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Date: **7 February 2020**
Our ref: **Extraordinary Cabinet/Agenda**
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EXTRAORDINARY CABINET

17 FEBRUARY 2020

An extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet will be held at **7.00 pm on Monday, 17 February 2020** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Membership:

Councillor Cllr Everitt (Chairman); Councillors: Whitehead, Albon, Duckworth and Yates

AGENDA

<u>Item No</u>	<u>Subject</u>
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1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** (Pages 3 - 4)
To receive any declarations of interest. Members are advised to consider the advice contained within the Declaration of Interest advice attached to this Agenda. If a Member declares an interest, they should complete the [Declaration of Interest Form](#)
3. **HOUSING MANAGEMENT OPTIONS APPRAISAL; OUTCOME OF FORMAL CONSULTATION** (Pages 5 - 76)
4. **ASSET MANAGEMENT - SURPLUS PROPERTY AND LAND** (Pages 77 - 82)



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Do I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and if so what action should I take?

Your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) are those interests that are, or should be, listed on your Register of Interest Form.

If you are at a meeting and the subject relating to one of your DPIs is to be discussed, in so far as you are aware of the DPI, you **must** declare the existence **and** explain the nature of the DPI during the declarations of interest agenda item, at the commencement of the item under discussion, or when the interest has become apparent

Once you have declared that you have a DPI (unless you have been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee or the Monitoring Officer, for which you will have applied to the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting) you **must**:-

1. Not speak or vote on the matter;
2. Withdraw from the meeting room during the consideration of the matter;
3. Not seek to improperly influence the decision on the matter.

Do I have a significant interest and if so what action should I take?

A significant interest is an interest (other than a DPI or an interest in an Authority Function) which:

1. Affects the financial position of yourself and/or an associated person; or
Relates to the determination of your application for any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration made by, or on your behalf of, you and/or an associated person;
2. And which, in either case, a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as being so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgment of the public interest.

An associated person is defined as:

- A family member or any other person with whom you have a close association, including your spouse, civil partner, or somebody with whom you are living as a husband or wife, or as if you are civil partners; or
- Any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors; or
- Any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000;
- Any body of which you are in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the Authority; or
- any body in respect of which you are in a position of general control or management and which:
 - exercises functions of a public nature; or
 - is directed to charitable purposes; or
 - has as its principal purpose or one of its principal purposes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

An Authority Function is defined as: -

- Housing - where you are a tenant of the Council provided that those functions do not relate particularly to your tenancy or lease; or
- Any allowance, payment or indemnity given to members of the Council;
- Any ceremonial honour given to members of the Council
- Setting the Council Tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992

If you are at a meeting and you think that you have a significant interest then you **must** declare the existence **and** nature of the significant interest at the commencement of the matter, or when the interest has become apparent, or the declarations of interest agenda item.

Once you have declared that you have a significant interest (unless you have been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee or the Monitoring Officer, for which you will have applied to the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting) you **must**:-

1. Not speak or vote (unless the public have speaking rights, or you are present to make representations, answer questions or to give evidence relating to the business being discussed in which case you can speak only)
2. Withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the matter or immediately after speaking.
3. Not seek to improperly influence the decision.

Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality

Councillors must declare at meetings any gift, benefit or hospitality with an estimated value (or cumulative value if a series of gifts etc.) of £25 or more. You **must**, at the commencement of the meeting or when the interest becomes apparent, disclose the existence and nature of the gift, benefit or hospitality, the identity of the donor and how the business under consideration relates to that person or body. However you can stay in the meeting unless it constitutes a significant interest, in which case it should be declared as outlined above.

What if I am unsure?

If you are in any doubt, Members are strongly advised to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or the Committee Services Manager well in advance of the meeting.

If you need to declare an interest then please complete the declaration of [interest form](#).

Housing management options appraisal; outcome of formal consultation

Extraordinary Cabinet	17 February 2020
Report Author	Tim Willis, Deputy Chief Executive and 151 Officer
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Helen Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods
Status	For Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	Yes
Reasons for Key	Significant effect on communities
Previously Considered by	Cabinet - 17 October 2019
Ward:	All

Executive Summary:

An options appraisal was completed in October 2019, reviewing the delivery of housing management services provided by East Kent Housing (EKH) on behalf of Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council and Thanet District Council.

The four councils each agreed that the preferred option for future service provision to the four councils' tenants and leaseholders is that it should become an in-house service, subject to consultation.

This report sets out the outcomes from the formal consultation exercise undertaken with EKH tenants and leaseholders. It proposes that officers from across the four councils be instructed to negotiate ending the agreement with EKH and to make preparations for the housing management service to be brought in-house.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended to Cabinet that:

1. Having noted the results of the tenant and leaseholder consultation, the cost/benefit analysis and the risk analysis, it is agreed that the management of the council's housing stock be brought back in-house.
2. The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods be authorised to terminate the management agreement with EKH as soon as practicable.
3. The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods be authorised to take such decisions as may be necessary to facilitate the process of bringing the

Agenda Item 3

	<p>housing service in-house, including the use of Housing Revenue Account balances as required for any one off transition costs incurred.</p> <p>4. To delegate authorisation to the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer for the use of up to £250k of HRA Reserves for transitional costs.</p>
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CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS	
Financial and Value for Money	<p>Detailed financial implications are considered within section 7 of this report, and within the cost benefit analysis attached at annex 2.</p> <p>The working assumption at this stage is that the on-going costs of providing the landlord service in-house will be contained within the existing budget for the management fee.</p> <p>The proposal would have one-off transition costs, estimated at this stage to be around £250,000. It is proposed that these be funded, as required, from available HRA balances. In addition a revenue provision of £55,000 has been included within the 2020/21 draft HRA budget for an interim post of Transition Project Manager.</p> <p>This will be continually monitored and any significant costs above this level reported to members.</p>
Legal	<p>As required by the guidance issued in December 2011 by MHCLG, a risk analysis has been prepared. This document sets out the risks and their implications in detail and is given as Appendix 3.</p> <p>The guidance also requires councils to consider the cost/benefit analysis before reaching a final decision.</p> <p>The four councils as joint owners of EKH will need to achieve a mutually agreed termination of the contract, in accordance with the terms of the owners agreement.</p> <p>A decision to bring the ALMO back in house may result in a TUPE transfer of staff from EKH to TDC. This will be the case where, at the point of transfer, there is an organised grouping of staff whose main purpose is the provision of the housing service to TDC residents.</p> <p>There will be the need to transfer supply and service contracts and other assets held by EKH as part of the process. While the Council will take the benefit of those agreements, it will also have the burden of them.</p>
Corporate	<p>Strategic Aims: The proposals set out in this report will provide an opportunity to improve services provided to the councils tenants and leaseholders and to ensure that the service is more accountable to members and open to scrutiny from tenants and leaseholders. The proposals set out in this report specifically support the council's service ambitions, as set out in its published Corporate Statement.</p> <p>Communications: This report outlines that good communication, informing and involving tenants and leaseholders, elected members, EKH, council staff and other stakeholders will be</p>

Agenda Item 3

	<p>required. A communications strategy will be developed to support the corporate project management group.</p> <p>Property: An assessment of the future staff accommodation requirements will now need to be quantified. An Asset Management Strategy for the council's housing stock will also need to be established, considering alignment and opportunities for efficiencies with our corporate property asset portfolio.</p> <p>Risk: A detailed assessment of risk is attached at annex 3.</p>		
Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty	<p>Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.</p> <p>Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,</td> </tr></table>	Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
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Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,			
Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it			
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.			

Considerable efforts were made during the consultation to consult harder to reach groups. Responses to the consultation could be provided online, by telephone or by post. Therefore, we can be confident that all council tenants and leaseholders were given the opportunity to participate in the consultation.

People on low incomes, older people and more vulnerable households are all over represented among council tenants. Therefore, any changes to the service which will deliver efficiencies and improvements will benefit these people and households with these protected characteristics.

A completed Equalities Impact Assessment is attached at Annex 9.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES (tick those relevant) ✓	
Growth	
Environment	
Communities	✓

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The four councils of Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council and Thanet District Council are neighbouring district councils located in East Kent.
- 1.2 On 1 April 2011, the councils established East Kent Housing (EKH) under section 27 of the Housing Act 1985, delegating the management of its housing stock of approximately 17,000 homes. EKH is an Arms-Length Management Organisation (ALMO), jointly owned, in equal share, by the four councils. EKH was managed by an independent board up until 12 December 2019, when it was replaced by a new board consisting of the chief executives of the four councils.
- 1.3 In early 2019, the four client councils raised concerns about a number of key areas of the services provided by EKH in relation to asset management, procurement and delivery of the capital programme, which were further exacerbated by serious issues in relation to the internal control of health and safety, including fire safety, electrical safety, lift safety and legionella and limited assurance for gas safety.
- 1.4 The four councils agreed to self-refer to the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH), confirming that the councils, through EKH, had failed to meet statutory health and safety requirements across a range of areas. In September 2019, the RSH's investigation concluded that the four councils (under their statutory landlord responsibilities) were non-compliant, resulting in a Regulatory Notice being issued. The notice remains 'live' for 12 months or until full compliance is achieved.
- 1.5 As a result of the above, the four councils have continued to present reports to their various governance groups explaining why they have concerns about the way in which EKH has been managing council owned homes.
- 1.6 In June 2019, the four councils endorsed a review of the potential future options for the management of the housing stock. On 17 October 2019, TDC's Cabinet approved the report on future options for the housing management arrangements for the council's housing stock. The following recommendations were agreed:
 1. that the council's preferred option is to withdraw from East Kent Housing and return housing management services back in-house under direct management of the council, subject to formal consultation with all tenants (and leaseholders, as required) to satisfy the requirements of Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985.
 2. To delegate authority to the Chief Executive to make any minor amendments to the consultation documents.
 3. That the consultation results be presented to Cabinet for consideration and a final decision in early 2020.
- 1.7 Pennington Choices Ltd, a housing consultancy service, was appointed by the four councils to investigate the circumstances leading to the compliance failures, the main underlying causes, the effectiveness of the recovery action plans put in place and to make recommendations to ensure that the identified compliance failures do not happen again. The final report was published on 12 December 2019, alongside the decision to replace the board of EKH with the four council Chief Executives. Each council is fully committed to becoming compliant, as a priority, and endorsed the production of an 'action plan' to implement the recommendations outlined in

Agenda Item 3

Pennington's report. The action plan, which is being compiled by Pennington Choices Ltd, will seek to bring improvements in the operation and management of health and safety by EKH, such that full statutory compliance is achieved and that the RSH is in a position to remove the Regulatory Notices served on the four councils.

- 1.8 During the transition period, EKH will need to ensure the continued effective delivery of housing management services, including the essential detailed work on compliance recovery, and, assuming the recommendations of this report are agreed, to work with the four councils to effectively transfer services back in house and wind up the activities of EKH.

2. TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER CONSULTATION

- 2.1 All four councils provided their formal endorsement of the preferred option to withdrawal from EKH and return housing management services back in-house under direct management of each council, subject to consultation with all EKH tenants and leaseholders to satisfy the requirements of Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985.
- 2.2 The consultation exercise was administered by Canterbury City Council, running for 8 weeks from Tuesday 22 October to Friday 20 December 2019 and sought a test of opinion rather than a formal ballot in order to achieve consistency with the process used prior to the formation of EKH.
- 2.3 A programme of consultation was implemented across the four councils. All EKH tenants and leaseholders were written to by letter on 22 October 2019, informing them of the consultation survey and provided with a Frequently Asked Questions information sheet. Tenants and leaseholders were given the option to complete the consultation survey online or by post (using a pre-paid envelope).
- 2.4 Consultation drop-in sessions were organised and hosted in Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone & Hythe and Thanet between October to December 2019. The sessions were staffed and attended by council officers. All EKH tenants and leaseholders were invited and attendance is set out below. It should be noted that, unlike Thanet, the other three councils own a portfolio of sheltered housing and the figures below include drop in sessions held in sheltered housing schemes.

Local authority	No. of attendees (tenants and leaseholders)
Canterbury City Council	167
Dover District Council	77
Folkestone & Hythe District Council	50
Thanet District Council	11

- 2.5 The Corporate Consultation Manager at Canterbury City Council dealt with 45 tenant and leaseholder enquiries across the four council areas during the consultation, providing help and support, for example if someone needed information in a different format or additional information regarding the consultation. Other enquiries included tenancy, leaseholder, performance and repairs issues.
- 2.6 During December 2019, TDC's Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods attended the local Tenant and Leaseholder Board. The Thanet Tenant and Leaseholder Board expressed the view that they would want to see

resident involvement arrangements enhanced as a result of bringing housing management services back in house and that the relationship between the council and its tenants and leaseholders is critical. Currently resident involvement is managed by EKH and new arrangements will therefore be required for the future.

3. RESULT OF THE TEST OF OPINION

- 3.1 The purpose of the consultation was to gauge opinions and gather feedback from tenants and leaseholders, evaluate their attitudes towards the proposal and identify any concerns they might have. This is usually referred to as a test of opinion.
- 3.2 Tenants and leaseholders were asked to provide their level of agreement with the proposal to bring the service back in house. The consultation document is attached as Appendix 4.
- 3.3 At the close of the consultation, across the four districts, 17,201 questionnaires were issued and 2,603 (15%) completed and returned. 332 of these were submitted online and 2,271 were paper copies. A summary is set out below:

Canterbury City Council

In total, 5,510 consultation surveys were issued. Of these, 843 were returned (15%).
In terms of who has responded:

- 821 tenants and leaseholders
- 4 other individuals
- 18 respondents did not say in what capacity they were responding

Dover District Council

In total, 4,694 consultation surveys were issued. Of these, 731 were returned (16%).
In terms of who has responded:

- 707 tenants and leaseholders
- 13 other individuals
- 11 respondents did not say in what capacity they were responding

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

In total, 3,575 consultation surveys were issued. Of these, 602 were returned (17%).
In terms of who has responded:

- 588 tenants and leaseholders
- 4 other individuals
- 1 Shepway Tenants and Leaseholder Board
- 1 Age UK Hythe and Lyminge
- 1 shared ownership resident
- 7 respondents did not say in what capacity they were responding

Thanet District Council

In total, 3,422 consultation surveys were issued. Of these, 427 were returned (12%).
In terms of who has responded:

- 403 tenants and leaseholders
- 17 other individuals
- 1 Addington Street Community Group
- 1 Newington Community Association
- 1 shared ownership resident
- 1 former tenant

Agenda Item 3

- 3 respondents did not say in what capacity they were responding
- 3.4 Across the four councils, the majority of respondents strongly agree or tend to agree with the proposal to bring the housing service back in house. In Canterbury, 81% of respondents agree to some extent to the proposal, Dover 81%, Folkestone & Hythe 74% and Thanet 81%. The results are set out below:

Canterbury City Council

	All respondents	Tenants and leaseholders
Strongly agree	60% (492)	60% (487)
Tend to agree	21% (171)	21% (167)
Neither agree nor disagree	12% (96)	11% (92)
Tend to disagree	4% (30)	4% (30)
Strongly disagree	4% (37)	4% (37)

Dover District Council

	All respondents	Tenants and leaseholders
Strongly agree	62% (445)	62% (433)
Tend to agree	19% (138)	19% (135)
Neither agree nor disagree	12% (84)	12% (82)
Tend to disagree	3% (20)	3% (20)
Strongly disagree	5% (36)	5% (33)

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

	All respondents	Tenants and leaseholders
Strongly agree	54% (323)	54% (316)
Tend to agree	20% (120)	20% (119)
Neither agree nor disagree	13% (76)	13% (75)
Tend to disagree	4% (21)	4% (21)
Strongly disagree	9% (53)	9% (51)

Thanet District Council

	All respondents	Tenants and leaseholders
Strongly agree	60% (257)	60% (243)
Tend to agree	21% (91)	22% (88)
Neither agree nor disagree	9% (37)	9% (35)
Tend to disagree	3% (12)	3% (11)
Strongly disagree	7% (28)	6% (25)

- 3.5 The full consultation reports are attached at Annexes 5-8. However, a snapshot of comments made by respondents who strongly agree or tend to agree with the proposal is below:
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repair and maintenance issues

Agenda Item 3

- The council would be more responsive in dealing with issues
- The council would be more accountable than East Kent Housing
- The service provided by East Kent Housing has deteriorated in the last few years
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing
- The council ran the service well before East Kent Housing was created
- Unhappy with the general standard of service provided by East Kent Housing
- Bringing the service back under council control would be more cost effective
- The council could build stronger relationships with its tenants

3.6 What the council should focus on for housing services

Respondents across the four council areas were asked what they feel are the three most important things for the council to focus on for housing services from the following list:

- Dealing with repairs and maintenance
- Dealing with anti-social behaviour
- Providing value for money for your rent and service charges
- Building new council homes
- Estate services (such as grass cutting, cleaning communal areas etc)
- Dealing with customer enquiries and complaints
- Involving and listening to residents

Other:

- Maintain reasonable rent charges
- Improve efficiency
- Improve consultation with residents
- Improve dialogue with disabled residents
- Dealing with communal repairs

At the close of the consultation, respondents highlighted the three most important areas of focus for Canterbury, Dover and Thanet as (in order of priority):

1. Dealing with repairs and maintenance
2. Dealing with anti-social behaviour
3. Providing value for money for your rent and service charges

In Folkestone & Hythe, respondents highlighted the three most important areas of focus as (in order of priority):

1. Dealing with repairs and maintenance
2. Dealing with anti-social behaviour
3. Dealing with customer enquiries and complaints

4. GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE ON ALMO CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Government issued guidance in 2011 to Local Authorities (see Annex 1) considering the future of their ALMO housing management services. Councils are asked to undertake a cost-benefit and risk analysis exercise before reaching a final decision. These exercises have been completed and the results are given in annexes 2 (cost/benefit analysis) and 3 (risk analysis). Cabinet is invited to consider the two documents before reaching a decision on the report's recommendations.

5. PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

- 5.1 At present, the Secretary of State is not required to consent to the transfer of landlord functions from the EKH ALMO to the council.
- 5.2 The four councils as joint owners of EKH will need to achieve a mutually agreed termination of the contract, in accordance with the terms of the owners agreement. Once the process has been concluded, it is proposed that an in-house service be established through a two stage process, as follows:
 - Taking the minimum legal and administrative action needed to close down EKH and pass responsibility to each council. This will involve transferring the housing management service from EKH to each council without significant change.
 - Drawing up proposals for the future housing service, which will cover new governance arrangements, organisational structures, integration with existing council services (e.g. call handling, property and grounds maintenance, community safety, communications and ICT) and the priorities and plans of the new service.
- 5.3 Officers from the four councils will establish a Transition Board to co-ordinate the overall East Kent project, with a transition delivery group reporting to the board to manage the delivery of detailed workstreams. It is likely that officers within each council will also need to establish an internal corporate project management group to oversee the legal, financial, human resources and ICT work necessary to wind up EKH and to create a new in-house service.
- 5.4 A communications strategy will be of critical importance. Each council will have responsibility for overseeing the communications necessary with tenants, leaseholders, staff, elected members and other stakeholders. There are many tenants and leaseholders who have expressed their views strongly at many of the consultation meetings, and it will be important to address the concerns that they raised at those meetings.
- 5.5 It will be necessary to look at how elected members and resident engagement will be addressed, for example, a Tenants and Leaseholder Panel in each local authority area may overcome the loss of the EKH Board under the in-house option. Thanet already has a local Tenant and Leaseholder Group that meets regularly.

6. ISSUES NEEDING FURTHER DECISION

- 6.1 The transition process set out above will give rise to the need for decisions on a number of key issues:
 - The name or branding to be used for the new in-house service (if required).
 - The transfer / recruitment of staff
 - Arrangements for leadership and management of the landlord service through the transition and beyond.
 - Decisions on the potential for the integration of EKH and council services which are currently provided separately.
 - A review of the role of the Thanet Tenant and Leaseholder Group to sustain resident involvement in key housing management decisions.

- Decisions about the winding up of East Kent Housing, as a separate company once the contract transfer has occurred (as required).
- Decisions about the novation of any contracts currently held by EKH to the council, such as ICT contracts.

- 6.2 These issues are discussed further in Annex 2, the Cost/Benefit analysis.
- 6.3 These decisions will either be taken by officers in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods or reported to Cabinet for decision as appropriate.

7. FINANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is used for the management and maintenance of the council's housing stock and for the repayment of the HRA debt. The HRA is a ring-fenced account.
- 7.2 Included within the annual HRA current budget is an approved amount for the management fee paid to EKH, as set out in the table below. These amounts are in addition to separate council budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital programme works to council homes. Once the council's landlord service has been returned to in-house delivery and the operations of EKH concluded, these amounts will be retained by the individual councils and will be available to fund the on-going revenue costs of the service. The funding for each council management fee to EKH is shown in the table below. The amounts shown include fee increases agreed during 2019/20 to cover the costs of the agreed improvement plan and additional costs in relation to the management of health and safety compliance.

	2019/20	2020/21 (Provisional)
Canterbury City Council	£3,311,800	£3,428,000
Dover District Council	£2,580,100	£2,717,100
Folkestone & Hythe District Council	£2,384,100	£2,480,300
Thanet District Council	£1,734,100	£1,895,900
	£10,010,100	£10,521,300

- 7.3 The working assumption at this stage is that the on-going costs of providing the landlord service in-house will be contained within these existing budgets.
- 7.4 As required by guidance issued in December 2011 by the Government, a cost/benefit analysis has been prepared and is attached at Annex 2.
- 7.5 The proposal will however have one-off transition costs, referred to in section 9 of the cost benefit analysis. These transition costs will be continually monitored and are in addition to the current approved budget, including the management fee paid to East Kent Housing. Any costs incurred will need to be met from available HRA balances. EKH have initially assessed these one-off costs to total around £900k across the four councils. EKH have requested an additional £900k funding for 2020/21 to cover these estimated costs, should the decision be to bring the service back in house. No additional funding has been agreed at this stage, as:
- it is dependent upon the decision taken about the future of the service,

- not all of the estimated costs would necessarily fall to EKH, as some may be direct council costs,
 - costs associated with service risks may not materialise.
- 7.6 At this stage therefore, it is anticipated that transition costs for TDC could be in the region of £250k, and it is recommended that the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer be given delegated authority to withdraw up to £250k from HRA balances to fund these costs, as required. An additional revenue provision of £55,000 has also been included within the 2020/21 draft HRA budget for an interim post of Transition Project Manager.
- 7.7 As EKH approaches dissolution, the EKH board and the four councils will want to ensure that EKH maintains adequate cash flow and cannot at any point trade whilst insolvent. The councils will want to ensure that steps are taken as are necessary to provide funding to EKH during this period. In order to respond quickly to such a scenario, it is necessary to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods to allocate such funds, from the £250k overall anticipated cost identified in 7.6 above, and to agree with the other councils the apportionment of such costs.
- 8. IMPLICATIONS FOR EKH STAFF**
- 8.1 A decision to bring the ALMO back in house may result in a TUPE transfer of staff from EKH to TDC. This will be the case where, at the point of transfer, there is an organised grouping of staff whose main purpose is the provision of the housing service to TDC residents. The main effect of TUPE is that staff employed or assigned to work in the areas of the relevant business transfer functions and services (e.g. all those employed or engaged at the point of transfer by EKH) will be covered under the Regulations. The TUPE regulations effectively provides that staff affected by relevant business transfers have their terms and conditions protected from change following the transfer.
- 8.2 In light of the above, the implications of TUPE for bringing EKH back in-house may be summarised in the following terms:
- All staff employed by EKH at the point of transfer may have a right to transfer under TUPE to the four council owners.
 - Staff who transfer to TDC under TUPE will have their EKH differential employment terms and conditions protected from harmonisation or standardisations that may be connected to the transfer of the service in-house.
 - It is essential that relevant staffing information is gathered in regard to current terms and conditions (all formal and informal contractual terms) of relevant staff so that an assessment can be made of likely costs in preparation for moving towards a new delivery model for the eventual in house service.
- 8.3 Staff affected by TUPE will need to be determined. An HR work-stream will need to support the above to ensure that there is early identification of staff likely to be affected and appropriate consultation with all affected staff and trade unions.
- 8.4 Not all EKH staff are employed for the main purpose of providing services on behalf of a single council. Some staff are organised on a functional basis, providing services across all four councils. As a result, it is unlikely that TUPE will apply to all EKH staff.

That said however, the councils will want to retain as many staff as possible with key specialist skills that will be required in the new in house services and local arrangements to facilitate the transfer of staff not protected by TUPE will be needed.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 At the close of the tenant and leaseholder consultation, across the four districts 17,201 questionnaires were issued and 2,603 completed and returned. 332 of these were submitted online and 2,271 were paper copies. 2,037 (78%) respondents strongly or tend to agree with the proposal to bring the service back in house.
- 9.2 The level of responses to the consultation was very good and the considerably greater support amongst tenants and leaseholders for the preferred option to bring the service in-house is considered to be significant and decisive. However, independently of the consultation, joint work has already begun to improve the service now, plan for a more fundamental transformation of the service and a smooth period of transition if the four councils decide to formally adopt the preferred option in February 2020.
- 9.3 The EKH Board, consisting of the four council chief executives, retains accountability for the service, but additional measures have been put in place to advance joint working to improve the service now, and to plan for the future. It also ensures that there is a collaborative and inclusive approach and that we communicate a single message to tenants, leaseholder, EKH employees and council officers and members.
- 9.4 Bringing the service in-house provides each of the four councils with the opportunity to re-position the housing service with the aim of improving a broad range of outcomes for over 17,000 households. This is not necessarily the lift and shift of a self-contained housing service into each council's structure. This option provides the opportunity to engage the housing service with each councils' wider corporate agenda in order to secure improved outcomes for residents.
- 9.5 The four councils will each be able to redesign the corporate approach and consider afresh the opportunities that arise from having the housing management unit under direct council control. There is a desire to progress an overarching plan for returning EKH in-house, which is being developed by council officers.
- 9.6 At this stage it is anticipated that the transition to new in-house services is likely to take up to one year. The financial year to 31 March 2021 would therefore be a transition year for EKH and the four councils. Establishing an in-house service, if agreed, is complex and will take time to set up. It is therefore assumed that this would need to be completed and the new in-house service fully operational by 1 April 2021.

10. OPTIONS

- 10.1 At its meeting on 17 October 2019, the cabinet considered the following four options for the future of the council's landlord service:
 - Option 1:** Retain and refocus the current EKH ALMO arrangement.
 - Option 2:** Withdraw from EKH and return the provision of housing management services back in-house under direct management of each council.
 - Option 3:** Withdraw from EKH and form a new shared housing service with one or more of the other councils (this would not be an ALMO).

Agenda Item 3

Option 4: Withdraw from EKH and outsource the service to one or more external providers.

- 10.2 Following consideration of the options, the Cabinet agreed:
'that the council's preferred option is to withdraw from East Kent Housing and return housing management services back in-house under direct management of the council, subject to formal consultation with all tenants (and leaseholders, as required) to satisfy the requirements of Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985.'
- 10.2 The consultation with tenants and leaseholders has now been completed and the results are set out in this report. Cabinet therefore has the option to decide to either:
1. Withdraw from East Kent Housing and return housing management services back in-house under direct management of the council, or
 2. Reject the recommendations of this report and decide to retain the current EKH arrangements.
- 10.3 Option 1, to withdraw from East Kent Housing and return housing management services back in-house under direct management of the council, is recommended, for the following reasons:
- EKH has experienced serious performance problems and health and safety non-compliance issues.
 - Tenants and leaseholders have expressed their views clearly, that they would prefer their homes to be managed by the individual councils rather than retain the existing Arms-Length Management Organisation structure.
 - It is in the best interests of tenants and leaseholders for the four councils to terminate the management agreement and transfer housing services back in-house.
 - The integration of the housing management service with each council's remaining housing services would provide a more transparent and accountable structure for the housing service.

Contact Officer:	Bob Porter, Head of Housing and Planning
Reporting to:	Tim Willis, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer

Annex List

Annex 1	CLG Updated guidance for councils considering the future of their ALMO housing management services (2011)
Annex 2	Cost/benefit analysis
Annex 3	Risk analysis
Annex 4	Tenant and Leaseholder consultation document
Annex 5	Analysis of consultation responses, Canterbury City Council
Annex 6	Analysis of consultation responses, Dover District Council
Annex 7	Analysis of consultation responses, Folkestone & Hythe District Council
Annex 8	Analysis of consultation responses, Thanet District Council
Annex 9	Equalities Impact Assessment screening

Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy
None	

Agenda Item 3

Corporate Consultation

Finance	Chris Blundell, Head of Finance
Legal	Estelle Culligan, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Annex 1

Communities and Local Government

www.communities.gov.uk community, opportunity, prosperity

Updated guidance for councils considering the future of their ALMO housing management services.

Purpose

1. About half of all council housing is managed by ALMOS. ALMOS have successfully delivered much of the Decent Homes investment programme, ALMOS have proved very popular with tenants and residents and in many areas have become key local providers of neighbourhood services.
2. As a number of the original management delegations and funding contracts between councils and ALMOS are now drawing to a close, councils are considering how best they can deliver their ongoing housing investment and management services into the future.
3. The reform of the HRA subsidy system will also bring major changes to the system of council housing finance and to the way in which councils view stock management. It is therefore timely to remind those councils who intend to review their housing management of the need for thoroughness and openness.
4. Councils are continually having to reassess how best to deliver all their services, including the provision of housing management. ALMOS are not immune from the need to drive value for money savings and spend tax payers money wisely.
5. When determining the future of their ALMOS, councils will need to consider a number of important and competing factors. These include the wider financial, organisational and local political landscape within their councils, alongside the views of tenants.
6. This document sets out the Government's guidance on the processes that councils should undertake when considering taking housing management functions back in-house. This note strengthens previous guidance issued by the Department.

Current Position

Agenda Item 3

Annex 1

7. The Government believes that the decision to take ALMO housing management functions back 'in-house' should remain a local one. Councils in England are currently required to seek consent from the Secretary of State under section 27 of the Housing Act 1985 where it seeks to transfer all or part of its housing management functions to an ALMO. There is no requirement for a council to seek consent when taking ALMO housing management functions back in-house. Government does not propose to alter these arrangements.

8. Guidance issued by the Department in 2004 was consolidated after the Review of Arms Length Housing Management Organisations issued in June 2006. The Review considered a number of scenarios for taking forward the work of ALMOs, including the process should a council decide to take housing management back in-house following a consultation with tenants.

9. The Review recommended that any change in housing management arrangements should be the subject of a test of opinion no less rigorous than the test undertaken on transferring housing management functions to the ALMO.

10. The document went on to emphasise the importance of consulting and working with tenants and outlined the possible consultation mechanisms, including questionnaires, telephone surveys and ballots. A combination of options rather than a single favoured option was considered to be appropriate. This remains the case.

Future arrangements

11. Government does not believe in imposing any unnecessary additional regulations or burdens on councils. The Government does not consider it necessary to impose upon all councils with ALMOs a mandatory duty to hold a ballot of their tenants when considering taking housing management functions back from their ALMOS.

12. However, in line with the principles set out in the Review document, Government considers that in the interests of fairness and consistency, councils that had held ballots to gauge tenant opinion before transferring their housing management functions to an ALMO should also similarly hold a ballot when considering taking housing management functions back from the ALMO. This is important as it allows tenants to express their opinion in a similar manner to the

Agenda Item 3

Annex 1

original ballot.

13. For those councils that did not hold a ballot to test tenants' opinions but chose to use an alternative method, they may of course choose to hold a ballot. There are no plans to require those councils to follow a particular course of action.

14. However, it is expected that the consultation exercises undertaken by all councils considering the future of their ALMOs should be as comprehensive as that undertaken when transferring those functions to the ALMO originally. This could be either through a ballot or a full survey or other locally appropriate method.

15. Ballots and other tests of opinion should not however be seen as a "be all and end all" solution, but as part of an ongoing, process of engagement. Any council considering undertaking an options review of its housing management arrangements should notify the Department as soon as possible in the process, as part of its wider commitment to demonstrate the openness of the process.

Tenant Engagement & Consultation

16. There are a range of steps that councils will need to consider and undertake when consulting their tenants on the future for their ALMOs. The list is not definitive and councils will wish to undertake the level of consultation which they consider is appropriate locally.

17. Councils should ensure that the information provided to tenants must be accurate and impartial. Tenants should have the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to process leading to the final decision,

18. All tenants should have the opportunity to have a say in the final decision, either through a ballot or other comprehensive consultation process, and the process should be overseen by an external organisation, to ensure that it is fair and valid. Tenants could also be provided with an Independent Tenants Adviser (ITA) paid for by the ALMO/Council.

19. Councils should ensure that tenants have the opportunity to shape the options, and be consulted from the outset. Tenants should be given the opportunity to be included in any project group leading the work and be allowed to scrutinise the council's process.

20. The aims and objectives of the review, plus timescales, processes, and criteria

Agenda Item 3

Annex 1

for short listing options and the final decision making, should be clearly set out and be publicly accessible.

21. Councils should carry out a full cost-benefit assessment exercise and risk analysis of the implications for the councils' wider housing service. Preferably, this should be externally validated. (*Risks should include potential loss of key staff and how that might affect implementation of self financing and major capital programmes, including decent homes, so that they fully understand the financial rationale for any decision they take*).

22. The council must clearly set out the pros and cons of the various options reviewed, demonstrate the potential impact on residents, and explain the reasons for recommending its final option(s).

23. The ALMO Board and employees should be allowed to contribute fully in any housing management review process. ALMOs and councils should work collaboratively towards an agreed outcome.

24. ALMO officers and their boards should cooperate fully with any review and assist their council to undertake any review in a timely and professional manner. In that way, any call on costs and resources can be minimised.

Conclusion

25. It is clear that the best run councils and ALMOs are those where both parties work together collaboratively on behalf of tenants to ensure that the services they provide are efficient and value for money. Undertaking a thorough consultation exercise on the future of an ALMO and housing management is no different.

26. The Department recognises that there will be local differences in the way councils and ALMOs undertake their tenant consultation exercises. It is imperative that the views of tenants should be at the centre of these considerations,

27. If the Council intends to support the ALMO going forward, then clear funding streams for this must be identified, and a council decision ratifying such expenditure should be included in any consultation material

28. ALMO housing management option reviews should be transparent and tenants should have all the information available so that they have the opportunity to be fully engaged in the process from the outset. The underpinning rationale remains

Agenda Item 3

Annex 1

that the level of consultation and engagement should be at least as comprehensive and robust as undertaken to transfer the housing management functions to the ALMO originally.

29. The Department does not intervene directly in disputes between councils and their ALMOs but will provide assistance and support as appropriate to try to ensure that reviews are conducted satisfactorily.

December 2011

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Appendix 2:

An in-house housing management service: cost/benefit analysis of the options of creating an in-house service and retaining East Kent Housing (EKH), Arm Length Management Organisation (ALMO)

An options appraisal was completed in October 2019, reviewing the delivery of housing management services provided by East Kent Housing (EKH) on behalf of Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council and Thanet District Council. The four councils agreed that the preferred option for future service provision to the four councils' tenants and leaseholders is that it should become an in-house service, subject to consultation. Between 22 October to 20 December 2019, EKH tenants and leaseholders were invited to express their views on the future of the council's ALMO, East Kent Housing, through a test of opinion.

The council has considered the establishment of an in-house service through a process involving three stages:

1. Taking the minimum legal and administrative action needed to close down EKH and pass responsibility to the council. This will involve transferring the housing management service from EKH to the council without significant change.
2. Drawing up proposals for the future housing service, and consulting on the key issues. The plans will cover new governance arrangements, organisational structures, possible integration with existing council services (e.g. customer services, property and estate management, community safety, communications), and the priorities and plans of the new service.
3. Implementing change to the service, based on the outcome of the tenant and leaseholder consultation.

This cost/benefit analysis focuses on those issues where there may be opportunities to review the way services are provided.

Issue	In-house service	Retention of EKH	Comments on benefits
1) Management arrangements cost and quality issues	If the service were brought in-house, a decision would need to be made as to which EKH posts are in scope and what process will be undertaken for those posts not in scope. For those staff that transfer to the four councils, once the transfer is completed there may be scope to review the arrangements for both the former EKH staff and council staff. This will give the ability to look at the arrangements and focus on the efficiencies of the service.	If EKH were retained the senior structure in EKH would remain as at present, including a Chief Executive, two Directors, three Operations Managers and a Head of Finance. The total cost of the current EKH senior structure is £477,000 (top of the scale, not including on-costs).	For quality to be maintained housing will need highly skilled leaders in sufficient numbers to avoid overloading individuals. Leaders will need to be sufficiently rewarded to retain their services. The current separation of EKH from the council creates significantly more work for both EKH and council senior staff than would be the case in an integrated service.
2) Management arrangements: implications of leadership changes on staff teams	As noted above, if the service is brought in-house there is a danger of reduced senior manager input during the transition. This would coincide with a period when staff particularly need leadership. In order to prevent a drop in performance during the transition, additional resources may have to be put in. This may take the form of interim	If EKH were to carry on providing the service, there would be a concern over their ability to attract and retain good senior managers.	The danger of disruption and loss of performance is a feature of any major change process. The impact can be minimised by anticipating where leadership will be needed, and deploying the resources required.

Agenda Item 3

Annex 2

	managers or acting up arrangements. The potential cost cannot be quantified at this stage.		
3) Management arrangements, implications for HRA self-financing	The council employs a number of senior staff with expert knowledge of HRA self-financing. If the service is brought in-house this expertise will still be needed. It will be important to encourage key individuals to remain in the organisation.	The council currently and will continue to oversee management arrangements for the HRA.	Although it would be possible to replace key individuals if they left, the loss of their local knowledge should be avoided if possible. As this is already provided in-house, there are no additional costs.
4) Governance: cost and quality issues	If the service comes in-house, the EKH Board would cease to operate. Instead decisions would be taken by Members and senior council officers. This change would simplify the decision making process. This simplification would save staff time and contribute to any savings required.	If the service remained with EKH, the EKH Board and its committees would continue to operate. The EKH Board typically deals with a greater level of detail than Members deal with in the council. A significant proportion of EKH senior management time is spent reporting to the Board.	During the consultation on the future of EKH, some tenants and leaseholders expressed concern about the accountability of the EKH Board. They felt accountability through the local democracy would be preferable. Many tenants and leaseholders said they would prefer to take their individual issues to their ward Member than to an EKH Board Member. Bringing the service in-house has the benefit of meeting tenants and leaseholders wishes.
5) Governance: implications for tenants and leaseholder involvement	In order to sustain tenant and leaseholder involvement in an in-house service, it is proposed to create a new local Tenant	If the service remained with EKH, tenants and leaseholders would continue to be involved in governance through their seats	The proposed new Tenant and Leaseholder Panel offers the advantage of direct access for a wider group of tenants and

Agenda Item 3

Annex 2

	<p>and Leaseholder Panel. This would give tenants and leaseholders a voice in housing management issues by giving them access to the Lead Member. The establishment of such a body would have cost implications.</p>	<p>on the EKH Board and extensive participation in other meetings. The cost of servicing the current governance structure would remain high.</p>	<p>leaseholders to the Lead Member. It would however have the disadvantage of being an advisory body only, in contrast to the decision making role undertaken by Tenant and Leaseholder Board members in the current EKH structure.</p>
6) Client /contractor split	<p>If the service is brought in-house the current complex arrangements for the management of the agreement with EKH will no longer be required. This would save senior staff time contributing to any savings required.</p>	<p>If EKH were to be retained, the current complex client contractor relations would have to be sustained.</p>	<p>The removal of the client/contractor relationship would make it easier for senior managers to concentrate on delivering high quality services to tenants and leaseholders.</p>
7) Integration of services	<p>Bringing the service in-house service may enable us to simplify structures and eliminate duplications with existing council services in a number of areas.</p> <p>The detailed work on the extent and nature of potential integration has yet to be carried out, and so savings cannot yet be quantified. Redundancy and pension costs will need to be considered.</p>	<p>The existence of EKH as an independent body gives rise to separation of services such as call handling. If EKH were retained many of these duplications would continue.</p>	<p>Integration of services offers the potential for service improvements through faster decision making and a greater focus on outcomes. There is also the potential for savings.</p>
8) Accountability	<p>Bringing the service in-house would simplify and unify the way housing is governed. This</p>	<p>The retention of EKH would mean continuing with the current division of</p>	<p>There is evidence of a degree of confusion among tenants and leaseholders about</p>

	would make for more transparent accountability at senior management and elected member level. No saving would be achieved but tenants and leaseholder wishes would be met.	responsibilities. This causes some confusion among tenants and leaseholders and leads to blurring of responsibilities.	responsibilities. Bringing the service in-house would assist considerably in addressing this.
9) One-off costs	A decision to bring housing management in-house will create a number of one-off transition costs. Examples include: Legal, HR and IT work Changes to accounting structures HR related costs Costs linked to service risks, such as increased rent arrears or extend void property times. Changing signage/stationary Project management	If the service is left with EKH there would be no transition costs. However, the four councils have and will continue to need to invest substantially into a programme to address performance and health and safety compliance issues.	The exact cost of these items has yet to be calculated, and it will depend to some extent on decisions about the new service which have yet to be taken. However it is currently estimated that the cost will not exceed £250,000

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Annex 3

Thanet District Council housing management service: Risk analysis of a decision to create an in-house service

An options appraisal was completed in October 2019, reviewing the delivery of housing management services provided by East Kent Housing (EKH) on behalf of Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council and Thanet District Council. The four councils agreed that the preferred option for future service provision to the four councils' tenants and leaseholders is that it should become an in-house service, subject to consultation. Between 22 October to 20 December 2019, EKH tenants and leaseholders were invited to express their views on the future of the council's ALMO, East Kent Housing, through a test of opinion.

The format of this document will ensure compliance with the Government guidance on the consideration of the future of local councils' ALMOs dated December 2011 (Annex 1). The risks identified in the document reflect the guidance. The table below analyses the risks and shows the steps which need to be taken to mitigate them. (In the table 1 is low).

	Risk	Likelihood 1-5	Impact score 1-5	Combined score 1-25	Mitigation
1.	Short term loss of key executive level staff with impact on service quality.	2	2	4	New post of Transition Project Manager approved. Structure of a senior officer Project Board agreed. Appointment of interims if necessary.
2.	Short term loss of key technical staff with impact on stock condition.	3	3	9	Appointment of interims if necessary. Where possible, EKH staff will TUPE transfer to the councils. It has been identified that the councils need to introduce a strategy to deal with those staff not identified to TUPE,

					although this has not yet been agreed, hopefully this will also contribute to minimising staff losses.
3.	Loss of focus on services and reduction in performance during transition.	2	4	8	<p>Implementation of an effective performance management and monitoring strategy / scrutiny arrangement.</p> <p>Implementation of an effective communication strategy.</p>
4.	Stability and therefore performance of EKH is affected by lack of staff / reliance on interims.	2	4	8	<p>Each council continues to measure and manage performance, identifying a well-resourced package of specialised staffing support to address any issues arising.</p> <p>Implementation of an effective staff communication and engagement strategy.</p>
5.	Revised governance arrangements leading to less tenant and leaseholder involvement.	1	4	4	Early creation of Tenant and Leaseholder Panel.
6.	Loss of service quality arising from reduced staff morale.	2	4	8	<p>Implementation of an effective HR strategy to support staff, ensuring necessary training and development is in place.</p> <p>Implementation of an effective staff communication and engagement strategy.</p>
7.	Loss of service quality arising from IT complications.	2	3	6	Early meeting with IT to identify issues (e.g. the full implementation of the

					single system) and develop a project action plan.
8.	Loss of service quality in strategic housing arising from overstretch.	2	3	6	Appointment of specialist interims if necessary. Housing Strategy and Projects Manager role refocused on strategic housing.
9.	Cost of transition over-runs.	2	2	4	Adequate budget created and project management to include control.
10.	The council's consultation and decision making process are challenged.	2	1	2	Continue to comply with statutory guidance and good practice.
11.	Changes in Government guidance of statutory requirements during the transition.	1	2	2	None possible.
12.	Excessive short-term expectations from tenants and leaseholders.	4	2	8	Manage expectations via published material and meetings with tenants and leaseholders. Implementation of a tenant and leaseholder communication strategy.
13.	Unreasonable expectations of the future service arising from consultation.	2	2	4	Manage expectations via published material and meetings with tenants and leaseholders. Implementation of a tenant and leaseholder communication strategy.
14.	Insufficient senior staff capacity to support the transition project.	2	2	4	New posts of Transformation Project Manager approved. Potential use of HRA reserves to support transition costs. Use external specialists if necessary.

Agenda Item 3

Annex 3

15.	Changes in the required extent of reintegration of services made after reorganisation has started.	2	4	8	Identify the risks clearly at the start of any reorganisation.
16.	One or more of the four councils begins an aggressive recruitment campaign from EKH prior to the transfer date.	4	4	16	<p>The four council Chief Executives currently and will continue to meet fortnightly to discuss EKH.</p> <p>Regular transition monitoring by the four council Chief Executives.</p> <p>Joint director level Project Board established.</p> <p>Co-ordinated and effective implementation planning to pinpoint decisions points and milestones throughout the transfer.</p>
17.	Redundancy costs are unaffordable due to the pool of staff subject to TUPE being very small and many of the remaining staff are not interested in being recruited by the Councils.	2	4	8	<p>Regular transition monitoring by the four council Chief Executives and HR teams.</p> <p>Co-ordinated and effective implementation planning to pinpoint TUPE implications throughout the transfer.</p> <p>Early specialist legal advice on TUPE obligations.</p>
18.	No/limited EKH staff want to work for the four councils.	3	3	9	Comprehensive HR communication plan to keep EKH staff informed of the project timescales, job opportunities, staff benefits etc. if they chose to transition to one of the four councils.

Agenda Item 3
Annex 3

					<p>Talent management plan developed identifying key people and knowledge and puts measures in place to secure these key people.</p> <p>Policy position developed to enable offers of suitable alternative employment to be made by councils to protect both EKH staff and councils.</p>
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Annex 4:
Consultation documents

Document 1: Covering letter

Dear xxx (*personalise*),

Have your say on how we look after your home

Your home is currently looked after by East Kent Housing on our behalf. They carry out safety checks, manage repairs, collect your rent etc.

Earlier this year we discovered serious problems with a range of safety checks at some properties looked after by East Kent Housing. I am sorry if that caused you to worry.

I am pleased to say we have made an enormous amount of progress in fixing those problems.

To make sure the same thing does not happen again, we have asked a range of experts to look into what went wrong.

We have also looked at how we should manage our council housing in the future.

We have come up with four options:

Option 1: Keep East Kent Housing and improve the way they work

Option 2: Close East Kent Housing and create a team at each council to look after your home

Option 3: Close East Kent Housing and work with nearby councils to look after your home

Option 4: Ask an outside organisation such as a housing association to look after your home

We think **Option 2** is the best way forward which means closing East Kent Housing leaving council staff to look after your home instead.

Agenda Item 3 Annex 4

The advantages and disadvantages that we see of each way of doing things is explained in the attached information sheet.

We want to know what you think about our proposal and would ask you to spend a couple of minutes taking part in our survey.

You have until Friday 20 December and the easiest way to reply is online at canterbury.gov.uk/consultations (*link to be amended to be specific to each council*)

We have enclosed a paper copy and freepost envelope in case you prefer to do it that way.

If you want to find out more or have a chat about our proposals before making up your mind, we are holding some drop-in events:

- Add details of drop-in event 1 for the relevant district
- Add details of drop-in event 2 for the relevant district

If you need any help or support, for example if you need this information in a different format such as large print or Braille, or you'd like to talk to someone about the proposals over the phone or in person, please contact Mike Bailey, Corporate Consultation Manager at consultations@canterbury.gov.uk or on 01227 862 059 who can arrange this for you.

We will tell councillors, the people you vote for to run the council on your behalf, how you feel about the plans early next year before they make any final decisions.

When councillors have taken those views on board and decided on what they think is the best way forward, we will write to you again.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Madeline Homer

Chief Executive

Agenda Item 3 Annex 4

Document 2: Information sheet

What is East Kent Housing? East Kent Housing is a company that looks after council housing on behalf of Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council and Thanet District Council. It does not make a profit because it was designed to provide a service rather than make money for the councils.

The four councils jointly own East Kent Housing which manages approximately 17,000 homes.

East Kent Housing is overseen by an independent board which is made up of an elected councillor for each council area, a tenant from each council area and four independent members.

East Kent Housing was created on 1 April 2011 and is now in its ninth year of operation.

Why was East Kent Housing set up? The four councils felt it would provide better quality services for tenants and leaseholders, increase efficiency and save money.

Why are we thinking about the way the system works? Before the problems with safety checks were discovered, the four councils were worried about how East Kent Housing was performing.

Concerns included how they managed a number of contracts, how they were collecting rent and the progress they were making on getting a new computer system up and running.

The four councils and East Kent Housing all signed up to an improvement plan aimed at fixing these problems.

In May this year, it then became apparent gas safety checks were not being carried out.

This led to the discovery of problems with electrical checks, lift inspections, legionella checks and delays in fire prevention work being carried out. Action has been taken on all of these and they have been fixed or are in the process of being fixed.

By now, the four councils had reported themselves to the government body that oversees council housing, the Regulator of Social Housing. In September, the regulator issued formal notices against all four councils telling them improvements needed to be made.

Agenda Item 3

Annex 4

Why are we saying East Kent Housing should be closed and the four councils should look after council homes themselves?

This is what is known as **Option 2** in our covering letter. We think the advantages of the councils taking back control are:

- The councils would be able to make decisions about their council homes more quickly
- The councils would be able to rebuild the strong relationships they had with tenants before East Kent Housing was created and talk directly to their tenants again
- The decisions around council housing would be made locally
- There could be opportunities to increase investment in council homes
- There could be cost savings from removing duplicated jobs

We think the disadvantages are:

- Performance around repairs and maintenance might dip while the changes are made
- Key staff might not want to work for one of the councils

Why did we rule out the other options?

Option 1 involves East Kent Housing continuing to manage council housing on behalf of the councils with improvements to the way they work

We feel the advantages of this approach are:

- The risks are reduced if smaller changes are being made to the service being provided and this is the least complicated option
- There would be no need to ask tenants for their views
- There is the opportunity for East Kent Housing to improve

We think the disadvantages are:

- The councils, who are paying for East Kent Housing's services, would have less control than if they were running things themselves.
- The extra layer of management provided by East Kent Housing could get in the way of necessary changes

Agenda Item 3

Annex 4

- Lots of people, including councillors, have lost trust in East Kent Housing carrying out safety checks when they need to
- East Kent Housing has struggled to carry out its work and manage the people carrying out work for it. It would cost money to put this right

Option 3 is to close East Kent Housing and for some or all of the councils to work together to manage council housing.

In our view, the advantages are:

- The councils would have more control over the service being delivered
- The councils would be able to save money by not duplicating jobs and taking advantage of their greater buying power to reduce the prices of the goods and services they buy

We feel the disadvantages are:

- The councils would lose a little bit of control over buying decisions
- Disagreements between the councils could hamper efficiency and improvements

Option 4 involves asking an outside provider like a housing association to manage council homes.

We think the advantages of this option are:

- An outside organisation might be more efficient because it operates more like a private company and might have more buying power to reduce the prices of the good and services they buy
- Any extra money generated can be ploughed back into other council services

The disadvantages are:

- Any savings that are made might be lost if the council cannot persuade the outside provider to alter the way it delivers its services when things go wrong
- It will take the councils a lot of work to ensure the outside provider manages council housing in the way councillors, and ultimately, tenants want
- Tenants and councillors may not trust an outside provider
- An outside provider would be exposed to the same risks as a private company

Agenda Item 3

Annex 4

What happens if one or two of the four councils decide to stay with the current arrangements while the remaining councils take direct control of their housing service? If the majority of councils decide to close East Kent Housing, it will close. The remaining councils would have to consider their next steps.

If the councils decide to bring the service back under their direct control, would this affect the service I receive? No, the intention is it would simply be delivered by staff at the council instead of at East Kent Housing. They may be the very same staff you deal with at the moment. You would still be able to access housing services at the council office, by telephone or via the council website.

Would the proposal affect the amount of rent and service charges I pay?

No.

Would the proposal affect the work due to be done to my home? No, all programmed work will continue as planned. The council will continue to keep your home to a decent standard.

Would staffing levels change? There is a chance that levels would change overall but staff would still be delivering services and work within the community. The big difference is their employer would change and they are likely to be based in the council's offices.

Would the quality of housing provided change?

The four councils are committed to providing high-quality housing services to all tenants and leaseholders. The aim would be direct management by the four councils would lead to improvements.

Would the transfer affect how I report housing issues? No, each council has a customer contact centre to provide a single access point for council services including housing.

When will you make a decision on whether to bring the service back under council management? Consultation closes on Friday 20 December 2019. What you tell us will be reported to councillors early next year. They will use your feedback to decide how your housing service should be delivered in future.

As soon as a decision has been made, we will write to you again to let you know.

If you decide to bring the service back under direct council control, what happens next? If the council decides to do this, more work would need to be done to manage the process and keep any disruption to a minimum. We would keep you informed on progress.

Document 3: Consultation questionnaire

Questionnaire Have your say on how we look after your home

You can either:

- Complete the questionnaire online at thanet.gov.uk/consultations
- Fill in this paper copy and either:
 - Send it back to us in the freepost envelope provided
 - Bring it to us at one of our consultation events
 - Bring it to the council offices at Cecil Street, Margate, Kent

Please make sure you read the enclosed information sheet before filling in the survey.

Questions that need a response are marked with a red asterisk (*)

1. Which of the following best describes you?

* Please tick one box only

- Council tenant or leaseholder
- Other individual
- A business, organisation or community group, please provide the name: _____
- Other, please state: _____

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to close East Kent Housing and leave it to people working at the council to look after your home (Option 2)?

* Please tick one box only

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree

2a. Please tell us why:

Agenda Item 3

Annex 4

3. What do you feel are the most important things for the council to focus on for your housing services?

* Please tick up to three options

- Dealing with repairs and maintenance
- Dealing with anti-social behaviour
- Providing value for money for your rent and service charges
- Building new council homes
- Estate services (such as grass cutting, cleaning communal areas etc)
- Dealing with customer enquiries and complaints
- Involving and listening to residents
- Other, please state: _____

4. If you are a tenant or leaseholder, would you like to be more involved in the management of your council home? (On the online version, this question only to appear to people who ticked "Council tenant or leaseholder" as their answer to Question 1)

If you would, and you are happy for the council to contact you about becoming more involved, please tick the box to indicate your consent to your email address being used to contact you in this regard: (insert tick box)

Please provide your email address: _____

5. Do you have any other comments on your housing services?

Thank you for taking the time to give us your views.

Future options for managing council housing
Analysis of consultation responses

1. Introduction

Consultation on future options for the management of housing services across East Kent took place between 22 October and 20 December 2019.

All council tenants and leaseholders across the district were sent a letter, information sheet and questionnaire inviting them to give their views, and an online version of the questionnaire was available on the council's website.

Additionally, key stakeholders including district councillors, county councillors, MPs, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Canterbury Housing Advice Centre, Civica, Kent County Council Social Services, Kent Police and the NHS were emailed directly inviting them to respond to the consultation.

2. Questionnaire responses

A total of 843 completed questionnaires have been received. 76 of these were submitted online and 767 paper copies were returned.

In terms of who responded:

- 821 tenants and leaseholders (15% of all tenants and leaseholders)
- 4 other individuals
- 18 respondents did not say in what capacity they were responding

2.1. Level of agreement with the proposal to bring the service back in house

As shown below, 81% of respondents agree to some extent with the proposal:

	All respondents	Tenants and leaseholders
Strongly agree	60% (492)	60% (487)
Tend to agree	21% (171)	21% (167)
Neither agree nor disagree	12% (96)	11% (92)
Tend to disagree	4% (30)	4% (29)
Strongly disagree	4% (37)	4% (36)

The following comments were made by respondents who agree with the proposal:

- Unhappy with the general standard of service provided by East Kent Housing: 131 comments

Agenda Item 3

Annex 5

- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repair and maintenance issues: 128 comments
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing: 96 comments
- The council is more local so can deal with issues more quickly: 76 comments
- The council would be more accountable than East Kent Housing: 65 comments
- The council would build stronger relationships with tenants: 48 comments
- The council ran the service well before East Kent Housing was created: 40 comments
- It would be more cost effective if the service was delivered directly by the council: 32 comments
- Lack of safety inspections from East Kent Housing: 25 comments
- The council knows its own housing stock: 23 comments
- East Kent Housing do not provide us with a dedicated Housing Officer anymore: 19 comments
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with anti-social behaviour: 18 comments
- East Kent Housing no longer provide rent statements: 10 comments
- The council would keep better records: 4 comments
- East Kent Housing is too large so too many people are involved in managing the service: 3 comments
- Trust the council to deliver a good service: 3 comments
- Inconvenient repair times being given: 2 comments
- Strongly support returning the service to the council: 2 comments

Respondents who disagree with the proposal made the following comments:

- East Kent Housing provide a good service: 25 comments
- Concern that neither the council nor East Kent Housing would deliver a good service: 6 comments
- East Kent Housing provide a better service than the council did before East Kent Housing was created: 4 comments
- Concern costs may increase if the service is brought under direct council control: 4 comments
- The council would find the service unmanageable: 4 comments
- East Kent Housing and Canterbury City Council are both to blame for the recent failings: 3 comments
- The council would need to employ new staff who would not necessarily know the local area: 2 comments

General comments received regarding the proposal:

- No preference on who runs the service as long as it is delivered effectively: 21 comments
- Don't feel able to give an opinion: 14 comments
- Concern that if East Kent Housing staff simply transfer to the council, the service would not improve: 4 comments
- Happy for other tenants to decide the best way forward: 2 comments
- Would oppose the service being managed by an external provider (option 4): 2 comments

Agenda Item 3

Annex 5

2.2. What the council should focus on for housing services

Respondents were asked what they feel are the three most important things for the council to focus on for housing services. The following responses were received:

Dealing with repairs and maintenance	79% (667)
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	32% (271)
Providing value for money for your rent and service charges	32% (269)
Building new council homes	26% (215)
Estate services (such as grass cutting, cleaning communal areas etc)	24% (205)
Dealing with customer enquiries and complaints	30% (252)
Involving and listening to residents	22% (189)
Other: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve estate services x2• Focus on capital works x2• Improve parking x2• Bin store needs to be installed x1• Provide help with decorating and carpeting x1• Build more sheltered housing x1• Improve street cleaning services x1• Provide more support to tenants seeking to move x1• Install electric vehicle charging points x1• Focus on front door replacements x1• Focus on employing staff with knowledge of the local area x1• Focus on maintaining staff levels x1• All of the above x1• Provide more practical support to residents who are unable to maintain their homes and gardens x1• Improve security at sheltered housing schemes x1• Improve accountability x1• Provide more support to residents with mental health issues x1• Allow tenants to make more improvements to their homes themselves x1• No details given x3	3% (24)

2.3. Resident involvement

Tenants and leaseholders were asked if they would like to be more involved in the management of their council homes. 127 tenants and leaseholders said they would, and provided their contact details.

Agenda Item 3 Annex 5

2.4. Other comments

The following additional comments were received:

- Not enough attention is given to maintaining council estates: 27 comments
- Parking problems: 7 comments
- The council needs to listen to tenants: 7 comments
- Make it easier for tenants to contact the housing service: 6 comments
- Desire for a greater Independent Living Manager presence: 5 comments
- The council needs to build more homes: 4 comments
- Concern over contractor performance: 4 comments
- Concern over how leasehold service charges are calculated: 4 comments
- Procedure for tenants wishing to transfer to another property is complicated: 4 comments
- Would like follow-up visits from council officers to check repairs have been completed correctly: 3 comments
- Concern over the criteria for ensuring properties are suitable for prospective tenants before they are allocated: 3 comments
- Too many properties on council estates are now Houses in Multiple Occupation: 2 comments
- The council needs to undertake a full audit of its housing stock: 2 comments
- Concern the council would reduce service levels and/or staff if option 2 is implemented: 2 comments
- Concern the council would try to use the service to make a profit if they managed it directly: 2 comments
- Concern about potential data loss if services transfer back to the council: 1 comment
- Concern over the length of time taken to deal with aids and adaptations: 1 comment
- Letters sent by East Kent Housing are difficult to understand as they are not in plain English: 1 comment
- Query over whether the council would use the same contractors as East Kent Housing currently use: 1 comment
- Feeling that East Kent Housing was set up to fail: 1 comment
- Concern tenants would have to sign a new tenancy agreement if the service is brought under direct council control: 1 comment
- Concern rents would increase if the service is brought under direct council control: 1 comment

3. Events

3.1. Drop-in events

3.1.1. Spring Lane Neighbourhood Centre, Canterbury, 4 November 2019

This event was staffed by Sarah Randall, Alexis Jobson, Mike Bailey and Jon Crwys-Williams and 5 residents attended. Two residents who are members of the Tenant Consultative Group also attended.

Agenda Item 3

Annex 5

The main issues discussed were:

- Support bringing the service back in house: 4 comments
- Concerns over contractor performance: 3 comments
- East Kent Housing no longer provide a dedicated Housing Officer: 2 comments
- Feeling tenants are not properly involved in decision making: 2 comments
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repair and maintenance issues: 2 comments
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with anti-social behaviour: 1 comment
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing: 1 comment
- Lack of resident involvement from East Kent Housing: 1 comment
- Grounds maintenance issues: 1 comment
- Proposal for a committee structure for the new service to consist of 50% tenants/25% non-management staff/25% management staff: 1 comment
- Concern that the council would not necessarily deliver a better service than East Kent Housing: 1 comment

3.1.2. Baptist Church, Herne Bay, 9 November 2019

This event was staffed by Alexis Jobson, Mike Bailey and Tasha Love and 4 residents attended. Councillor Dekker and one resident who is a member of the Tenant Consultative Group also attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Support bringing the service back in house: 3 comments
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing: 3 comments
- Issues with fire prevention works not being completed as per what was originally promised to residents: 3 comments
- Concerns over contractor performance: 2 comments
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with anti-social behaviour: 2 comments
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to enforce fire regulations: 2 comments
- Unhappy that East Kent Housing no longer provide a dedicated Housing Officer: 2 comments
- Issues with flytipping: 2 comments
- Happy with East Kent Housing: 1 comment
- Unhappy that residents were promised central heating which has not been installed: 1 comment
- Would oppose a housing association taking over: 1 comment

3.1.3. The Horsebridge Centre, Whitstable, 19 November 2019

This event was staffed by Sarah Randall, Mike Bailey and Lizzie Norcott and 6 residents attended. Councillor Caffery, Councillor Kenny and two residents who are members of the Tenant Consultative Group also attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Support bringing the service back in house: 4 comments
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repairs and maintenance: 2 comments

Agenda Item 3

Annex 5

- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing: 1 comment
- East Kent Housing's complaints procedure is not fit for purpose: 1 comment
- Desire for the Housing Appeals Committee to be reinstated, and for at least one member of the committee to be a tenant: 1 comment
- Query over whether Tenancy Agreements would change if the service were to come back under direct council control: 1 comment
- Query over whether succession rights would change if the service were to come back under direct council control: 1 comment

3.2. Question and answer sessions for sheltered housing tenants

3.2.1. Lang Court, Whitstable, 28 October 2019

This event was staffed by Mike Bailey and Lizzie Norcott and 15 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Lack of action by EKH to deal with repair issues
- Concerns over how EKH manage the performance of contractors
- Query as to whether support staff that were in place pre-2015 would be reinstated
- Query as to whether the same Independent Living Manager would be retained
- Tenants want their homes to be managed by the council
- Query as to whether rent levels would change
- Query as to how long it would take to implement option 2 if agreed
- Query as to whether night support and laundry staff would be retained

3.2.2. Seaview House, Herne Bay, 29 October 2019

This event was staffed by Mike Bailey and Tasha Love and 7 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Unhappy that the scheme is served by 3 Independent Living Managers rather than having a dedicated Independent Living Manager solely for their scheme
- Concerns regarding the application/selection process on who is allowed to move into sheltered housing
- They feel that have to make all the reports about repairs themselves instead of a service manager who does this for them
- Query when the process of bringing the service back under council control would start if it is decided to do this
- Query as to how long it would take to implement option 2 if agreed
- Query on whether residents would notice a difference in service levels in the interim if option 2 is agreed
- Query on whether residents would receive more attendance from staff on site
- Query on whether management staff from EKH will just transfer over to the council and if so, concern as to whether there would be any difference in service

Agenda Item 3 Annex 5

3.2.3. Cranmer House, Canterbury, 4 November 2019

This event was staffed by Mike Bailey and Jon Crwys-Williams and 8 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Query as to whether residents would notice a difference in service levels if option 2 is agreed
- Query as to whether there would be any cost savings if option 2 is agreed
- Happy with the service provided by Mears
- Support the proposal to bring the service back under direct council control

3.2.4. St Gregory's Court, Canterbury, 6 November 2019

This event was staffed by Mike Bailey and Jon Crwys-Williams and 9 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Query on why the council is consulting tenants when an in principle decision has already been made
- Query over rent free weeks
- One resident commented he had lived there for five years and never had any problems
- Query as to which organisation would employ the Independent Living Manager
- Query as to whether residents would notice a difference in service levels if option 2 is agreed
- Query when the process of bringing the service back under council control would start if it is decided to do this
- Query as to how long it would take to implement option 2 if agreed
- Query on which organisation receives the rent money tenants pay
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repairs and maintenance
- Two residents stated their support for bringing the service back under direct council control

3.2.5. Windsor House, Whitstable, 7 November 2019

This event was staffed by Mike Bailey and Lizzie Norcott and 23 residents attended. Councillor Cornell and Councillor Kenny also attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Strong support for bringing the service back under direct council control (21 residents)
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with anti-social behaviour
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repairs and maintenance
- Tenants not being kept informed of timescales on the work currently being undertaken on the building
- Concerns over insufficient scooter storage once the works to the building are complete
- Concerns over insufficient car parking
- Concerns over accessibility of bin storage area, and residents not using the recycling and residual waste bins correctly

Agenda Item 3

Annex 5

- Concerns regarding the application/selection process on who is allowed to move into sheltered housing
- Query as to whether Independent Living would be retained or whether the service would be rebranded as Sheltered Housing
- Query as to whether the same Independent Living Manager would be retained
- Unhappy that rent statements are no longer provided
- Residents' support plans are not being regularly reviewed and updated
- Desire to retain and improve the Independent Living Forum if the service is brought back under direct council control

3.2.6. Franklyn House, Sturry, 8 November 2019

This event was staffed by Mike Bailey and Jon Crwys-Williams and 10 residents attended. Councillor Dekker and Councillor Harvey-Quirke also attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Query on why the council is consulting tenants when an in principle decision has already been made
- Query as to whether Independent Living would be retained or whether the service would be rebranded as Sheltered Housing
- Query as to whether residents would notice a difference in service levels if option 2 is agreed
- Desire to retain and improve the Independent Living Forum if the service is brought back under direct council control
- Query as to whether the handyman service would be retained
- Concerns over contractor performance
- Query on how rent and service charges are calculated
- Query as to whether tenants' rights under their tenancy agreements would change
- Query on whether the choice based lettings system would be retained
- Concerns over building security
- Concerns over lack of adequate cover when the Independent Living Manager is absent
- Concerns over emergency evacuation procedure for disabled residents as no wheelchair or stairlift is provided
- Concerns over accessibility of bin storage area
- Query as to whether it would be easier to contact staff at the council than it is to contact staff at East Kent Housing

3.2.7. Longfield Court, Whitstable, 11 November 2019

This event was staffed by Mike Bailey and Lizzie Norcott and 12 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Strong support for bringing the service back under direct council control (9 residents)
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repairs and maintenance
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing
- Query as to why East Kent Housing was created
- Concerns over contractor performance

Agenda Item 3

Annex 5

- Query as to whether the same Independent Living Manager would be retained

3.2.8. Ellen Court, Littlebourne, 11 November 2019

This event was staffed by Mike Bailey and Jon Crwys-Williams and 11 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Query as to whether residents would notice a difference in service levels if option 2 is agreed
- Query over whether rents would reduce if it costs the council less to deliver the service than it currently costs East Kent Housing
- Concern over whether the council actually deliver a better service than East Kent Housing
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repairs and maintenance
- Query on whether staff currently employed by East Kent Housing would transfer to work for Canterbury City Council
- Desire for a greater Independent Living Manager presence in the scheme
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing on fire safety issues
- What would happen if one or more of the councils wanted to keep East Kent Housing
- Query on health and safety checks being carried out at weekends but tenants not notified
- Concerns over emergency evacuation procedure for disabled residents as no wheelchair or stairlift is provided
- Concerns over building security
- Residents unable to access their electricity meters as they are in a locked cupboard

3.2.9. Maple House, Rough Common, 12 November 2019

This event was staffed by Mike Bailey and Jon Crwys-Williams and 6 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Residents being told they are in rent arrears only to subsequently be told East Kent Housing have made a mistake and they are not in arrears
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repairs and maintenance
- Residents being given misleading reasons for work not being carried out
- Support bringing the service back under direct council control as the council would be more accountable and provide more a local focus
- Query as to how long it would take to implement option 2 if agreed
- Access problems to the car park caused by an overgrown hedge

Agenda Item 3 Annex 5

3.2.10. Whitgift Court, Canterbury, 14 November 2019

This event was staffed by Mike Bailey and Tasha Love and 19 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Concern that the council is consulting on its preferred option rather than asking for tenants' views on all four options referred to in the information sheet
- Unhappy with general standard of service provided by East Kent Housing
- Issues with missed bin collections
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing
- Difficulties contacting the Independent Living team on the number provided when staff are not on site
- Problems with lift maintenance
- Desire for a greater Independent Living Manager presence in the scheme, particularly at weekends
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repairs and maintenance
- Query as to how long it would take to implement option 2 if agreed
- Query as to whether the council might look to outsource the service again in the future
- Issues with parking

3.2.11. Churchill House, Bridge, 15 November 2019

This event was staffed by Mike Bailey and Lizzie Norcott and 10 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repairs and maintenance, particularly issues with the communal washing machine, lift and communal boiler
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing
- Query over why residents of the bungalows adjoining the main building are allowed to use the communal areas of the scheme
- Concerns over contractor performance, particularly window cleaners and grounds maintenance
- Query as to whether Independent Living would be retained or whether the service would be rebranded as Sheltered Housing
- Concerns over building security
- Feeling East Kent Housing ignore Churchill House
- Desire for a greater Independent Living Manager presence in the scheme,
- Query as to how long it would take to implement option 2 if agreed

3.2.12. Collard House, Canterbury, 19 November 2019

This event was staffed by Mike Bailey and Tasha Love and 9 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Query as to whether the process for existing tenants wishing to submit transfer applications would change
- Query as to what would happen if the majority of tenants wanted to keep East Kent Housing

Agenda Item 3

Annex 5

- Query as to whether rents would increase if the service is brought back under direct council control
- Query as to whether staffing levels would increase if the service is brought back under direct council control
- Query as to how much savings the council could make by bringing the service back under its direct control
- Concerns over the performance of contractors, particularly grounds maintenance
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repairs and maintenance, particularly lift maintenance
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing
- More confidence in the council to deliver a good service
- Issues with the Kent Homechoice system
- Query as to whether Mears would be retained as the repairs contractor
- Happy with the service from Mears, particularly the handyman service

3.2.13. Shalmsford Court, Chartham, 28 November 2019

This event was staffed by Mike Bailey and Jon Crwys-Williams and 8 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Query as to whether the same Independent Living Manager would be retained
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repairs and maintenance
- Parking problems
- Issues with fly tipping
- Support the proposal to bring the service back under direct council control
- Concerns over contractor performance
- Desire to retain and improve the Independent Living Forum if the service is brought back under direct council control

4. Contact with the consultation team

The consultation team dealt with enquiries from 16 Canterbury residents:

- Repairs reported to EKH but not dealt with x7
- Tenant wanting to complete questionnaire over the phone x2
- Unhappy with the general standard of service provided by EKH x2
- Lack of action by EKH on potential tenancy fraud x1
- Request for electronic copies of the consultation documents x1
- NHS CCG wanting to discuss the proposal over the phone x1
- Tenant requesting a home visit to discuss the consultation x1
- Query regarding a tenancy succession issue x1

NB: Four of these tenants also said they support bringing the service back in house, and one said he would prefer to keep EKH.

Agenda Item 3

Annex 5

5. Written submission from Canterbury Housing Advice Centre

Canterbury Housing Advice Centre sent an email in response to the consultation, in which they made the following comments:

"Canterbury Housing Advice Centre most strongly supports option 2 which is to close East Kent Housing and create a team at Canterbury City Council to look after Canterbury City Council homes. We would also strongly support keeping all housing services under the direct control of Canterbury City Council and to not contract out any of these services to anybody else".



Future options for managing council housing Analysis of consultation responses

1. Introduction

Consultation on future options for the management of housing services across East Kent took place between 22 October and 20 December 2019.

All council tenants and leaseholders across the district were sent a letter, information sheet and questionnaire inviting them to give their views, and an online version of the questionnaire was available on the council's website.

Additionally, key stakeholders including district councillors, county councillors, MPs, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Civica, Kent County Council Social Services, Kent Police and the NHS were emailed directly inviting them to respond to the consultation.

2. Questionnaire responses

A total of 731 completed questionnaires have been received. 93 of these were submitted online and 638 paper copies were returned.

In terms of who responded:

- 707 tenants and leaseholders (15% of all tenants and leaseholders)
- 13 other individuals
- 11 respondents did not say in what capacity they were responding

2.1. Level of agreement with the proposal to bring the service back in house

As shown below, 81% of respondents agree to some extent with the proposal:

	All respondents	Tenants and leaseholders
Strongly agree	62% (445)	62% (433)
Tend to agree	19% (138)	19% (135)
Neither agree nor disagree	12% (84)	12% (82)
Tend to disagree	3% (20)	3% (20)
Strongly disagree	5% (36)	5% (33)

Agenda Item 3

Annex 6

The following comments were made by respondents who agree with the proposal:

- Unhappy with the general standard of service provided by East Kent Housing: 159 comments
- The council would be more responsive in dealing with issues: 153 comments
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repair and maintenance issues: 140 comments
- The council ran the service well before East Kent Housing was created: 124 comments
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing: 91 comments
- Don't trust the contractors to deliver an effective service: 47 comments
- Each of the four councils should have sole responsibility for their own housing stock: 37 comments
- The council would be more accountable than East Kent Housing: 34 comments
- The council would build stronger relationships with tenants: 32 comments
- It would be easier for residents to deal directly with the council: 29 comments
- Bringing the service back under council control would be more cost effective: 26 comments
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with anti-social behaviour: 14 comments
- Don't feel that East Kent Housing keep us safe in our homes: 11 comments
- Agree, providing we retain the same Independent Living Manager: 4 comments

Respondents who disagree with the proposal made the following comments:

- East Kent Housing provide a good service: 34 comments
- Don't see the need to change: 8 comments
- Keeping East Kent Housing would mean less work for the council: 3 comments
- Bringing the service back under direct council control would be a waste of money: 2 comments

General comments received regarding the proposal:

- Never had any problems: 24 comments
- No preference on who runs the service as long as it is delivered effectively: 13 comments
- Don't feel able to give an opinion: 5 comments

2.2. What the council should focus on for housing services

Respondents were asked what they feel are the three most important things for the council to focus on for housing services. The following responses were received:

Dealing with repairs and maintenance	85% (618)
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	29% (213)
Providing value for money for your rent and service charges	37% (268)
Building new council homes	26% (191)
Estate services	20% (148)

Agenda Item 3

Annex 6

(such as grass cutting, cleaning communal areas etc)	
Dealing with customer enquiries and complaints	35% (253)
Involving and listening to residents	21% (153)
Other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more of a focus on supporting disabled and vulnerable residents x4 • All of the above x2 • More attention needed on safety inspections x1 • Improve parking x1 • Retain and improve independent living services x1 • No details given x2 	2% (11)

2.3. Resident involvement

Tenants and leaseholders were asked if they would like to be more involved in the management of their council homes. 93 tenants and leaseholders said they would, and provided their contact details.

2.4. Other comments

The following additional comments were received:

- More should be done to support elderly and disabled tenants: 14 comments
- Concern over the criteria for ensuring properties are suitable for prospective tenants before they are allocated: 5 comments
- Parking problems: 4 comments
- The council needs to build more homes: 3 comments
- Concern leasehold service charges would increase if the council managed the service directly: 1 comment

3. Events

3.1. Drop-in events

3.1.1. Guildhall, Sandwich, 28 October 2019

This event was staffed by Louise Taylor and Talha Islam and residents from 7 properties attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Concerns over maintenance issues
- Had problems over rent arrears
- Complaint with efficiency of service
- EKH are not managing ASB
- Strongly agrees to bring the service back to the council
- Leaseholder of a property has arranged his own boiler services for the 15 years he has been there as EKH does not help
- Query over who is in charge of the maintenance on leasehold properties
- Query over how ASB would be managed by the council

Agenda Item 3

Annex 6

3.1.2. The Ark, Dover, 9 November 2019

This event was staffed by Louise Taylor, Talha Islam, Naomi Palmer and Lizzie Norcott and residents from 3 properties attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Lack of cleaning in external areas
- Complaint over efficiency of service provided by East Kent Housing
- Query if East Kent Housing staff would transfer over to work for Dover District Council
- Health and safety concerns within property

3.1.3. Community Trust, Aylesham, 18 November 2019

This event was staffed by Louise Taylor, Talha Islam and 2 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Concern over whether tenants will be kept informed of when works will take place.
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repairs and maintenance
- Support bringing the service under direct council control
- Query over whether independent living manager will be retained
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing
- Concerns over contractor performance

3.1.4. Bettleshanger Sports Club, Deal, 19 November 2019

This event was staffed by Louise Taylor, Naomi Palmer and Talha Islam and 7 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Difficulties contacting Dover District Council
- Want to keep East Kent Housing
- Concern if the council do take the service back it will be managed by the same staff responsible for poor performance of East Kent Housing
- Lack of action from East Kent Housing to deal with repairs and maintenance
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing
- Concern that the council may outsource the service to a housing association
- Lack of resident involvement
- Support bringing the service under direct council control
- Lack of safety inspections from East Kent Housing
- Query what difference it will make back under council control

3.2. Question and answer sessions for sheltered housing tenants

3.2.1. Barnesende Court, Sandwich, 23 October 2019

This event was staffed by Louise Taylor and residents from 13 properties attended.

The main issues discussed were:

Agenda Item 3

Annex 6

- Query on whether they would still have the same Independent Living Manager
- Query on whether their landlord would be a different council
- Query on whether rent would increase
- Query on whether it would be easier to get through on the phone
- Says it is hard to know who is in charge of what

3.2.2. Lambert House, Deal, 4 November 2019

This event was staffed by Louise Taylor and Tasha Love and residents from 15 properties attended.

The only issue discussed was one resident who commented that he was not worried by the proposal.

3.2.3. Reece Adams House, Capel-le-Ferne, 20 November 2019

This event was staffed by Louise Taylor and Lizzie Norcott and 11 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Lack of repairs and maintenance by East Kent Housing
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing
- Concerns if contractors will change
- Concerns over not having a community atmosphere within the property
- All residents wanted to keep their independent living manager

3.2.4. Sunny Corner, Aycliffe, 25 November 2019

This event was staffed by Lizzie Norcott and Pat Turley and 9 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Lack of action to deal with anti-social behaviour from East Kent Housing
- Repairs and maintenance not being dealt with
- No heating within the communal areas and some flats, has been on-going for a few months
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing.
- Concerns over rent increasing
- Concerns if they will keep their Independent Living Manager

3.2.5. Eastry Court, Aylesham 11 December 2019

This event was staffed by Lizzie Norcott, Naomi Palmer and Talha Islam and 10 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Lack of action to deal with repairs and maintenance
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing
- Concern over losing their Independent Living Manager
- Concerns over health and safety, lifelines haven't been working for months.
- Worries over checks of the property, they don't have any senior staff from East Kent Housing or Dover District Council attending the property.

Agenda Item 3

Annex 6

3.3. Dover District Tenant Group Meeting, 17 October 2019

This meeting was arranged by East Kent Housing, and Louise Taylor attended to discuss the consultation with residents.

The main issues discussed were:

- The residents think that EKH are being treated unfairly by the council
- Why had EKH's planned door knocking exercise been cancelled in DDC?
Explained it would be confusing to do this at the same time as this consultation is taking place
- Why wasn't there an event for Elvington?
- Could residents attend meetings to defend EKH?
- Feel material is biased
- Feel council has taken credit for EKH's hard work
- Asked if material is available in different formats
- Feel that press coverage is biased
- Concerned people would lose their jobs

4. Contact with the consultation team

The consultation team dealt with enquiries from 12 Dover residents:

- Repairs reported to EKH but not dealt with x4
- Leaseholder querying how the proposals would affect her x2
- Lack of communication from EKH x1
- Concerns over P&R performance x1
- Tenant feels she has been unfairly treated by EKH and DDC x1
- Tenant wanting to complete questionnaire over the phone x1
- Query regarding change in gas contractor x1
- Confirming EKH have dealt with repair issue following our team's intervention x1

NB: Three of these tenants also said they support bringing the service back in house.



Future options for managing council housing Analysis of consultation responses

1. Introduction

Consultation on future options for the management of housing services across East Kent took place between 22 October and 20 December 2019.

All council tenants and leaseholders across the district were sent a letter, information sheet and questionnaire inviting them to give their views, and an online version of the questionnaire was available on the council's website.

Additionally, key stakeholders including district councillors, county councillors, MPs, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Kent County Council Social Services, Kent Police and the NHS were emailed directly inviting them to respond to the consultation.

2. Questionnaire responses

A total of 602 completed questionnaires were received. 72 of these were submitted online and 530 paper copies were returned.

In terms of who responded:

- 588 tenants and leaseholders (16% of all tenants and leaseholders)
- 4 other individuals
- 1 response from the Shepway Tenants and Leaseholders Board
- 1 response from Age UK Hythe and Lyminge
- 1 shared ownership resident
- 7 respondents did not say in what capacity they were responding

2.1. Level of agreement with the proposal to bring the service back in house

As shown below, 74% of respondents agree to some extent with the proposal:

	All respondents	Tenants and leaseholders
Strongly agree	54% (323)	54% (316)
Tend to agree	20% (120)	20% (119)
Neither agree nor disagree	13% (76)	13% (75)
Tend to disagree	4% (21)	4% (21)
Strongly disagree	9% (53)	9% (51)

Agenda Item 3

Annex 7

The following comments were made by respondents who agree with the proposal:

- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repair and maintenance issues: 104 comments
- The council is more local so can deal with issues more quickly: 93 comments
- The council would be more accountable than East Kent Housing: 82 comments
- Unhappy with the general standard of service provided by East Kent Housing: 72 comments
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing: 53 comments
- The service provided by East Kent Housing has deteriorated in the last few years: 50 comments
- The council ran the service well before East Kent Housing was created: 41 comments
- It would be easier for residents to deal directly with the council: 29 comments
- The council knows its own housing stock: 20 comments
- The council could build stronger relationships with its tenants: 20 comments
- East Kent Housing do not provide us with a dedicated Housing Officer anymore: 18 comments
- Any money saved from bringing the service under direct council control could be used to improve housing services: 11 comments
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with anti-social behaviour: 10 comments
- Bringing the service under direct council control would minimise the risk of an alternative provider seeking to make a profit: 9 comments
- Agree, providing a dedicated housing department is created at the council: 3 comments
- Agree, providing our existing Independent Living Manager is retained: 1 comment

Respondents who disagree with the proposal made the following comments:

- East Kent Housing provide a good service: 35 comments
- Concern that neither the council nor East Kent Housing would deliver a good service: 10 comments
- Concern the council would reduce service levels and/or staff if option 2 is implemented: 6 comments
- Concern it would be harder to contact the council than it is to contact East Kent Housing: 4 comments
- Concern the council would not provide front line staff with the support needed to deliver the service effectively: 3 comments
- Concern we would not keep our existing Independent Living Manager: 2 comments
- Concern bringing the service under direct council control would cost more money: 2 comments

General comments received regarding the proposal:

- No preference on who runs the service as long as it is delivered effectively: 17 comments

Agenda Item 3

Annex 7

- Don't feel able to give an opinion as only recently became a tenant: 3 comments
- Don't feel there is any point giving an opinion as they feel it would not be listened to: 3 comments
- The decision should be made by experts: 2 comments
- Concern the council has already decided on its preferred option: 1 comment

2.2. What the council should focus on for housing services

Respondents were asked what they feel are the three most important things for the council to focus on for housing services. The following responses were received:

Dealing with repairs and maintenance	79% (473)
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	22% (130)
Providing value for money for your rent and service charges	40% (240)
Building new council homes	24% (142)
Estate services (such as grass cutting, cleaning communal areas etc)	21% (129)
Dealing with customer enquiries and complaints	36% (218)
Involving and listening to residents	24% (142)
Other: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve dialogue with all residents x3• Maintain reasonable rent charges x1• Improve efficiency x1• Improve consultation with residents x1• Improve dialogue with disabled residents x1• Dealing with communal repairs x1• Listen to East Kent Housing x1• Be more accountable x1	2% (10)

2.3. Resident involvement

Tenants and leaseholders were asked if they would like to be more involved in the management of their council homes. 89 tenants and leaseholders said they would, and provided their contact details.

2.4. Other comments

The following additional comments were received:

- The council needs to listen to tenants more: 25 comments
- Estate services need improvement: 22 comments
- Unhappy that East Kent Housing no longer provide rent statements: 10 comments
- The council needs to build more properties: 6 comments
- Problems with parking: 4 comments

Agenda Item 3

Annex 7

- Problems with the way East Kent Housing have calculated leasehold service charges: 3 comments
- Would be happy to pay a higher leasehold service charge if it meant more repairs would be carried out: 2 comments
- Concern over the criteria for allocating properties to residents on the housing register: 1 comment
- Problems with items left in communal areas: 1 comment
- Would oppose the service being outsourced to a housing association: 1 comment

3. Events

3.1. Win Pine House, Hythe, 7 November 2019

This event was staffed by Adrian Hammond, Sandra Sainsbury and Tasha Love and 21 residents attended. Five councillors also attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repair and maintenance issues
- Issues with parking bays
- Issues with recycling bins
- Sheltered tenants would like a greater Independent Living Manager presence

Additionally, all but one of the attendees stated their support for the service returning to the council.

3.2. All Souls Church Hall, Cheriton, 9 November 2019

This event was staffed by Adrian Hammond and Sandra Sainsbury and 11 residents attended. Six councillors and a tenant who is a member of the Shepway Tenant and Leaseholder Board also attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Lack of parking bay markings at sheltered scheme, worried about vehicles being damaged
- Repairs not carried out even though contractor had visited to measure up
- Wished to downsize but could not get in touch with anyone

3.3. Assembly Rooms, New Romney, 20 November 2019

This event was staffed by Adrian Hammond, Sandra Sainsbury and Lizzie Norcott and 3 residents attended. Two councillors and a tenant who is a member of the Shepway Tenant and Leaseholder Board also attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repair and maintenance issues
- Concern over issues with contractors
- General lack of a good service from East Kent Housing
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing
- Need for regular rent statements

Agenda Item 3 Annex 7

3.4. Salvation Army, Folkestone, 4 December 2019

This event was staffed by Adrian Hammond, Sandra Sainsbury and Lizzie Norcott and 5 residents attended. Three councillors also attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repair and maintenance issues
- Support for East Kent Housing
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing
- Concern of rent increasing

3.5. Nailbourne Court, Lyminge

This event was staffed by Sandra Sainsbury and 8 residents attended. One councillor also attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Concerned about trees surrounding the building - very overgrown and move about a lot when windy
- Residents keep asking for things to be done, repairs are outstanding for months and when they are carried out, the problem is not always sorted
- Concerns over very elderly residents not receiving a daily call when the Independent Living Manager is on leave

4. Contact with the consultation team

The consultation team dealt with enquiries from 8 Folkestone & Hythe residents:

- Repairs reported to EKH but not dealt with x4
- Tenant's son seeking clarification on how the consultation would affect his mother x1
- Tenant querying how the proposal would affect her x1
- Leaseholder querying whether both leaseholder names are recorded on the system x1
- Leaseholder querying why her deceased husband is still recorded on the system x1

NB: One of these tenants also said she supports bringing the service back in house.

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**Future options for managing council housing
Analysis of consultation responses**

1. Introduction

Consultation on future options for the management of housing services across East Kent took place between 22 October and 20 December 2019.

All council tenants and leaseholders across the district were sent a letter, information sheet and questionnaire inviting them to give their views, and an online version of the questionnaire was available on the council's website.

Additionally, key stakeholders including district councillors, county councillors, MPs, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Civica, Kent County Council Social Services, Kent Police and the NHS were emailed directly inviting them to respond to the consultation.

2. Questionnaire responses

A total of 427 completed questionnaires were received. 91 of these were submitted online and 336 paper copies were returned.

In terms of who responded:

- 403 tenants and leaseholders (12% of all tenants and leaseholders)
- 17 other individuals
- 1 response from Addington Street Community Group
- 1 response from Newington Community Association
- 1 shared ownership resident
- 1 response from a former tenant
- 3 respondents did not say in what capacity they were responding

2.1. Level of agreement with the proposal to bring the service back in house

As shown below, 81% of respondents agree to some extent with the proposal:

	All respondents	Tenants and leaseholders
Strongly agree	60% (257)	60% (243)
Tend to agree	21% (91)	22% (88)
Neither agree nor disagree	9% (37)	9% (35)
Tend to disagree	3% (12)	3% (11)

Agenda Item 3 Annex 8

Strongly disagree	7% (28)	6% (25)
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The following comments were made by respondents who agree with the proposal:

- The council knows its own housing stock: 111 comments
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing: 100 comments
- The council would be more accountable than East Kent Housing: 80 comments
- Unhappy with the general standard of service provided by East Kent Housing: 72 comments
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repair and maintenance issues: 71 comments
- Poor value for money provided by East Kent Housing: 31 comments
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with anti-social behaviour: 30 comments
- East Kent Housing do not provide us with a dedicated Housing Officer anymore: 9 comments

Respondents who disagree with the proposal made the following comments:

- East Kent Housing provide a good service: 14 comments
- Concern that neither the council nor East Kent Housing would deliver a good service: 12 comments
- The council has not managed contracts effectively: 5 comments
- Concern costs may increase if the service is brought under direct council control: 4 comments
- East Kent Housing and Thanet District Council are both to blame for the recent failings: 4 comments
- Unclear on how things would be run if East Kent Housing no longer existed: 3 comments

General comments received regarding the proposal:

- The decision should be made by experts rather than residents: 5 comments
- Concern over the amount of work involved in bringing the service back under direct council control: 2 comments
- No preference on who runs the service as long as it is delivered effectively: 2 comments
- Don't feel able to give an opinion as only recently became a tenant: 2 comments

2.2. What the council should focus on for housing services

Respondents were asked what they feel are the three most important things for the council to focus on for housing services. The following responses were received:

Dealing with repairs and maintenance	77% (328)
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	44% (189)
Providing value for money for your rent and service charges	35% (149)
Building new council homes	24% (103)

Agenda Item 3

Annex 8

Estate services (such as grass cutting, cleaning communal areas etc)	21% (89)
Dealing with customer enquiries and complaints	26% (113)
Involving and listening to residents	20% (85)
Other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No details given x4 • All of the above x3 • Community cohesion x1 • Street cleaning x1 • Deal with aids and adaptations more quickly x1 • Fire safety x1 • Improve leaseholder services x1 • Allow tenants to carry out more repairs themselves x1 • Provide more support to disabled residents x1 • Provide more support to residents with mental health issues x1 • More robust action to tackle anti-social behaviour x1 • Compliance with health and safety law x1 	4% (17)

2.3. Resident involvement

Tenants and leaseholders were asked if they would like to be more involved in the management of their council homes. 81 tenants and leaseholders said they would, and provided their contact details.

2.4. Other comments

The following additional comments were received:

- Concerns over the performance of contractors: 40 comments
- Support Option 2 (closing East Kent Housing and bringing the service under direct council control): 36 comments
- Support Option 1 (keeping East Kent Housing and improving the way they work): 21 comments
- The council needs to listen to tenants more: 5 comments
- Would like to be more involved in how properties are managed: 5 comments
- Concern over the criteria for ensuring properties are suitable for prospective tenants before they are allocated: 2 comments
- Opposed to Option 4 (asking an outside organisation to look after homes): 1 comment

3. Drop-in events

3.1. St John's Community Centre, Margate, 2 November 2019

This event was staffed by Amena Matin, Lyn Forster and Tasha Love and 1 resident attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Query on how frequently fire precautions are updated

Agenda Item 3

Annex 8

- Query over works not carried out despite leasehold service charge having been paid
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repair and maintenance issues
- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing
- Support bringing the service back under direct council control

3.2. SureStart Millmead, Margate, 7 November 2019

One resident attended this event. They reported concerns with East Kent Housing writing to them regarding rent arrears but they were then subsequently unable to make contact with East Kent Housing. They also reported a lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repairs and maintenance.

3.3. Brunswick Hall, Ramsgate, 13 November 2019

This event was staffed by Ashley Jackson and 5 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with repair and maintenance issues
- Concerns over communal cleaning
- Lack of action by East Kent Housing to deal with anti-social behaviour

3.4. Newington Community Centre, Ramsgate, 23 November 2019

This event was staffed by Bob Porter, Ashley Jackson and Lizzie Norcott and 4 residents attended.

The main issues discussed were:

- Lack of communication from East Kent Housing
- Repairs and maintenance not being done
- Reports of ASB being ignored and not dealt with
- Repairs on community building not being done, left to disrepair

4. Contact with the consultation team

The consultation team dealt with enquiries from 9 Thanet residents:

- Repairs reported to EKH but not dealt with x4
- Tenant querying how the proposal would affect him x3
- Tenant wanting to complete questionnaire over the phone x1
- Leaseholder requesting a replacement consultation pack x1

NB: One of these tenants also said she supports bringing the service back in house, and one said he would prefer to keep EKH.

Equality Impact Assessment

Topic	Housing Management Options Appraisal; Outcome of Formal Consultation
For decision by/project lead	Cabinet - 17 February 2020
Date of assessment (or date range if over a period of time)	6 February 2020
Author	Bob Porter, Head of Housing and Planning



Introduction to the proposal and background	<p>Following a number of significant service failures in the housing services provided by East Kent Housing, the four owner councils of Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council and Thanet District Council completed an options appraisal in October 2019.</p> <p>The appraisal reviewed the delivery of housing management services provided by East Kent Housing (EKH). It concluded that the four councils' preferred option for future service provision to the four councils' tenants and leaseholders is that it should become an in-house service, subject to consultation.</p> <p>The formal consultation ran for 8 weeks from Tuesday 22 October to Friday 20 December 2019. The results of the consultation showed that 81% of respondents tended to agree (21%) or strongly agreed (60%) to the preferred option to bring the housing management service back in house.</p> <p>The Council's Cabinet will consider the outcome of the consultation at its meeting on 17 February 2020 and make a final decision about bringing the service back in house. The report concludes that this decision would be in the best interests of tenants and leaseholders.</p>
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PSED Engaged by this topic (Select)	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No		If no, please explain your reasoning and provide evidence where possible.				
Protected Characteristic	Definitions				Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No specific impact	What will the impact(s) be? If there is a negative impact, can you mitigate it or suggest alternative options for the groups identified? Include detail of any consultation that has taken place with affected groups and any other relevant data that supports the points you make (see EIA Guidance).	If there is a negative impact, please explain the 'legitimate aim you are trying to achieve' and provide evidence that no other options are available.
					P S E D A i m 1	P S E D A i m 2	P S E D A i m 3		Use this space to evidence your thinking if you believe there to be no impact on a particular protected characteristic. Ensure you assess each protected characteristic.

Gender	Men/Boys				✓	
	Women/Girls				✓	
Gender Reassignment					✓	
Disability	Physical		✓			An estimated 47% of the council's tenants and leaseholders are vulnerable or have a disability. The purpose of the proposed change in housing management arrangements include the need to improve the quality of service provision and ensure that the service is more locally accountable. It is likely that vulnerable tenants and leaseholders or those with physical disabilities are more likely to rely on these services.
	Mental Ill health/disability		✓			
	Learning difficulty/disability		✓			
	Sensory impairment		✓			
Age	Babies and children (0-16)				✓	
	Young adults (16-25)				✓	
	Mid-age adults (26-59)				✓	
	Older adults (60+)				✓	
Race	White British/white other				✓	
	Mixed race				✓	
	Asian/Asian British				✓	
	Black/Black British				✓	
	Arab/Arab British				✓	
	Gypsies/travellers				✓	
	Other ethnic group				✓	
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual				✓	
	Gay man				✓	
	Lesbian				✓	
	Bisexual				✓	
Religion or Belief	Faith Groups				✓	
Pregnancy & Maternity					✓	
Marriage & Civil Partnership	(Aim 1 of the PSED only)				✓	

Socio-Economic Background	<i>(N.B not a protected characteristic but relevant to Thanet)</i>	✓			Around 78% of the council's tenants are in receipt of either housing benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit. The council's housing management service includes support for these residents to ensure that they are able to meet their rent payments and effectively maintain their tenancies. The purpose of the proposed change in housing management arrangements include the need to improve the quality of service provision and ensure that the service is more locally accountable. It is likely that households on low incomes need to access rent collection and welfare support services more frequently.
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Consultation with Information Governance & Equality Team					
Date advice given	6 February 2020				
Summary of Advice – Key Points	Proposals are a positive benefit to tenants and leaseholders with protected characteristics				
Advice accepted by responsible officer?	Yes	✓	No		If no, please explain your reasoning.

Approval and Sign off from Line Manager			
Name	Bob Porter	Job Title	Head of Housing and Planning
Date	6 February 2020		

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Asset Management - Surplus Property and Land

Cabinet	17 February 2020
Report Author	Tim Howes, Director of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer
Portfolio Holder	Clr Rob Yates, Portfolio Holder (Finance and Estates)
Status	For Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	No
Ward:	Newington Ward

Executive Summary:

This report details an amendment to the size of the land offered for community asset transfer that was approved by the Cabinet on the 16 December 2019.

Recommendation(s):

To approve the reduction in size of the land proposed for Community Asset Transfer to Newington Community Association, as indicated on plans annexed. (Annexe 1)

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS	
Financial and Value for Money	The capital programme is part-funded from capital receipts generated from the sale of assets. These disposals are required to enable the continued investment in council assets. The disposal of assets listed in this report will not only generate capital receipts but will also reduce ongoing maintenance costs and reduce the risk of incurring future capital expenditure.
Legal	No Legal Implications
Corporate	Review of assets forms part of the adopted policy and corporate aims. The Council should not retain assets unless they provide value for money or support the corporate aims and these assets have been identified as underperforming for the Council.
Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty	Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

	<p>Protected characteristics: age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="padding: 5px;">Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.</td></tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td></tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it</td><td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">X</td></tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td></tr> </table> <p>The freehold sales, with leasehold interests remaining will have no impact under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.</p> <p>The transfers to benefit the community will support our commitment under these acts to continue to provide inclusive community facilities.</p>	Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.		Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,		Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it	X	Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.	
Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.									
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,									
Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it	X								
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.									

CORPORATE PRIORITIES (tick those relevant) ✓	
A clean and welcoming Environment	✓
Promoting inward investment and job creation	
Supporting neighbourhoods	✓

CORPORATE VALUES (tick those relevant) ✓	
Delivering value for money	✓
Supporting the Workforce	
Promoting open communications	

Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Thanet Council is committed to a robust asset management strategy, to release underperforming land and property in order to achieve the corporate aims.
- 1.2 Additionally, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) requires secure income and capital receipts.
- 1.3 To support these aims and strategies, there is an ongoing review of the corporate portfolio to identify assets that are not meeting the corporate objectives and therefore should be considered for disposal.
- 1.4 The property and land below have been fully appraised and are considered suitable for either obtaining a capital receipt or benefiting the community by way of community asset transfer.

2.0 Current Situation

As documented in the Community Asset Transfer Policy the Council evaluate assets that have a use that benefits neighbourhoods and promotes social aims. Land and property identified by the Council as appropriate for community asset transfer (with adequate restrictions to ensure they remain in community use) are:

2.2.1 Newington Community Centre, Ramsgate

Agenda Item 4

At the cabinet meeting dated the 16th of December 2019, it was agreed to dispose of the Newington Community Center land and building.

Following communications with Newington Community Association, it is recommended to scale down the size of land offered for disposal.

The new area for disposal to only include the land and buildings shown for purpose of identification only on the plan annexed hereto and edged red.

Caveats to ensure that the premises remain for public use to remain in place.

Note that community asset transfers are not a transfer at nil value, however market value will be restricted by the community use.

All transfers will be subject to the transferee paying Thanet Council reasonable legal and surveying costs.

3.0 Options

Cabinet could choose not to approve the recommendation and leave the size of the plot as per its larger initial size. This may push the purchasers into financial difficulties resulting in poor maintenance of the green open space area.

The preferred and recommended options are as documented at the top of this report.

Contact Officer:	Victoria Kellet, Head of Asset management
Reporting to:	Tim Howes, Director of Corporate Services

Annex List

Annexe 1	Plans showing land and property (indicative and not to scale)
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Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access a copy
Community Asset Transfer Policy 2018 - 2021	Thanet District Council Website or contact estates@thanet.gov.uk

Corporate Consultation

Finance	Matt Sanham, Financial Services Manager
Legal	Estelle Culligan, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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Agenda Item 4

Annex 1

Asset Management - Surplus Property and Land - Cabinet 17 February 2020

Annexe 1 - Plans showing land and property (indicative and not to scale)



Title: Newington Community Centre

Author: Thanet District Council

Scale 1:1,250

Date: 30/01/2020

Thanet District Council
Cecil Street
Margate
Kent
CT9 1XZ



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