


Project Business Case		
Project Name Housing+	Project Sponsor Janet Sharpe	
Project/Project Board Tenant Services Board	Project Manager Peter Brown	
Which Strategic Outcome will the project link to? (<i>where applicable</i>)	Better Health and Wellbeing Successful Young People Tackling Poverty and Increasing Social Justice Safe and Secure Communities A Great Place to Live An Environmentally Responsible City	
Costs Summary		
The costs of the project are explained in Section 11.2		
Benefits Summary		
The benefits of the project are listed in Section 4.		
Finance Approval (Appropriate Finance Manager)		
I have reviewed the business case and can confirm that the financial assumptions are accurate.		
Name: Karen Jones, Finance Manager	Date: 7.3.14	
Project Sponsor Accountability		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ I am accountable for delivering the benefits of the project on time and within budget ♦ I confirm the level of spend is within my delegated powers and available in my project budget ♦ The impact of this project on other functions and areas has been agreed with them and is reflected in the business case and the sign off below. ♦ I have sought any additional sign offs e.g. Cabinet. 		
Name: Janet Sharpe, Interim Director of Housing Services	Date: 7.3.14	

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Housing+ Project is the development of a model of council housing management which will deliver the vision for the housing service developed by Members, customers and staff.

1.1.2 As well as achieving this vision, the project will also establish a Council Housing Service (CHS) which meets the Council's corporate Strategic Objectives and Design Principles.

1.1.3 The proposals and recommendations in this Business Case build on a significant amount of consultation work undertaken with customers and staff through the Future of Council Housing (FoCH) Programme. They are also based on detailed development work undertaken by Staff Working Groups – which comprised of a large number of both council housing staff and key officers from elsewhere in the Council.

1.1.4 The project is large-scale and far-reaching. The changes will benefit the Council's 48,000 tenants and their wider households. As part of the implementation plan, there will need to be a significant communication and consultation programme. All teams within the CHS are in scope of the proposals and there will be major HR-related and training implications. An Achieving Change process will be needed to make the transition to the new model, along with a full Equalities Impact Assessment.

1.1.5 An important element of the proposals is better joint-working between the CHS and other Council services – particularly Adult Social Care, Children, Young People and Families and Public Health. The project will therefore need to involve, engage and be supported by a number of other Council teams and officers. This will need to include the development of robust referral routes between the CHS and other key services.

1.2 Benefits of the project

1.2.1 The potential benefits of the project are detailed in section 4 of this Business Case. Customers will receive services in a way which they have told us they would prefer. They will benefit from services which are delivered in a more effective and joined-up way, tailored to meet their individual needs.

1.2.2 By providing advice and delivering low-level prevention work in disciplines outside of the 'traditional' housing boundaries, the CHS will help tenants maintain their tenancy, become self-reliant and less dependent on more costly intervention services.

1.2.3 Through encouragement and support from CHS staff, stronger local networks and more active community involvement should develop to allow neighbourhoods to become more resilient and better able to meet the needs of their residents.

1.2.4 More sustainable tenancies will create savings for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), as will pro-active rents and welfare benefits advice early on in the tenancy. Housing+ will also bring potential opportunities to reduce accommodation costs through fewer office-based contacts with customers.

1.2.5 Another key feature of the Housing+ model is mobile technology – enabling staff to spend more time working at the frontline with customers and less time travelling and completing paperwork. As well as increased efficiency, this should also result in more job satisfaction for staff.

1.2.6 Staff will also benefit from being more empowered to help the tenants and households they are working with, and from a more varied workload.

1.2.7 The Housing+ model will contribute to and support the Council’s Strategic Objectives – particularly those focusing on “Better Health and Wellbeing”, “Tackling Poverty and Increasing Social Justice” and “A Great Place to Live”.

1.2.8 The new approach will reduce the duplication of council services working with households in council homes, and will increase the preventative interventions done with those households. This should help generate reductions in both the business costs for those services and in the demand for their more costly interventions.

1.2.9 The benefits of Housing+ will be Council-wide, and a ‘whole Council’ approach will help ensure that its potential benefits are fully realised. Other services will need to support its implementation, particularly in terms of staff training and developing effective referral routes. The model has the potential to develop and expand over time.

1.2.10 The Council overall will benefit from better use of community facilities. Closer working with Libraries for example, could generate financial cost savings where shared spaces can be developed into community resources.

1.3 The Housing+ model

1.3.1 Housing+ is a patch-based model, with named Housing+ Officers working with all households in their patch. As well as dealing with core housing issues such as rent arrears, ASB and community engagement they will work at a low-level with tenants on a variety of other issues when appropriate – e.g. employment; education; and health-related – to help tenants maintain their tenancy. Where households need more support, advice and interventions will be drawn-in from the relevant specialists.

1.3.2 There will be an emphasis on more contact with customers in their own homes. All tenants will be offered an annual visit to discuss what guidance or intervention may be needed, and to check the condition of the property. Follow-up work will then be done as needed.

1.3.3 There will be 8 Neighbourhood Teams, based on the current Electoral Ward boundaries. As well as front-line service delivery in their area, these Teams will also work with other providers in the area and help to strengthen their local communities. Neighbourhood Teams will be supported by a number of consolidated teams who will provide specialist advice, develop city-wide policies and deliver operational services - e.g. income management.

1.3.4 Frontline staff will be equipped with mobile technology to enable information, systems, records, etc to be accessed and updated remotely. This technology will also help deliver the Digital Inclusion agenda to tenant households.

1.4 Linkages to other projects

1.4.1 This project has a number of links and dependencies with other projects currently underway – most significantly with the Libraries Review, the Green Open Spaces Review, the Adult Social Services ‘Offline Mobile Working Solution’ project and the Successful Tenancies Pilot.

1.4.2 Effective links have been made with these and all other relevant projects to ensure that opportunities for joint-working, increased benefits and shared learning are maximised.

1.5 Risks

1.5.1 As with any large-scale project, there are risks associated with the implementation of Housing+, and within this Business Case appropriate mitigating actions are identified to address and manage these risks.

1.5.2 Most significant are those relating to TUPE regulations under which Sheffield Homes staff transferred into the Council. Housing+ may require changes to some job descriptions and grades, and the regulations state that any variation of a contract to the employee’s detriment is void if the principle reason for the change is the transfer itself or a reason connected with it - unless the employer can point to an “economic, technical or organisational reason entailing changes in the workforce”. HR are seeking legal advice on this in relation to Housing+ proposals to ensure that the Council meets its legal obligations.

1.5.3 CHS staff are currently excluded from proposed changes to the Council’s Pay Strategy. Longer term, for economic, technical or organisational reasons, it is likely that the Council will need to address any differences in pay, terms and conditions between CHS employees and the rest of the Council by moving CHS staff onto the Council’s pay structure. If Housing+ is implemented then this may be an appropriate time to start the process using the Council’s MER/AC process. HR are seeking legal advice on the detail of the proposals, how they impact on staff and any legal implications.

1.5.4 Housing+ could result in increased demand for services (both within and outside of the CHS) which cannot be met. However, the benefits described in 1.2.8 above are expected to help mitigate this. Learning from the Successful Tenancies Pilots currently running will also help assess this risk and the Housing+ model will be sufficiently flexible to accommodate any resulting changes required. Joint working on clear pathways and referral mechanisms, and joint-training and sharing of skills, will also help mitigate this.

1.5.5 Potential disruptions in the Council’s IT system could impact on the mobile technology needed for Housing+. Work will be done with Capita to ensure that the IT sourced is as reliable and efficient as possible, and that we have robust arrangements in place to deal with any IT disruption. Business Continuity Plans will be made by all teams for alternative service delivery arrangements during periods of IT disruption.

1.5.6 To help minimise the risks of a wholesale change in council housing management, and to ensure successful implementation, a staged roll-out of the new model is proposed. Implementation will begin by rolling out the Housing+ approach in a ‘test phase’ in a specific housing area, testing the policies and procedures introduced to support the new way of working. This will be evaluated after 3 months and learning from it used to fine-tune the model. Full roll-out is expected to begin on an area-by-area basis in April 2015.

1.6 Timeline

1.6.1 The key milestones are outlined below. A more detailed project plan will be developed as more detailed work takes place around the test phase:

Staff Consultation	Jan 2015 onwards
Cabinet decision	19 th March
Customer Consultation	May onwards
Preparations made for launch of 'test phase'	Mid Apr-end of May
Test phase is launched	June
Evaluation of test phase	Sep
Consideration of customer consultation	Jun - Sep
MER / Achieving Change launched	1st Oct
MER /Achieving Change and recruitment process	Oct – Feb 2015
Final preparations made for full roll-out	Feb - Mar
Full roll-out of Housing+ begins	1st Apr

1.7 Financial cost implications

1.7.1 The final cost of the Housing+ model is subject to change as more details are worked through. For this Business Case, a number of assumptions have been made and are clearly explained. These include an assumed 5% shift in resources from both consolidated and Estate Services teams to the frontline Neighbourhoods teams, and that new staffing structures will largely be aligned with the Council's guidance on tiers of management.

1.7.2 The Business Case suggests that 906 staff would be needed to deliver the Housing+ model, which is a 5% reduction in the existing substantive workforce. However, due to the number of currently vacant posts in the CHS, this equates to more employees than are actually currently in post.

1.7.4 Until any new job descriptions are evaluated under the corporate job allocation process, it is not known for certain at what grades the Housing+ roles will be set. It is therefore not possible to establish definite salary costs – and the costs quoted in this document are based on comparisons with similar roles elsewhere in the Council.

1.7.5 Taking into account these cost assumptions, Housing+ is projected to generate a £0.5million in HRA savings, compared to the existing baseline, over the first 5 years. This includes additional one-off costs for mobile IT and a potential VER/VS scheme. An annual saving of £0.5 million from Year 6 is projected, taking into account the savings expected to be achieved by Housing+.

1.7.6 The additional resources needed to implement Housing+, such as project management and specialist HR and legal advice, would be provided by the existing FoCH Project Team and additional specialists within the Council.

2 Background / Why do we need it?

2.1 Background - The vision for the city's council housing service

2.1.1 The Housing+ Project is the development of a model of council housing management which will deliver a vision for the housing service developed by Members, customers and staff.

2.1.2 Cabinet made a commitment in March 2012 to an ambitious vision for council housing in Sheffield. This vision can be summarised as:

- An excellent quality council housing management service
- Making best use of the Council's role as landlord to help people achieve their full potential – with all Council services using this role as a platform for achieving this.
- Being an active landlord and delivering services to tenants which are part of a joined-up neighbourhood management approach including parks, libraries, schools, other public services and other housing tenures – helping neighbourhoods to flourish.
- A “one stop shop” approach to enable easy access to housing and other Council services.
- Efficient management which allows more of tenants' rent to be spent on frontline services and homes.
- A bigger say for tenants – about their homes; their neighbourhoods; and the city – to strengthen tenant scrutiny and inspection.

2.1.3 The Housing+ project will significantly contribute to achieving these ambitions. It will also deliver the vision developed by customers and staff over the past year. The key elements of which are:

- Local community-based approaches to delivering services.
- Better joined-up working between Council services to respond to tenants' needs more effectively, and to achieve better value-for-money by reducing duplication of activity.
- Enabling tenants and their families to independently manage their finances, health, well-being and housing circumstances and so improve their household resilience.
- Taking a holistic approach, and building better links with GPs and other health staff.
- Building community resilience by encouraging more 'grassroots' tenant involvement
- Strengthening democracy and transparency in decision-making.
- More pre-tenancy support for applicants.
- Well looked-after and effectively managed estates and neighbourhoods
- Protecting the Decent Homes investment made in council housing properties
- Ensuring value-for-money and making the best use of tenants' rents.

2.1.4 Successful implementation of the model will ultimately support the viability of the 30-year self-financing HRA (Housing Revenue Account) Business Plan, and enable the HRA to deliver the assumptions and commitments made within that Plan.

2.2 Turning the vision into a reality

2.2.1 The Housing+ Project began in September with the establishment of 13 Staff Working Groups tasked with considering in more detail how the visions developed by Members, customers and staff (as described above) could be delivered in practice.

2.2.2 The work of the Staff Working Groups centred on the recommendations of the eight Service Design Project Groups set up in 2013. The tenants and staff on these Project Groups worked together for around 8 months to establish a clear vision for the delivery of a better and more integrated housing service. The vision statements from each of these Project Groups are attached in Appendix One.

2.2.3 The Staff Working Groups took these recommendations as their starting point, and developed them further based on four key assumptions for the new housing service model:

- (a) That it should take a more holistic view of households in council housing.
- (b) That it should work with households to understand their needs and aspirations and how we can contribute to improving their resilience.
- (c) That it needs to contribute to building community resilience.
- (d) That the new model will be patch-based, with each household having a named contact within the Council Housing Service.

2.2.4 The Staff Working Groups have now completed their work and their recommendations form the basis of this Business Case. Each of the Groups has provided detailed proposals for how their particular area of the service could be delivered in a way which meets the ambitions and visions of tenants and Cabinet Members. These include:

- A list of roles and responsibilities which would form the scope of work for the new patch-based council housing teams.
- An indication of which specific tasks and responsibilities would need to be delivered by specialist staff working to support these patch-based teams.
- A specification of the technology which would be needed to deliver the new service.
- An outline of the training staff would need to fulfil their new roles.
- Links which the council housing service would need to make with other Council teams.
- The potential risks and equalities issues which may result from the new way of working.

2.4 Strategic Objectives

This project will contribute to the Council's objectives in the following ways:

2.4.1 Better Health and Wellbeing

The Council's aim is to "join up the way we secure services across healthcare, public health, children's' and adult social care and housing". This includes developing a 'one stop' approach to services, linking housing with health-related and social-care services and improving the evidenced links between safe, well-maintained housing and improved health and mental well-being.

2.4.2 Successful Young People

This corporate objective is focused on helping families be safe, healthy and strong by using a 'whole household' approach. A major feature of this project is to develop a holistic approach when providing services to our tenants.

2.4.3 Tackling Poverty and Increasing Social Justice

The Council wants to support people in maximising their available income, developing basic skills to participate in the wider economy and ensure that advice is available for those who need it. This has clear links with the project's aims to develop opportunities for individuals and families to grow their financial and economic potential.

2.4.4 Safe and Secure Communities

The Council wants communities to *be* safe and to *feel* safe. An important part of this is effectively tackling antisocial behaviour, which is a very important function of the council housing management service. By working more closely with other public services we will be contributing to the wider approach the Council is taking – of crime prevention, crisis resolution and recovery. The project will consider how we, in our role as landlord, can help deliver this approach.

2.4.5 A Great Place to Live

By offering safe and well-maintained housing, our neighbourhoods will become more desirable places to live. Through its outcome of joined-up neighbourhood management and investment, the project will also support the sustainability of communities by working with and developing partnerships between community facilities such as parks, shops, libraries, schools, local public transport and other public services.

2.4.6 An Environmentally Responsible City

Whilst this objective focusses primarily on business, we do want to encourage environmental responsibilities within our communities. For individual households, this could be about ensuring that they do what they can to reduce energy consumption, increase their recycling rates and achieve energy cost savings. It's also about making our buildings, both homes and shared spaces, as efficient as possible.

2.5 Corporate Design Principles

2.5.1 To modernise the service, work is needed to realign the Council Housing Service to meet the requirements of the Council's Design Principles.

2.5.2 The proposed Housing+ model will ensure that the Council Housing Service meets these requirements, in particular by:

Providing city leadership and working in partnership – the CHS will work in partnership with other services and external organisations to achieve the best possible outcomes for tenants and their families.

Helping people to help themselves – enabling tenants to become more self-reliant by providing them with the information and initial support that they need to successfully and independently maintain their tenancy.

Providing affordable and cost-effective services – Housing+ will ultimately help to support the long-term sustainability of the HRA Business Plan and so help ensure that the commitments made to tenants within the Plan can be fulfilled.

Being creative and innovative – the implementation of Housing+ will result in a major shift in the Council's approach to council housing management, in line with the ambitious vision developed by tenants for their housing service.

Focusing on early intervention and prevention – a key part of a Housing+ Officer's role will be to work with tenants on identifying and addressing potential issues as soon as they arise, thereby reducing the need for costly high-level interventions later on.

Providing flexible and responsive services – by tailoring our approach according to the needs of each household, the Housing+ model will help ensure that tenants receive the services they need, when they need them.

3. Project Scope

3.1 Implementation of the new model will involve a wholesale change in the way we deliver council housing services, including tenancy management, tenancy support, maintenance and investment services. All teams and services in the Council Housing Service are therefore within the scope of this phase of the project.

3.2 Successful implementation of the new model will also involve making links between the Council Housing Service and other relevant Council teams – particularly Adult Social Care, Public Health and CYPF. So it is clear that the project will need to involve and engage with a large number of other Council services.

3.3 There are a number of significant HR issues that will arise as part of the implementation of a new delivery model. The management of these changes are within the scope of this project, and will include:

- A wide-reaching Achieving Change / Managing Employee Reductions process
- Formal Trade Union consultation
- Organisational design
- New job descriptions and grading
- Training and development

3.4 The new model will need to be supported by all stakeholders in order to be effective. A major part of the project will therefore be a significant communications and consultation plan to ensure staff, customer and partner engagement in implementing the Housing+ model.

3.5 Under the new model, frontline staff will be required to work more flexibly, and so new ways of working – predominantly mobile-working – will need to be developed. The associated requirements and implications of this – such as new technology, accommodation / premises, new policies and procedures, health-and-safety and performance management - all need to be considered as part of the implementation plan.

3.6 Consideration must also be given to the financial and legal implications of the proposed changes, and support will be needed from the relevant Council teams to help with these areas of work.

3.7 A number of other dependencies for the project are listed in section 7. These are out of scope for direct delivery of this project, though they will impact on the way that this project develops.

3.8 The Estate Services teams within the Council Housing Services will be impacted less by the Housing+ proposals as there are plans to review open space maintenance provision within

Sheffield and explore the potential of having a single maintenance provider for all of Parks and Public realm and Housing land. The review will also look at the possibility of land transfer between Parks and Housing. Currently the project scope includes personnel (workforce and any potential new structures etc.), and the project timeline is aiming to implement the chosen model by June 2015. However, Estates Teams will be expected to deliver some efficiency savings as part of the transition to Housing+. These are detailed in paragraph 11.1.6

4. Benefits

4.1 The potential benefits of successful implementation of these proposals are significant and wide-reaching. These benefits are both cashable and non-cashable. It is difficult to precisely forecast the scale of these benefits at this stage, although the 'test phase' proposals described in 6.4.3 will help to add detail to these predictions.

4.2 For customers and their communities

4.2.1 Implementing this project should deliver increased customer satisfaction. The approach is based on an extensive customer consultation and visioning exercise. The final model should therefore deliver a service that better meets customers' needs and one that they are more satisfied with. Improvements in customer satisfaction should also bring a reduction in the number of complaints received by the service. Managing complaints costs in excess of £220,000 annually, so a reduction in this figure could generate a small cashable saving or allow resources to be reallocated.

4.2.2 Better outcomes for individual tenants and their families through the delivery of more streamlined, better integrated and individually-tailored services. Customers will have access to more than just the Council Housing Service through Housing+ staff. Because Housing+ is about more than just council housing, staff will be able to offer customers limited advice and assistance on a whole range of preventative services - for example health and wellbeing, employment and training - that should improve the life chances of council housing households.

4.2.3 Increased individual and household resilience by providing guidance and support in a way which helps people to help themselves and so reduce their dependency on outside support.

4.2.4 Better service to customers through having access to the right information at the right time through the introduction of mobile technology. Mobile technology should also enable staff to support and empower customers to access services on-line – either in their own home or by directing them to local on-line facilities.

4.2.5 Improved access for older people to a variety of preventative services, potentially leading to improved health outcomes, helping to reduce hospital admissions, reduce social isolation and improve financial wellbeing. This will require help and support from other SCC services to generate the maximum benefits.

4.2.6 More effective responses to financial exclusion and household debt, leading to lower rent arrears, improved disposable incomes, improved tenancy sustainment, and reduced anxiety among affected individuals and households.

4.2.7 Earlier resolution of issues for customers. The preventative nature of the Housing+ approach should allow tenancy issues to be identified and resolved earlier. Tenancy issues - such as ASB, rent arrears and repairs - will be identified earlier and mitigating actions taken. This should reduce the strain on council housing households and lead to improved tenancy sustainability.

4.2.8 Increased community resilience through encouraging and supporting community engagement and networks, and by encouraging and enabling tenants and their families to become active members of their community. This has the potential to improve community volunteering, community health and overall community resilience.

4.2.9 Implementation of the Housing+ model will also see more staffing resources deployed to the front-line through reduced management layers and more streamlined specialist and support services. This shift in resources will allow us to give customers named contacts to discuss any housing and wider Council issues, something which customers were very positive about throughout the consultation.

4.2.10 Customers will benefit from having a visible Council presence in the local area. Housing+ Officers will spend a high percentage of their time working with customers in their home and neighbourhood and will therefore be 'out and about' much more than at present, making the service much more accessible to tenants.

4.3 For the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

4.3.1 Increased sustainability of individual tenancies: If tenants are able to access more easily the support they need to live successfully and happily in their homes, this should reduce tenancy turnover and the costs that this generates for the Council. A high proportion of tenancies also are fairly short-term with 30% on average lasting less than 2 years. This reduces the overall stability of some parts of the City and generates additional cost pressures for the HRA in mitigating cohesion issues.

4.3.2 Around 4,000 Council tenancies per year end for a variety of reasons, some positive and some negative. In the first half of 13/14, 1,639 tenancies ended through eviction, abandonment, transfer to another Council property or by a tenant giving notice – equating to 3,278 over a 12-month period. Many of these are potentially avoidable. Housing+ is designed to improve the sustainability of tenancies through more sustainable initial lettings, earlier support and prevention and better advice and assistance. The cashable benefits from this approach to the HRA are potentially significant. The average staff and repair costs of reletting a tenancy are £3,000. Some relets are unavoidable – e.g. where a tenant goes into long-term care - but just a 6% reduction in avoidable relets equates to almost £600,000 a year in efficiencies.

4.3.3 Housing+ should also have a positive impact on the amount of rent collected from current tenants and reduce the action taken on the non-payment of tenancy charges. Part of the Housing+ remit will be to offer pre-emptive advice on rent payment and to take a proactive role in encouraging tenants to enter into a regular payment routine. This is particularly important as changes to Welfare Reform become a reality for more tenants. A small reduction in the forecast rent arrears as a result of this action could release an efficiency saving of £172,000 per year. Alongside these efficiencies, the excellent preventative work being undertaken by the Income Management team will continue and their success will be supported by the changes proposed through Housing+.

4.3.4 Housing+ also brings the potential to reduce the number of face-to-face enquiries at local housing offices. Customers have been clear throughout the consultation that they like having face-to-face access to staff who can help with their queries. However, under Housing+ home appointments will become more commonplace and this could potentially reduce the demand for appointments in fixed office bases. Housing staff deal with around 210,000 personal contacts each year. A small 10% reduction in these interactions could release an efficiency of around £165,000 per year. The exact potential of this efficiency will depend on the profile of the reduced interactions and any proposals to reduce current office locations would need to be undertaken in consultation with customers.

4.3.5 Mobile ICT will also bring benefits for the HRA. Early work undertaken by Adult Social Care on their deployment of a mobile solution indicates a potential reduction of 50% in data entry and 20% reduction in travelling time. These savings have been re-directed as a non-cashable efficiency into providing more Housing+ Officers interacting directly with customers in their homes and in their neighbourhoods. However a small 10% efficiency is assumed within the 'patch' calculations for savings from mobile technology alongside a further 10% saving in the local Neighbourhood Support Teams.

4.3.6 Longer-term, Housing+ could also generate further efficiencies in the overall running costs of the Council Housing Service (CHS). Housing+ is a tailored approach that takes into account the needs of the individual household rather than a 'one-size fits all' approach to service delivery. Initial Customer Insight work undertaken by the CHS has demonstrated the differential costs of managing different customer groups. By understanding the needs of these different groups, the service can be designed in a cost effective way to meet customer needs but also to manage costs. The average annual cost of managing a tenancy is £592. This rises to over £1,100 for some family tenancies and over £1,800 for younger, single tenants.

4.3.7 This project offers the opportunity to better understand these costs and contribute towards reducing them in the longer-term. A risk-stratification approach has been used to develop the patch sizes, but this could be expanded and applied within each patch to target visits and support activities on households who need this the most. Better, more intelligent use of data is part of the work with the University of Sheffield described in 7.13.

4.3.8 Further details of the efficiencies are contained in section 11.2 as part of the overall cost/benefit analysis.

4.4 For staff and their performance levels

4.4.1 Staff will be empowered through new structures and ways of working. The success of Housing+ will rely on empowering staff at the very front-line to deal with the situations that they will face each day working with individual households. Flatter management structures will require delegated decision-making and should allow staff to make decisions within a policy and procedure framework that doesn't leave them feeling caught up in 'red tape'. This should lead to greater job satisfaction.

4.4.2 A new performance framework that focuses more on outcomes and the difference that staff are making should be similarly empowering. The patch-based approach of Housing+ allows performance management at a local level to focus on achieving sustainability in local neighbourhoods and on a greater link between cause and effect. Staff will be able to better understand the direct role they play in supporting the 30-year HRA Business Plan.

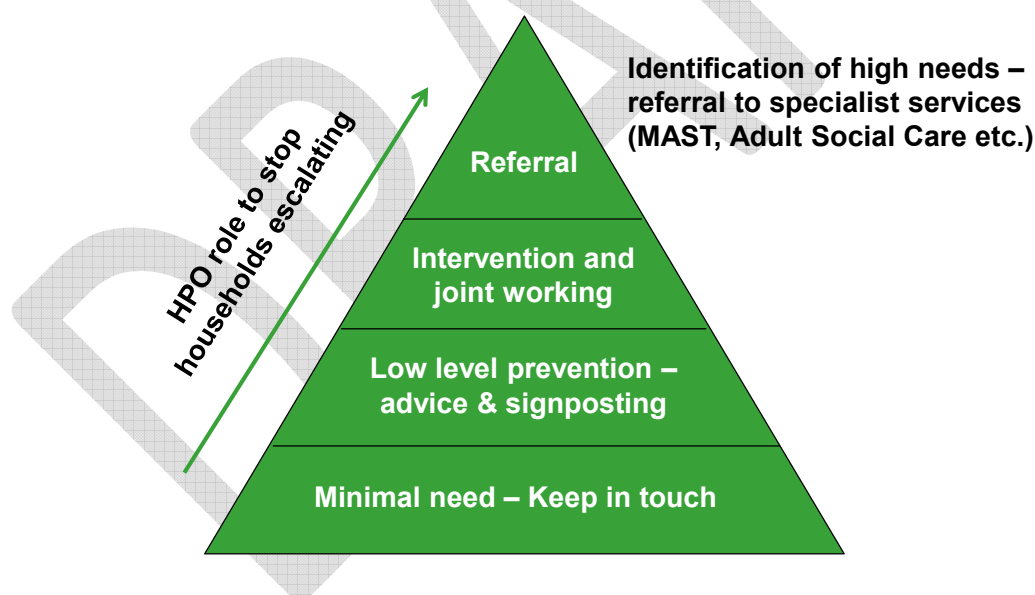
4.4.3 Staff should also have a much more varied workload as a result of Housing+. Most staff will have much less routine and more contact with other services outside of the CHS through making referrals and building community contacts in their 'patch'. This will provide staff with a range of career development opportunities that they may not currently have access to.

4.4.4 Increased productivity from staff through the new mobile way of working – which will enable staff to access information and update electronic records systems whilst they are 'out in the field' (as opposed to travelling back to the office for this). As well as creating additional resource to direct into front-line services, this should also improve staff satisfaction through a reduction in routine tasks.

4.4.5 Staff will also have the opportunity to work more flexibly as a result of Housing+. Mobile technology and greater empowerment will require a change in both management style and employee self-management, accepting a shift from process to outcomes. Staff should therefore be able to work more flexibly to achieve their agreed outcomes.

4.5 For the wider Council

4.5.1 The major benefit for the wider Council is in increasing preventative intervention with tenants and their families. If planned correctly, this could reduce the progression of these households to more costly forms of emergency intervention – for example residential care. This has the potential to generate a reduction in the demand for the relevant services.



4.5.2 It's not a simple 'win-win' though. There is a possibility that going into tenants homes will uncover significant hidden demand for Council services. By working together to develop clear pathways and referral mechanisms and through joint-training and sharing of skills, this can hopefully be avoided.

4.5.3 Joint-working should also result in a reduction in the duplication of services working with individual tenants and their families. This should help generate reductions in business costs for those services.

4.5.4 There may also be opportunities for joint-funded posts to be created sharing expertise between services. Particular synergies have been identified as part of the Staff Working

Groups around the benefits of a shared resource with mental health services and Adult Social Care assessment. These opportunities would need to be further explored should the Housing+ approach be approved.

4.5.5 Housing+ staff could provide a wider community role in providing services with ‘eyes and ears’ on the ground in patches across the City. They should be able to help in developing the community asset and provide customers with a way of feeding back views and opinions on the wider Council.

4.5.6 This also has the potential to support volunteering and community development in neighbourhoods where there is a significant council housing presence. To do this, Housing+ staff will require the capacity to work with all tenant households, not just those ‘in need’. By developing these more resilient households however, this does give the community the best possible chance of succeeding and potentially reduces the need for Council intervention.

4.5.7 The Council overall should benefit from the best use of local community facilities. Closer working with Libraries for example, could generate financial cost savings where shared spaces can be developed into community resources. A number of options for this are being developed as part of the Library Review which could support the viability of Hub, Co-delivered and Independent Libraries where there is a clear benefit for the HRA and tenants.

4.5.8 There may be joint benefits for services working together on data sharing. Understanding from who and where potential service demands are generated would inform strategic planning and the best use of overall Council resources.

4.5.9 Longer-term, there is the potential to deliver some limited services on behalf of sections within the Council. This may be limited by skills and training and must be mindful of the restrictions around use of the HRA and Housing Benefit, but the potential exists for the expansion of the ‘Plus’ role described in section 6.

4.6 Measuring the benefits

4.6.1 It will be important to monitor the impact of Housing+ to ensure that it is delivering its ambitions and the predicted benefits for all stakeholders. The Performance Monitoring Framework will be reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose to measure the impacts of a new service based on sustainability and better outcomes for the whole household. The Logistics Housing+ Staff Working Group have discussed this and recommended a framework that:

- Is focused on outcomes for households, both on measurable financial outcomes such as rent arrears and income, but also on satisfaction and meeting personal ambitions.
- Measures sustainability but recognises that this is a long term measure and is relative in different property types and locations
- Is based on local conditions, and local priorities
- Involves tenants in identifying their ambitions and expectations

4.6.2 The Performance Monitoring Framework could make use of spatial analysis and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to analyse improvements in outcomes and optimise the deployment of resources. The Council’s Knowledge and Research team and

the University of Sheffield are currently involved in discussions about the development of an analytical model to provide this – paragraph 7.13 refers.

4.6.3 This will require a more sophisticated approach to performance management that acknowledges the wider impact of this work in neighbourhoods. Ideally this would start to look at issues of displacement – where demand for services is fluid between different providers.

5. Key Assumptions

5.1 The resources needed for implementing the new model must be met within the existing HRA Business plan. Any additional costs would need to be met from savings elsewhere in the Business Plan.

5.2 The duty to keep a Housing Revenue Account and prevent a debit balance on it and restrictions as to what may be credited or debited to the account (the "ring-fence") are governed by Part VI of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Expenditure in connection with the Council's provision of housing under Part II of the Housing Act 1985 (the 1985 Act) falling within the heading of "repair, maintenance, supervision and management" must be debited to the HRA.

5.3 Whilst some of the services offered through the Housing + model are beyond what might be understood as council housing management the Council has the power to provide "welfare services" in connection with its housing provision to promote the welfare of people for whom the housing is provided, which broadly describes those additional services. The costs of providing such welfare services may be debited to the HRA unless they amount to personal or nursing care, which is not proposed within Housing+. The proposal therefore falls within the HRA legal framework.

5.4 If the model is developed in the future to include more cross-service working it will be necessary to consider the model against the legal restrictions governing the HRA before further implementation.

5.5 The Housing+ model should deliver the tenant Visions set out in section 2.2. These Visions represent a commitment to tenants following the transfer of council housing services.

5.6 The model should also deliver the broad principles derived from the tenant Visions

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Meet & Greet
@ viewing, pre-tenancy, sign-up and needs assessment | 6 Low-level Prevention
Preventative work around health, jobs, money or home |
| 2 Key Contact
Delivering excellent customer services to households in their patch | 7 Refer On
Support from CHS or SCC colleagues but keeping in touch |
| 3 Tailored Plan
Visiting at least annually to agree household plan | 8 Monitor & Enforce
Local environment and individual tenancy conditions |
| 4 Achieve More
Working to help households achieve their aspirations | 9 Active Community
Encouraging & supporting local people to play an active role |
| 5 Encourage & Support
Offering appropriate support to enjoy and sustain tenancies | 10 Resilience
For individual households and the HRA |

5.7 The assumption is that the Housing+ model would be delivered using the current Electoral Ward boundaries. This should improve linkages to other SCC services and partners including

Multi Agency Support Teams (MAST), Local Area Partnerships and the Police. It will also provide Councillors with clear contact details for Housing+ staff across the city. Because of the uneven geographical spread of council housing across the city, the assumption in this proposal is that 8 Neighbourhood teams are created. Details of the Wards contained within each of these teams are shown in Appendix Two.

5.8 This Business Case also assumes that Estate Services will be reviewed and a decision made about their future role and structure as part of the Green and Open Spaces Review.

5.9 The assumptions on patch sizes are based on the following factors:

- The predicted levels of activity within the Housing+ model. This includes, for example, an annual visit to each household, numbers of households with rent arrears and households who experience or are responsible for Anti-Social Behaviour. A full list of the assumptions is contained in Appendix Five.
- An estimate of the time each activity would take – for example, an expectation that an annual visit and follow up work will take up to 3 hours. Timings are not prescriptive, but to ensure that enough time is allowed to reasonably carry out these duties.
- This total time has then been divided by the number of 'effective' working hours in a year. This measure takes into account factors such as leave, average sickness, supervision and training and gives a realistic picture of 'effective' hours. This gives the number of staff needed to deliver the service.
- The 'patch' size has then been calculated by dividing the total number of staff by the number of Council and leasehold properties to give an indicative patch size.

5.9.1 The average patch size across the City will be approximately 230. This will vary across Sheffield. The differences in patch size between Wards reflect differences in the amount of activity. The activity and the time allowances for each were agreed with groups of operational housing staff and are based on either Housing service data for 12/13 or estimates of future activity.

5.9.2 Implementation of the model would involve more detailed work to help work out patches within wards, adjust to the changes in demand and to monitor outcomes.

5.10 The estimated costs given in this business case for the staffing resource needed for Housing+ are based on basic assumptions made regarding pay scales / grades. These assumptions are based on comparisons made with similar roles identified elsewhere in the Council. It is important to note that no certainty can be given to these figures until job descriptions have been agreed and assessed under the Council's corporate job allocation process.

5.11 Mobile technology is essential for the effective implementation of the proposed model, and an assumption has been made that good quality IT solutions will be provided to meet this requirement. The costs associated with this are detailed in section 11.28..

5.12 The overall cost of implementing the model also assumes that some modest savings will be made through the closure of some offices and through a more efficient use of the accommodation which remains. These savings are detailed in section 6.3

5.13 The outcomes of the Staff Working Groups have formed the basis of the proposed working practices and split of responsibilities for the Housing+ teams, and for the specialist staff within the Council Housing Service delivering city-wide services. The Staff Groups consisted of a broad range of knowledgeable and experienced staff, who took the visions of the customer

project groups' set-up in Phase Two and considered how these visions could be implemented in practice.

6. How will we deliver this?

6.1. The Housing+ Model

As described above, to satisfy Cabinet's ambitions and the vision developed by tenants and staff, the new model needs to deliver an integrated tenancy management, tenancy support, maintenance and investment service which is tailored to the needs of individual households to help them maintain a successful tenancy. Based on the outcomes from the Staff Working Groups, the recommended 'Housing+' model is as follows:

6.1.1 Housing + Officers will deliver Council Housing services via a patch based approach to a diverse range of customers. This will include core council housing management services for example; dealing with rent arrears, anti-social behaviour and supporting community engagement as well as dealing with the physical aspects of the neighbourhood including individual property issues and monitoring environmental standards.

6.1.2 Housing+ Officers will take a more holistic approach to managing successful tenancies and this means that conversations will take place with our tenants around a variety of issues including home skills, employment, education and health. As a preventative model, Housing + Officers should deal with low level issues directly and signpost people to the resources that exist within the local community. However, some of these discussions may lead to referrals to other services.

6.1.3 A "Day in the life..." profile is attached as Appendix Three to demonstrate how the role could work.

6.1.4 Each of the 8 areas will have a Neighbourhood Management Team, which will be responsible for the delivery and co-ordination of all Council Housing services within that area. This may involve liaising with other teams within the CHS, or within the wider Council, when more specialist advice or support is required.

6.1.5 Front-line housing staff ('Housing+ Officers') will each have a clearly defined geographical 'patch' and will be responsible for front-line service delivery to all council households within that patch. The Housing+ Officers will work as a team and will cover for each other during periods of leave, sickness, etc.

6.1.6 Housing+ Officers will be very visible in the area they service, and will complete as much of their work as possible out in the area, rather than from an office base. Appointments with tenants will be in the tenant's home, wherever possible, and technology will enable staff to update records and access information remotely wherever possible.

6.1.7 Each household will be offered an annual visit by their relevant Housing+ Officer, to discuss how their tenancy is working, identify any guidance or intervention they may need to help sustain the tenancy and to assess the condition of the property. This annual visit will result in a 'Housing+ Plan' being agreed with the household, and the Housing+ Officer will then continue to work with the household as required to help achieve this Plan.

6.1.8 The level of support required and engagement with the Housing+ approach will be variable. Risk stratification will be helpful to identify those households that are self-

sustaining and don't need much support and those where as a service provider efforts should be made to engage with the tenants. In the latter case, there are a number of options that Housing+ staff may need to pursue to develop a dialogue with the tenant including working with other services or partners for example, on repair or annual gas safety visits.

6.1.9 The Council would be required to consult on a change to the Conditions of Tenancy should they wish to enforce a visit to a tenant household under the Housing+ model.

6.1.10 As well as Housing+ Officers, there will also be a number of other officers in each Neighbourhood Team who will manage and support the frontline staff and deliver services. In addition to the patch based Housing+ Officers there will also be Housing+ specialists who are able to provide support for more complex cases. The patch size for these specialists will be larger than that of the Housing+ Officer as the case load should be smaller, allowing the Housing+ Officer to maintain service levels to all tenants in their patch.

6.1.11 The main focus of the Neighbourhood Teams will be the efficient and effective delivery of council-housing services. However, they will also liaise with other teams and service providers to pull-in specialist advice or support for those tenants struggling to maintain their tenancies due to non-housing related issues.

6.1.12 The Neighbourhood Teams will also be responsible for developing and strengthening their local community through the promotion of community engagement, involvement and resilience.

6.1.13 They will liaise closely with other service providers in the area with responsibility for maintaining the environmental and physical aspects of our housing estates (e.g. Estate Services Teams; Amey; Parks & Countryside etc.) to ensure that standards are maintained.

6.1.14 In addition to the Neighbourhood Teams, there will also be a number of teams within the Council Housing Service delivering a city-wide service – responsible for:

- Specialist advice and support, and the development of city-wide policies, strategies and partnerships (e.g. community engagement).
- Direct delivery of operational services (e.g. re-housing, repairs, income management)

6.1.15 There may need to be a rationalisation of these city-wide (non-area) teams based on setting a cash limit for the delivery of these services and a review of the way in which they support the Neighbourhood teams. These proposals assume that this review leads to an average 5% shift in staffing resources from city-wide teams to the local Neighbourhood teams. Section 11.1 provides more details about this.

6.1.16 Many HPOs will have leasehold properties within the geographical boundaries of their patch. Leaseholders have been involved in the consultation which has shaped the new proposals – through the 'It's Your Shout' campaign, through involvement in the Service Design Project Groups and via the Leaseholder Forum.

6.1.17 It is recognised that many of the benefits for tenants of the Housing+ model could also apply to leaseholders – for example, in terms of increased customer satisfaction, more effective responses to financial inclusion leading to lower service charge arrears, earlier resolution of ASB issues, etc.

6.1.18 More work needs to be done to understand the legal- and service-charge implications of expanding the Housing+ model to include leaseholders. However, initial work undertaken by the Leaseholder Staff Working Group suggests that at least some of elements of the Housing+ approach could and should be applied to both tenants and leaseholders, and this will be factored into the implementation of the new model.

6.1.19 The success of the Housing+ model will rely on the skills of staff delivering the service. This applies equally to all staff involved at whatever level. Getting the right individual skills and behaviours is essential and it is important that the 'ask' of staff and reward is balanced. There will need to be careful consideration given to any recruitment and selection process for newly created posts to ensure that the appropriate skill set is recruited.

6.2 IT requirements of the new model

6.2.1 For the new model to work effectively, front-line staff must be able to work flexibly and in a mobile way. New technology will be needed to support this mobile way of working – including handheld devices which enable information, forms, records, Council systems, etc to be accessed and updated remotely.

6.2.2 The development of appropriate ICT will also be important to promote the digital inclusion amongst tenant households. The implementation of Welfare Reform and in particular the shift to on-line Universal Credit applications has a potentially significant impact on the income stream for the HRA. Housing+ staff will have an important role in trying to mitigate the impacts through education and support for households in making claims. Similarly, if the Housing+ model is to generate the maximum benefits for other services, digital inclusion has a role to play in supporting people back to work and combatting loneliness and social isolation. The ICT has to be fit for purpose to deliver these agendas.

6.2.3 The options and costs for this mobile technology are given in Section 11.2.8.

6.3 Accommodation and Customer Access Points

6.3.1 The Council Housing Service currently delivers its services from 12 public access points and 7 main back office locations across Sheffield. The total annual cost of this portfolio to the Housing Revenue Account is £1.4 million. Customers have expressed strong views throughout the consultation around Housing+ that the provision of a face-to-face enquiry service is very important to them - the more local, the better.

6.3.2 Implementing the Housing+ model should not reduce that ability to talk to someone face-to-face. However it will change the nature of the interaction and potentially the location of that interaction. Mobile ICT and home visits should reduce the need for customers to visit fixed office locations (discussed more in paragraph 4.3.4). Mobile working will also require staff to work more flexibly from fewer fixed office locations, whilst having access to local 'touchdown' and welfare facilities. All this offers the potential to re-shape the current use of both public access and back office accommodation.

6.3.3 Any proposals to close or change the opening hours of existing access points would need to be done in consultation with customers. Further detailed work would be required to identify those offices where the footfall makes them less viable. The impact of Housing+ on footfall figures, as it becomes established, would also need to be accounted for. That work

will also need to take into account the range of possible alternative locations within a locality where a face-to-face service could be delivered.

6.3.4 One possible opportunity is an increase in shared space with libraries. There are a number of locations across the city where libraries are located in close proximity to a housing office. In Crystal Peaks, Parsons Cross and Burngreave (from early 2014), the services are co-located in the same building and in Firth Park and Manor Top, Council Housing staff already provide a customer access point. The Library Review means that further expansion of these working arrangements would need to be considered in light of the final proposals agreed by Cabinet. However there is potential for a further significant expansion of these joint working arrangements. This would benefit the HRA, by reducing its accommodation costs and the General Fund by supporting the long-term viability of the Library Service.

6.3.5 Future public access points may also be shaped by the wider work the Council is undertaking around Locality Hubs. Housing is part of this agenda, but this is a long-term strategy whose operational outcome is difficult to predict at this stage.

6.3.6 For the purpose of this Business Case, a small assumed saving of approximately 8% has been built into the cost model predictions. This represents a minimum assumed saving as part of the initial implementation of Housing+. The majority of this saving should be realised through changes to back office accommodation provision rather than through any significant impact on customers.

6.3.7 The potential does exist though to increase this figure by working more closely with other council services on a shared accommodation strategy. For example, the costs of the CHS accommodation portfolio could be further reduced by 30% per year by moving from expensive accommodation in the City Centre and reviewing provision in Hillsborough without adversely affecting the customer experience.

6.4 Managing the transition to the new model

6.4.1 Housing+ will be implemented according to the Council's Managing Employee Reductions (MER) / Achieving Change (AC) policy and procedures. Robust consultation, communication and change management will be undertaken, including full consultation with staff and Trade Unions. Key milestones within this will include:

- Initial launch of the proposals
- Development of Job Descriptions and Job Allocation
- Drafting and consulting on an Achieving Change/MER document
- Pooling arrangements proposals if not already covered in the MER/AC document
- Feedback on Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) and Voluntary Severance (VS) applications, and any subsequent revised pooling
- Post-recruitment / issue of selection notices
- A full review 6 months after the implementation date.

6.4.2 A clear communication strategy will be developed – for customers, staff and other stakeholders, to ensure full understanding of and engagement with the changes being implemented.

6.4.3 Implementation will begin by rolling out the Housing+ approach on a temporary basis in a specific housing area, testing the policies and procedures introduced to support the new way of working. This will be evaluated after 3 months and learning from it used to fine-tune the model. Full roll-out is expected to begin on an area-by-area basis in April 2015.

7. Links and Dependencies

This project has a number of links and dependencies with other projects currently underway. The main links are listed below:

7.1 Libraries Review Project: In considering the options for more efficient and fit-for-purpose accommodation to meet the needs of the Housing+ model, co-location options are currently being explored in liaison with this Project.

7.2 The Adult Social Services 'Offline Mobile Working Solution Project' – this project is utilising technology and devices which will also deliver the IT solution needed for Housing+. It is essential that the learning from this project contributes to the Housing+ project, and that any opportunities for efficiencies through joint-procurement or shared resources are fully utilised.

7.3 Customer First Programme – the way customers interact with housing and non-housing services will be, in part, determined by the future development of the Council's Customer First Project. In particular, Customer First could determine the community access points for face-to-face and the on-line and telephone access to Council services. This could have implications for the type of support provided and the delivery model for council housing services.

7.4 Digital Inclusion – A significant amount of work is currently being undertaken with the aim of increasing the digital inclusion of Council tenants and their households. The learning from this work will be an important factor in designing a future delivery model that is digitally inclusive, both for staff and tenants.

7.5 Green Open Space (GOS) and SLA review - The way that GOS services are delivered has been discussed as part of the FoCH 'Clean, attractive neighbourhoods' Service Design group. The recommendations from this group, alongside a review of pilot activity in the North-east and South-east of the city, will help to shape the future delivery model for GOS.

7.6 New repairs and maintenance contract – Kier Services are the contractor for the new repairs and maintenance contract for Council properties. Changes to the way that repair services are delivered as part of the awarding of this new contract – including pilots of new ways of working in selected areas of the city – will have an impact on the design of services through this project.

7.7 Successful Tenancies pilot – A HRA-funded pilot project has been established to test out new ways of working more holistically with households across traditional housing, health and social care boundaries. This pilot will look at interacting earlier and in a more proactive way with households in several geographic locations across the city. In some ways this is a precursor for the design ideas within this project. It will therefore be important to learn the lessons from this approach in order to feed these into any proposed Housing+ model.

7.8 CYPF, MAST & Successful Families - The Successful Families Project will support families with multiple problems that make frequent and extensive use of public services, as well

as those likely to do so in the future. The focus is on families who are out of work, where children are not attending school and involved in crime / anti-social behaviour. There is likely to be overlap between the families identified here and those working with the Council Housing Service. The challenge will be to avoid duplication in the delivery of these services and ensure effective referral mechanisms are in place. Successful Families is just one part of a change agenda being undertaken by the Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) Portfolio, which also includes the further development of the Multi Agency Support Teams and the Integrated Front Door (see below). It is important that Housing+ is linked into this change agenda.

7.9 Adult Social Care 'Front door' - Health and social care recognise the importance of housing and the impact it can have on health and wellbeing . The Housing+ model needs to complement any changes to the "front door" into these services. Work is currently taking place looking at Community Prevention Models and Housing+ will be strongly reflected.

7.10 Housing Support Pathways Project – This project aims to develop a Housing Support pathway for homeless customers and those without settled accommodation that addresses access to and allocation of accommodation and move-on arrangements. The development of the pathway will need to link into the Housing+ approach to support customers entering and exiting the pathway in a planned and managed way that addresses the needs of the individuals concerned.

7.11 Locality Management and Engagement – The Council has recently developed new arrangements for engaging with residents in localities across the City, through 'Local Area Partnerships'. These arrangements have replaced the previous Community Assembly format. It is important that these new structures make effective links with the proposals for tenant engagement developed through the Housing+ model.

7.12 Review of SCC Conditions of Tenancy – the existing Conditions of Tenancy for SCC tenants have not been reviewed for quite a number of years. A number of these conditions require a refresh and others will be affected by the proposals around Housing+, particularly the offer of an annual visit. A separate Business Case will be developed for a full review of the Conditions of Tenancy in 2014.

7.13 Collaborative research project with University of Sheffield – the Council have been successful in a joint bid with the Department of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Sheffield for £20,000 research funding to better understand and map some of the spatial links between services delivered to Council Housing tenants. This will support the Housing+ project by identifying potential 'hotspots' across the City and inform the deployment of resources.

7.14 Community Investment Plan - the Community Investment Plan project has reviewed all SCC operational property against an overarching strategic brief for what the organisation requires from property moving forward. A key part of this is the emerging Locality Hubs Strategy for selected localities across the city. Any proposals for changing the customer access strategy for the Council Housing Service as part of Housing+ will need to be consistent with this strategy.

8. Impacts

The potential impacts of this project are significant, for a number of different stakeholders:

8.1 Impacts for Customers

8.1.1 Council housing in Sheffield represents almost a fifth of the city's total housing stock. There are over 48,000 tenants living in around 41,000 council homes – and a further estimated 11,000 'additional occupants' within these households.

8.1.2 Therefore, taking a more tailored and locality-based approach to how council housing services are delivered has huge potential to make a real and tangible difference to many people in the city.

8.1.3 In its corporate plan 'Standing up for Sheffield', the Council gives a commitment to "... make the best possible use of our resources to meet the needs of Sheffield and its people ... making sure that we are only investing in efficient services that people and local communities really need."

8.1.4 Implementation of the Housing+ model would support this commitment – by aiming to deliver an excellent and efficient Council Housing Service which supports its tenants, their families and their communities in the ways which they have said best meet their needs and make the most of their potential.

8.1.5 The aims of the Project are also in line with the Sheffield Fairness Commission's "Fairness Framework" – and will contribute towards the city achieving some of the outcomes recommended by the Commission.

8.1.6 The aim is for all customers to receive a better service as a result of this project. Households should see a reduction in the duplication of providers and a more streamlined service that is responsive to their needs. They should also find it easier to contact services through a range of access channels.

8.1.7 Customers will also benefit in the ways described in Section 4.

8.1.8 Vulnerable customers and others needing additional support to access services should benefit the most from the new model. The new way of delivering and co-ordinating services will make it easier for people to access the services they need and at the right time. A full Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken prior to implementation to fully identify and mitigate if necessary any equalities issues.

8.1.9 A consultation exercise in November 2013 gave customers the opportunity to feedback on six key principles of Housing+ in order to validate some of these assumptions around the potential benefits of the new model. Scenario-based questions allowed customers to rate the principles on a 1(poor) –10 (excellent) scale and comment on the proposals. 929 responses were received, in addition to discussions at Local Housing Forums and Sheltered Board:

- a) Having a named 'patch officer'. Average rating 8.5. Comments included, 'a named officer will make things easier as often we are passed from pillar to post and end up speaking to different people every time we ring.'

- b) Being offered an annual visit. Average rating 7.3. Comments included, 'this develops a relationship with tenants and housing officers that has been lost in recent years.'
- c) Being offered home appointments. Average rating 8.0. Comments included, 'It's a great idea because if you can't get out you can't be seen and won't be heard.'
- d) The 'Plus', non- housing services. Average rating 7.9. Comments included, 'linking up would be fantastic as a lot of issues revolve around other problems not just housing issues'.
- e) Help to access online services. Average rating 7.7. Comments included, 'as most things seem to be going online these days, especially benefits, this is a good idea.'
- f) Accessing the service in alternative locations. Average rating 7.0. Comments included, 'Yes – Area Offices are remote from some people at the moment'

8.1.10 A more detailed summary of the consultation results is given in Appendix Four.

8.2 Impacts for Council Housing staff

8.2.1 These changes will bring a number of benefits for staff, described in Section 4.4.

8.2.2 Staff impacted by the introduction of Housing+ will see a difference in their working practices. Housing+ will require Council Housing staff to work more flexibly across existing housing disciplines and tailor the way that they deliver services according to the needs of the household. It will also require a shift in the boundaries between existing Area-based and 'Central' teams and potentially changes to policy, procedures and 'handover' points.

8.2.3 In order to deliver the proposed Housing+ service, staff will require a programme of training to support them in any new roles. Changes to existing referral routes and protocols with other Council or partner services may also be required as a result of the changes.

8.2.4 The introduction of Housing+ will need to be supported by an Equalities Action Plan which recognises some of the issues that the change of role will bring for staff. This includes the move to more mobile working where staff are predominantly office based and currently have reasonable adjustments, which applies to a number of protected groups. Policy and practice currently exists to support staff who already work in this way. However, it will be necessary to review these to ensure that they are fit for purpose if the majority of staff move to mobile working.

8.2.5 The new model will be implemented following the Council's Achieving Change/ Managing Employee Reductions (MER) Policy and processes. It is envisaged that it will take around 5 months depending on final decisions around the test phase and its evaluation, recruitment process and impact on individual grades.

8.2.6 CHS staff are currently excluded from proposed changes to the Council's Pay Strategy. Longer term, for economic, technical or organisational reasons, it is likely that the Council will need to address any differences in pay, terms and conditions between CHS employees and the rest of the Council by moving CHS staff onto the Council's pay structure. If Housing+ is implemented then this may be an appropriate time to start the process using the Council's MER/AC process. HR are seeking legal advice on the detail of the proposals, how they impact on staff and any legal implications.

8.2.7 Formal consultation on the Pay Strategy in relation to Council employees within the scope of the exercise is underway. However, these proposals have changed during the final stages of producing this report, and it has not been possible to model the impact of these

changes in time to update this Business Case. HR will seek legal advice on the process for implementation of these proposals in the context of the protections afforded by TUPE.

8.2.8 312 staff completed a survey similar to the customer survey referred to in 8.1.10 above. Staff and customer feedback was similar in that both saw the same potential benefits and raised the same concerns. However, the average rating out of 10 was lower in the staff survey. The main concerns raised by staff were around the logistics of how the Housing + model would operate. The proposals have been amended to take account of these concerns.

8.3 Impacts for other SCC services

8.3.1 Two important parts of the role of the new Housing+ Area teams will be (i) undertaking low-level preventative work relating to health, financial, employment or education issues and (ii) engaging with other Council services and external expertise where more intensive or higher-level support is needed.

8.3.2 It will therefore be crucial that Housing+ teams have the necessary knowledge, awareness and skills to enable them to deliver the wide variety of supportive measures which this approach will require.

8.3.3 Clear, well-defined and effective referral routes will be needed to enable CHS officers to seek the intervention of other teams or agencies for households which require support beyond the boundaries of a Housing+ Neighbourhood Team's role.

8.3.4 To ensure that this happens, CHS staff must be empowered and able to fully and competently undertake their role. All relevant services and teams across the Council will need to contribute to this – in terms of staff training and development, and also in designing and implementing effective pathways and referral routes. The services expected to play a particularly important part in the new model are Public Health, Adult Social Care and Children and Young People and Families.

8.3.5 Joint working with these services should highlight where CHS staff are able to deliver preventative interventions. The 'offer' to these services is that HRA-funded staff will be supporting the delivery of their services to council tenants. In return, the CHS will require those services to support the development and training of CHS staff and provide guaranteed responsive referral routes when required.

8.3.6 Commitment from other relevant Council services to a 'whole Council' approach will support successful implementation of the Housing+ model. There will need to be clear protocols and / or SLAs in place to ensure all involved understand the expectations. Other services will need to support its implementation, particularly in terms of staff training and developing effective referral routes. The model has the potential to develop and expand over time.

8.3.7 As described in Section 4.5, the low-level preventative work undertaken as part of Housing+ should reduce the need for costly interventions from other services. However, as explained in Section 9.4, the new emphasis on making more regular contact with more tenants could result in an increase in demand for services (both in and outside of the CHS). This will need to be closely monitored and managed.

8.3.8 The potential risk of uncovering unmet demand from council housing tenants is covered in paragraphs 4.5.2 and 9.4.

8.4 Impacts for other partner services

8.4.1 There may be a number of impacts for partner services as a result of implementing a Housing+ approach. The most significant is likely to be on community health services, with whom CHS staff may work jointly won preventative action within households. CHS staff should be able to contribute to some of their initiatives and so free up a little more of their time to focus on non-council-housing residents. This will require some up-front support from these teams – most likely in the form of training and referral protocols.

8.4.2 There may also be impacts on a range of community and voluntary sector service providers in the city. These are likely to be as described in 8.4.1 above and we will require similar support from these partners to make Housing+ a success.

8.4.3 Through increased community engagement, and the promotion of community assets and of services offered by the Voluntary Community Faith sector, Housing+ will contribute to developing stronger and more resilient communities across the city.

8.5 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.5.1 The consultation with customers conducted around the principles of Housing+ described in section 8.1.10 (which was generally representative of the customer base) also showed that customers feel positive about the proposals and that the model will help address some of the barriers that customers face with current service delivery. The development of a tailored approach to delivering housing services should deliver positive outcomes for all those protected groups under the public sector equality duty.

8.5.2 The Staff Working Groups have flagged some issues which will need to be mitigated as part of the implementation of Housing+. These include the move to online and more self-service ways of accessing our services for those who are currently digitally excluded. However, it is anticipated that the in-person contact provided through developing a relationship with customers who are unable to access the service or resolve their query through self-service will help provide support to mitigate this.

8.5.3 Additional issues which will require a full EIA include the potential closure of some Area Offices, should this be proposed at a later date. EIAs will be completed for each office to help inform the decision making process following the decision on the introduction of Housing+.

8.5.4 A full EIA is attached in Appendix Six.

9. Risks

The risks associated with this project, and the associated mitigating actions, are as follows:

9.1 The transfer of Sheffield Homes staff into the Council was completed under the 'Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations' (TUPE). Implementation of the Housing+ model, and any associated changes to job descriptions, working practices and structures, may contravene these rules – leaving the Council open to grievances, disputes and employment tribunals.

Changing terms and conditions of employment post-transfer is never without risk. The TUPE regulations make it clear that any variation of a contract to the employee's detriment will be void if the sole or principle reason for the change is the transfer itself or a reason connected with the transfer, unless the employer can point to an "economic, technical or organisational reason entailing changes in the workforce".

There is no clear definition on this wording and therefore it is always advisable to seek legal advice prior to implementing any substantial changes to terms and conditions. HR are currently seeking legal advice on Housing+ proposals and how this will impact on staff to ensure that the Council is meeting its legal obligations.

9.2 CHS staff are currently excluded from the proposed changes to the Council's Pay Strategy. In the longer term, for economic, technical or organisational reasons it is likely that the Council will need to address any differences in pay, terms and conditions between CHS employees and the rest of the Council by moving CHS staff onto the Council's pay structure. If Housing+ is implemented then this will be an appropriate time to do this.

Formal consultation on the Pay Strategy in relation to Council employees within the scope of the exercise is underway. It is not possible to pre-empt the outcome of this consultation and so the proposals as they stand at the time of writing this report should be used as the basis for modelling the potential impact on posts within the Housing+ proposals.

HR will seek legal advice on the process for implementation of these proposals in the context of the protections afforded by TUPE.

Any proposals to implement the Pay Strategy for staff not currently on SCC Terms and Conditions would be subject to consultation in line with SCC policies irrespective of whether Housing+ goes ahead.

9.3 Any new posts created as part of the Housing+ model will be graded through the Council's corporate Job Allocation process. Until that work is completed, there can be no certainty about the staffing costs of the new model.

A simple desk-top exercise has been undertaken, looking at the requirements of the Housing+ roles and comparable jobs elsewhere within the Council. This has provided provisional grades on which the costs given in this business case have been based.

However, until job descriptions have been written and agreed, and the job allocation process followed, the staffing costs used must be accepted as estimates.

9.4 Housing+ Officers will make contact with a large number of tenants who previously have had very little contact with us. This could result in increased demand for services (both within and outside of the CHS) which cannot be met.

One of the main principles of Housing+ is that the CHS contributes to a reduction in the demand for high-cost intervention services (particularly those delivered by Adult Social Care and Public Health) by undertaking more low-level preventative work. So in this respect, Housing+ should have a positive impact on the demand for those services.

Small-scale pilot projects are currently running in two areas of the city, and these are testing out the practicalities of some of the fundamental principles of the Housing+ model around joint-working and taking a holistic approach to households. These pilots should help give an indication about the likely proportion of unmet demand, which will then be factored into the implementation of Housing+.

Flexibility will be also be built into the Housing+ patches to ensure some capacity is available within the CHS to deal with an increase in demand for its own services.

9.5 It could take longer than originally planned to obtain and implement the required ICT hardware, devices and software.

Work on the IT specification has already begun to ensure as long a lead-in time as possible. A Staff Working Group was established to look in detail at the requirements needed from the mobile technology and ongoing work is being undertaken with Capita to ensure any delays are minimal.

9.6 A lack of stability and potential disruptions in the Council's IT system, and in the new mobile technology which will be utilised as part of Housing+, could have a negative impact on performance and service delivery.

As part of the implementation of Housing+, we will work closely with colleagues in BIS and Capita to ensure that the IT sourced is as reliable and efficient as possible. Work will also be undertaken to ensure that we have robust arrangements in place to deal with any IT disruption, in line with the Council's corporate contract / SLA with Capita.

Business Continuity Plans will need to be drawn-up and agreed by all teams which put alternative arrangements in place for service delivery during periods of disruption to IT services – as is the case now.

9.7 A 'big bang' launch of the Housing+ model, without the opportunity to identify the potential issues during a pilot, will risk the new model failing or not being as effective as it could be if the assumptions made are incorrect.

Information from other organisations who have undertaken similar projects has shown that a 'learning implementation' approach – one which continuously adapts and changes as required – works best. Under this approach, the model is rolled out incrementally and changes made along the way. This is the approach being recommended for Housing+, beginning with a 'test phase' as described in Section 6.4.3.

9.8 Other services / teams within the Council do not engage effectively with the implementation of the Housing+ model.

Effective partnership working between the CHS and other council teams is essential for the model to be a success. Senior managers across the Council have therefore been fully briefed on the Housing+ concept through presentations to the Portfolio Leadership Team and the Executive Management Team.

Key staff from across the Council have also been directly involved in the development of the Housing+ model, in a number of ways. The Staff Working Groups, for example, included staff from services outside of the CHS, and key managers from other services are members of the Tenants Services Board, which oversees the project

Throughout the project, emphasis will continue to be placed on ensuring staff in other relevant service areas are fully engaged with the project.

9.9 Processes and referral routes between the CHS and other services involved in the delivery of Housing+ are not effective, leading to a breakdown in service delivery.

As described above, a lot of work has and will be invested in ensuring buy-in from other Council services. The implementation plan will include the development and communication of robust and effective referral routes to help ensure that there is seamless and joined-up service

delivery, and that customers receive effective and timely support. The implementation plan will also include a detailed training plan, part of which will be making staff fully aware of when and how to make referrals.

9.10 The CHS is supported by a number of teams who used to be part of Sheffield Homes but are now distributed across the Council structure (for example, Finance, HR etc.) Support from these teams will be required to implement Housing+ but they may not have the resource to deliver this or be able to respond in a timely manner.

Early engagement with teams outside the CHS will be required early on to scope the 'ask' and response to requests for support. This may require short-term resources to be brought into the project to cover specialist skill areas or provide additional capacity to meet project timescales.

9.11 Staff will not have the necessary skills or knowledge to undertake their new role – particularly in relation to other services outside of the CHS.

An effective and thorough training programme will be developed as part of the implementation plan to ensure that staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively perform their jobs. As part of this, a commitment will be sought from other services within the Council to provide training to CHS staff on the additional 'non-housing' aspects of their roles.

An effective recruitment process will also be used, in line with Council's corporate Achieving Change policy, to ensure as far as possible that staff are given roles which best suit their skills, knowledge and experience.

9.12 Housing+ Officers could be overburdened with additional responsibilities – particularly in areas with high levels of vulnerable customers. This could dilute the 'core housing' offer and the level of expertise with the CHS, and may lead to some areas of the service being neglected.

Patch sizes have been carefully calculated taking into account the demographics and characteristics of each housing area. These will be flexible and regularly reviewed to ensure that resources are deployed in a way which most effectively meets demand. Housing+ Officers will have full access to a range of specialist advice and support – both within and outside the CHS – and so have the guidance and support they need to manage serious or complex cases.

A full training programme will be developed to ensure that the necessary housing-related knowledge is retained, and that staff have the necessary skills to fulfil their roles. There will be clear procedures and referral routes to underpin their work.

Staff will also be equipped with mobile technology to ensure that time spent on administrative duties is minimal, and so help them to effectively manage their workloads.

9.13 The review of the provision of services provided to customers outside of normal working hours is viewed negatively by customers and impacts on how Housing + is received.

A communications strategy needs developing early to help reinforce the role of the Housing+ Officer and the benefit of a routine visible presence on the estates that the new service will bring. Sensitive consultation with both staff and tenants will be critical to the change to minimise negative perceptions. Consideration needs to be given to the possible provision of an out-of-hours evidence gathering / customer contact service. Promotion of the Council's '101' service as the main out of hours contact would be needed.

10. Project Delivery

10.1 Project approach (including governance of the project)

10.1.1 Ultimately all decisions will be made in line with the Scheme of Delegation and will rest with either the Project Sponsor, in consultation with the appropriate Executive Director, or with the Cabinet Member.

10.1.2 Governance of the project will follow a similar format to that to date where the Tenant Services Board, reporting into the HRA Board, retains the overall operational responsibility as the Project Board. Highlight reports would still be sent to both the Better Health & Wellbeing Outcome Board and the Housing and Neighbourhoods Advisory Panel for comment and critical challenge.

10.2 Key milestones from the project plan

The key milestones for the project are outlined below. Further work will take place to identify additional milestones as more detailed work takes place around the test phase.

Staff Consultation	Jan 2015 onwards
Cabinet decision	19 th March
Customer Consultation	May onwards
Preparations made for launch of 'test phase'	Mid Apr-end of May
Test phase is launched	June
Evaluation of test phase	Sep
Consideration of customer consultation	Jun - Sep
MER / Achieving Change launched	1st Oct
MER /Achieving Change and recruitment process	Oct – Feb 2015
Final preparations made for full roll-out	Feb - Mar
Full roll-out of Housing+ begins	1st Apr

11. Project Resources

11.1 What people will the project need?

11.1.1 The delivery of Housing+ will require a restructure of the whole of the Council Housing Service. There will need to be a shift in resources from city-wide (non-area) teams who provide a service to customers on a specific housing topic, to more decentralised neighbourhood-based Housing+ staff providing customers with a general council housing and wider council service.

11.1.2 The final shape of this service will be subject to change as the details of the operating model emerge from the proposed 'test phase' described in paragraph 6.4.3 and through more detailed work within and outside of the CHS if this Business Case is approved.

11.1.3 However, in order to provide some outline costs, a number of assumptions have been made as part of this document. The starting point for these assumptions has been the detailed work that has been undertaken by the Staff Working Groups around activity and patch sizes summarised in paragraph 5.8 and described in more detail in Appendix Five.

11.1.4 The Housing+ Neighbourhood Team would comprise the following:

- **Housing+ officers** each with their own 'patch' of an average of 230 properties. The Housing+ officer role would be as described in section 6.
- **Housing+ Specialists** who support the Housing+ officers with more specialist skills and handle some of the more complex cases.
- **Neighbourhood Support officers** providing customer access and business support functions to the whole team.
- **Management and supervision** based on the Council's 'spans of control' and management structure guidance.

11.1.5 The patch-based model proposed would be based around the current Electoral Ward boundaries as described in paragraph 5.6. Because of the uneven geographical spread of council housing across the city, the assumption in this proposal is that 8 Neighbourhood teams are created. Details of the Wards contained within each of these teams are in Appendix Two.

11.1.6 The way that Estate Services are delivered to council tenants are currently under review as outlined in paragraph 3.8. The assumption in this Business Case is therefore that the current area-based delivery model for Estate Services is retained until the conclusion of the review. Housing+ will however have a limited impact on the way that the green and open space services are delivered to customers – particularly around responsibilities to monitor and report issues on patches. The Business Case therefore makes the assumption that a small 5% shift in resources will be required to support this transition to the Housing+ model.

11.1.7 The Neighbourhood Team structure would be supported by a number of non-area teams providing specific city-wide council housing services to customers around repairs, rehousing and rents for example. Following on from the Staff Working Groups there is the need to undertake further detailed work to consider the structure and form of these teams and how they will change the way that they work to integrate with the Neighbourhood Teams. This would include reviewing the provision of services provided to customers outside of normal working hours.

11.1.8 In order to develop the cost proposals an assumption has been made that there would need to be an overall shift in resources from these non-area teams to the Neighbourhood teams. This shift is estimated to be, on average, 5%.

11.1.9 The model also makes an assumption that the management layers and spans of control throughout the Council Housing Service are reduced and aligned wherever possible with the Council's preferred ratios.

11.1.10 The CHS is supported by a number of teams who used to be part of Sheffield Homes but are now distributed across the Council structure. These teams provide essential support around customer access (primarily through the Housing Call Centre), complaints management, communications, performance management, ICT, HR and Finance. The process of integrating these teams within corresponding Council services continues, but at present they are supported by direct payments from the HRA. In order to provide a consistent baseline figure for this Business Case, it is assumed that their costs and staff numbers remain constant. Any subsequent changes to these services however are not part of this Business Case and any changes made by the relevant service management teams will not be reflected here. The

assumption made is that the commitment to deliver the £1.2 million Future of Council Housing savings will be met by these teams in 2014/15.

11.1.11 The table below shows the estimated number of posts that would be required to deliver the Housing+ model. The table shows the current number of budgeted FTE posts and includes vacancies which are currently 9% on average. The 5% shift in resources described in paragraphs 11.1.6 and 11.1.8 above are assumed to come from the number of substantive posts in the structure.

Housing+ Summary (Budgetted FTE)	Current Structure (including vacancies)	Future Structure	Difference
Area teams	278.4	313.4	35.0
Area-based estates teams	158.6	141.2	-17.4
Non-Area CHS teams	514.8	451.1	-63.7
Total	951.9	905.7	-46.2

11.1.12 The table shows an overall reduction in the size of the substantive workforce from 952 to 906 – a reduction of 5%. There is a reduction in the consolidated (non-area) teams of 64 posts and a proportionate shift in resources to the new Neighbourhood teams of 35 posts.

11.1.13 The current vacancy rate means that there are more posts in the proposed structure than there are current substantive post holders. However there are a number of risks associated with making the transition to Housing+, in particular in matching the current skills and grades of existing post holders to that required in the future. The Achieving Change / MER process will need to take account of this and include proposals for dealing with staff that do not have or do not wish to develop the skills required to deliver Housing+.

11.1.14 There will also be a need to supplement the proposed substantive structure of the CHS with limited resources to support the implementation of Housing+ - in particular around ICT, HR, Communications and project and change management. These proposed resources will come from the existing Future of Council Housing team and from additional support from specialist ICT, Communications and HR resources from within the Council.

11.2 Costs (including staff costs) and Funding

11.2.1 The assumptions and outline staffing numbers described in section 11.1 above have been used as the basis for the cost modelling described in this section. The same caveats listed above in paragraphs 11.1.2 and 11.1.3 equally apply here. Whilst every effort has been made to forecast the costs of the new model, some of the detail is still lacking at this point to accurately predict the final cost.

11.2.2 In particular, the Council's recent proposals for a revised Pay Strategy, if implemented, will need to be fully assessed to understand their impact. The staffing cost assumptions contained in this report are currently based on implementing the Council's original proposals for a revised Pay and Reward Strategy which were launched in November 2013. The Council have subsequently proposed an alternative strategy (28th February 2014) which is currently being consulted on with staff and Trade Unions. These proposals were launched shortly before the

publication of this report and the potential financial impact of these changes on Housing+ has not yet been modelled. The assumption is that the overall financial impact of these changes will be similar to the original proposal however.

11.2.3 The intention within this Business Case is to provide an estimation of the likely cost impacts of implementing the Housing+ model and set these in context against the current baseline costs of delivering aspects of the Council Housing Service.

11.2.4 The costs included in this section are not fully inclusive of the total budget for delivering the Council Housing Service. **The costs included here are those where there will be a significant change if the implementation of Housing+ is approved;** staff salaries (and related costs); ICT and accommodation. Other cost centres within the Council Housing Service budget, notably SLAs, are unlikely to be significantly impacted by Housing+ initially and have therefore been excluded from these comparisons.

11.2.5 The largest single cost for the Council Housing Service is salaries. This is also the most difficult aspect of the Housing+ service to predict at this point in time. Sections 8 and 9 of this Business Case highlighted some of the potential issues around TUPE and the application of the Council's preferred Pay Strategy to former Sheffield Homes' employees. However, as explained in section 11.2.2, the Pay Strategy proposals have changed during the final stages of producing this report, and so the financial modelling used in this Business Case is based on the previous Pay Strategy proposal. The early stages of the project would be focussed around achieving greater certainty of the likely salary costs, particularly through work on Job Descriptions and Job Allocation. This would enable changes to be modelled, understood and decisions made before significant implementation costs were incurred.

11.2.6 All new job roles created as part of Housing+ will need to be graded in accordance with the Council's Job Allocation scheme. That process has not taken place in the preparation of this Business Case. In order to generate these costs, existing comparable jobs across the organisation have been looked at to identify the potential future grade for the new Housing+ posts. All these assumptions will need to be revisited if this Business Case is approved and will be subject to all job roles being formally allocated in accordance with the approved scheme.

11.2.7 A provision of £1.1 million has been made for potentially operating a VER/VS scheme as part of the implementation of Housing+. Again it is difficult to precisely forecast these costs, but an assumption has been made that interest in any future scheme will be similar to the level of interest expressed by staff in December 2013.

11.2.8 The outline ICT costs given here are based on the implementation of a housing version of the type of software package being implemented by Adult Social Care. This would be delivered on a Windows 8 platform through 300 mobile devices (tablets) and includes all project and implementation costs. It also includes the provision of mobile telephones and a lone working safety system for 300 staff. The ICT would be implemented over a two-year period at an initial cost of approximately £2.1million, followed by an on-going annual cost of £421,000. These costs are in addition to the existing Council Housing Service contribution to the Capita SLA. The table below provides a summary of the costs:

Summary of 5-year ICT Costs			
	Initial Cost	Annual Cost	Total
Year 1	£ 1,087,353	£ 109,600	£ 1,196,953
Year 2	£ 543,676	£ 421,600	£ 965,276
Year 3 on	£ -	£ 421,600	£ 421,600
Total	£ 1,631,029	£ 1,796,000	£ 3,427,029

11.2.9 The costs for accommodation are based on the existing portfolio of Council Housing front and back office accommodation. The mobile ICT package described in paragraph 11.2.7 above offers the potential to reshape the CHS use of its accommodation. This is described in more detail in paragraph 6.3 but would essentially mean staff working more flexibly from a smaller number of office locations. For customers, Housing+ means taking the service more to their homes and the potential benefit for the CHS is the reduction in the number of face-to-face office based interactions (this is described in section 4.3.4)

11.2.10 Both of these aspects of Housing+ offer the potential to reduce the number of office locations or to share community space with other services. The biggest potential in this respect is the Library Service. Longer-term there is also the potential to work more closely as part of the Locality Hub Strategy, listed as a dependency in section 7, to identify further savings. These savings could be substantial as described in section 6.3. These savings would not be released without implementing Housing+ and could significantly increase the annual cashable benefit to the HRA.

11.2.11 For the purpose of this Business Case a number of assumptions have been made about minimum savings of approximately 8% in back and front office that would have minimal impact on staff or customers. All these assumptions would be subject to consultation with customers should the Housing+ Business Case be approved.

11.2.12 The Housing+ model will require staff to work in a more mobile way. This could increase the travel costs incurred whilst staff are undertaking their duties. However there is an assumption that staff will minimise these costs by undertaking multiple visits whilst out on their patch rather than returning to the office after each visit as at present. Therefore it is assumed that travel costs will not increase significantly as part of these proposals. Travel costs do not make up a significant proportion of the overall operating costs of the service anyway so a small variation in these is manageable.

11.2.113 The resources required to implement Housing+ described in paragraph 11.1.13 are not included in the costs shown here. The implementation costs for the project have already been provisionally included in the HRA Business Plan for 2014/15.

11.2.114 The table below provides a cost-benefit analysis of the Housing+ proposals. Two different cost assumptions have been developed:

Housing+ Cost-Benefit Analysis		Baseline (14/15)	Housing+ (incl. P&R)
1	Total Cost (Years 1 & 2) ¹	£ 61,330,000	£ 63,430,000
2	Total Benefits (Years 1 & 2) ²	£ -	£ 1,050,000
3	Net Cost (Years 1 & 2)	£ 61,330,000	£ 62,380,000

4	Total Annual Cost (Year 3 on) ³	£ 30,120,000	£ 30,520,000
5	Total Annual Benefits (Year 3 on) ^{2,4}	£ -	£ 930,000
6	Net Annual Cost	£ 30,120,000	£ 29,590,000
7	Difference to Baseline	£ -	-£ 530,000

8	5-year Costs ¹	£ 151,690,000	£ 154,990,000
9	5-year Benefits ^{2,4}	£ -	£ 3,840,000
10	Net 5-year Cost	£ 151,690,000	£ 151,150,000
11	5-year Difference to Baseline	£ -	-£ 540,000

¹Total Cost includes salaries (and on-costs), P&R transition, VER/VS, mobile ICT implementation and hardware costs and accommodation

²Potential savings from reductions in turnover, rent arrears and customer contacts

³Total Cost includes salaries (and on-costs) mobile ICT and accommodation

⁴There is an assumed £250,000 saving per year from improvements to tenancy sustainability built into the HRA Business Plan from 2016/17 onwards. The actual saving to the HRA would therefore be less than that shown here

11.2.15 The table above shows both the annual cost of implementing the changes (row 6) and the total costs over a 5 year period (row 10). The costs for years 1 and 2 are shown separately (rows 1-3) as these include abnormal costs for VER/VS, Pay Strategy transition and ICT capital investment.

11.2.16 Section 4 of this Business Case provided details of the potential benefits of implementing a Housing+ approach. The efficiencies savings shown in this table (rows 2, 5 and 9) are those predicted to accrue from reduced rent loss and turnover on empty properties, rent arrears and face-to-face interactions in housing offices. The net costs show the impact of offsetting these benefits against the costs. There is an assumed £250,000 saving per year from improvements to tenancy sustainability already built into the HRA Business Plan from 2016/17 onwards. Therefore the actual savings to the HRA Business Plan would be less than shown here and it would take a further 18 months to bring the existing HRA Business Plan profile back into line beyond the 5-year payback period.

11.2.17 The **annual cost of implementing the Housing+ proposals** described in this Business Case would be **£29.6million** (row 6). This compares to the forecast 2014/15 costs of £30.1million. This represents **an annual saving of £0.5million** (row 7). The costs included here are those where there will be a significant change if the implementation of Housing+ is approved; staff salaries (and related costs); ICT and accommodation as described in paragraph 11.2.3.

11.2.18 There would be an initial investment need in new mobile ICT to deliver the full potential benefits of Housing+ however. This results in a higher initial cost in the first 2 years of the project, with a pay-back period of 5 years. The 5-year costs of implementing the Housing+ proposals would therefore be £151.17million (row 10). **This shows a small £0.5million increase in HRA benefit (row 11), compared to the baseline, over 5 years.**

11.2.19 The **annual and 5-year savings represent a minimum potential saving from implementing Housing+.** The savings figure could be higher depending on the final outcome of decisions and consultation around the Pay Strategy, Job Allocation and the future customer access locations for Council Housing Services.

12. Evaluation of the options

12.1 As described in sections 11.2.13 to 11.2.19 above, financial modelling has been done based on 2 different cost assumptions:

- 1 - A completely 'standstill' no-change position
- 2 - Housing+

12.2 The standstill option is not recommended for a number of reasons:

12.2.1 Firstly, it will not deliver a housing service which achieves the ambitions set by Cabinet in March 2012 as part of the ballot commitment to tenants (as described in section 2.1.2). Through the intensive large-scale consultation undertaken with tenants and Members over the last 2 years, a strong and detailed vision for the future of the service has been developed. Customers are clear that they want more streamlined and better joined-up services, tailored to their individual needs and those of their local community. Members also strongly support this vision, which cannot be delivered without a wholesale change of approach.

12.2.2 Significant opportunities for achieving wider benefits for the Council would also be lost if Housing+ is not implemented. In particular, the potential benefits which the Council Housing Service could both generate and gain in relation to the Libraries Review and Locality Hubs Strategy – through the delivery of shared services, co-location and shared facilities – would not be achievable under this option.

12.2.3 Likewise, any contribution to reducing demand for Adult Social Care services would not be delivered. Housing+ would see a significant increase in the amount of tenancy-related preventative and low-level intervention work undertaken by CHS staff, which in turn could reduce the demand from council housing tenants for high-cost interventions at a later stage.

12.2.4 The Council must make effective and efficient use of the HRA – and the efficiency savings offered by Housing+ will help do just that. Achieving more sustainable tenancies

and thereby reducing empty properties and turnover – alongside earlier intervention and guidance in cases of rent arrears – will in the medium- to long-term generate significant savings for the HRA. This in turn will mean more money available to invest in homes and front-line services.

12.2.5 Similarly, Housing+ also protects the long-term asset value of the council housing stock, and of the HRA investment which has been made in it under the Decent Homes Programme. The same protection of the HRA investment would not be afforded by standing still.

12.2.6 Now that the housing service has transferred to the Council there is an expectation corporately for the Council Housing Service to operate and shape itself in a way which achieves the Council's corporate objectives. The service as it currently stands does not do this – and so from a corporate point of view a standstill position is not satisfactory. In comparison, Housing+ would see the development of a Council Housing Service which meets and fully supports the Council's Strategic Objectives and Organisation Design Principles, and the Council Housing Service would be viewed as a key player in delivering the Council's wider ambitions.

12.2.7 In this context, the 'do nothing' option is not viable in the medium to longer-term. The service has to modernise and change the way it operates to improve performance and meet the changing demands of its customers. Without this modernisation and drive for further efficiencies there is a risk that performance could reduce and the long-term aspirations of the HRA Business Plan would not be delivered. A proactive change in the way that the service operates through Housing+ will help secure a long-term income stream for the HRA and protect the value of the Council's asset.

12.3 The potential benefits outlined in this Business Case represent the minimum achievable savings through implementing Housing+. The savings figure could be higher depending on the final outcome of decisions and consultation around Pay Strategy, Job Allocation and the future customer access locations for Council Housing Services. The cashable benefits described here need to be combined with the non-cashable benefits described in section 4 to get a full picture of the potential impact of Housing+.

12.4 This Business Case outlines the projected resources required to implement Housing+ in the short to medium-term. These costs and benefits will change as the model develops and the service would look to improve efficiency measures once Housing+ is implemented. These would be in addition to the figures quoted in this Business Case and represent a long-term commitment to the viability of the HRA Business Plan.

13. Additional Appendices

- **Appendix One** – Service Design Group Vision Statements
- **Appendix Two** – Proposed Neighbourhood Team and Ward structure
- **Appendix Three** – 'A Day in the life of a Housing+ Officer'
- **Appendix Four** – Consultation results
- **Appendix Five** – Summary of 'patch' calculation assumptions
- **Appendix Six** – Equalities Impact Assessment
- **Appendix Seven** – Key differences for customers

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