

## Housing Improvement Sub-Plan

### Key

Completed/in place		
On track		
Not started		
ISDHE: Interim Strategic Director for Housing and Environment	CE: Chief Executive	ADofF: Assistant Director of Finance
ADofH: Assistant Director of Housing	ADofOD: Assistant Director of Organisational Development	ADofCandCC: Assistant Director of Communications and Customer Service

### Leadership

Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Rec no	Owner	Updates since May 24
H1 Develop an improvement plan for Housing with a particular focus on leadership, cultural change, tenant engagement, building and tenant safety, compliance, staff training, procurement and budget monitoring.	This plan	Complete	1	ISDHE	Completed
H2 Introduce performance management culture, including more comprehensive monthly compliance reporting and assurance, and regular review by CMB and Scrutiny. To review KPIs and monitor key decisions, risk logs and improvement plans at directorate management meeting.  Ensure regular monitoring reports including the risk register, voids, budget monitoring and contract awards reviewed at least quarterly by directorate management teams, with non-compliance tackled swiftly.	Draft dashboard created to share with team, stakeholders and scrutiny committee. 2024/5 KPI review completed with team leaders by Housing Insight and Improvement Lead Housing Senior Management Team meetings set fortnightly with set agenda covering key decisions, risk	May 24	2, 3, 7 and 21	ADofH	Completed

Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Rec no	Owner	Updates since May 24
	logs and improvement against plans				
H3 Refresh the Housing Strategy, in partnership with stakeholders and residents to help align housing service plans to wider aspirations for Guildford Borough Council's people and places, and the Social Housing Regulation Act.  Ensure the Corporate Plan feeds into the Housing Strategy and vice versa.	Development of strategy to be complete by December 24.	December 24	4 and 5	ADofH	Corporate Strategy – July 2024.
H4 Ensure a permanent Joint Strategic Director of Housing is in place and has adequate time to devote to Housing, amongst their other priorities.	Recruitment process launched	Recruitment to be made by the end of Summer 2024	8 and 9	CE and ISDHE	Shortlisting and interviews - July 2024
H5 Review the entire Housing staffing structure and ensure that it is fit for purpose, is robust and has the necessary capacity and skills. Ensure all job profiles are up to date and reflect organisational and service needs.	Review of staffing structure launched	Phase 1 June 24 Phase 2 December 24	10 and 16	ADofH	Phase 1 complete: pivotal roles recruited to in compliance & repairs: Phase 2 will be a comprehensive review.
H6 Agree a Corporate Vision and Values and ensure that this is reflected and fully embedded within Housing.  Ensure a 'golden thread' approach exists so that the Corporate Plan feeds into the Housing Strategy, and in turn, feeds into team plans and Appraisal Targets	Corporate strategy will go to Full Council in July 24  Strategy and values to be reflected in team plans by Autumn 24  Housing Strategy will be complete by December 24	December 24	11 and 12	ADofOD	Corporate Strategy & Values, 23 July Full Council.  Values discussion featured at all housing staff event June 2024 and embedded into performance appraisals
H7 Introduce a performance culture. Ensure all housing staff have regular 121s, annual appraisals, with clear	To work with HR on templates and guidance for	September 24	13 and 27	ADofH	Commenced, will align with Corporate

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work-based and behavioural targets, with 6 monthly reviews and development plans.	appraisals, 121s and development plans				performance management
H8 Undertake a skills and qualifications audit for the housing team and ensure that senior housing managers and housing executives hold professional qualifications and if they do not, support them to obtain these qualifications.	Audit to be undertaken by October 24	October 24	14 and 15	ADofH	
H9 Ensure all permanent jobs are reflected within the Establishment and match with the specified staffing budgets.	Completed	Completed	17	ADofH	
H10 HR and Housing Service Recruitment panel members to consider references as part of the recruitment process for permanent, agency and interim candidates. (HR to retain references on file for 2 years)	Is now standard	Completed	18	ADofH	

## Governance & Culture

Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Rec no	Owner	Updates since May 24
H11 Develop a skills requirement audit that identifies the minimum levels of procurement and financial management knowledge required for roles across the organisation, with an associated training programme to help all staff in relevant roles meet the requirements.	Audit scheduled for completion Autumn 24 Officers to attend appropriate training – awareness and/or practice	Training to be complete by December 24	20	ADofOD	Initial discussions with HR.
H12 Engender a ‘no blame’ learning culture within a framework of staff taking personal accountability and responsibility and within a performance culture.	To be reflected as part of corporate values	July 24	25	ADofH	Open discussions at Housing Away Day. Updated Corporate Whistleblowing Policy which has been embedded into Housing practices.

H13 Encourage staff to come forward with continuous improvements, innovation and creativity whilst adhering to Good Governance and following due process.	To be reflected as part of corporate values and strategy	July 24	26	ADofH	Housing Away morning – June  Creation of Housing Volunteers group and engagement with Housing workstream leads for innovation & ideas.  Improvement Champions Group also formed for staff to be involved with wider council improvements
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## Finance, Budget & the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Rec no	Owner	Updates since May 24
H14 Financial Management Ensure the team follow, comply, monitor and report on procurement, contract procedure and financial rules in all work areas. Ensure all reports requesting investment, major procurement and financial expenditure include a robust business case. Ensure the HRA, Capital and General Fund (Housing) revenue budgets have detailed breakdowns. Ensure there are inbuilt financial checks and balances, with Purchase Order and procurement monitoring.	All processes to be in place by the end of June 24 PPM and Procurement training to be complete by the end of December 24. Working with Finance to develop improved financial reporting for housing budgets.	June 24   December 24	6, 28, 29, 31, 32, 34 and 57	ADofH	Set up monthly budget monitoring meetings  Shared contract and procedure rules (currently in draft)  Identified in staff appraisals to attend required training.  Working with Finance and Procurement.

H15 Ensure sufficient HRA experienced Accountants support the Housing Service.	Finance team being restructured to support this	September 24	30	ADofH	Savills re-procurement to complete July 24 – HRA business plan review and training to appropriate staff
H16 Recruit permanent procurement staff.	Recruitment launched	September 24	33	ADofH	New Interim Head of Procurement started June 24. Housing service has dedicated procurement resource within corporate procurement.

### Back-log of Voids (Empty Properties)

Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Rec no	Owner	Updates since May 24
H17 The inspections pre and post-works to be undertaken by Guildford Borough Council surveyors. Appoint permanent surveyors	Recruiting interim surveying capacity. Permanent recruitment to commence once new structure agreed.	December 24	37 and 38	ADofH	All works over £1000 post-inspected
H18 Undertake a service review of the key to key void process with cost benchmarking and best practice.	Voids team leader appointed May 2024. Will lead review	December 24	39 and 40	ADofH	

### Leaseholds and Leaseholders

Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Rec no	Owner	Updates since May 24
H19 To review leaseholder regulations and services and prepare for new Leasehold Reform Bill. Process map the work of the leasehold team; so that new members of staff clearly understand what needs to be	Comprehensive leasehold review to be scoped. Including, refresh processes, clear roles and responsibilities and	December 24	41, 42, 44, 45 and 46	ADofH	Leasehold lead attended leasehold reform awareness session to develop future responsibilities.

done, and where files are stored, etc. There were no leaseholder staff, at the time of writing.	ensure adhered to processes				
H20 Ensure appropriate accountancy support for Leaseholder Service Charges. An accountant with financial responsibility for Leasehold Service Charges.	Finance team being restructured to support this	September 24	43	ADofF	Leasehold lead working with Finance and created a service charge project team.
H21 To undertake an audit and review of all HRA leasehold property let to RPs and charities	Audit commenced. Will establish leasehold register, review earlier communication/decisions and confirm next steps	September 24	47, 48, 49	ADofH	Commenced.

### North Downs Housing and other Local Authority Companies

Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Rec no	Owner	Updates since May 24
H22 Undertake a review of North Downs Housing.	Review into the future of NDH commenced – to include membership of local authority shareholder company	July 2024	50, 51	ISDHE	Discussion with NDH Board ongoing. CLB review of council owned companies ongoing

### Compliance & Decision Making

Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Rec no	Owner	Updates since May 24
H23 Ensure Key Decision reports concerning contracts are presented to the Executive for decision and appear on the Forward Plan.	Housing Managers reviewing and monitoring procurement and contract renewals to ensure correct governance route adhered to. Housing SMT forward plan developed to map report pathways.	May 24	52	ADofH	

H24 Prepare for the Procurement Act 2024.	New Procurement Strategy in Summer 2024	September 24	54	ADofF	New Head of Procurement started
H25 Ensure that Urgency Powers are only used in exceptional circumstances and that the Strategic Director for Housing ensures that the Monitoring Officer agrees that the Urgency Powers are warranted on a case-by-case basis and that there is full constitutional compliance.	Can only be used with agreement of Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer	Complete	55	ISDHE	
H26 Ensure that all Procurement requirements are followed, and that Housing works closely with the Corporate Procurement Team and Legal Services.	Regular joint meetings scheduled and taking place. Procurement dashboard developed.	Complete	6 and 56	ADofH	
H27 Set out Planned Housing Works with associated costs reviewed quarterly for progress on planned works and actual to projected costs.	Asset Management Strategy to be developed. Future planned programmes will follow strategy aims, with quarterly monitoring	Mar 25	58	ADofH	

## Housing Software Systems

Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE rec no	Owner	Updates since May 24
H28 Upgrade the Housing Software System and ensure it interfaces with the Corporate Finance System, Business World and Housing Applications	Review of all housing IT systems and future requirements. Link to emerging corporate IT strategy	2027	61	ISDHE	Started – planning stage

## Complaints

Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE rec no	Owner	Updates since May 24
H29 Clarify and review the Complaints Process ensuring it is a simple and clear process, which puts customers at its heart.	Review completed to meet Housing Ombudsman Service complaint handling code	Complete	63	ADofCand CC	

H30 Analyse complaints and identify themes; so that service and policy improvements can be made.	In depth analysis commenced	June 24	64	ADofH	Review complete and service improvements identified
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## Agency Staff

Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Rec no	Owner	Updates since May 24
H31 Review recruitment, induction and management of all agency staff. To ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the relevant software system (Business World) flags when contracts should be reviewed.</li> <li>all agency staff have the references, relevant and necessary qualifications and experience</li> <li>all agency staff disclose if related to or know existing permanent and/or agency staff and councillors, and</li> <li>all staff policies apply to agency and permanent staff.</li> </ul>	All actions to be implemented as standard	June 24	65, 66, 67 and 68	ADofOD	HR review on agency staff  Agency staff do follow key policies and part of induction. Relationship policy now in place.

## Housing Data, Corporate Property & HRA Land Data

Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Rec no	Owner	Updates since May 24
H32 To ensure all HRA land and assets are documented and listed.	To develop project plan to undertake a data audit of HRA properties and assets. Book valuation commissioned	March 25	70 and 71	ADofH	Started – planning stage
H33 Housing to liaise with Corporate Assets and Property Team to ensure that maintenance & repairs of Housing garages and Housing car parks are undertaken by the most effective and appropriate services.	SLA review to complete by December 24	December 24	72	ADofH	Started – planning stage



## Preparation for and Compliance with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2024

Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Rec no	Owner	Updates since May 24
<p>H34 Prepare for and comply with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.</p> <p>Develop data management, improvement plan and processes to adhere to legislative and regulatory requirements with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RSH consumer standards</li> <li>• H&amp;S compliance,</li> <li>• Tenant Satisfaction Measures, and</li> <li>• Building Safety compliance</li> </ul>	<p>Acuity appointed to carry out TSM surveys May 2024. Training on RSH consumer standards carried out.</p> <p>Plan for housing update briefings, away day and monthly all housing meetings to increase communication and raise awareness and engagement.</p>	<p>Spring 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	53, 73, 74 and 76	ADofH	<p>Housing Away Morning June 24</p> <p>HQN appointed to conduct external assessment against Consumer Standards</p>
<p>H35 Strengthen and document engagement with tenants and broaden and refresh the representation of TEG (The Tenant Engagement Group).</p>	<p>Work with TEG and Community Services to increase tenant engagement. Away day scheduled with TEG.</p>	July 24	75	ADofH	<p>TEG sessions took place in July: Introduction to Improvement Plan &amp; vision for TEG. Shared Regulatory Judgement with TEG.</p>
<p>H36 Consider commissioning a Social Housing Management Peer, or independent Review for Consumer Standards.</p>	<p>External independent assessment commissioned</p>	Completed	77	ADofH	