



EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT COVER SHEET

Title of Report:	Supporting damp and mould enforcement: Healthy Homes Project	To be marked with an 'X' by Democratic Services after report has been presented
Meeting of:	Corporate Management Team: 17 April 2024	X
	Pre Cabinet: 25 April 2024	X
	Leader's / Leader of the Opposition's Advisory Group	X
	Cabinet: 20 May 2024	

Is this an Executive Decision:	NO	Is this a Key Decision:	YES
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<p>Is this in the Forward Plan:</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Does this report contain Confidential or Exempt Information:</p> <p>If the report Contains Confidential Information, please provide reason.</p> <p>If the report contains Exempt Information, please state the relevant paragraph from Schedule 12A LGA 1972:</p>	<p>NO</p> <p>[]</p> <p>[]</p>
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Essential Signatories:

ALL REPORTS MUST BE IN THE NAME OF A HEAD OF SERVICE

Monitoring Officer: **John Teasdale**

Date Signature

Chief Finance Officer: **Lloyd Haynes**

Date Signature

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Cabinet

Date: 20 May 2024

REPORT TITLE: Healthy Homes Project
PORTFOLIO: Regulatory Services
HEAD OF SERVICE: John Teasdale
CONTACT OFFICER: Rachel Liddle Ext. No. x1838
WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To provide details of a Health Homes Project that East Staffordshire have been selected to participate in.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. East Staffordshire Borough Council has been selected to participate in a Healthy Homes Project that has been developed by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- 2.2. The project provides additional funding up to £130,000 to spend in 2024/25 to deliver interventions to support damp and mould enforcement.
- 2.3. This report details how the funding will be allocated to cover delivery of the project and recommends the creation of two new temporary full time posts to deliver the project to 31st March 2025.
- 2.4. This will provide additional resource to deal with the increased demand from damp and mould complaints and ensure that the project is delivered in accordance with the project guidance. It will further support the improvement of energy efficiency in our private rented accommodation and improve the EPC of these properties.

3. Background

- 3.1. In 2022, the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) wrote to all local authorities in England asking them to review how they deal with damp and mould in rented homes and produce plans detailing how complaints will be dealt with.
- 3.2. Our response is available on our website at [Tenant complaints | East Staffordshire Borough Council \(eaststaffsbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/tenant-complaints) and details how we will deal with damp and mould complaints.
- 3.3. On 7 September 2023, the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, wrote to local authorities emphasising the government's commitment to ensuring landlords take action to remove damp and mould from tenants' homes to protect tenants' health. The letter also addressed the challenges of effective enforcement, acknowledging feedback received from the government on this issue
- 3.4. Alongside this the government published guidance on 'understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home', jointly developed by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). This signalled the government's commitment to tackling this serious issue, and to ensuring action is taken by landlords to remove damp and mould from tenants' homes in order to protect their health.

4. Contribution to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1. Standing up for our communities – The Healthy Homes Project aims to address damp and mould in rented accommodation.

5. Private Rented Sector Healthy Homes Project

- 5.1. East Staffordshire Borough Council have been selected to take part in a Healthy Homes Project by DLUHC. This will be run in collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to understand the impact of housing interventions on health and wider societal outcomes.
- 5.2. We will be allocated up to £130,000 to spend in 2024/25 to deliver the following interventions to support robust damp and mould enforcement:
 - Additional resource in your team;
 - Standardised training across your existing team;
 - Improved communications and engagement with landlords and tenants;
 - Improved equipment, i.e. tools to measure damp and mould; and
 - Improved data collection tools and support.
- 5.3. The expectation is that this project will:
 - Support local authorities in tackling damp and mould hazards in private rented properties in the areas of greatest need.

- Build greater understanding regarding the impact on enforcement activity, when funding specific interventions.
 - Build an understanding of best practice in housing enforcement teams when it comes to damp and mould.
 - Assess the impact to benefit expenditure associated with non-decent housing in the private rented sector relative to the supplied funding.
 - Evaluate the impact of better enforcement of damp and mould in the home on health outcomes.
 - Increase awareness of the health impacts of damp and mould with landlords, and the implications of not dealing with it quickly. • Build understanding of the effects that poor quality housing (damp and mould hazards) has on labour market activity; and
 - Build understanding of landlord behaviour as it pertains to repairs and maintenance (particularly with regards to damp and mould hazards).
- 5.4. We will be responsible for providing the data that allows robust conclusions to be drawn from the project and it is anticipated that this will be required to be provided quarterly.

6. **Financial Considerations**

This section has been approved by the following member of the Financial Management Unit: Paul Frith

- 6.1. The main financial issues arising from this Report are as follows:
- 6.2. The Healthy Homes Project Guidance in Appendix 1 sets out how DLUHC anticipate this funding being used. However, it is recognised that each area will have its own unique challenges and existing arrangements, and so have allowed for flexibility to reflect this.
- 6.3. The allocated £130,000 is expected to be spent as detailed in the following table:

Revenue	2024/25
Officer Resources- 1 FTE Graduate EHO & 1 FTE EHO/Housing Standards Officer	£80,000
Training	£10,000
Communications and Engagement	£20,000
Data Collection & Administration (RIAMS)	£10,000
Supplementary Equipment (2x Laptop & Mobile)	£10,000
Total	£130,000

- 6.4. This will create two new additional full time posts to the 31st March 25, subject to approval, which will be responsible for delivering the project.
- 6.5. The funding is allocated to cover the lifetime of the programme and is expected to be paid out in two equal amounts, in approximately May 2024 and October 2024. These will be made in the form of Section 31 grant payments.

- 6.6. The payment of the second tranche of funding (October 2024) will be subject to the Department agreeing that:
- Progress is being made against the outputs specified in this guidance, or that satisfactory reasons have been given where this is not the case;
 - The activities undertaken are meeting the objectives of the Healthy Homes Project; and
 - Local authorities are certifying that any expenditure from the Healthy Homes Project has been used for activities that support damp and mould enforcement.
- 6.7. Funding is conditional on participating local authorities agreeing to take part in the collection of relevant data, such as project spend data, and project KPIs (see annex A in Appendix 1). In addition, DLUHC will identify and fund an external evaluator, with whom local authorities will be required to engage.

7. Risk Assessment and Management

7.1. The main risks to this Report and the Council achieving its objectives are as follows:

7.2. **Positive** (Opportunities/Benefits):

- Increased resources to deal with damp and mould in private rented properties in areas of greatest need
- Improved housing conditions and reduction of health inequalities

7.3. **Negative** (Threats):

- Difficulty recruiting resulting in a lack of capacity

7.4. The risks do not need to be entered in the Risk Register. Any financial implications to mitigate against these risks are considered above.

8. Legal Considerations

*This section has been approved by the following member of the Legal Team:
John Teasdale*

8.1. There are no significant legal issues arising from this Report. However it is noted that a Memo of Understanding covering the project is detailed in Appendix 2, which has separately been reviewed and approved. Legal have also considered the content of the Healthy Homes Project Guidance in Appendix 1/online. This sets out how DLUHC anticipate this funding being used. It appears to be acknowledged that each area will have its own unique challenges and existing arrangements, and so have allowed for flexibility to reflect this.

9. **Equalities and Health**

- 9.1. **Equality impacts:** The subject of this Report is not a policy, strategy, function or service that is new or being revised. An equality and health impact assessment is not required
- 9.2. **Health impacts:** The outcome of the health screening question does not require] a full Health Impact Assessment to be completed. An equality and health impact assessment is not required

10. **Data Protection Implications – Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)**

- 10.1. A DPIA must be completed where there are plans to:
- use systematic and extensive profiling with significant effects;
 - process special category or criminal offence data on a large scale; or
 - systematically monitor publicly accessible places on a large scale
 - use new technologies;
 - use profiling or special category data to decide on access to services;
 - profile individuals on a large scale;
 - process biometric data;
 - process genetic data;
 - match data or combine datasets from different sources;
 - collect personal data from a source other than the individual without providing them with a privacy notice ('invisible processing');
 - track individuals' location or behaviour;
 - profile children or target marketing or online services at them; or
 - process data that might endanger the individual's physical health or safety in the event of a security breach
- 10.2 Following consideration of the above, there are no Data Protection implications arising from this report which would require a DPIA

11. **Human Rights**

- 11.1. There are no Human Rights issues arising from this Report.

12. **Environmental Impacts**

- 12.1. Does the proposal have any positive or negative environmental impacts? Yes

Consider impacts related to the Climate Change & Nature Strategy aims:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions (climate change mitigation)
- Preparing for future climate change (adaptation)
- Protecting and enhancing nature
- Using resources wisely and minimising waste and pollution

- 12.2. If so, are these impacts **significant**? Yes

(If No, the report author can complete paragraph 12.3. If Yes, the report should be forwarded to the Council's Climate Change and Adaptation Officers for enhanced consideration)

(note – a **significant** impact will likely result from any project, policy, procurement exercise or service change that has a direct or indirect effect on energy or fuel use, water use, land use, other physical resource use, waste generation, pollution, regeneration or construction - If unsure contact the Council's Climate Change and Adaptation Officers)

12.3. Please detail the positive/negative environmental impacts and any mitigation:

- Positive impacts (Benefits/Opportunities)
- Improved energy efficiency

- Negative impacts (Threats/Mitigation)
- None

13. **Recommendation(s)**

13.1. To consider the contents of the report.

14. **Appendices**

14.1. Appendix 1: DLUHC Healthy Homes Project

14.2. Appendix 2: MOU