

**Equality Analysis of 2012/13 Council budget  
Housing Services**

**1. Departmental information and audit trail**

<b>Council department</b>	Housing Services Department
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<b>Consultation with other officers / departments</b>	Community Housing services Area Management Finance & Resources

**2. Vision / aims and objectives**

<b>Departmental vision statement</b>	<p>Vision:</p> <p>Making Southwark homes great places to live where good quality services are delivered right first time.</p> <p>Mission:</p> <p>Improve Housing Services by working with residents to deliver consistently high quality services, doing more for less and supporting the most vulnerable residents.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <p>Objective 1: Implement a programme to ensure that Southwark's council housing stock is warm, dry and safe</p> <p>Objective 2: Deliver an improved housing repairs service, verified by residents</p> <p>Objective 3: Improve customer service and increase on-line services</p> <p>Objective 4: Ensure that charges for homeowners are fair.</p> <p>Objective 5 Provide improved value for money and deliver savings</p> <p>Objective 6: Increase the supply of housing, use our stock effectively, and minimise the number of people in temporary accommodation</p> <p>Objective 7 Involve tenants and homeowners in the improvement of service delivery</p>
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### 3. 2012/13 budget proposals

#### Budget “headlines”

The department will focus on rationalising support services so more money is protected at the frontline and working alongside others to provide the organisation with the tools to innovate and transform service delivery. It will also be focused on delivering functions that help achieve local policy priorities. This will be achieved by rationalising back office and support costs and merging functions as a result of forming a new Housing Services Department

Ongoing negotiations to deliver improved contract management, and realise savings through operational efficiencies without adversely impacting upon service delivery. The council remains committed to this means of transforming customer access as a policy objective.

Taking the various aspects of Community Housing together, the demand for temporary accommodation is an area of concern, and alternatives to the high cost options of utilising the private rented sector and bed and breakfast placements continue to be explored with some success in mitigating this pressure in cost terms.

There will be opportunities within the department to streamline structures through rationalisation of internal organisational arrangements. There will be an imperative to maximise opportunities from very limited external funding streams. Resources will be focused on the most vulnerable through partnership arrangements with developers to help create jobs and through optimising council land and property to achieve policy objectives. Seeking alternative ways to deliver services will also be a priority.

It is proposed to deliver savings within Finance and Resources through management restructuring, rationalised back office support and new contractual arrangements for facilities management, information and data services. The savings include a further review of finance functions across the Council, building on the recent shared services review. This will also include a review of audit, fraud and risk services to refocus priorities and reduce running costs. Savings will also be achieved through smarter procurement and contract management.

<b>4. Service users</b>	
<b>Service users</b>	<p>Our service users include tenants, home owners and applicants for social housing. The full range of protected characteristics is represented amongst our residents. Vulnerable people and those on low incomes are also strongly represented amongst our residents, and some wards in Southwark are amongst the most deprived in the country. We continually undertake specific equality impact assessments as part of ongoing considerations around the implementation of the budget.</p>

<b>5. Process</b>	
<b>Outline of process followed</b>	<p>The HRA budget efficiency savings were determined with reference to wide-ranging consultation exercises by Housing Services. This process is ongoing. It has included work with the following stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Savings Working Party, in which the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Strategic Director engage with Tenant and Home Owner Council representatives regarding the budget.</li> <li>▪ Tenant Council</li> <li>▪ Home Owner Council</li> <li>▪ Area Forums</li> <li>▪ Tenant and Resident Associations</li> <li>▪ Consultation on housing estates</li> <li>▪ Consultation via drop in sessions at Housing Offices</li> <li>▪ Statutory and Contractual Notifications</li> </ul> <p>Housing staff were consulted by a range of means (these included all-staff meetings, written consultation, specific meetings regarding re-organisations, etc).</p>

Service area	Budget proposals	Equality impact	Evidence gathered	Mitigation/further action
<b>Area Management</b>				
Community Safety	Reconfiguration of community safety/ warden provision on housing estates	Enforcement will be targeted at the most serious offenders in the Community ensuring that the most vulnerable are protected. Resident Officers will focus on early intervention to prevent escalation of antisocial behaviour, referring vulnerable families and individuals at risk of becoming entrenched in antisocial behaviour and criminality to support agencies as required. However risks of serious escalation in rates of antisocial behaviour and in HATE Crime need to be planned for as the recession deepens. Rough sleeping and squatting on housing estates parts by street homeless and economic migrants is increasing and may cause distress to the elderly and vulnerable on housing estates. Community safety's and Southwark antisocial behaviour unit's (SASBU) capacity to manage such complex situations will be adversely affected by this diminution in resources. It should also be considered that the change in antisocial behaviour powers may be delayed and the new powers not in place to be utilised until late in 2013 or 2014. It may take some considerable time for the new powers to be fully understood by the courts which may increase costs.	Resident Officers are receiving comprehensive training in January and February 2012 to enhance their skills around case management and problem solving. At present they are supported by SASBU officers in day to day case management. SASBU are currently working with police managing increasing levels of HATE Crime and antisocial behaviour affecting residents and businesses in Bermondsey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing Managers will regularly review the work of Resident Officers work in tackling antisocial behaviour looking at case management and measuring the customer experience.</li> <li>▪ Good Neighbour Agreements and other methods of building Community resilience are also being considered.</li> </ul>
Area Management	Area management modernisation - Reduction in number of Housing receptions	The reduction of reception areas would have potentially affected the elderly, those with mental health issues and low income users. However numbers of users have been decreasing as more services are been provided at the OSS, via the phone and web.	Footfall logs from receptions areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To ensure service delivery 4 local office hubs for face to face meetings and reception services have been set up.</li> <li>▪ A mobile office has been introduced, to</li> </ul>

Service area	Budget proposals	Equality impact	Evidence gathered	Mitigation/further action
				visit the more distant estates on a regular basis, with regular surgeries. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resident service officers focus on the community and increased high visibility on the estates.</li> </ul>
Area Management	Reduction in energy costs across housing services through improved contract arrangements and reduced usage	No adverse impact on protected categories because efficiencies will be made by negotiating contract and agreeing on a new energy tariff		
Area Management	Move to a fixed charging arrangement for provision of legal services and greater DIY arrears actions undertaken in-house	No adverse impact on protected categories.		
<b>Maintenance and Compliance</b>				
Engineering	Change from Schedule of Rates to Price per Property pricing model for the	There will be no discernable impact on residents as the reduction is driven by a new commercial agreement with the contractors on the heating contract. The service will remain the same with improved key performance indicators and same	As per Gateway 3 supplied to DCRB	

<b>Service area</b>	<b>Budget proposals</b>	<b>Equality impact</b>	<b>Evidence gathered</b>	<b>Mitigation/further action</b>
	heating contract (Individual heating systems)	attendance times		
Repairs	Internal staff restructuring – centralisation/ rationalisation of repairs, maintenance functions and back office processes.	All communities will benefit from improved contract management and more streamlined services. No adverse impact on protected categories.		
Repairs	Southwark Building Services (SBS) – internalise management and rationalise workforce generating.	Greater efficiency and productivity due to rationalisation of the workforce will benefit all communities. The contract remains the same, very low impact on service delivery. Impact evenly spread across the population		
Repairs	Contractor efficiencies	Improved contract management across repairs and maintenance contracts. The contract remains the same, so little impact on day to day service delivery. Impact is evenly spread across the population		
Major Works	Staff restructuring within the Investment and Asset Management team	Very low impact on residents. Reduce the level of staff to be in line with staffing levels of similar organisations of our size. Low impact on residents and no adverse impact on protected categories.		
<b>Community Housing Services</b>				

Service area	Budget proposals	Equality impact	Evidence gathered	Mitigation/further action
Business Improvement	Rationalise business support functions all divisions under Head of CHS, including resident involvement	No adverse impact on protected categories.	Restructure consultation document	
Housing Assessment and Support	Reduction of business support at Bournemouth Road. The saving consists on the deletion of Business Support Officer post due to the introduction of streamlined services and modern ways of working.	No adverse impact on protected categories.	Restructure consultation document	
Housing Options	Deletion Homeseach magazine – on-line access only	Review of bidding shows over 90% received on-line therefore impact is limited to the elderly and those with mental health or learning disabilities	Novalet report on bidding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Telephone advice line widely advertised and bidding support sessions arranged by local advice agencies</li> </ul>
Temporary Accommodation	Estate Voids – reduce unit costs, predominantly repairs and maintenance and other operational expenses	No adverse impact on protected categories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SAP spend. Projection of future stock numbers and Temporary accommodation model</li> <li>▪ Stock condition surveys.</li> <li>▪ iWorld reports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased and sustained staffing level in Handyperson team reduces the need for external contract cleans.</li> <li>▪ Educating tenants about their responsibilities.</li> </ul>

Service area	Budget proposals	Equality impact	Evidence gathered	Mitigation/further action
				<p>Identifying any potential repairs issues during the occupancy checks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved management of planned maintenance and investment programme</li> </ul>
Temporary Accommodation	Reduction in tenant removal expenses	Users of this service include high risk cases, such as victims of domestic violence, also women and the vulnerable could be disproportionately affected by changes on this service.	Increased number of all lets to homeless households in temporary accommodation reduces the need to move clients between TA where we absorb the cost of removals	Assistance with removals will be considered on a case by case basis. Need to identify hardship cases at an early stage to mitigate against delayed move on
Temporary Accommodation	Hostels – rationalise operational budgets and reduce unit costs	Users of this service include high risk cases, such as victims of domestic violence, also women and the vulnerable could be disproportionately affected by changes on this service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Projection of future stock numbers and type of property,</li> <li>Temporary accommodation model.</li> <li>Change of supplier and reduced costs.</li> <li>Changes to the catering contract.</li> <li>Resident surveys.</li> <li>iWorld reports</li> <li>SAP.</li> </ul>	
Temporary Accommodation	Reduce agency usage	No adverse impact on protected categories as these savings is the result of streamlining back office processes.	In line with corporate policy. Reduced staffing levels in	



Service area	Budget proposals	Equality impact	Evidence gathered	Mitigation/further action
			business unit following restructure.	
<b>Regeneration Department</b>				
	Staff restructuring within the Investment Strategy team	No adverse impact on protected categories as these savings is the result of streamlining back office processes.		
<b>Department Support costs</b>				
	Staff restructuring within Finance & Resources department	No adverse impact on protected categories as these savings is the result of streamlining back office processes.		
	Thames Water – net saving from stock changes			
	Reduction in central employee pay award provision			