

**TITLE OF REPORT:** Review of Housing Functions in Gateshead

**REPORT OF:** Colin Huntington, Strategic Director Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities

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### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To advise Cabinet of the outcomes from wide ranging engagement of key housing stakeholders in Gateshead throughout the summer, including the formal consultation of tenants and leaseholders on the future management and maintenance of the Council's housing stock; to ask Cabinet to approve the re-integration of housing management and maintenance services back into the Council; to consider and approve a new vision and operating model for the delivery of its housing, maintenance and neighbourhood management services moving forward; and to consider and approve a proposed timetable, key next steps and plan for implementation of the new housing delivery model.

### **Background**

2. At its meeting of the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020, following conclusion of an independent review of the options for the future management and maintenance of its housing stock, Cabinet approved the formal consultation of its tenants and leaseholders on the recommended option of re-integrating the services currently provided on behalf of the Council by The Gateshead Housing Company (TGHC), back into the Council.
3. Cabinet also approved the development of a new vision for housing in Gateshead, together with a wider engagement of key stakeholders, including employees and trade unions, to inform the development of this new vision. In addition, Cabinet confirmed the need for a fundamental review of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan, and a need to ensure its longer-term viability.
4. Consultation with tenants and leaseholders has now concluded with feedback obtained from 3 principal sources: a) a telephone survey undertaken by an independent customer research company, and involving 1502 tenants and leaseholders, b) a 'mail in' survey of all tenants and leaseholders, which received 987 responses from tenants and residents, c) 'virtual' consultation sessions with 44 of the most involved tenants and leaseholders.
5. The results of the consultation with tenants and leaseholders confirms an overwhelming 95% support for the recommended option of re-integrating the management and maintenance of its homes back into the Council.
6. The results of the wider engagement of key stakeholders also confirms support for:
  - ✓ A 'joined -up' housing service, that is 'tenure blind' in its scope and delivery and has a strong 'identity' within the Council;
  - ✓ A housing service with an effective strategic and enabling focus;

- ✓ A housing service with a 'place' as well as a 'people' and 'property' focus;
- ✓ The 'housing review' being an opportunity for securing wider change across the Council.

7. The insight and feedback provided by customers and stakeholders has informed the development of a proposed new vision for housing in Gateshead, a proposed new model for the delivery of the vision, as well as potential new priorities for all housing functions in Gateshead.

## **Proposal**

8. It is proposed to re-integrate the management and maintenance of Council homes back into the Council. These services would be provided by a new 'housing services' section of the Council, based within the current Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities Directorate. In effect the re-integration of these services will also see the formal dissolution of TGHC as a trading and legal entity, and a transfer of its assets to the Council.

9. This new 'housing services' section would also see the inclusion of a number of additional housing functions either provided currently by TGHC and / or other Council Directorates, and including:

- Homelessness, rough sleeping, refugees and asylum;
- Gypsy and traveller liaison and provision;
- Housing adaptations;
- Housing strategy;
- HRA business planning;
- Partnership working and enabling;
- Private sector housing including licensing and enforcement;
- Housing association development and services engagement;
- Tenancy strategy;
- Affordable housing strategy, development and housing led regeneration
- Empty homes;
- Local community planning (spatial and management);
- Anti-social behaviour;
- Locality working and neighbourhood management.

10. It is also proposed that new housing governance arrangements are developed and implemented from April 2021. These arrangements will need to ensure tenants and leaseholders are able to be involved and can inform future decision-making. This has been a key 'ask' of customers arising from the consultation.

11. If approved by Cabinet, it is anticipated that a new Council run housing service, that includes the direct delivery of management and maintenance services for all its housing stock, will be launched in April 2021.

## **Recommendations**

12. Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) note the outcomes from the formal consultation of tenants and leaseholders on the future management and maintenance of Council homes;

- (ii) note the outcomes from the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders on a new vision for housing in Gateshead;
- (iii) acknowledge several challenges (as well as opportunities) facing 'housing' over the next 3 years, including the need to have a viable 30-year HRA business plan;
- (iv) note the potential for the review of housing functions, and the implementation of a new operating model to ensure delivery of a new vision for housing in Gateshead, to act as a catalyst for wider change across the Council;
- (v) approve the re-integration of the management and maintenance of its housing stock, back into the Council;
- (vi) approve a new vision for housing in Gateshead and the development and implementation of a new operating model for its housing, maintenance and neighbourhood management functions that will enable delivery of the vision; and
- (vii) approve the proposed implementation timetable for the new delivery model together with the suggested milestones for the development and implementation of new housing governance and customer involvement arrangements.

For the following reasons:

- a) To ensure the Council's housing stock is managed and maintained in the interests of the Council, and its tenants and leaseholders, as effectively and efficiently as possible.
- b) To deliver a new vision for all the Council's housing functions and to meet the aspirations and ambitions of a range of stakeholders and partners.
- c) To support the delivery of the Council's overarching ambition of Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives.

## Policy Context

1. The proposals support and have been shaped by the Council's overall vision for Gateshead as set out in Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives including the five pledges:
  - ✓ Put people and families at the heart of everything we do;
  - ✓ Support our communities to support themselves and each other;
  - ✓ Invest in our economy to provide opportunities for employment, innovation and growth
  - ✓ Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance;
  - ✓ Work together and fight for a better future for Gateshead
2. The proposals also support the achievement of the Council's Housing Strategy and Health & Wellbeing Strategy. Key strategic outcomes that have shaped these proposals include:
  - ✓ Give every child the best start in life;
  - ✓ Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives;
  - ✓ Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities;
  - ✓ Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention;
  - ✓ Delivering the homes we need;
  - ✓ Ensuring our homes sustain health and wellbeing.
3. A New Vision for housing services in Gateshead has been developed in response to this policy context, the insight obtained from customers and wider stakeholders during the consultation period, and the need to address several significant challenges for the Council, not least a current underfunded HRA business plan.
4. There are 3 pillars to the proposed New Vision:
  - a) People: the importance of housing in ensuring all children, young people and adults live in a good quality, safe and secure home (any tenure), have employment opportunity, good health and prosperity – they thrive;
  - b) Place: the importance of housing in ensuring people live in a place they can be proud of, that has a good quality environment around the home, and where communities are resilient and self-sufficient;
  - c) Change: the importance of housing as a driver for positive change within the Council, establishing new ways of working, new opportunities to access services, and a culture of effective engagement and co-production of services with customers and stakeholders.
5. Critical also is a recognition of the need to deliver efficient as well as effective services; there is a need to ensure a long-term viable and sustainable HRA business plan.

## Background

6. In July 2019 Cabinet approved an independent review of the delivery model for the management and maintenance of its housing stock, and a detailed assessment of all the available options. Reasons for the review included the issue of a Regulatory Notice by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in April 2019 confirming a breach of the Home Standard. In November 2019, the Council entered into a voluntary undertaking with the regulator confirming a commitment to resolve the reasons for the breach and to ensure achievement of better and sustainable outcomes for tenants and leaseholders by acting on the findings of the independent review.
7. Pennington Choices were commissioned in November 2019 to undertake the options review. The options to be considered were:
  - Retain the current arm's length management organisation (ALMO) model of delivery, with TGHC continuing to provide management and maintenance services for all Council homes;
  - Re-integrate management and maintenance back into the Council;
  - Enter into a partnership arrangement with another external organisation;
  - Transfer the housing stock to an external organisation.

The options were subsequently appraised both financially and non-financially with equal weighting given to each element. Following completion of the appraisal, Pennington Choices confirmed the re-integration of management and maintenance services back into the Council as the recommended option.

8. In March 2020, Cabinet approved the formal consultation of tenants and leaseholders on the recommended option prior to making a final decision. Further, Cabinet also confirmed a wish to develop a new vision for housing in Gateshead. In developing this new vision, a wider engagement of key stakeholders, including employees and trade unions, would be undertaken to capture relevant insight and feedback.

## Consultation and Engagement

9. The formal engagement of tenants and leaseholders commenced in August 2020, concluded in October 2020 and took the form of 2 separate consultation exercises:
  - a) A telephone survey of 1,502 tenants undertaken by an independent housing research company, Acuity Research and Practice and ensuring a balanced profile of tenants and leaseholders in terms of age and location etc.
  - b) A 'mail in' survey option for all 19,085 tenants and leaseholders which resulted in 990 completed returns.

In addition, 44 of the most engaged and involved customers (TGHC Board, scrutiny and service panel members) were consulted via virtual sessions.

Tenants and leaseholders were asked whether or not they agreed with the recommended option of the re-integration of the management and maintenance of their home back into the Council. Access to an independent tenant advisor, the Tenant Participation and Advisory Service (TPAS), was made available during the consultation period. Information was made available via direct mailing, the web and social media.

10. Of the 2,492 responses obtained through both consultation exercises, 203 responses were duplicated. Removing these responses confirms an overall response rate of 12%. Excluding any don't knows the results were as follows:

- 2,042 (or 95%) agreed with the recommended option of re-integrating the management and maintenance of their home back into the Council;
- 99 (or 5%) did not agree with the recommended option.

11. In addition to a response to the recommended option, customers were asked several supplementary questions to help inform the wider housing review. This feedback can be summarised as follows:

- Top 3 priorities:
  - 1962 customers confirmed repairs and maintenance to be the most important priority with a clear expressed need to improve the current service (right first time, length of time to complete repairs, quality and communication);
  - 327 customers confirmed 'street scene' issues to be the next most important priority with a clear expressed need to improve grounds maintenance, street cleaning, litter / fly tipping and graffiti;
  - 323 customers confirmed the need to tackle anti-social behaviour as the 3<sup>rd</sup> most important priority.

12. These top three priorities identified by customers during the consultation mirrors feedback from previous customer satisfaction surveys. In 2019 the biennial survey sent to all tenants and leaseholders identified, repairs and maintenance, estate issues and tackling anti-social behaviour as customers top three priorities. In 2018 The Leadership Factor carried out an in-depth customer satisfaction project on behalf of TGHC, interviewing 1400 tenants and leaseholders. It also identified the same top three priorities and in addition, listening to views and acting upon them. Again, repairs and maintenance featured as the main priority and the most important service to improve. Repairs and maintenance was identified as having the most dissatisfaction and the biggest impact on overall satisfaction with TGHC. It outlined what the "perfect" repairs experience should include; ease of making contact, offering a convenient appointment time, reporting the repair only once and completing the repair at the first visit. Those customers who reported receiving a "perfect" repairs experience were 91% satisfied overall with TGHC.

13. The engagement of wider stakeholders in the review of housing functions and development of a new vision for housing in Gateshead also concluded in October 2020. This engagement secured contributions from the following:

- Elected representatives including Gateshead MP's;
- Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Board;
- TGHC Board;
- Keelman Homes Board;
- Housing Associations active in Gateshead;
- Independent housing service providers active in Gateshead;
- Private landlords;
- Trade Unions.

Employees across the Council and TGHC also had an opportunity to feed into the housing review, and many did so through 1 to 1 and group discussion, staff briefings or through their trade union representatives.

14. A number of consistent themes emerged from this wider engagement including:

- A welcome of the opportunity to contribute to a review of the 'whole' housing offer in Gateshead;
- That all housing functions, not just those relating to the management and maintenance of Council homes, need to be 'joined-up' within the Council;
- Any new housing service needs a strong 'identity' and not be 'subsumed' within other functions;
- Housing should have an effective strategic and enabling role, not just operational;
- Partnership working and engagement can and should improve;
- Housing services should have a focus on place as well as people, and be 'tenure blind' in service planning and delivery wherever possible;
- That the housing review has the potential to lead or support wider change within the Council including embedding new ways of working and culture change, providing opportunities for improved customer access to services, connecting services to improve their overall effectiveness and impact particularly in relation to the Council's Thrive ambitions, and in securing greater efficiencies.

## **Challenges for Housing**

15. In addition to the insight and feedback provided through consultation and engagement, the proposed new vision and operating model for the future delivery of housing services has been shaped by the need to address a number of challenges facing housing in Gateshead including:

### **a) Regulatory Intervention and Post Grenfell Requirements**

The regulator has been kept informed of progress with the housing review including the formal consultation of tenants and leaseholders. A key part of the voluntary undertaking is the need to provide assurance to the regulator that the review will ensure safe and compliant homes for tenants underpinned by fit for purpose systems, effective processes, timely access to relevant data and information, clear management roles and responsibilities.

The Government response to the Hackett Review of building regulations and fire safety, published April 2020, confirms the likely implementation of a range of new measures including a new building safety regulator, clear duty holders and accountable persons within the Council and a 'golden thread' of information for tenants.

### **b) Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Deficit, Asset Strategy & Efficiencies**

Years of austerity have placed significant financial strain on the funding of the management and maintenance of council homes. The review must ensure the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is viable for the long term.

The current 30-year HRA Business Plan projects that the minimum balance of £3m will be breached in 2025/26 after which it will move into a deficit position. In order to provide a sustainable HRA, one in which we are spending only what we can afford, significant levels of efficiencies will need to be identified and achieved both over the next 4 years and beyond. Action needs to be taken now to address this. Currently the following actions are on-going:

- ✓ A review of the HRA asset management strategy to identify viable and uneconomic housing stock, expenditure assumptions over the 30-year period based on accurate stock condition data, as well as component replacement costing assumptions;
- ✓ A review of key business plan assumptions such as rent increase projections, void loss levels, bad debt and loan costs;
- ✓ A review of operational costs, including management and maintenance costs to ensure they are more efficient and provide maximum value for money;
- ✓ A review of the current model of internal recharges and surplus generation requirements.

The intention is to present to Cabinet a report confirming a revised 5 and 30 year HRA Business Plan, the budget for 2021/22, together with a proposed efficiencies plan, in February 2021.

#### c) Leadership, Culture and Expectations

Establishing the proposed new operating model for housing will require capable leadership, of the right capacity and experience able to deliver significant change, motivate and engage employees. There will be a need to recognise the raised expectations of customers and wider stakeholders arising from this major review, and ensure a culture within the new housing service of strong performance, partnership working and customer focus.

#### d) Fragmented Service Planning and Delivery

There is a need to consider how housing and other council services can be more 'joined-up' to provide a better customer experience, support our most vulnerable households and improve neighbourhoods. There is widespread recognition of fragmented current service delivery. This is not just across TGHC and Council services such as homelessness, customer access, ASB, neighbourhood management, income collection, supported housing, etc., but also within the Council itself with functions such as housing strategy, regeneration and locality planning, private sector housing, affordable housing development, supported housing service commissioning and building compliance located in different parts of the Council. This is a confusing operational environment, it re-enforces 'silos', is an inefficient use of resources and makes effective service planning difficult.

#### e) Covid-19

Housing services, like all other key services, have had to adapt to new and challenging ways of working in response to Covid-19. Being able to provide essential services to keep tenants safe and secure, provide much needed advice and support as well as fulfil a range of statutory duties and responsibilities both as a landlord and as the strategic housing authority has provided a wealth of learning.



The importance of connected services at the locality level, providing a flexible, multi-disciplinary approach to ensuring effective and targeted support for vulnerable customers and their families has come to the fore and confirms a future model of service delivery that is likely to have significant impact on helping to achieve the Council's Thrive ambitions moving forward.

16. Pennington Choices have continued to inform the housing review. They have provided essential independent support and expertise particularly in relation to HRA business planning, service improvement planning and in helping to identify the measures necessary to ensure the required level of compliance assurance and capability. Pennington Choices have also provided advice as to future organisational design for housing functions and responsibilities.
17. Pennington Choices will maintain their engagement with the Council to support the implementation of a service improvement plan for the repairs, maintenance and voids function. This is a major element of the overall housing review project plan and is in response to clear customer feedback and performance information. There is a recognition that productivity needs to improve, costs need to reduce and that the overall customer experience of the repairs and maintenance service must become more positive.

### **Proposed Operating Model**

18. It is proposed to bring together the broad range of housing functions into a single organisational structure following the recommended re-integration of the management and maintenance of its housing stock back into the Council. In summary, the Strategic Director for Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities would have overall operational responsibility for the following housing functions:

- a) Housing Strategy and Enabling (including);

- Housing Strategy development and delivery;
- Production of key supporting strategies and policies including homelessness, lettings, affordable housing, empty homes, older person's housing, gypsies & travellers etc.;
- Local community and place planning including production of 'joined-up' spatial and locality service plans;
- Housing governance support, customer scrutiny and involvement;
- Housing growth, development and programme management;
- Partnership working with Registered Providers, private landlords, developers etc;
- Housing data, performance and information management;
- HRA business planning;
- Housing enforcement, licensing, complaints and appeals (all tenures);
- Home Improvement Agency.

- b) Corporate Landlord (including):

- Statutory compliance for all Council buildings including the housing stock;
- Facilities and property management;

- Asset strategy;
- Capital and cyclical programme management;
- Traded services;
- Right to Buy and leasehold management.

c) Construction services (including):

- Reactive maintenance and void works;
- Cyclical and compliance related works;
- Planned and major repairs;
- Newbuild;
- Building adaptations;
- Design and Build capability.

d) Neighbourhood and housing services (including):

- Customer access to relevant services;
- Housing options, homelessness and support;
- Neighbourhood and locality working;
- Community engagement and capacity building;
- Locality plan delivery;
- ASB;
- Core tenancy and estate management functions.

19. A key feature of the proposed operating model is the development of new locality-based services that seek to support the achievement of Thrive objectives. Built around a joined-up housing and neighbourhood management function the aim will be to provide a range of connected services that are place, property and people focused, are 'tenure blind' in delivery and that aim to improve outcomes for individuals, families and the wider community. In addition, this new service will have the following features:

- ✓ Is locality based (but not tied necessarily to buildings);
- ✓ Is person centred;
- ✓ Can be transactional but also develops an increasingly preventative and bespoke support service offer to people and families;
- ✓ Develops effective approaches to casework and management;
- ✓ Builds a multi-disciplinary approach, that is cross tenure (council and private) and cross sector, particularly the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector;
- ✓ Has at its heart a joined-up housing and neighbourhood management function to provide an efficient, experienced and robust staffing resource, and recognises that 'housing' is often the lynchpin between different services, different tenures and different sectors
- ✓ Is a champion for 'place' quality, not just of the home but also the wider environment;
- ✓ Is a champion for community capacity building and development;
- ✓ Has a 'think yes' culture;
- ✓ Supports the achievement of health and wellbeing outcomes;

- ✓ Demonstrates impact by linking activity measurement with the Place Standard and other agreed outcomes.

20. The intention will be to co-produce this locality services model with other services, and to engage customers in its design and evolution. Critical will be early establishment of a geographical footprint for each locality and an approach to its detailed design that enables collaboration and the 'pooling' of resources across a number of different services and organisations. Customer priorities confirmed through the formal consultation process will provide an initial focus for the design and subsequent implementation of the locality services model. The model will initially seek to connect housing management with 'street scene' services, neighbourhood management, ASB and a new locality focused repairs service.

### **Housing Governance and Customer Involvement**

21. Should Cabinet approve the re-integration of housing management and maintenance services back into the Council, consideration will need to be given to future arrangements for decision making and especially in ensuring that the tenant's voice is heard and able to influence decision making.

22. The intention would be to present to a future Cabinet meeting a detailed proposal confirming:

- Creation of a new advisory body with appropriate importance and status, that has both a strategic and operational focus, and considers all housing functions and responsibilities not just the management and maintenance of Council homes;
- The ability of tenants and leaseholders to influence decisions, shape policy and recommend proposals for service improvement;
- The need to anticipate and respond to likely and emerging requirements from the soon to be published social housing white paper and the already published Building Safety Bill, both of which are requiring housing providers to strengthen their engagement with tenants and leaseholders resident in high rise blocks particularly in relation to buildings compliance assurance;
- The wider arrangements and opportunities for customer engagement and involvement.

23. Feedback from stakeholders, particularly Registered Providers, also confirms an appetite for more formal engagement and partnership working. The intention would be to present to Cabinet the detail of a new partnership arrangement alongside the proposals for future housing governance and customer involvement.

### **Key Next Steps and Milestones**

24. If Cabinet approves the 'in-house' model, the Housing Review Project Team, led by the Strategic Director Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities, will lead the transition to a successful re-integration of housing management and maintenance services, as well as the launch of the new 'housing services' operating model on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

25. The table below summarises the proposed key next steps to achieve the April 2021 launch date, as well key milestones beyond next April:

task	when
➤ Cabinet decision	Nov 20
➤ Mailing to all tenants and leaseholders	Dec 20
➤ Formal notification to all employees	Dec 20
➤ Commence formal TUPE consultation	Dec 20
➤ Cabinet to receive governance and customer involvement proposals	Dec 20
➤ New organisational structure completed	Dec 20
➤ Budget planning for 2021/22 completed	Dec 20
➤ Review of HRA charging mechanisms completed	Dec 20
➤ IT systems integration and transfer plan completed	Dec 20
➤ Complete self-assessment against regulatory standards	Jan 21
➤ Formal TGHC decision to dissolve	Jan 21
➤ Revised HRA Business Plan (5- and 30-year plan) produced for approval	Feb 21
➤ Launch of new Gateshead Home Improvement Agency	Feb 21
➤ Cabinet to receive proposed new affordable housing strategy and plan	Feb 21
➤ Final full meeting of TGHC Board	Mar 21
➤ Council Constitution amended	Mar 21
➤ Mailing to all tenants and leaseholders on new service contact arrangements	Mar 21
➤ Cabinet to receive proposed new homelessness strategy and plan	Mar 21
➤ Complete employee TUPE	April 21
➤ Launch of new 'housing service' and operating model	April 21
➤ Formal regulatory disengagement achieved	May 21
➤ Cabinet to receive proposed new lettings policy and tenancy strategy	May 21
➤ Approve TGHC final accounts and external audit	Jul 21
➤ TGHC dissolved as a legal entity	Mar 21-Jul 21

## 26. Implications of the recommended options

## 27. Resources

- a) Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital, confirms that the HRA is projected to be in deficit by 2025/26. This cannot happen and must be viable with enough 'headroom' to allow for the funding of any exceptional or unforeseen requirements. Re-integration of the management and maintenance of the housing stock, enabling the establishment of a new housing service with the necessary leadership, capacity and focus on driving change and efficiencies, will be an important first step to achieving a sustainable HRA. Work has already begun on assessing the investment needs of the housing stock over the next 30 years, identifying high cost investment as well operational areas, and in developing a 4-year efficiencies programme that will aim to secure in excess of £6m efficiencies over the period. There is no expectation that establishing a new housing service will result in any notable additional expenditure; the aim will

be to ensure that the organisational change required will be managed within existing budgets.

- b) Human Resources Implications** – TUPE is likely to apply and will directly affect over 800 employees of TGHC. Formal consultation on TUPE will be required and discussion with relevant employees and trade unions will commence following Cabinet approval, as to next steps, a consultation timetable, and to ensure all relevant TUPE consultation requirements are adhered to. It is proposed that TUPE consultations will conclude before the transfer takes place in April 2021. Over the next 2 to 3-year period the Council will further develop its new housing service; will be considering wider transformation of all services in line with its Thrive agenda; and will be considering further efficiencies across all services. This may result in proposed staffing reductions and/or fundamental changes to existing job roles and the creation of new roles and new opportunities. Such proposals may affect all Council employees, including those who have TUPE transferred, and will be subject to detailed consultation with relevant staff and trade unions at the appropriate time.
- c) Property Implications** – There will need to be a formal Transfer Agreement with TGHC, confirming all the assets to be transferred back to the Council. This will include any materials at the Shearlegs depot, any IT equipment, office furniture etc. It will also include any contracts with suppliers beyond the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and the transfer of 8 properties currently owned by TGHC.

## 28. Risk Implications

3 key risks to highlight at present are:

- a) **Ineffective Change Management:** managing change of the scale and complexity proposed will require the necessary leadership and capacity to ensure change is managed effectively and on time. Robust project management arrangements are in place and there is a commitment across the Council to support the large range of necessary tasks and actions to achieve the required change. The Cabinet Member for Housing will receive regular updates on change progress including the measures in place to manage any existing or new risks to achieving change milestones or outcomes.
- b) **Failure to Deliver Improved Outcomes for Customers:** it is clear tenants want change. There is also an expectation from tenants and leaseholders that their priorities are listened and responded to effectively by the Council. Measures are being put in place to improve services and the overall customer experience both prior to and following the re-integration of their services back into the Council.
- c) **Failure to achieve a viable HRA:** it will be necessary to produce a deliverable efficiencies programme that drives significant efficiencies over the next 4 years. Key operational performance will need to improve such as repairs productivity and reducing void loss. Current internal recharges to the HRA will need to be reviewed. Uneconomic housing stock will need to be identified and options put forward to reduce their burden on the HRA.

29. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – An equalities impact assessment of any key service changes arising from the establishment of the new housing service will be undertaken and acted upon accordingly.
30. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – The need to tackle ASB and improve feelings of safety and security are key messages from tenants and leaseholders. The proposed locality services model will allow for the development of a more joined up approach to improving overall community safety.
31. **Health Implications** – Housing is a key determinant on the health and wellbeing of communities. Housing can make a significant contribution to tackling health inequality. This proposal would enable a strengthening of the strategic as well as operational connection between housing and health and will seek to improve overall outcomes for a range of vulnerable residents including those who are homeless, leaving care or looked after, with a mental health or learning disability, older people requiring support etc.
32. **Sustainability and Climate Emergency Implications** – The proposal will support the development of an affordable housing strategy and plan ensuring a supply of affordable homes that can meet current as well as future needs. The review of the HRA asset strategy includes consideration of the need to meet carbon neutrality targets for the housing stock.
33. **Human Rights Implications** – There are no negative human rights implications arising from this report.
34. **Ward Implications** – This proposal will affect all wards across Gateshead.

## Key contacts

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