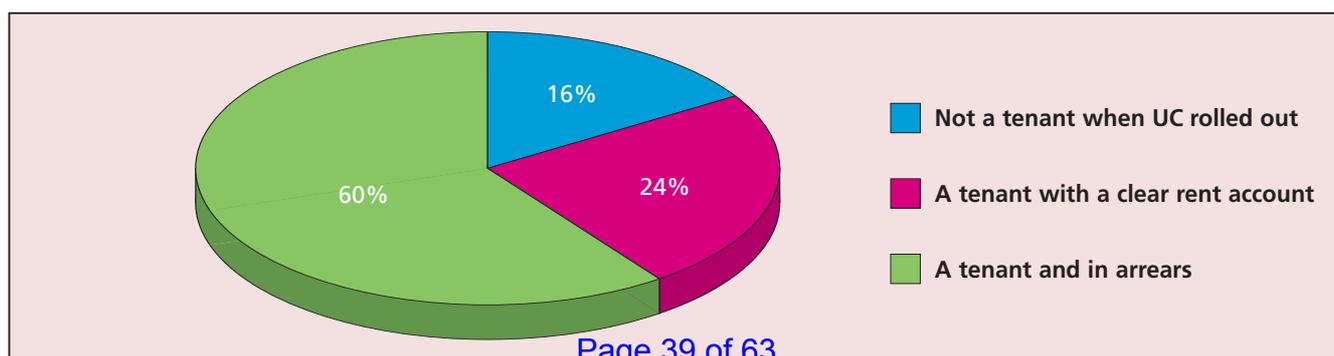
The organisation saw a significant increase in people moving onto Universal Credit following the full service roll out which impacted on arrears performance. Rent collection rates for UC claimants have slowly improved from 65.8% in the first 3 months to 96.4% after 12 months. YHN has invested in providing a significant level of support to individuals on Universal Credit. For example, the organisation has placed staff in each of its Jobcentre Plus offices, became part of the trusted partner pilot and provides personal budgeting support through the universal support framework delivered locally for its customers.

**3. The percentage of arrears which is due to UC rollout**

10 organisations could provide comparisons of their tenants’ rent accounts before and after UC rollout in their area.

Of **UC households in arrears**, 84% were households prior to UC going live and 16% were new households after UC went live. The status of UC households (now in arrears) prior to the UC rollout is shown in the chart below. 60% of these households were a tenant and were already in arrears, while 40% were not in arrears prior to their UC claim either because they were a new tenant (16%) or a tenant with a clear rent account (24%).

**Diagram 2: Status of households now on UC and in arrears prior to UC rollout**



<sup>7</sup> We have reanalysed the results of previous surveys to ensure the same respondents are tracked, which means that previous reports of the cohort group are not comparable.

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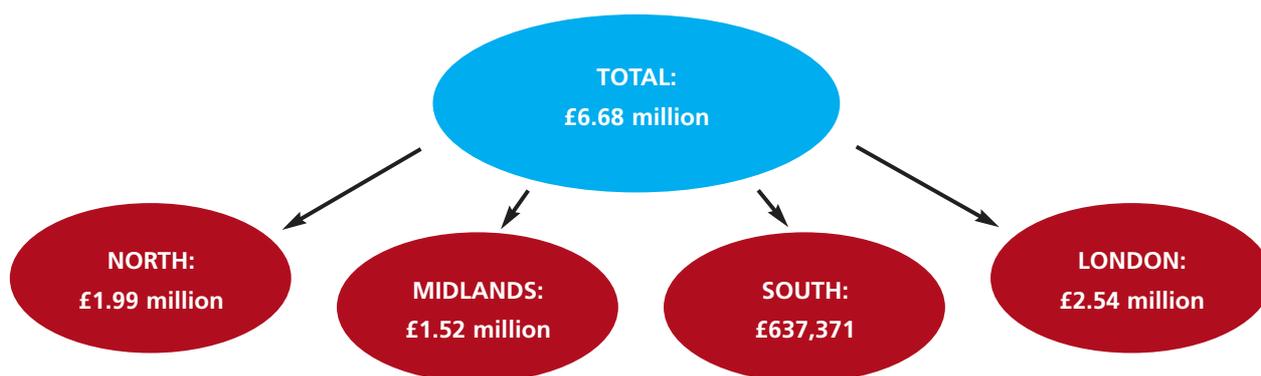
It should be noted that all 10 respondents who could provide data were areas where UC had only been rolled out to single people who are often in more precarious circumstances than other demographic groups. For this reason, you would be likely to see higher levels of pre-rollout arrears than the average.

Although there may be other factors at play, it is clear that a significant percentage of households went into arrears after going onto UC. Feedback from our roundtable highlighted the negative impact of the length of time between applying for UC and getting the first payment (as well as subsequent delays in the housing element of UC) combined with the lack of information about individuals on UC, which is likely to explain much of these arrears.

**The total value of pre-existing arrears was £355,645 (55.8%) of the total level of UC arrears (£637,622), which means 44.2% was accrued after UC was rolled out.**

#### 4. The total amount of UC arrears

UC arrears at March 2017 was **£6.68 million**, which is about 10% of the total arrears bill even though households with UC only make up 2.6% of the total.



UC tenants across all respondents had average arrears of **£772.21**. This compares with an average of **£611.73** across all respondents in March 2016.<sup>8</sup> When looking at the data across the regions, there are clear differences:

	Mar-16		Mar-17	
	Percentage of UC tenants in arrears	Average arrears	Percentage of UC tenants in arrears	Average arrears
North	79%	£546.00	67% <sup>9</sup>	£655.47
Midlands	74%	£662.60	79%	£715.91
South	78%	£647.26	70%	£613.45
London	87%	£1,184.21	78%	£1,032.17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>£611.73</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>£772.21</b>
<i>Based on:</i>	<i>3146 households</i>		<i>11,854 households</i>	

<sup>8</sup> Figures based on a comparison of all respondents in March 2016 and all respondents in March 2017. Differences between the years are partly due to a different respondent profile with a higher number of London and metropolitan respondents, which increases the size of the overall average arrears.

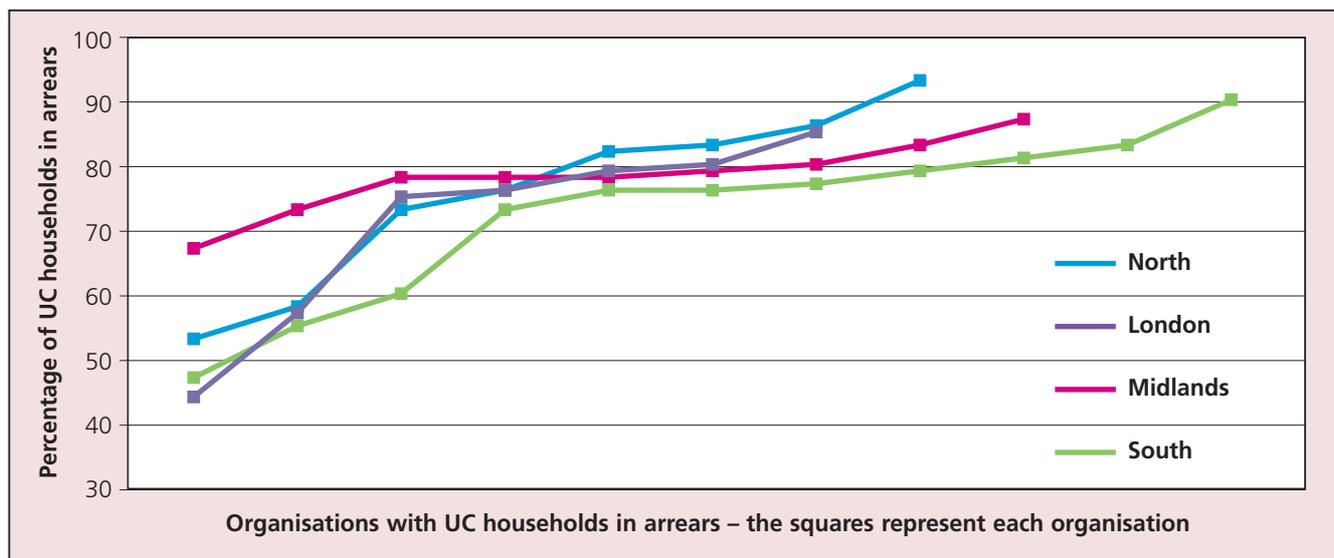
<sup>9</sup> This percentage drop is due in large part to one respondent who constitutes 44% of all the households in the North and saw a significant drop in arrears. Removing that respondent, the average for the North is 75% which is more in line with the March 2016 figure

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However, even within these averages, there are significant variations. For example, in the South, the level of average arrears goes from £301 to £859 (or a £558 difference). The graph below shows this variation in the UC households arrears by region:

**Diagram 3: Percentage of UC households in arrears by region**



The data for the cohort group shows that there has been a steady rise in the average arrears for UC households in arrears, rising from £668.68 in March 2016 to £744.12 in March 2017 (an 11% increase over the year).

#### 5. UC Households with one month or more arrears

For UC households with one month or more arrears, the situation has not improved over the year, and remains worryingly high.

Although not all respondents could provide data, 3,603 out of 6,433 UC households (56%) had arrears totalling more than 1 month, which is the same as the figure in March 2016. Of these households, the average amount of arrears was **£890.31**. This compares with **£898.85** across respondents in March 2016. 9 out of 31 respondents (29%) reported an average between £1,000 and £2,000 arrears per household, and 3 respondents (all London based) over £2,000 per household.

Within the cohort group, **53%** of respondent households had arrears totalling more than 1 month, which compares with **54%** in March 2016. The average level of arrears in March 2017 for this group is **£789.45** which compares with **£969.36** in March 2016.

#### 6. Alternative Payment Arrangements (APAs)

Landlords can apply for APAs where a claimant is in arrears with their rent for an amount equal to, or more than 2 months in rent; or where a claimant has continually underpaid their rent over a period of time, and have accrued arrears of an amount equal to or more than a month's rent. Vulnerability factors are also taken into consideration, including – for example – for families with multiple or complex needs, or individuals with addictions or mental health conditions.

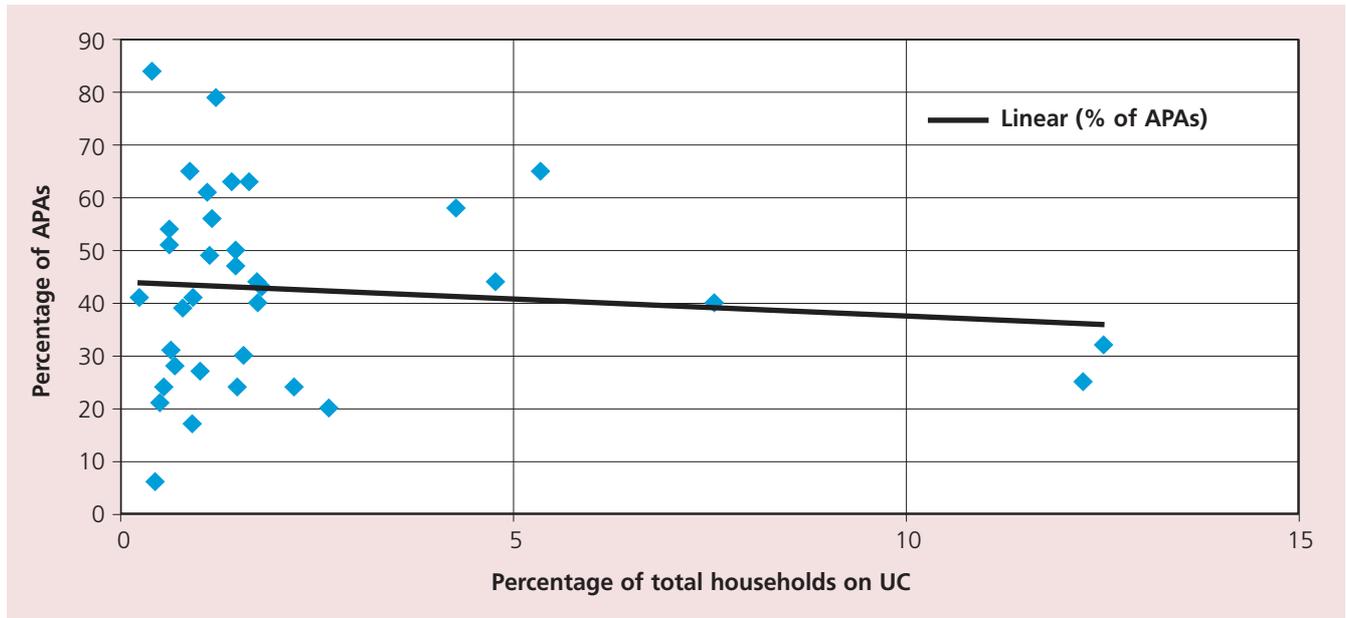
35 respondents were able to tell us what percentage of their UC households in arrears were subject to an alternative payment arrangement (APA). Across these organisations, an average of **41%** were subject to an APA. This compares with 46% in March 2016. However, there is an enormous range of APA usage from 6% to 84%. Considering that an APA should be used in exceptional circumstances (e.g. outside the norm) this strongly suggests that UC is not functioning correctly in many areas.

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There is a slight negative correlation between the percentage of households on UC and the use of APAs, however, the graph below more clearly demonstrates the different approaches to arrears management across respondents with similar low levels of UC take-up:

**Diagram 4: Relationship between APAs and percentage of total households on UC**



The roundtable highlighted a number of issues around APAs which had led some attendees to stop using them altogether. One attendee reported that they found the average arrears for individuals on APAs was nearly 4 times the level of those not on APAs so they were not using them unless absolutely necessary. Issues included:

- It is time consuming and bureaucratic (in part due to a reliance on manual systems), and takes a long time for the APA to be put in place, by which time someone is more in debt.
- Incorrect APA letters are being sent out, there is a long wait to sort problems.
- APAs do not work well with people who have variable incomes.
- APAs mark a return to more dependency based models of support which is contrary to what UC is trying to achieve.
- Court orders do not always support the APA as APA deductions are significantly higher, creating additional hardship for the customer.
- Landlords prefer to make their own arrangements with tenants where possible to allow for more support and control over repayment levels and agreements.

#### 7. Factors contributing to households in receipt of UC falling into rent arrears

Within the survey, we asked respondents to rate how frequently a range of factors contributed to households in receipt of UC falling into rent arrears. All respondents stated that the **6 week waiting period for a tenant's first UC payment** "frequently" or "very frequently" was a factor in contributing to a household falling into arrears, which is a finding that has not improved since our last survey (November 2016).

The six week waiting period is comprised of a week (where the claimant is not entitled to any award after submitting their claim), followed by a four week regular assessment period and a further week (which can be longer in some cases due to administrative delays) before the payment is typically received.

*"The length of time taken to process UC applications has put some tenants in severe financial hardship where they have to rely on friends/family to support them. Once UC is paid, they then find that they have to repay these loans to friends/family therefore meaning they are always short of funds from the outset"*  
*"...Heightened distress and hardship due to the UC centre staff's lack of understanding of social housing legislation & tenancy agreements lead to UC payments being withheld and tenants denied UC. Conflicting information given by UC centre staff: applications for direct deductions and APAs being approved but not processed & left in the UC's workflow for no apparent reason lead to arrears escalating."*

Survey respondents

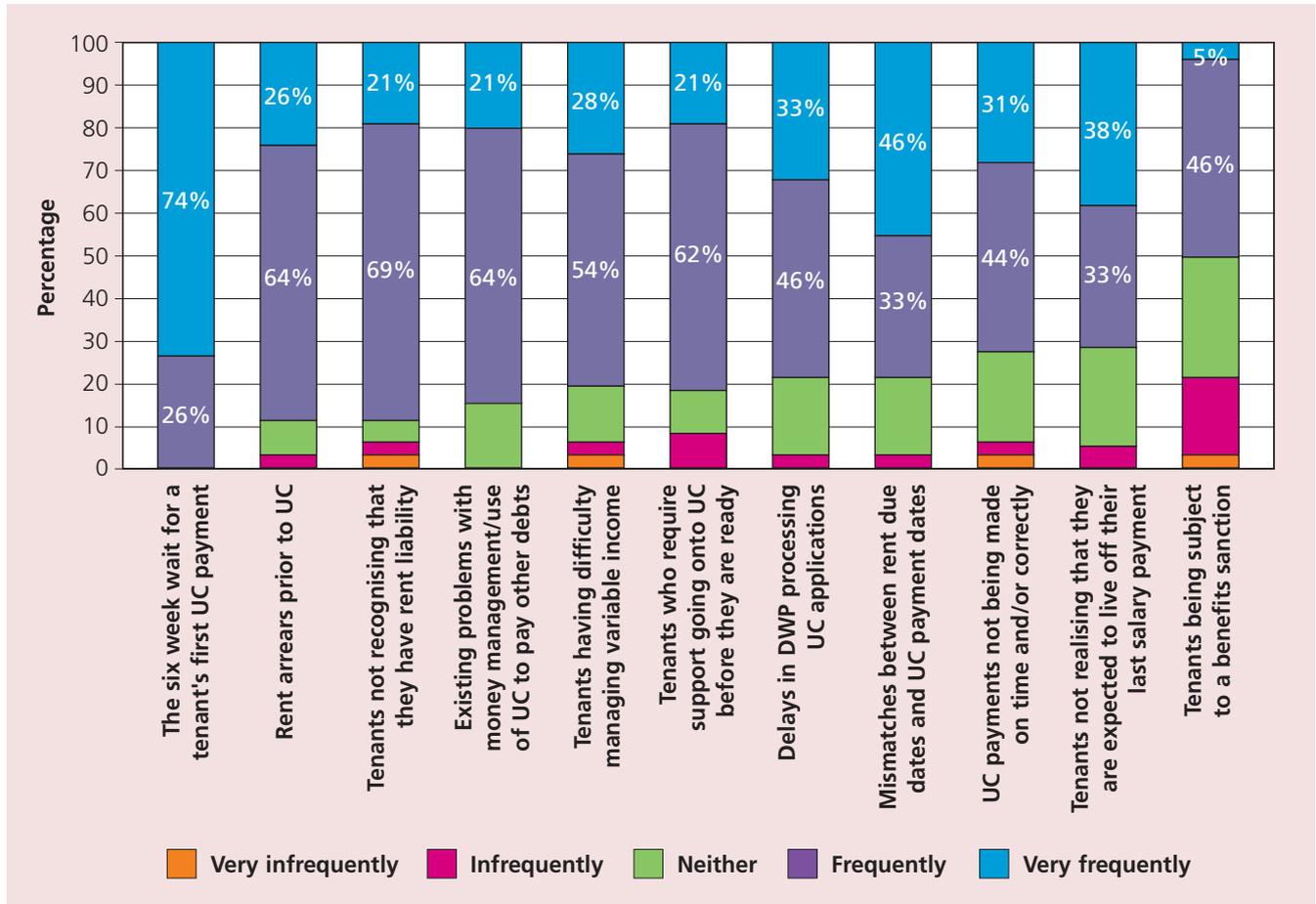
As shown in the graph on the next page the majority of listed factors were rated by respondents as "frequently" or "very frequently" a factor in contributing to higher levels of rent arrears (with the percentage in brackets).

The significant agreement in responses shows that this range of factors are perceived to work together to contribute towards households in receipt of UC falling into rent arrears.

A number of additional concerns were reported in both the survey and the roundtable, including:

- Tenants not being advised to apply for Council Tax support at the same time as UC as they are now uncoupled.
- The need for personal budget support not being identified early enough by DWP Job Work Coaches.
- DWP not notifying either landlord or claimant that UC APA has stopped.
- Individuals not being informed that they are being sanctioned, or sanctions being applied unfairly.
- The Partnership Manager role not working in an optimal way to support organisations, and Partnership Managers being unable to resolve most issues raised by those organisations.
- People having difficulty navigating the online system (especially older people).
- Lack of coordination between services – for example, one attendee reported that tenants are getting stuck in a "catch 22" situation where Job Centre Plus staff will not help them until they have made a UC claim, but they need JCP support to make the UC application.

Diagram 6: The percentage of respondents saying that particular issues are a factor in pushing households in receipt of Universal Credit into arrears.



8. Other consequences of the rollout of Universal Credit

We asked respondents how frequently they had seen other consequences as a rollout of Universal Credit. The majority of respondents (98%) had “frequently” or “very frequently” seen increased use of foodbanks among those on Universal Credit. A similar percentage had seen increased demand for their own money/debt advice/financial inclusion services (97%), while 82% had “frequently” or “very frequently” seen increased demand for external debt or financial advice. A lower, but still notable percentage of respondents reported that they had seen increased demand for hardship funds (64%). See Diagram 7 on page 16.

There were a range of other consequences noted by respondents, including:

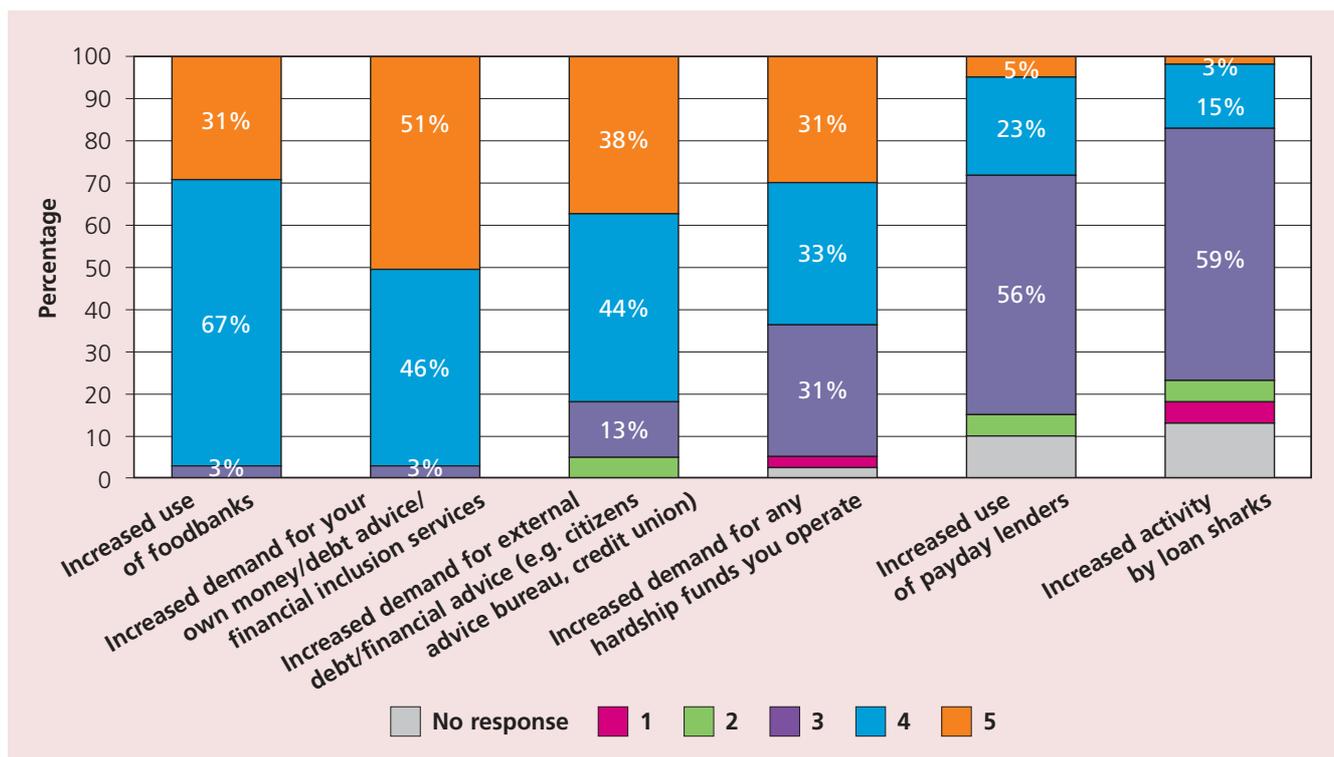
- Lack of information:
  - The difficulty for social landlords to act proactively to support tenants as they have access to far less information than previously under the Housing Benefit system.
  - The difficulty in deciding whether to apply for an APA or not.
- Running out of gas and electric: meaning tenants are unable to charge mobiles or are running out of credit, meaning they miss DWP appointments, cannot access their on-line journals and may get sanctioned.
- Generational impacts: the impact on younger people’s income having a knock on effect on the older generation as they are the ones often supporting younger people.
- Digitalisation having an impact on the older cohort who are on average, less digitally aware.
- Impact on tenants’ health: affecting tenant mental health in a negative way.

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- Abandonment, non engagement and eviction: several respondents reported higher levels of abandonment, non-engagement and eviction as a result of the roll out of UC. For example, one stated that 46% of tenancy terminations of UC claimants were negative (e.g. eviction for rent arrears, abandonment, notice to quit and prison) compared with 17% of those not in receipt of UC housing support. Those tenants on UC terminating their tenancies for this respondent also left with significantly higher debt; £1,042 compared with £527 for tenants not receipt of UC housing support.

**Diagram 7: Other consequences of the rollout of UC**



### 9. How are respondents managing UC arrears?

We asked respondents how many cases they were taking recovery action against due to issues with Universal Credit as at March 2017. We received data from 25 organisations (290,900 households). Of these, approximately one fifth (22%) of UC households in arrears had been given a notice of intention to seek possession (NOSP). Nearly 1 in 10 UC households in arrears were subject to court action and approximately 1% were being pursued for eviction. However, within this data there were huge variations: the range of data for NOSP's was 1-66%, Court Action was 0-28%, and evictions was 0-6%.

#### Case Study – Birmingham City Council

Birmingham City Council (BCC) has established an Eviction Review Panel with senior management officers from the BCC Rent Service, Council Tax Team, Homeless Team, Homeless Prevention Team and Benefit Services to prevent evictions. Weekly meetings are held to discuss and review evictions for the following week to see if they can be prevented, including thorough benefits reviews and use of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to reduce or clear rent debt. The reviews commenced at the end of November 2016. In the period starting from 5 December 2016 to 2 June 2017, 36 evictions were cancelled out of 199 planned evictions leaving a total of 163 evictions that took place in that time period following the eviction review panel. Debt reduction and clearing of arrears has been undertaken through a combination of DHP, Housing Benefit reviews, and the use of the BCC Homeless Prevention Fund. This sustains tenancies and therefore income to the HRA in addition to avoiding costs associated with homeless presentations and subsequent temporary accommodation costs.

#### Case Study – Croydon Council

Croydon Council identified a lack of understanding and knowledge of the new Universal Credit system by courts in their area so Croydon Council's income service presented an overview of UC to Croydon County Court to assist with UC cases which came up in court. This included information about UC, how customers apply and are paid, the relationship to the landlord, and current issues/problems. As a result of this work, the judges have a clearer understanding and working relations have greatly improved.

The roundtable discussion demonstrated that organisations were managing the rollout of UC largely within their current resources through fundamental changes in working practices, but there were concerns that these practices will not all be scalable for larger numbers of UC households.

Roundtable attendees reported that they were undertaking continuous training of income teams as things are constantly changing and stated that there has been a need to completely change the culture within these teams from pure rent collection to a more holistic approach with more in-depth conversations and support available.

A number of attendees had placed their staff into Job Centres to facilitate closer working. One attendee stated that they had devised a pro-forma with the work coaches which was a simple way to facilitate joint working.

Landlords were funding personal budget support services to support people who were moving to UC.

Two landlords had put in place triage systems to enable them to focus resources on those with the highest risk of arrears.

#### Case Study – Homes in Sedgemoor

Homes in Sedgemoor became a full service area in May 2016, and since then has considerably changed its way of working through LEAN processes to ensure that the individual tenants on UC are fully empowered to take responsibility over their financial situations.

This has included:

- Training the Income Team to work in a much more positive and enabling way with tenants in arrears, supporting them to have difficult conversations with tenants and build relationships. As an organisation all staff teams have an awareness of UC and poverty linked to safeguarding issues; working closer with partners such as schools and children's services to understand the impacts UC is having on families.
- Delivering a workshop with tenants in arrears to show them how they can proactively manage their arrears -feedback from this showed that tenants felt the organisation's approach was firm, but fair and was offering them the necessary support.
- Moving to a "rent first" culture so that tenants can move quickly to a more positive position.
- Utilising the journals to ensure tenants are much more aware of their own financial situation and are supported to take control over their finances; training for staff to understand the journal and support claimants has been key to gaining understanding of the UC system.
- Introducing a triage system so that higher risk individuals can be provided with intensive support earlier (however this is likely to get more difficult as greater numbers of vulnerable people are housed in local authority housing).
- Moving away from using APAs, since they are felt to force people back into a culture of dependency and higher levels of debt.

As a result of this, the organisation is being much more proactive and UC arrears debt has reduced considerably. UC can put customers in a position to manage their money. Those who are IT literate can access their journals easily and have instant access to their financial information which provides greater control. →

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Although UC has put customers into a position to take control of their financial affairs, there are some challenges: more support is required to help those who have difficulty getting online to access their journals; the six week wait often increases hardship, since the reality in Sedgemoor is that only a small proportion of people have left a job with a month's wages to tide them over; and the remit of the DWP Partnership Managers does not enable them to support landlords as well as possible. As other housing providers are less willing to take on tenants who are not in work, it is likely that stock-owning local authorities will house the most complex and vulnerable cases, creating clusters of deprivation.

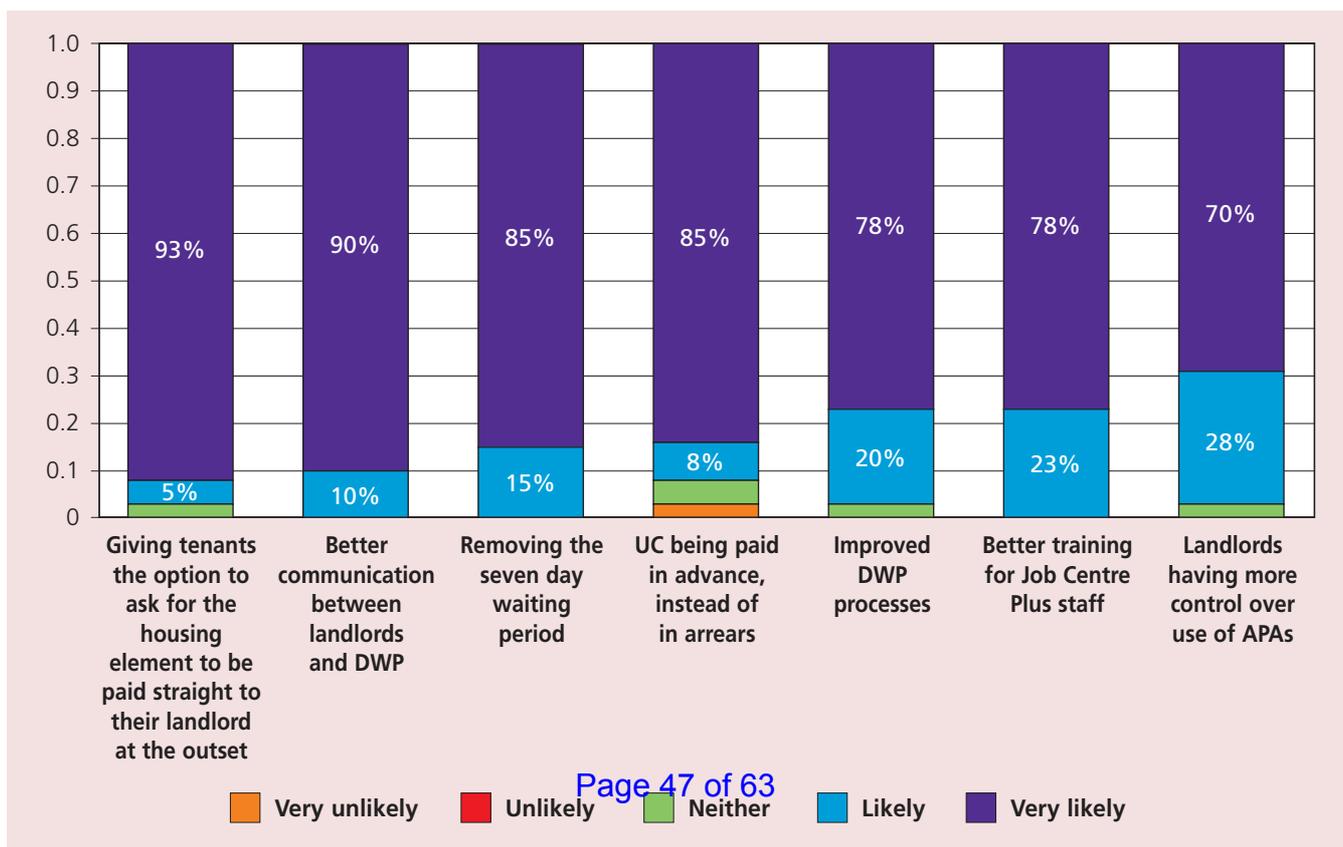
#### 10. Reducing the number of households in receipt of UC who fall into arrears

Respondents were asked to comment on how likely they felt a range of measures would be in helping to reduce the number of households in receipt of UC who fall into arrears. As can be seen in the graph below, the majority of respondents felt that all the measures would be "very likely" or "likely" to reduce arrears.

The majority of respondents stated that giving tenants the option to ask for the housing element to be paid straight to their landlord at the outset would be "very likely" to reduce arrears (93%), while 90% felt that better communication between landlords and the DWP would be "very likely" to reduce arrears.

85% of respondents stated that removing the seven day waiting period, and UC being paid in advance rather than arrears, would be "very likely" to prevent households falling into arrears. 78% stated that improved DWP practices and better training for Job Centre staff would be "very likely" to have an impact. Although only 70% stated "very likely" for giving landlords more control over use of APAs, altogether 98% stated "likely" or "very likely" to this question.

**Diagram 8: How likely would the following factors be in reducing the number of households which fall into arrears**



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Landlords at the roundtable were clear that they fully supported the intention of UC and recognised its opportunities. They identified 5 key areas that should be looked at to ensure the successful rollout of UC:

- End the 7 day waiting period for new claims.
- Slow down the speed of UC rollout until the procedural issues with the existing system have been resolved.
- Create a transitional funding pot for landlords to enable them to effectively manage the rollout of UC and adequately support vulnerable tenants.
- Improve the digital engagement for full service (especially for older tenants).
- Improve the process of UC for claimants and landlords, including integrating the learning from the Live Service.

Feedback from those areas that had transitioned to full service was that some of the learning from live service had been lost, especially landlords' ability to respond to problems quickly and easily. The process of 6 month drop out of the UC system was felt to be counter-productive, as individuals dropped in and out of the system as they dropped in and out of eligibility. It was also felt that the housing escalation team should be maintained in the full service as well as the live service. There were some concerns around how journals are working in practice, and requests for a Landlord Portal to be put in place as soon as possible.

Attendees felt that they had changed their ways of working as far as they could to accommodate the rollout of UC, but that the rollout was resource intensive and the changes which had been put in place were not scalable. Therefore there were considerable concerns about how landlords would manage the full transition to UC without further support.

### 3. The under-occupancy penalty

*“Four households have recently registered with the downsizing scheme who have had their children taken into care... Whilst their children are in care (pending decision on returning them to the family home) the household is subject to the under-occupation charge. This is putting the households at risk of financial hardship as well as going through the emotion of having their children removed. Often this is impacting on other services (such as the Community Mental Health Team and Adult Services), and these cases can be particularly time consuming.”*

Survey respondent

The under-occupancy penalty is still affecting households. The evidence below shows that people are not always moving, and are largely absorbing the costs of the penalty either themselves or through Discretionary Housing Payments.

Based on data from 517,222 households, the average percentage of households affected by the under-occupancy penalty was 9%. This is only slightly lower than the figure reported in 2014/2015 of 10%. However there was a considerable variation among the respondents in March 2017, with a range of 3% to 15% affected. This is most likely to do with the type of housing stock within an area.

Of those who could provide data, 40% of households affected by the under-occupancy penalty were in arrears. This compares with 51% at the end of the 2014/2015 financial year. On average, they owed £380.57. The differences between the regions are shown below:

REGION	Percentage of households affected by under-occupancy penalty	Percentage of households affected by under-occupancy penalty in arrears	Average level of arrears
North	11.5%	40%	£222.46
Midlands (comprised of East and West Midlands)	9.5%	41%	£468.75
South (ex. London)	6.3%	33%	£225.17
London	5%	35%	£640.79
<b>OVERALL AVERAGE</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>£380.57</b>

Since 2014/15, there has been a considerable decrease in the percentage of tenants affected by the under-occupancy penalty and in arrears from an overall 51% down to 39%. This seems largely to have been driven by a decrease in London, although there is still a large variation in the level of arrears within London (range: 22%-58%):

REGION	Percentage of households affected by under-occupancy penalty in arrears (Mar 2015)	Percentage of households affected by under-occupancy penalty in arrears (Mar 2017)
North	50%	40%
Midlands (comprised of East and West Midlands)	50%	41%
South (ex. London)	43%	33%
London	60%	35%
<b>OVERALL AVERAGE</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>40%</b>

## PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

### Measuring the impact of Welfare Reform on tenants and landlords – 2017 Survey Results

Although not all respondents could provide information, approximately 10.6% of those affected by the under-occupancy penalty were subject to a NOSP; 6% were subject to court action, and 0.5% were in the process of eviction. However, the majority were not being pursued.

Analysis of the DHP budget shows that 60% of the DHP spending is attributable to the impact of the under-occupancy penalty.

When asked what actions households affected by the under-occupancy penalty have undertaken, a significant percentage reported that people have chosen to pay and stay. The second most frequent response was that people were registered on the transfer list, while the third was that people had moved to alternative social housing.

29 organisations stated that they had had some success in helping people to move, which is reflected in the figures above. They had employed a range of methods to help people. However, a number of respondents highlighted that these schemes may have been more successful at the beginning and many people now just do not want to move. Respondent actions include:

#### **New schemes:**

- Schemes with dedicated officers facilitating downsizing.
- Non-eviction policy for those who commit to downsizing.
- Transfer incentive schemes, with support, cash payment incentive and increased transfer banding priorities.
- Encouragement of mutual exchanges.
- Tenants who want more support receiving a better banding or priority for downsizing.
- Money and debt advice.
- Profiling of tenants and targeting of resources to those who are affected.
- Setting up welfare reform support fund:  
*“The Welfare Reform Support Fund helps to support those who have been affected by the Social Sector Size Criteria (SSSC) who already had a tenancy pre-dating the implementation in 2013 or had an unforeseen change of circumstances. The Fund pays the 14% or 25% deduction whilst the tenant is actively seeking smaller accommodation. The Fund will also pay for removals, skips, reconnection costs etc.” – Survey respondent*

#### **Change to current policy and practices:**

- Relaxation of exclusion policy, allowing tenants in rent arrears to downsize, with payment of former tenant arrears a condition of the new tenancy.
- Use of new rules regarding tenants requiring separate bedrooms for health reasons.
- Use of DHP, e.g. those with arrears supported to apply for DHP, with special initiatives to pay off a maximum level of rent arrears to enable a move to take place; additional DHP for those willing to downsize, paid retrospectively.
- Introduction of a shared tenancy policy for single applicants affected by the under-occupancy penalty.

#### **Partnership Working:**

- Working with the local council with weekly meetings to discuss direct lets and suitable alternative accommodation; working with local and regional providers to make best use of available stock.

#### **Respondents had seen other impacts from the introduction of the under-occupancy penalty, which include:**

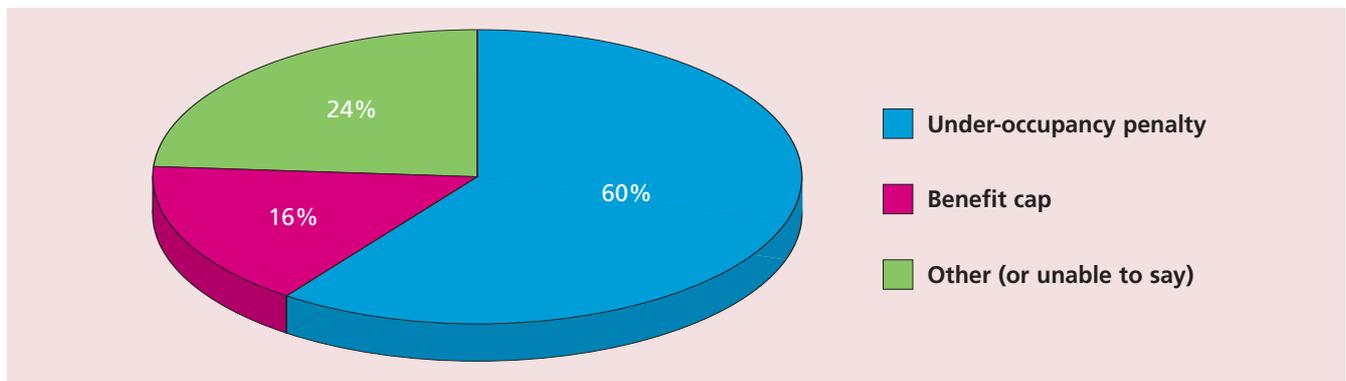
- More vulnerable people who do not have a choice financially having to move, increases in rent arrears and general hardship.
- DHP being a positive contributory factor in managing payments. Consequently tenants have become reliant upon this and have not been proactive in seeking other solutions.
- Higher demand for smaller homes, and 3 bedroom properties “difficult to let”.
- Tenants taking in lodgers to manage.
- Increase in cases being referred to the food bank due to financial challenges.

## 4. Discretionary Housing Payments

*“It is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain that DHP budgets are sufficient since continuous changes to the welfare system puts increased burdens on benefit-dependent households without similar increases in the DHP budgets. For 2017/18 there will be a doubling of our Benefit Cap caseload, the highest area of DHP spend, but the level of DHP fund has remained broadly the same as in the previous year. With the introduction of further reforms which cap the level of benefit received for dependant children etc. the DHP fund will start to become increasing stretched and potentially insufficient to meet the needs of vulnerable households.”*

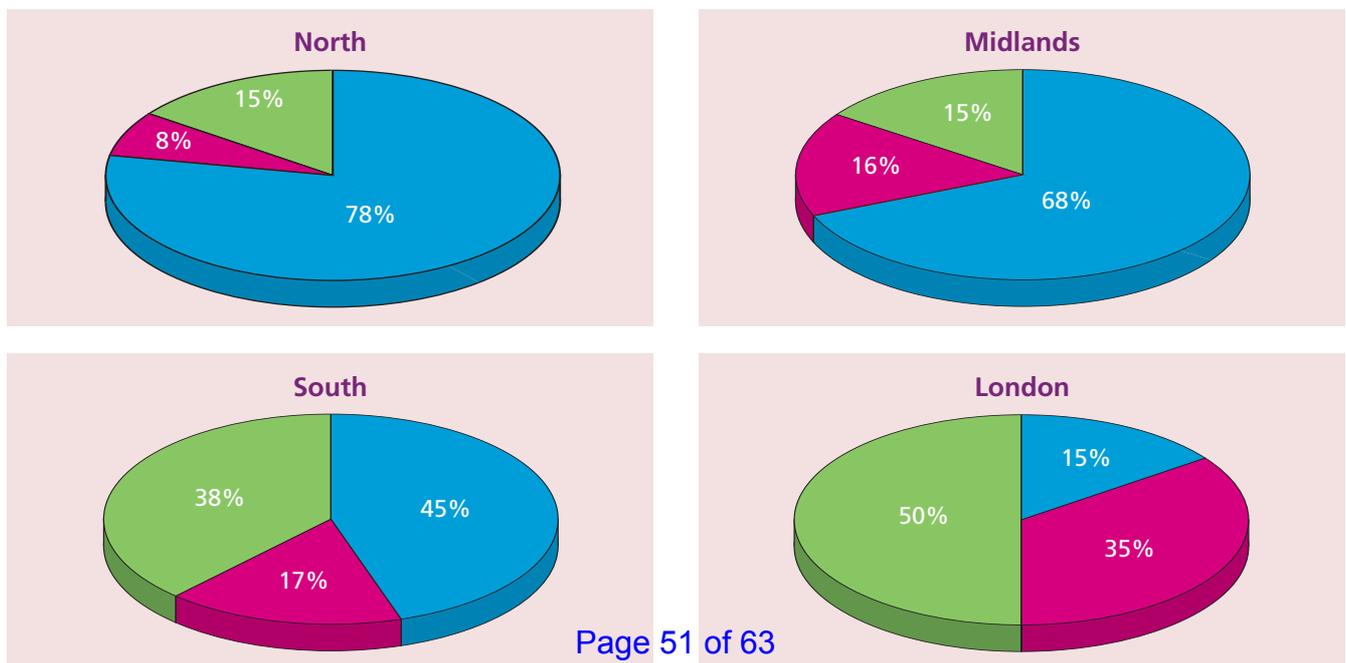
Survey respondent

6% of working age people on benefits were in receipt of discretionary housing payments (DHP) as at the 31st March 2017. The breakdown of which welfare reforms have led to these households claiming the DHP is below:



Based on data from 15105 households across 19 Councils and ALMOs

As can be seen in the charts below there are significant regional variations, with the under-occupancy penalty having the greatest impact on the DHP in the North, and other factors (e.g. temporary accommodation) and the benefit cap having the greatest impact on the DHP in London:



## PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

### Measuring the impact of Welfare Reform on tenants and landlords – 2017 Survey Results

Approximately a third of respondents felt that the DHP pot in their area had been sufficient in the period up to March 2017 to help those tenants experiencing genuine difficulties (35%), a third stated it was not sufficient (35%) and a third did not know or did not give a response (30%).

However, the situation is more complicated than this for those who answered yes:

- The majority stated that where the DHP had been sufficient this year, they were waiting for the full impact of UC and other welfare reforms to be felt (especially the lowering of the benefit cap), and demand was already increasing. For example, one respondent stated that to meet the potential support requirement for just the benefit cap cases would utilise 54% of the budget.
- 2 respondents had supplemented the DHP from the General Fund, which was the only reason it had been sufficient.
- Several respondents stated that applications had been refused and it was difficult to get applications through meaning the pot was not used as much as it could have been.
- 2 London based respondents stated that the pot was largely being used for temporary accommodation. One of these stated that the DHP pot would only cover those in temporary accommodation so all tenants affected by the benefit cap or under-occupancy penalty will not be able to benefit from it.
- The proposed introduction of the LHA cap will add demands to the pot.

*“With the cap and bedroom tax pressures there is little money to cope with the vast numbers of UC claimants we expect to quickly fall into arrears when full service hits. It will be a tool we can use for exceptional cases but won’t make a dent in the overall arrears. Any DHP money we do spend will be prioritised for private landlords and TA, as the risk of evictions is much higher...”* Survey respondent

11 ALMOs and Local Authorities operated an Additional Hardship Fund (27% of respondents); of these, 7 were fully or partly funded through the HRA, 3 through ALMOs’ own funds, and 4 through the Local Authority General Fund.

## 5. The benefit cap

*“...To meet the potential support requirements for just benefit cap cases would utilise 54% of the discretionary housing payment budget...”* Survey respondent

As of the 31st March 2017, **66%** of working age households received Housing Benefits or UC (based on a base of 332,538 households); of those who could provide data, **1.5%** of households were subject to the benefit cap. We asked respondents for the percentage of households who had their benefits capped at various points:

DATE	31st October 2016	30th November 2016	31st March 2017
HOUSEHOLDS	851	1056	3000

(Based on 197,353 households on working age benefits)

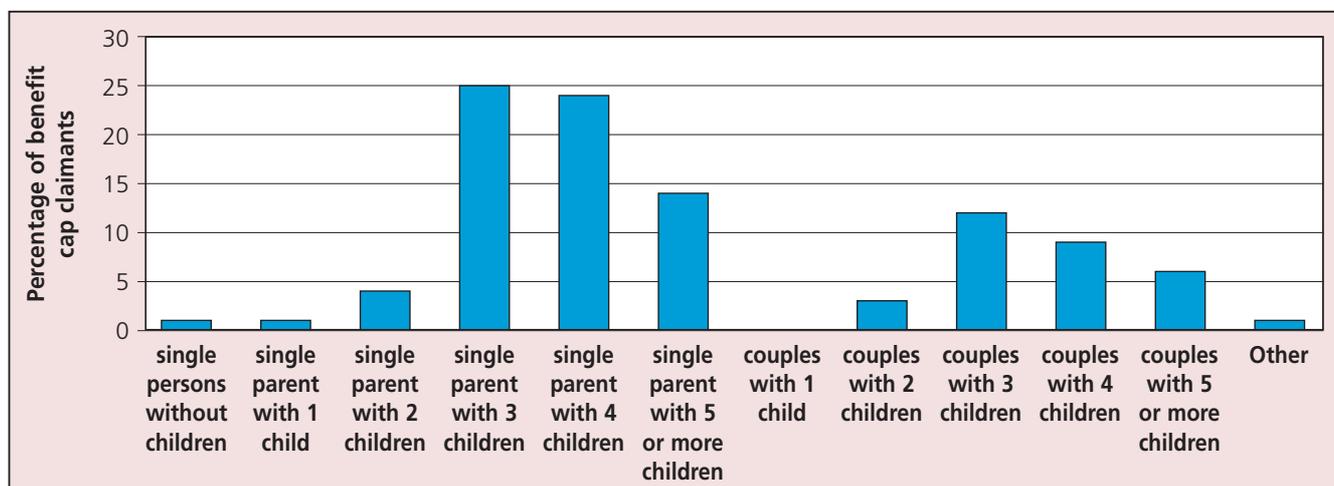
There is some regional variation, as can be seen in the table below. Respondents from metropolitan areas – namely London and Birmingham – had experienced a higher level of households subject to the benefit cap.

	% on HB or UC	% subject to cap
North	63%	0.89%
Midlands	70%	2.15%
South	57%	0.90%
London	69%	1.08%

14 organisations were able to provide data as to which households the benefit cap was affecting most (out of 2,489 households) in March 2017.<sup>10</sup> As is clear from the graph the benefit cap is affecting single parents with 3, 4 or 5 children the most significantly, and couples with 3, 4 or 5 children to a lesser extent.

A quarter of cases (25%) concerned a single parent with 3 children, nearly a quarter of cases (24%) concerned a single parent with 4 children, 13% of cases concerned couples with 3 children; and 9% concerned couples with 4 children.

**Diagram 9: Impact of benefit cap by claimant type**



<sup>10</sup> One respondent had approximately half of the benefit cap cases due to its size. If you remove this from the analysis, the averages are 27.9% of all cases concern a single parent with 3 children, 26.7% concern a single parent with 4 children; 11.3% concern couples with 3 children; and 8% concern couples with 4 children.

7 organisations provided data around the benefits which capped households were eligible for; unsurprisingly considering the picture above, 6 out of 7 organisations stated that the majority of capped households were eligible for child tax credits, and a lower but significant percentage were eligible for income support.

The majority of households had their benefits capped by either £50 or less a week (53%) or between £50 and £100 (37%) based on data from 22 respondents.

#### Impacts from the lower benefit cap

Respondents reported that they had seen a range of other impacts from the lower benefit cap, including:

- Increased arrears more likely for those affected.
- People not choosing or able to engage until they hit legal action, which is resource intensive.
- Tenants in temporary accommodation affected.
- A small number of those affected returned to work, increased their income and managed their spending better.
- Increased reliance on food banks or food parcels/ increased social services involvement/ some evidence of tenants starting to use loan sharks.
- Tenants struggling to make ends meet.
- Reluctance from landlords to accept families made homeless that are capped.
- Concerns that savings on the benefit bill will be wiped out at a local level with the costs of temporary and re-housing, social care and health.

Only 11 out of 42 respondents (26%) had increased staff or financial resources to provide guidance or support to tenants. This includes:

- Short term funded posts for housing support and additional welfare benefit advisor or project leader posts.
- Increase in money advice provision and rent case work.
- Resourcing an in-house money advice team.
- Intensive visiting project sourced from income management budgets.
- Redirecting existing resources for administration, gathering intelligence, undertaking impact analysis and designing intervention; training and directing front line operational and visiting staff.
- Secondment of fulltime family education workers to work on benefit cases across tenure.

The majority of respondents stated that they strongly agreed or agreed that the benefit cap should be based on regional rather than national incomes, and regional rents. Reasons were based on:

- Average incomes vary so much meaning one size cannot fit all.
- Disparity between income levels and cost of living, including in London.
- Fairness.
- A cap that does not reflect local differences pushes people with low earning potential out of regions where incomes, rents and general cost of living is higher.

A few respondents felt that it should not be linked to regional incomes and rents. This is due to the unique circumstances of the area; so for example, in one area, the relatively low average income per household and low rental charges would bring more people into the benefit cap if it was based on regional rents and incomes.

#### Case Study

This case study demonstrates the complexity of welfare reform and how the different welfare reform policies have impacted on each other to the detriment of vulnerable individuals:

A single mother with 5 children aged between 4 and 15 years old moved to this Northern area from the south of England in 2016 to secure cheaper accommodation as a result of the benefit cap. She is not working and rents from a private landlord, who served her with a Section 21 notice 5 months after she moved in November 2016. She had become subject to the lower benefit cap and her HB reduced from £73.59 to 50p a week. There were a number of barriers preventing her and her family from having a stable life:

- Unreliable child maintenance payments from her ex-partner.
- Child behavioural issues.
- Unaffordable and unsuitable housing – although her private rented landlord had served her with a notice due to arrears, the landlord did not have any other issues with her tenancy. The landlord would not lower the rent even though the property was cold, damp and there were no heaters; and the tenant was paying most of her income on heating.

The tenant has a number of options which have proved difficult:

- She has already adjusted her budgeting and debt repayments following support from the debt advisory services, but she is worried about the amount spent on gas and electricity as she is in a large, poorly heated house.
- She has made an application for social housing but delays in the registration process mean it has taken several months for her to be able to apply for housing.
- She cannot get a job until her youngest child has a nursery place and the behavioural issues of the eldest child are sorted.
- The introduction of UC full service and the “2 child policy” will further affect her income, and moving house will not be enough to improve her financial situation in the long-term. When moving to UC she will only be eligible to receive the child element for two of her three children.

Welfare reform changes combined with the tenant’s personal circumstances mean that supporting her to have financial stability will take significantly longer.

### The NFA team

Further details can be found at [www.almos.org.uk/nfa\\_team](http://www.almos.org.uk/nfa_team)



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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 9</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2017</b>	<b>CATEGORY: DELEGATED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND PLANNING SERVICES / DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>STUART BATCHELOR (EXT. 5820) / GED LUCAS (EXT.5775)</b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME</b>	<b>REF:</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: G</b>

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### **1.0 Recommendations**

1.1 That the Committee considers and approves the updated work programme.

### **2.0 Purpose of Report**

2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the updated work programme.

### **3.0 Detail**

3.1 Attached at Annexe 'A' is an updated work programme document. The Committee is asked to consider and review the content of this document.

### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 None arising directly from this report.

### **5.0 Background Papers**

5.1 Work Programme.

## Housing and Community Services Committee – 24<sup>th</sup> August 2017 Work Programme

Work Programme Area	Date of Committee meetings	Contact Officer (Contact details)
<b>Reports Previously Considered By Last 3 Committees</b>		
Housemark Core Benchmarking Report 2015/16	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2017	Martin Guest Performance & Policy Manager (01283) 595940
Housing Revenue Account Budget, Financial Plan and Rent Increase 2017/18	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2017	Kevin Stackhouse Director of Finance and Corporate Services (01283 595811)
Derbyshire Safe Place and Breastfeeding Welcome Here Award Sign Up	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2017	Vicky Smyth Health Partnership Manager (01283) 595776
Rosliston Forestry Centre – Vision Statement 2016-26	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2017	Louise Glover Rosliston Project Officer (01283) 595887
Gresley Old Hall Community Hub	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2017	Stuart Batchelor Director of Community and Planning (01283) 595820
Corporate Plan Performance Report	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	Keith Bull Communications Manager (01283) 228705

Active Nation Annual Report	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	Malcolm Roseburgh Cultural Services Manager (01283) 595774
Housing White Paper Consultation	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	Martin Guest Performance and Policy Manager (01283) 595940
Rosliston Astronomy Group – Observatory	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	Louise Glover Project Officer – Rosliston Forestry Centre (01283) 595887
Rosliston Forestry Centre – Management Options Appraisal	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	Louise Glover Project Officer – Rosliston Forestry Centre (01283) 595887
Corporate Anti-Social Behaviour Policy	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	Chris Smith Communities Manager (01283) 595924
Safer South Derbyshire Partnership – Community Safety Partnership Plan 2017-20	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	Chris Smith Communities Manager (01283) 595924
Housing Safety Policy 2017	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	Gary Clarkson Housing Improvement Manager (01283) 595889
Delivering a First Class Repairs Service	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	David Hucker Director of Housing and Environmental Services (01283) 595775

Corporate Plan 2016-21: Performance Report (1 Jan-31 Mar 2017)	14 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	Keith Bull Communications Manager (01283) 228705
Service Plan	14 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	Keith Bull Communications Manager (01283) 228705
Physical Activity, Sport and Recreation Strategy Adoption	14 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	Hannah Peate Sport and Health Partnership Manager (01283) 595973
<b>Provisional Programme of Reports To Be Considered by Committee</b>		
Corporate Plan 2016-21: Performance Report (1 April – 30 June 2017)	24 <sup>th</sup> August 2017	Keith Bull Head of Communications (01283) 228705
Housing Policy Post Election	24 <sup>th</sup> August 2017	Martin Guest Performance and Policy Manager (01283) 595940
Review of Disabled Facilities Grant Policy	5 <sup>th</sup> October 2017	Martin Guest Performance and Policy Manager (01283) 595940
Swadlincote Woodlands Management Plan	5 <sup>th</sup> October 2017	Zoe Sewter Open Space and Facility Development Manager (01283) 5955753
Review of Leaseholder Policy	5 <sup>th</sup> October 2017	Martin Guest Performance and Policy Manager (01283) 595940

Corporate Plan 2016-21: Performance Report (1 July – 30 September 2017)	23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2017	Keith Bull Head of Communications (01283 228705)
Review of Housing Complaints Procedure	23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2017	Martin Guest Performance and Policy Manager (01283) 595940
Rosliston Forestry Centre – Management Contract	23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2017	Louise Glover Project Officer – Rosliston Forestry Centre (01283) 595887
Open Space, Sports and Community Facility Strategy Update	23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2017	Zoe Sewter Open Space and Facility Development Manager (01283) 5955753
Supported Housing Review (Update)	23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2017	Chris Holloway Housing Operations Manager (01283) 595957
Acquisitions Plan	23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2017	Eileen Jackson Housing Strategy Manager
Homeless Strategy (2018-2023)	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2018	Chris Holloway Housing Operations Manager (01283) 595957
Allocations Policy and Choice-Based Lettings	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2018	Chris Holloway Housing Operations Manager (01283) 595957

Corporate Plan 2016-21: Performance Report (1 October – 31 December 2017)	8 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	Keith Bull Head of Communications (01283 228705)
Tenancy Policy	8 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	Martin Guest Performance and Policy Manager (01283) 595940
Homelessness Service Review – update	8 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	Chris Holloway Housing Operations Manager (01283) 595957
South Derbyshire Playing Pitch Strategy	26 <sup>th</sup> April 2018	Zoe Sewter Open Space and Facility Development Manager (01283) 5955753
Safer South Derbyshire Partnership – Community Safety Partnership Plan 2018-21	26 <sup>th</sup> April 2018	Chris Smith Communities Manager (01283) 595924
Corporate Plan 2016-21: Performance Report (1 January – 31 March 2018)	2018/19	Keith Bull Head of Communications (01283 228705)