

# **HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL**

CABINET 13 JULY 2022

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## **HOUSING SERVICES REVIEW PANEL**

### **FOR DECISION**

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Gwen Robinson

Key Decision: No

Report Number: HBC/060/2022

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### **1. Purpose**

1.1. This paper is submitted to Cabinet to establish a Housing Services Review Panel

### **2. Recommendation**

2.1. Members are requested to

- a. Establish a Housing Services Review Panel as a working group of Cabinet
- b. To receive a report from the Housing Services Review Panel within the next 3 months on the outcome of their service review

### **3. Executive Summary**

3.1. Havant Borough Council agreed in March to become a standalone Council and is establishing its staffing structures.

3.2. Concurrently, Cabinet established a Budget Working Group in response to the budget presented to Council in February 2022, which showed increasing budget deficits over the 5 year medium term financial plan. Budget Working Group is undertaking a series of service reviews to ensure economy and effectiveness in the delivery of services within budget.

- 3.3 The Budget Working Group was due to consider a service review for the housing team in June. The Housing Service budget is overspent – see the comments of the Chief Finance Officer below. This paper requests that Cabinet establishes a separate Housing Service Review Panel to undertake a deep dive into the delivery of the housing service, its staffing structures and use of Government grants. Terms of reference for this Panel is included at Appendix A.
- 3.4 The move to a standalone Council presents an ideal opportunity to review service delivery. Having an effective and efficient housing service is of paramount importance for the Havant Borough, as the area is facing a number of challenges. The 2021 census demonstrates that there has been a 2.9% increase in population since the last census and that the number of households has increased from 51,311 to 53,600, an increase of 4.5%. The population is predicted to grow further by 2030. At a time when the economic environment is becoming more challenging for many households, it is vital that the Council provides an effective housing support service. This requires a top to bottom review of strategy, structures, budget and operations. For this reason, a Housing Service Review Panel separate to the Budget Working Group, is proposed.
- 3.5 The Housing Services Review Panel will be a working group of Cabinet and therefore should report back to Cabinet with any recommendations to change the strategy or service as soon as possible, and certainly no later than 3 months after this report.

### ***Affordable Housing Liaison Panel***

- 3.6 The Cabinet proposed in its Corporate Strategy to establish an Affordable Housing Liaison Panel for the purpose of collaborating with local housing providers. This was to find long term solutions to the housing pressures within the Havant Borough.
- 3.7 Whilst the Affordable Housing Liaison Panel is still essential to the delivery of a good housing service, it is proposed that the Housing Services Review Panel should consider, as part of its remit, the appropriate time at which to establish the Liaison Panel. At this stage, a short, intensive piece of work is required to first ensure an effective housing service. The Liaison Panel should evolve out of the work of the Service Review Panel and it's report should also make recommendations for the future operation of the Affordable Housing Liaison Panel.

## **4. Additional Budgetary Implications**

- 4.1. There are no budget implications identified at this stage. The report back to Cabinet may identify recommendations for future operation of the service which

carry budget implications. Those will need to be considered at the time of reporting.

**5. Background and relationship to Corporate Strategy, Climate & Environment Strategy and/or Business Plans**

5.1 These recommendations meet the Councils statutory requirements to review levels of homelessness, undertake activities to prevent homelessness, secure accommodation and provide support to homeless households and to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in place.

**6. Options considered**

6.1 This service review could be referred to the Budget Working Group, however the level of the review required for the housing service would suggest that a dedicated service panel, led by the relevant Cabinet portfolio holder would be more appropriate.

**7. Resource Implications**

7.1. There are no financial Implications identified at this stage (see paragraph 4.1)

7.2. There are no Human Resources implications identified at this stage. It is likely that structural changes will arise from the review. This is because the team is undergoing structural change as a result of the decision to create a standalone Council. These will be reported back to Cabinet within the next 3 months.

**Section 151 Officer comments**

Date: 4 July 2022

The council is significantly overspending against its revenue budget for placing residents in bed and breakfast and other temporary housing accommodation with a reported deficit of circa £775k in 2021/22. This level of overspend has continued into the 2022/23 financial year. Therefore, the Housing Services Review panel will need to consider any corrective action alongside additional revenue budget requirement over the MTFS period which will need to be fed back to Cabinet for approval.

7.3. There are no Information Governance implications at this stage. This report is public and the report back to Cabinet within 3 months will also be a public document.

7.4. There are no other resource implications identified at this stage.

## **8. Legal Implications**

8.1. There are no legal implications identified at this stage. The Council has statutory obligations to meet in the delivery of a housing service and alignment of the service to these duties will be reported back to Cabinet within the next 3 months.

### **Monitoring Officer comments**

Date: 5 July 2022

Monitoring Officer to provide comments at the Cabinet meeting.

## **9. Climate & Environment Implications**

9.1. None identified at this stage.

## **10. Consultation**

10.1 There are no consultation requirements at this stage

## **11. Appendices**

11.1. Appendix A: Terms of Reference

## **12. Background papers**

12.1. None

Agreed and signed off by:

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Gwen Robinson**

Executive Head of Service: Claire Hughes

Monitoring Officer: Mark Watkins

Section 151 Officer: Malcolm Coe

**Contact Officer**

Name: Kim Sawyer

Job Title: Interim Chief Executive