

## NOTICE OF MEETING

# CABINET MEMBER SIGNING

**Tuesday, 5th January, 2016, 4.00 pm - Civic Centre, High Road,  
Wood Green, N22 8LE**

MEMBERS: Councillors Alan Strickland (Chair)

Quorum: 1

### **1. FILMING AT MEETINGS**

Please note that this meeting may be filmed or recorded by the Council for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site or by anyone attending the meeting using any communication method. Although we ask members of the public recording, filming or reporting on the meeting not to include the public seating areas, members of the public attending the meeting should be aware that we cannot guarantee that they will not be filmed or recorded by others attending the meeting. Members of the public participating in the meeting (e.g. making deputations, asking questions, making oral protests) should be aware that they are likely to be filmed, recorded or reported on.

By entering the meeting room and using the public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings.

The chair of the meeting has the discretion to terminate or suspend filming or recording, if in his or her opinion continuation of the filming, recording or reporting would disrupt or prejudice the proceedings, infringe the rights of any individual or may lead to the breach of a legal obligation by the Council.

### **2. URGENT BUSINESS**

The Cabinet Member will advise of any items they have decided to take as urgent business.

### **3. SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICE CHARGES (PAGES 1 - 34)**

The report will seek Cabinet Member approval for increased service charges in sheltered/supported housing schemes, as part of a range of savings identified under the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2015-2018. The report will also seek Cabinet Member approval for the mitigation and support arrangements for residents affected by the increased service charges.

#### **4. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider any items of Urgent Business admitted under Item 2 above.

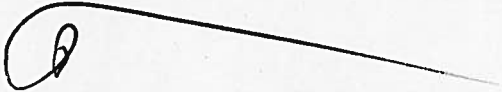
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Bernie Ryan  
Assistant Director – Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer  
River Park House, 225 High Road, Wood Green, N22 8HQ

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2015

Report for:	Cabinet Member Signing 5 January 2016	Item Number:	
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Title:	Sheltered Housing Service Charges
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Report Authorised by:	<p>TP Lyn Garner, Director of Regeneration, Planning &amp; Development Dan Hawthorn, Assistant Director for Regeneration</p>  <p>23/12/15</p>
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Lead Officer:	<p>Mustafa Ibrahim, Housing Commissioning, Investment &amp; Sites Tel: 020 8489 5369 Email: <a href="mailto:mustafa.ibrahim@haringey.gov.uk">mustafa.ibrahim@haringey.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Astrid Kjellberg-Obst, Executive Director of Operations, HfH Tel: 020 8489 5912 Email: <a href="mailto:astrid.kjellberg-obst@homesforharingey.org">astrid.kjellberg-obst@homesforharingey.org</a></p>
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Ward(s) affected: All	Report for Key/ Non Key Decision: Key Decision
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1. DESCRIBE THE ISSUE UNDER CONSIDERATION
  - 1.1 In February 2015, Cabinet considered the Medium Term Financial Plan 2015-18 and noted a proposal to increase service charges in sheltered/supported housing schemes. Cabinet determined that the proposal should be subject to consultation and an equality impact assessment before a final decision to proceed is made by Cabinet or the Lead Cabinet Member.
  - 1.2 This report provides information on the outcome of consultation and equality impact assessment, as required by Cabinet, and recommends that the Cabinet Member approves the proposal.

2. CABINET MEMBER INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 It is important that the Council maximises the resources available for housing and this proposal provides an effective means of doing so. It is equally important that this proposal is implemented sensitively and I welcome the extensive consultation, impact assessment and financial advice that Homes for Haringey has undertaken with affected residents.
- 2.2 Decisions affecting potentially vulnerable residents must be taken with great care and it is evident from the report and the impact assessment that this proposal can be implemented with effective mitigation and relatively few residents adversely affected.
- 2.3 I have required officers to keep this implementation under close scrutiny and ensure that any cases of real difficulty are dealt with sympathetically and fairly, with discretion to adjust services or charges where possible. It is not the intention to cause financial hardship and I am confident this change can be achieved without any hardship arising.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is RECOMMENDED that the Cabinet Member:

- 3.1 Notes the outcome of the consultation in respect of increased service charges in sheltered/supported housing schemes (as set out in appendix 3 and paragraphs 6.8 – 6.11).
- 3.2 Notes the results of the Equalities Impact Assessment (as set out in appendix 4 and paragraphs 8.10 – 8.14).
- 3.3 Approves the increased service charges in sheltered/supported housing considered by the Cabinet in February 2015, effective from 1 April 2016 (as set out in paragraphs 6.9 and 6.10) with these increases being included in the HRA Business Plan and 2016/17 HRA budget to be submitted to Cabinet in February 2016.
- 3.4 Approves the mitigation and support arrangements for residents affected by the increased service charges in 3.3 above, (as set out in paragraphs 6.12 – 6.18).

4. REASONS FOR DECISION

- 4.1 Recommendation 3.1 is required to confirm that the Cabinet Member has noted the consultation outcome in reaching a decision on the proposed service charges.
- 4.2 Recommendation 3.2 is required to confirm that the Cabinet Member has noted the results of the EQIA in reaching a decision on the proposed service charges and the mitigation and support arrangements identified.

- 4.3 Recommendation 3.3 is required to ensure service charges are applied consistently to both general needs and sheltered/supported housing and to generate additional annual income of up to £637k.
- 4.4 Recommendation 3.4 is required to mitigate the adverse impact of the increased service charges on residents, where practicable and to provide support to affected residents who may require financial advice or assistance to meet their service charges

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 To not proceed with service charge increases  
To not proceed with the proposed service charge increases would represent the 'no change' option. This would mean no additional charges for residents and thereby avoid any risk of distress or hardship. However, it would also perpetuate the current inconsistency in charging between general needs and sheltered housing and forgo additional income of up to £637k. Given the Council's financial circumstances, this option was not considered appropriate.
- 5.2 To reduce services for residents and avoid charges  
To reduce services received by residents and avoid the resultant charges has been considered. Some services are essential and could not be reduced without causing health and safety concerns. However, some services, for example the frequency of grass cutting could be reduced. As such services are provided to a sheltered block rather than individual units of accommodation, it would be necessary to consult on such changes on a block by block basis. This option was therefore not included as an option in the consultation, but has been included as a possible mitigation measure (as set out in paragraph 6.12, item (d)).

6. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cabinet decision – February 2015

- 6.1 Housing management service charges are not currently consistently applied to both general needs and sheltered housing. Charges for grounds maintenance, street sweeping, waste collection, bin/chute cleaning and communal lighting are currently applied to general needs housing but not to sheltered housing. Charges are applied on a cost recovery basis only.
- 6.2 In February 2015, the Cabinet considered a report entitled 'Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015-2018', which included a proposal to apply these service charges to sheltered housing from 2015/16. The report confirmed that housing management service charges are not fully applied to 1,285 residents in supported housing schemes. It also confirmed that applying charges to these residents would generate additional annual income of up to £637k to the HRA (*nb £673k was quoted in the original report due to a transposition error*). The report pointed out that not all service charges apply to all of the supported housing schemes and proposed that tenants are charged for services they receive. The report advised that the potential increase in service charges for residents in supported housing could be up to £8.95 per week when fully

applied, as shown in Table 6 within that report, which is reproduced in italics below.

Table 6 Tenant Service Charges 2015/16 (Supported Housing Schemes)

Tenants service charge	Proposed Charge 2015/16
Grounds Maintenance	£3.01
Street Sweeping	£3.63
Light & Power (Communal Lighting)	£2.15
Bin & Chute Cleaning	£0.16
<b>Maximum increase in service charge</b>	<b>£8.95</b>

- 6.3 The report went on to describe the housing benefit position for affected residents and possible implementation arrangements, including consultation, however the Cabinet resolved as follows:

*“To note the proposal to introduce additional service charges for tenants in Supported Housing Schemes as set out in Table 6, such proposals to be subject to consultation and equality impact assessments and final decision by the Cabinet or Cabinet Member if they are to proceed”*

#### Proposed Charges

- 6.4 The potential increase in service charges for tenants in supported housing could be up to £8.95 per week when fully applied. Applying the charges would mean new weekly charges as follows:

Grounds maintenance	£3.01
Street sweeping	£3.63
Communal lighting	£2.15
Bin & chute cleaning	£0.16
<b>Total increase in service charge</b>	<b>£8.95</b>

- 6.5 The implementation of service charges would be achieved without any direct impact on 1,013 tenants who are in receipt of maximum housing benefit. This means 272 tenants were thought to be potentially adversely affected i.e. be unable to claim housing benefit to fully cover the charges.
- 6.6 The average direct impact for residents without benefits is about £5 per week and the average direct impact for residents on partial Housing Benefit is about £2 per week.
- 6.7 Applying service charges to these tenants would generate additional annual income of up to £637k to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). However, not all service charges apply to all of the supported housing schemes. It is recommended that tenants are only charged for the services that they receive.

### Consultation and Financial Assessments

- 6.8 Housing management and housing related support services are now both provided by Homes for Haringey (HfH). During June 2015, HfH consulted 1,285 tenants in sheltered and community good neighbour schemes (see sample letter at Appendix 1) and carried out financial assessments.
- 6.9 Drop-in sessions were held in 21 schemes between 9<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> June 2015 (see schedule at Appendix 2). Over 200 tenants attended the sessions and 72 people were offered one-to-one sessions or given individual advice.
- 6.10 There were 197 written responses to the consultation, which are summarised in Appendix 3. Overall, there were 147 negative responses (74%) and 46 positive responses (23%) and 4 'don't know' responses (2%). Approximately half the negative responses expressed concerns about vulnerability and ability to pay (71 responses). The other negative responses commented on unfair charges (26 responses), unsatisfactory quality of service (19 responses) and that Council Tax covers these services (9 responses).
- 6.11 The financial assessments showed that 70 tenants who do not receive any housing benefit are likely to fund the proposed service charges themselves. 202 tenants were found to receive partial housing benefit and would therefore potentially have to fund a proportion of the proposed service charges themselves.

### Mitigation and Support Arrangements

- 6.12 In the light of the consultation responses and the financial assessments described above, mitigation and support arrangements have been explored. Work for the EqIA (see Appendix 4 and paragraphs 8.10 – 8.14 below) has identified a number of actions to mitigate the impact of the proposed service charges, as set out below.
- 6.13 HfH are engaging with all affected residents to prepare them for the change and are offering assessments to residents directly affected. Out of the 272 households (mostly single person households) who are directly affected, HfH arranged a financial assessment with 202 households. 70 households refused as they feel they are able to fund the difference and do not wish to disclose their financial situation.
- 6.14 From the 202 households :
- (a) 20 households have a saving of more than £16,000
  - (b) 7 households have an income too high for support eligibility
  - (c) 102 households are eligible for (further) Housing Benefit and HfH are assisting with the relevant application
  - (d) 34 households are eligible for other benefits and HfH are helping with the relevant application process
  - (e) 12 households now have full HB in place since the consultation in June 2015.

- (f) 8 households had a meeting arranged, but this has not taken place yet as they are abroad for a longer period.

This leaves 19 households having to pay the difference themselves. For these and other residents, HfH have provided the following:

- Budgeting Advice
- Utility Advice
- WaterSurePLus eligibility assessment and support with application to reduce the water charge by about £2 per week, which compensated for the proposed increase in Service Charges.

- 6.15 Additional support and budgeting advice is being offered to residents affected through the Financial Inclusion Team to ensure that residents are receiving all the support they are entitled to
- 6.16 Where a resident is likely to suffer particular financial hardship as a result of the scheme, HfH will make every effort to find alternative funding to minimise the impact, such as assisting Residents to successfully apply for WaterSurePlus or alternative money saving utility plans.
- 6.17 HfH will be reviewing the potential for blocks to be offered reduced levels of service where possible to offset the increased charges and will be consulting on this on a block by block basis where necessary.
- 6.18 The implementation will be kept under review. Scheme managers are in regular contact with residents and will deal with individual problems if they arise. A full review of service charges across all tenures is planned and the any changes to charging policy or practice required for this client group will be identified as part of that work.

## 7. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- 7.1 This proposal contributes to corporate plan objectives by charging for services provided in order to recover costs. This will increase the financial resources available within the Housing Revenue Account, which will be applied in support of Priority 5 "Create homes and communities where people choose to live and are able to thrive".

## 8. STATUTORY OFFICERS COMMENTS (CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER (INCLUDING PROCUREMENT), ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE , EQUALITIES)

### Finance and Procurement

- 8.1 If the recommendations in this report are agreed and implemented then the proposed increase in service charges relating to Sheltered Accommodation will generate up to an additional £637k income to the HRA in a full year. Original plans were to put the increase in service charges in place for the financial year 2015/16 but this has not been possible and will produce a shortfall in revenues

for this financial year. The current scheduled implementation date is the 1<sup>st</sup> April and will be included in budget planning estimates for future years.

8.2 It should be noted that the additional income projected may be reduced by a number of potential factors:-

- The Welfare Reform and Work Bill referred to in paragraph 8.9 of this report may impact on the authority's ability to raise service charges. This will not be known until the Bill is passed.
- It is noted in paragraph 6.17 that tenants may be offered the ability to forgo certain services in exchange for a reduced service charge. This may reduce the income generated without achieving an equal reduction in the cost of supply of these services.
- It is possible that the increase in service charges may lead to an increase in bad debts. This will also affect the estimated additional revenues generated. .

#### Legal

8.3 The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8.4 S24 of the Housing Act 1985 permits the Council to make such reasonable charges as it determines for the tenancy or occupation of its houses. The Council's form of tenancy agreement for sheltered housing permits it to vary service charges on one week's notice with no restriction on when that notice can be given. It is proposed that the service charges involved be varied by notice taking effect at the same time as the rent for the year 2016/17.

8.5 The costs involved are not building works and hence do not require formal "section 20" statutory consultation. S19 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 however limits recovery of costs of provision of services by way of service charge to a cost reasonably incurred for services provided to a reasonable standard. Insofar as service charges are levied in advance of the incurring of the costs this section further limits recovery to "a reasonable amount". Officers consider the proposed charges to be reasonable; the services to be provided to a reasonable standard; and the levying of the charge for a year by weekly instalments through the year, insofar as it constitutes advance payment to involve charging a reasonable amount.

8.6 There is no statutory requirement to consult upon the introduction of these charges. Cabinet has however requested consultation, details of the response to which are provided elsewhere.

8.7 By contrast, withdrawal of services may be sufficiently significant to require consultation under s105 of the Housing Act 1985, and this will be considered in the review of provision proposed under paragraph 6.17 above. It is unlikely, however, that a change in the frequency of service provision, as opposed to outright withdrawal, would trigger statutory consultation. It is however

recommended that, even if formal consultation is not legally required, the officers conducting the review engage with the affected tenants.

8.8 Increases in variable service charges are not caught by the Government's Guidance on rents for social housing; the limitation on rent increases to CPI + 1% applying for 2015-16 applies only to the net rent, although the Guidance encourages authorities to "endeavour to keep increases for service charges within the limit of rent changes". The proposal corrects a historical anomaly between Sheltered and General needs stock, and does not represent a general increase in service charges across the council's stock.

8.9 Clause 21 of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill, currently at Committee stage in the House of Lords, requires a reduction in rents charged to secure tenants over the next 4 years by 1% per annum from those applying at 8 July 2015. The Cabinet Member should be aware that while the Bill as it now stands defines "rent" in secure sheltered housing as excluding service charges, any amendment may prevent implementation of this proposal by including service charges within rent.

#### Equality

8.10 The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to:

- Tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under S4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

8.11 The EqIA identifies that 282 residents would be financially disadvantaged by the policy change as they are not in receipt of housing benefit or their costs are only partially covered by housing benefit. As this proposal relates to sheltered housing which supports some of our most vulnerable residents it is likely to impact on those with the protected characteristics, including older residents and disabled residents.

8.12. The EqIA has identified a number of actions to mitigate the impact of this policy

- (a) HfH are engaging with all affected residents to prepare them for the change and are offering assessments to residents directly affected.
- (b) Additional support and budgeting advice is being offered to residents affected through the Financial Inclusion Team to ensure that residents are receiving all the support they are entitled to.

- (c) Where a resident is likely to suffer particular financial hardship as a result of the scheme, HfH will make every effort to find alternative funding to minimise the impact, such as WaterSure Plus or alternative money saving utility plans.
- (d) HfH will be reviewing the potential for blocks to be offered reduced levels of service where possible to offset increased charges and will be consulting on this on a block by block basis where necessary.

8.13. Financial assessment work has been conducted by Homes for Haringey in respect of 272 households identified in that work as being directly affected, as set out in paragraphs 6.13 and 6.14 above.

8.14. As well as financial assessments for residents most affected, consultation has been conducted with all residents. The outcome of this consultation and officer responses to the issues raised is summarised in Appendix 3.

## 9. USE OF APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Sample consultation letter
- Appendix 2 – Schedule of consultation sessions with residents
- Appendix 3 – Summary of consultation responses
- Appendix 4 – Equalities Impact Assessment

## 10. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background documents:

Cabinet report and minutes: Corporate Planning 2015-2018 (Annex 4 Proposed HRA Medium term Financial Plan 2015-2018) 10<sup>th</sup> February 2015



Homes for Haringey

**APPENDIX 1 – Sample consultation letter**

Finance Team

4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 48 Station Road, London N22 2TY  
t: 020 8489 1205 f: 020 8489 1144[www.homesforharingey.org](http://www.homesforharingey.org) [www.haringey.gov.uk](http://www.haringey.gov.uk)

Title First name Surname

Address

Town

Post Code

Date: 1 June 2015

Our ref: 0000

Direct dial: 020 8489 1205

Email: [Andrew.Adegboye@HomesforHaringey.org](mailto:Andrew.Adegboye@HomesforHaringey.org)

This matter is being dealt with by: Andrew Adegboye

Dear XXXXXX,

**Consultation on proposed service charges**

Homes for Haringey is consulting tenants in supported housing schemes on behalf of Haringey Council. The Council is proposing to charge tenants in supported housing schemes for services they receive, which are not currently charged. However, not all service charges apply to every scheme and tenants will only be charged for services they receive. The additional service charges would take effect, with four weeks notice, after the Council has agreed the proposal.

We would like to know your views on the Council's proposal. Your views will be passed to the Council before a decision is made.

**Proposed charges**

In addition to rents, some tenants pay service charges for extra services they receive which are not covered by the rent. Service charges are set to cover the estimated cost of providing services and are only charged where tenants receive the service.

The Council is proposing to charge for all current services received by tenants in supported housing schemes.



The proposed changes to your rent and service charges are as follows:

<b>Property Charges</b>	<b>Existing amount</b>	<b>Proposed amount</b>
Rent	£X	£X
Heating	£X	£X
Light & Power (Communal lighting)	£X	£X
Grounds Maintenance	£X	£X
Street Sweeping (Waste collection)	£X	£X
Digital TV (Integrated Reception Service)	£X	£X
Bin & Chute cleaning	£X	£X
Estates Road Maintenance	£X	£X
Water Rates	£X	£X
<b>Total property charges</b>	<b>£XX</b>	<b>£XX</b>
<b>Individual Charges</b>		
Community alarm	£X	£X
Good neighbour	£X	£X
Additional good neighbour	£X	£X
Sheltered housing charge	£X	£X
<b>Total individual charges</b>	<b>£XX</b>	<b>£XX</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>£XXX</b>	<b>£XXX</b>

#### **Will housing benefit cover the proposed service charges?**

The proposed charges are eligible for housing benefit. However, the amount of benefit you get will depend on your personal circumstances. If you want further advice on your entitlement to benefits, please visit Haringey Council's website: [www.haringey.gov.uk](http://www.haringey.gov.uk) or contact Housing Benefits as follows.

- Email: [benefits@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@haringey.gov.uk)
- Call Haringey Council on 020 8489 1000
- Write to: Benefits Service, PO Box 10505, Wood Green, N22 7WJ

#### **What the Council will do next.**

The Council will meet on 14 July 2015 to make a decision. Your views will be passed to the Council before a decision is made. Following this, tenants will be sent a letter giving them formal notice of their rent and new service charges, if the proposal is agreed.

#### **What are your views on this proposal?**

You can tell us what you think about the proposal by **5pm on Tuesday, 30 June 2015** by completing the form enclosed and send to: Rent Consultation, Freepost RXXB-SACU-YERY, Homes for Haringey, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 48 Station Road, London N22 7TY or email to [finance@homesforharingey.org](mailto:finance@homesforharingey.org)

Sessions will also be held at each of the sheltered housing schemes. These sessions will give you an opportunity to ask any further questions about the proposal, or discuss individual concerns. The Scheme Support managers will notify you when these sessions will be held in your locality.

Yours sincerely,

**Astrid Kjellberg-Obst**  
Executive Director of Operations



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**APPENDIX 2 – Schedule of Consultation Sessions with Residents**

Service charge consultation drop in sessions  
 AM session 10-12noon or PM Session 2.00-4.00pm

<b>Date and Time</b>	<b>Scheme Name</b>	<b>Number of Residents</b>
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 PM	The Priory, Stokely Court, and New Road.	101
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 AM	Latimer Road, The Crescent, Westcott Close, and Eastbourne Road.	77
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 PM	Coombes House, and Campbell Court.	78
Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 AM	Gosport Walk, Runcorn Close, and Queensferry Walk.	61
Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 PM	Sophia House, and Talbot Close.	58
Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 PM	Keynes Close, Buckden Close, and Clissold Close.	59
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 AM	William Atkinson House and William Rainbird House.	55
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 AM	Summerhill Road, Dorset Road, and Loobert Road.	51
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 PM	Brookside House.	31
Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 AM	Palace Gates, Louise Court, and Clarence Road.	75
Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 PM	Spanswick Lodge.	28
Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 AM	Hilldene Court and Baden Court.	40
Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 PM	The Lindales, Asplins Road, and Cooperage Close.	52
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 AM	Beldale House, Park Road, and The Grove.	62
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 PM	Bigbury Close, Lamford Close, Larkspur Close, Roseland Close, and Crompton Crescent.	76
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 AM	Cranley Dene Court, John Clifford, and Avenue Road.	71
Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2015 AM	Lowry House, and Circular Road.	75
Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2015 PM	Stonebridge Road, Ashmount Road and Earlsmead Road.	46
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2015 AM	Bracknell Close.	64
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2015 PM	Alfred Findlay House and Newnham Road.	31
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> June 2015 AM	Clements House.	27

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**APPENDIX 3 – Summary of Consultation Responses**

The table below shows a summary of responses from residents.

Response	Negative	Positive	Don't Know	Total responses received	% Response
Email	5	0	0	5	3%
Written	142	46	4	192	97%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>100%</b>
% Response for each type	<b>74%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Response/Comment	No. of responses	%	HfH further action
No - Vulnerable/Ability to pay	71	36%	Further individual assistance / assessments
No - Unfair Charges	26	13%	Explain basis for proposed charges
No - Unsatisfactory quality of service	19	10%	Investigate services provided
No - Council tax covers services	9	5%	Explain basis for proposed charges
No - No Comment	22	11%	
<b>Total Negative responses</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>74%</b>	
Yes - Ability to pay	3	2%	
Yes - No Comment	31	16%	
Yes - OK with the proposal	11	6%	
Yes - Quality of Service	1	1%	
<b>Total Positive responses</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>23%</b>	
Don't know - No comment	3	2%	
Don't know - Vulnerable Tenant	1	1%	Further individual assistance / assessments
<b>Total Don't know</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2%</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>100%</b>	

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## Equality Impact Assessment

<p>Sheltered Housing Service Charges (Proposed increase in service charges for residents in sheltered and good neighbour housing schemes)</p>	<p>Cabinet meeting date <i>If applicable</i></p> <p>Cabinet Member Signing 5 January 2016</p>
<p>Homes for Haringey</p>	<p>Date EqIA created</p> <p>16<sup>th</sup> June 2015</p>
<p>Bernard Mooney / Allison Kennedy</p>	<p>Date of approval</p> <p>17 December 2015</p>
<p>Lyn Garner Dan Hawthorn, Assistant Director for Regeneration</p>	

The Equality Act 2010 places a 'General Duty' on all public bodies to have 'due regard' to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- Advancing equality of opportunity between those with 'protected characteristics' and those without them
- Fostering good relations between those with 'protected characteristics' and those without them.

In addition the Council complies with the Marriage (same sex couples) Act 2013.

Haringey Council also has a 'Specific Duty' to publish information about people affected by our policies and practices.

In addition the Council complies with the Marriage (same sex couples) Act 2013.

Haringey Council also has a 'Specific Duty' to publish information about people affected by our policies and practices.

**All assessments must be published on the Haringey equalities web pages. All Cabinet papers MUST include a link to the web page where this assessment will be published.**

This Equality Impact Assessment provides evidence for meeting the Council's commitment to equality and the responsibilities outlined above, for more information about the Councils commitment to equality; please visit the Council's website.

Stage 1 – Names of those involved in preparing the EqIA	
1. Project Lead – Bernard Mooney / Allison Kennedy	
2. Equalities / HR – Kathryn Booth	5. Helicon Topulli (provision of equalities data relating to residents in sheltered and good neighbour housing schemes)
3. Legal Advisor (where necessary) – Robin Levett	6. John Elliot (provision of information on support being provided to residents in sheltered and good neighbour housing schemes)
4. Trade union – N/A	7. Andrew Adegboye (provision of information relating to consultation of residents in sheltered and good neighbour housing schemes)
	8.

**Stage 2 - Description of proposal including the relevance of the proposal to the general equality duties and protected groups. Also carry out your preliminary screening (Use the questions in the Step by Step Guide (The screening process) and document your reasoning for deciding whether or not a full EqIA is required. If a full EqIA is required move on to Stage 3.**

A Haringey Council review of services provided to council estates across Haringey noted that sheltered and good neighbour housing schemes receive some of these services but have not previously been charged for them. The costs until now have therefore have been met by the Council. On 10<sup>th</sup> February 2015, the Council's Cabinet agreed to consult residents in sheltered and good neighbour scheme accommodation and carry out an impact assessment on a proposed increase in service charges.

The proposed increase of service charges is to deliver a fair and transparent approach to how costs are properly recovered. Sheltered and good

neighbour scheme tenants currently do not pay for all aspects of the services they receive. Charges had not previously been set for some activities, although these do form part of what would normally and reasonably be collected through a service charge. The suggested increases being consulted on range between £3.01 to £8.95 in additional weekly charges.

As the majority of sheltered and good neighbour scheme residents are currently receiving full housing benefit, this change will not impact on these residents as most service charges are covered by housing benefit.

Out of the 1285 residents in sheltered and good neighbour schemes, the support service team initially identified a total of 294 residents, in 272 households, who would have been directly affected by the proposed change, as they received no housing benefit or had costs only partially covered by housing benefit (this relates to figures provided at 30/6/15). These 272 households received financial assessments and support from June 2015 as summarised in stages 7 and 8 below.

As part of this impact assessment, the support service team carried out further analysis and removed 'step-down' residents funded by Adult Social Services, recently deceased residents, and 'moved-on' residents from the figures. This further analysis identified an updated total of 282 affected residents, in 261 households, receiving no housing benefit or partial housing benefit (figures provided on 20/7/15). These 282 individual residents have been included in the assessment conducted in this EqIA.

#### The consultation process

Homes for Haringey (HfH) has consulted tenants in sheltered housing and good neighbour schemes on behalf of Haringey Council. A letter was sent to residents in these schemes to consult them on the proposed increase in service charges. The consultation ran from 9<sup>th</sup> June to 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2015 and the results are summarised in stage 7 of this assessment.

The consultation process was supported by a wide range of briefings and information sessions to engage with residents in sheltered and good neighbour schemes in person and to help them understand the impact by:

- Offering one to one sessions to explain the proposals
- Arranging individual budgeting meetings with the affected residents through our sheltered services and financial inclusion teams to help with advice and alternative funding options
- Advertising and holding drop in sessions.

Sessions have been held at each of the housing schemes, in particular with those individuals not in receipt of full housing benefit. Please note that leaseholders in sheltered and good neighbour schemes are not affected by the consultation process that is adopted for the purpose of setting the level of charges payable by tenants. On an annual basis, Homes for Haringey calculates and recharges all leaseholders based on the costs incurred in providing services or works to their block or estate. The methodology is determined by the terms of their lease.

**Stage 3 – Scoping Exercise - Identify the main sources of the evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, that supports your analysis. This could include for example, data on the Council's workforce, equalities profile of service users, recent surveys, research, results of recent relevant consultations, Haringey Borough Profile, Haringey Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and any other sources of relevant information, local, regional or national.**

Data Source (include link where published)	What does this data include?
Sheltered and good neighbour scheme tenant Equalities Monitoring Data Analysis	This data covers all sheltered and good neighbour scheme tenants and includes: gender, age, disability, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief (or no belief). No gender reassignment data has been identified. The categories 'pregnancy and maternity' and 'marriage and civil partnership' are not covered in the data.
Equalities Monitoring Data Analysis for the 282 sheltered and good neighbour scheme tenants, in 261 households, likely to be impacted by the proposed service charge increase (figures provided on 20/7/15 for this analysis).	This data covers the sheltered and good neighbour scheme housing tenants likely to be impacted by the proposed service charge increase and includes: gender, age, disability, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief (or no belief), and marriage and civil partnership. No gender reassignment data has been identified. The category 'pregnancy and maternity' is not covered in the data.
Equalities profile of Haringey	This data provides gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, marital status and civil partnership, and sexual orientation information for Haringey based on the 2011 census.

**Stage 4 – Scoping Exercise - Service data used in this Equality Impact Assessment**

**This section to be completed where there is a change to the service provided**

Data Source (include link where published)

Not applicable – there are no current plans to change the service provided.

What does this data include?

**Stage 5a – Considering the above information, what impact will this proposal have on the following groups in terms of impact on residents and service delivery:  
Positive and negative impacts identified will need to form part of your action plan.**

	Positive	Negative	Details	None – why?
Sex / Gender			Of the 282 residents identified as potentially being impacted, 150 are men and 132 are women.	Based on the data available, this proposal is not viewed as disproportionately impacting on sex / gender.
Gender Reassignment			No gender reassignment has been identified in the 282 residents identified as being impacted.	No gender reassignment was identified in the 282 potentially impacted residents or in the sheltered and good neighbour scheme population as a whole.
Age		This proposal potentially impacts on the protected characteristic of age, as the majority	Of the 282 residents identified as being impacted, the average age is 66.	

		<p>of sheltered and good neighbour scheme tenants are older residents. The potential negative impact would be an increase in service charge costs for these residents and the possibility of associated hardship.</p>		
<p><b>Disability</b></p>		<p>This proposal potentially impacts on the protected characteristic of disability, as a significant number of sheltered and good neighbour scheme tenants have identified a disability. The potential negative impact will be an increase in service charge costs for these residents and the possibility of associated hardship.</p>	<p>Of the 282 residents likely to be impacted, 158 have identified one or more of the following: a mental health issue, a learning disability, a physical disability, a mobility issue, a sensory impairment, or a long term or terminal illness. (The figure of 158 includes 24 residents with mental health issues).</p>	
<p><b>Race &amp; Ethnicity</b></p>			<p>Of the 282 residents identified as being impacted, 102 are Black or Black British, 162 are White, 4 are Mixed, and 13 are Asian or Asian British, and 1 is Chinese.</p>	<p>Based on the data available, this proposal is not viewed as disproportionately impacting on any race or ethnic group.</p>

<p><b>Sexual Orientation</b></p>			<p>Of the 282 residents identified as being impacted, 213 have identified as heterosexual and 69 have not disclosed their sexual orientation.</p>	<p>Based on the data available, this proposal is not viewed as disproportionately impacting on any sexual orientation.</p>
<p><b>Religion or Belief (or No Belief)</b></p>			<p>Of the 282 residents identified as being impacted, 108 are Christian, 32 are Catholic, 10 are Muslim, 1 is Jehovah's Witness, 2 are Buddhist, 7 are Anglican, 16 have no religion or belief, 10 are other, and 96 have not disclosed this information.</p>	<p>Based on the data available, this proposal is not viewed as disproportionately impacting on religion, belief, or no belief.</p>
<p><b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b></p>			<p>Of the 282 residents identified as being impacted, no information on pregnancy and maternity is available.</p>	<p>Due to the age profile of residents in supported and sheltered housing, this proposal is not viewed as likely to disproportionately impact on pregnancy or maternity.</p>
<p><b>Marriage and Civil Partnership (note this only applies in relation to eliminating unlawful discrimination (limb 1))</b></p>			<p>Within the 282 residents identified as being impacted, there are 21 couples (no civil partnerships have been</p>	<p>Based on the data available, this proposal is not viewed as disproportionately impacting on marriage or</p>

			identified).	civil partnership.
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**Stage 5b – For your employees and considering the above information, what impact will this proposal have on the following groups: Positive and negative impacts identified will need to form part of your action plan.**

	Positive	Negative	Details	None – why?
Sex				
Gender Reassignment				
Age				
Disability				
Race & Ethnicity				
Sexual Orientation				
Religion or Belief (or No Belief)				
Pregnancy & Maternity				
Marriage and Civil Partnership (note this only applies in relation to eliminating unlawful discrimination (limb 1))				

**Stage 6 - Initial Impact analysis**

Out of 1285 residents in the Council's sheltered and good neighbour	Homes for Haringey (HfH) is undertaking a wide range of actions to
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schemes, HfH have identified 282 residents, in 261 households, who are likely to be impacted by the proposed increase in service charges, as these residents either receive no housing benefit or have costs only partially covered by housing benefit.

As this proposal relates to sheltered and good neighbour schemes it will, if implemented, impact on a number of older residents and residents with disabilities:

- Of the 282 residents identified as being impacted, the average age is 66.
- Of the 282 residents likely to be impacted, 158 have identified one or more of the following: a mental health issue, a learning disability, a physical disability, a mobility issue, a sensory impairment, or a long term or terminal illness
- The figure of 158 includes 24 residents with mental health issues.

The possible negative impact identified on these residents would be the charge of a fee that some might be unable to pay without the risk of associated financial hardship. Therefore, the majority of the actions planned to mitigate this impact are around determining which residents can afford to pay, which require assistance to pay, and which need assistance to avoid financial hardship. Alongside this, Homes for Haringey is taking action to reassure and offer assistance to all sheltered and good neighbour scheme residents concerned by the implications of the proposed change.

mitigate the proposed increase in service charge. In order to help people understand the subject of consultation, the process and the potential impact, HfH arranged drop-in sessions at the schemes and these were held in 21 schemes between 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and 24<sup>th</sup> June 2015. 243 people attended the drop-in sessions held in the 21 schemes, and 72 people were offered one-to-one sessions or given individual advice. HfH also provided one additional mop-up session at Campbell Court as no residents had attended following invitation to the session on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

Scheme Support Managers provided further clarity on the proposed changes at coffee mornings throughout July at all 21 schemes. At these coffee mornings, Scheme Managers also provided further copies of the Frequently Asked Questions document (FAQs) produced for the earlier drop-in sessions to residents.

Scheme Managers are also arranging individual face to face contact with the remaining affected residents. If Scheme Managers are unable to have 1-to-1 meetings at the first attempt they will make up to 2 further attempts to visit, leaving a card, phoning, or getting in touch with a relative if it is difficult to make contact with the affected resident. Scheme Managers will be providing feedback on the outcome of each contact so that data is available on each affected residents' circumstances and preferences. Where relevant, HfH are referring affected residents to their Financial Inclusion Team, the Housing Benefit team or the Citizen's Advice Bureau to check if they qualify for any other benefits or if there are other ways to save money off other bills, such as water rates, gas or electricity.

All future support required by residents in relation to budgeting,

applying for benefits or seeking advice is part of the housing related support already provided. . This will be provided through regular support planning meetings with individuals and key-work sessions depending on each resident's level of assessed need. Homes for Haringey is also putting a robust system in place to flag residents who may be affected in the future, should their Housing Benefit circumstances change.

**Stage 7 - Consultation and follow up data from actions set above**

**Data Source (include link where published)**

Homes for Haringey consulted tenants in sheltered and good neighbour schemes on behalf of Haringey Council. The consultation asked 1,285 residents to give their views on a proposal to charge for services they receive, which are not currently charged with their rent. The consultation ran from 1 June 2015 until 30 June 2015.

**What does this data include?**

Homes for Haringey received 197 responses to the consultation, representing a 15% response rate. 74% of residents who responded had a negative response to the proposed service charges. Residents were advised to present their responses formally. No verbal responses were accepted as this was a formal consultation process. A summary of the consultation responses is set out below, together with officer comments on the negative responses received. Further actions by Homes for Haringey are also set out in stage 8 below.

Response/Comment	No. of responses	%	HfH further action
No - Vulnerable/Ability to pay	71	36%	Further individual assistance / assessments
No - Unfair Charges	26	13%	Explain basis for proposed charges

No - Unsatisfactory quality of service	19	10%	Investigate services provided
No - Council tax covers services	9	5%	Explain basis for proposed charges
No - No Comment	22	11%	
Total Negative responses	147	74%	
Yes - Ability to pay	3	2%	
Yes - No Comment	31	16%	
Yes - OK with the proposal	11	6%	
Yes - Quality of Service	1	1%	
Total Positive responses	46	23%	
Don't know - No comment	3	2%	
Don't know - Vulnerable Tenant	1	1%	Further individual assistance / assessments
Total Don't know	4	2%	
Total	197	100%	

HfH are engaging with all affected residents to prepare them for the change and are offering assessments to residents directly affected. Out of the 272 households who are directly affected, HfH arranged a financial assessment with 202 households. 70 households refused as they feel they are able to fund the difference and do not wish to disclose their financial situation.

From the 202 households:

- (a) 20 households have a saving of more than £16,000
- (b) 7 households have an income too high for support eligibility
- (c) 102 households are eligible for (further) Housing Benefit and HfH are assisting with the relevant application
- (d) 34 households are eligible for other benefits and HfH are helping with the relevant application process
- (e) 12 households now have full HB in place since the consultation in June 2015.
- (f) 8 households had a meeting arranged, but this has not taken place yet as they are abroad for a longer period.

This leaves 19 households having to pay the difference themselves. For these and other residents, HfH have provided the following:

- Budgeting Advice
- Utility Advice
- WaterSurePlus eligibility assessment and support with application to reduce the water charge by about £2 per week, which compensated for the proposed increase in Service Charges.

### Stage 8 - Final impact analysis

The proposal to increase service charges was advanced because it was intended to bring charges to sheltered and good neighbour scheme residents in line with those paid by other Council tenants of the borough. As a result of the proposed increase in service charge, Homes for Haringey aims to become more accountable and subject to challenge if services are not provided to the required standard.

The sheltered and good neighbour housing tenant group as a whole have been consulted and there was a 15% response rate. 74% of residents who responded had a negative response to the proposed service charges (as set out in the table in stage 7 above).

Homes for Haringey is responding to the consultation feedback by:

- Providing further opportunities to explain and reassure residents regarding the services they are benefiting from and how the service charges would be applied. This is being done by:
  - i. Scheme Managers speaking to each resident who responded and expressed concerns individually, in order to clarify and explain the reason for the proposed increase.
  - ii. Coffee mornings are being used to discuss the proposal with the purpose of clarifying and reassuring residents on the proposed increase.
- Carrying out assessments with those residents who feel they will struggle to pay any additional charges. HfH are speaking to each resident who is directly affected to work out affordability by providing budgeting support and advice. Where relevant, we refer residents directly to our Financial Inclusion Team to help assess benefits eligibility so that the relevant steps can be taken swiftly. All efforts will be taken to ensure affected residents are accessing any benefits to which they are entitled.
- Homes for Haringey is recording the activities described above in a log of all general and individual discussions and associated outcomes for future reference.

The overall proposed increase in charges is mitigated by the consideration that the majority of the service users will not be impacted by the

change as they will have their charges covered by housing benefit. Out of 1285 residents in our sheltered and good neighbour schemes, we identified 282 residents, in 261 households, who are likely to be impacted by the proposed increase in service charges, as these residents either receive no housing benefit or have costs only partially covered by housing benefit.

If this proposal is implemented, there would potentially be a negative impact on a number of older residents and residents with disabilities:

- Of the 282 residents identified as being impacted, the average age is 66.
- Of the 282 residents likely to be impacted, 158 have identified one or more of the following: a mental health issue, a learning disability, a physical disability, a mobility issue, a sensory impairment, or a long term or terminal illness
- The above figure of 158 includes 24 residents with mental health issues.

The potential negative impact identified on these residents would be the introduction of a charge that some might be unable to pay without the associated risk of financial hardship. To mitigate this impact, Homes for Haringey is working closely with all residents likely to be directly affected by the proposed increase:

- HfH are assessing affordability and providing help with budgeting advice
- HfH are referring relevant cases directly to our specialist Financial Inclusion Team to assess any further benefits eligibility and other funding opportunities to minimise potential impact
- HfH are developing a framework to ensure that any new cases caused by benefit changes in future are identified and that relevant action to minimise the potential impact is taken.

It is the view of this assessment that the potential negative impact identified on the 282 residents not fully covered by Housing Benefit is likely to be successfully mitigated as Homes for Haringey:

- is working closely with all the residents likely to be directly affected
- is clear about who can self fund and is making every effort to find funding for those who would not be able to cope with this increase
- is putting a sound mechanism in place to pick up new cases going forward based on changes of residents' circumstances.

The Homes for Haringey financial assessment work in respect of the 272 households (294 residents) identified in that work as directly affected by the service charge increases, established that just 19 of those households would have to pay the difference themselves and they were provided with advice on budgeting and utility savings schemes.

**Stage 9 - Equality Impact Assessment Review Log**

Review approved by Director / Assistant Director

Date of review

Review approved by Director / Assistant Director

Date of review

**Stage 10 – Publication**

Ensure the completed EqIA is published in accordance with the Council's policy.

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