

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Delegated Officer Decision – 15 July 2025

Report Title

Ward Housing Budget 2024-25 carry forward.

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Ian Spicer, Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Report Author(s)

Paul Walsh, Head of Housing and Estate Management

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough Wide

Report Summary

On the 23rd of December 2019, Cabinet agreed the implementation of 25 Ward Housing Hubs with an allocated base budget of £4000 per ward and the remainder of the annual budget provision then being allocated based upon the percentage of Council homes within each ward. It was also agreed that the Assistant Director of Housing in consultation with the Head of Finance (Adults, Public Health and Housing), is authorised to increase the Ward Housing budget (on a ward by ward basis) by the value of the Ward Housing Budget underspend in the preceding year within the 4 year cycle.

This report seeks approval to carry forward the Ward Housing Budget underspend from 2024/25 to 2025/26.

Recommendations

1. That the Assistant Director of Housing approves the carry forward of the 2024/25 Ward Housing Hub budget underspend to 2025/26.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1: Ward Housing Hub budget outturn 2024/25, including carry forward.

Background Papers

Cabinet Report - Area Housing Panels Review 23rd December 2019

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

N/A

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Ward Housing Budget – 2024/25 carry forward.

1.	Background
1.1	On the 23rd of December 2019, Cabinet agreed the implementation of 25 Ward Housing Hubs with a base budget of £4000 per ward and a percentage uplift based upon the number of properties within the ward. This arrangement was implemented from 1 st April 2020.
1.2	A carry forward facility to enable the budget to be increased each financial year by the value of the underspend from the preceding year, on a ward-by-ward basis, within a four-yearly cycle, was also agreed and adopted, with the four-yearly cycle being in line with the local elections cycle.
1.3	The Ward Housing budget is allocated annually. The total annual budget allocation per year is currently £216,000. Any funding not spent in Year 1 rolls forward into Year 2, Year 2 to Year 3 and Year 3 to Year 4. The roll forward amount is added to the annual budget set for that year. All budget provision must be spent in full by the end of Year 4.
1.4	It was also agreed by Cabinet on 23rd December 2019 that the Assistant Director of Housing in consultation with the Head of Finance (Adults, Public Health and Housing), is authorised to increase the Ward Housing budget (on a ward by ward basis) by the value of the Ward Housing Budget underspend in the preceding year, within the 4 year cycle.
1.5	The current four-year Ward Housing Budget cycle commenced in 2024/25 and will end in 2027/28.
1.6	Within this current cycle, there will be a presumed carry forward of any underspend from 2024/25 (Year 1) to 2025/26 (Year 2), from 2025/26 to 2026/27 (Year 3) and from 2026/27 to 2027/28 (Year 4).
1.7	The current four-year cycle will end within financial year 2027/28, during which time all remaining ward housing budgets allocations should be fully spent. A new four-year cycle is presumed to commence in 2028/29.
2.	Key Issues
2.1	There is a total Ward Housing Budget underspend of £138,435 to carry forward from 2024/25, to 2025/26. This is the value of budget allocated to 2024/25 which was not spent within that financial year.
2.2	Appendix 1 details the 2024/25 Ward Housing Budget spend outturn by Ward and the carry forward to be applied on a ward-by-ward basis in 2025/26.
2.3	The carry forward from 2024/25 of £138,435 would give a total budget for 2025/26 of £354,435.

2.4	Each Ward brings forward project proposals for funding approval from the budget each year. Some Wards carry forward funding from one year to the next in order to accumulate sufficient budget to undertake larger projects. Ward Members and relevant Council staff are aware of the carry forward arrangements and that all funding must be fully spent by the end of Year 4.
3.	Options Considered and Recommendation
3.1	No other options were considered given the principle established by Cabinet that a carry forward facility should be put in place.
3.2	The Assistant Director of Housing, pursuant to the delegation referenced at para 1.4 above, is requested to approve the carry forward of the underspend of £138,435 from the 2024/25 Ward Housing Budget, to be incorporated into the 2025/26 budget and to be allocated to the relevant Wards.
4.	Consultation on proposal
4.1	The Housing Finance Team have been consulted on this proposal and have provided the necessary financial information to support this proposal.
4.2	The Cabinet Member for Housing has been consulted on the proposal and supports the recommendation.
5.	Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision
5.1	The Assistant Director of Housing has overall accountability for delivering the Ward Housing Budget.
5.2	The carry forward budget amounts will be allocated to relevant wards following approval.
6.	Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications
6.1	There are no procurement implications with the recommendations in this report.
6.2	A budget adjustment will be actioned by a budget virement on e5, the Council's accounting system, to provide the Ward Housing Budget with an additional allocation of £138,435 in 2025/26 (carry forward amount quoted above).
6.3	The underspend on the Ward Housing Budget from 2024/25 has increased the HRA revenue reserve balance. The budget adjustment in 2025/26 will be funded from these resources.
7.	Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)
7.1	There are no substantive legal issues arising from the content of this report.

7.2	The relevant authorisations are in place and consultation with Finance has taken place in respect of this decision to carry forward the Ward Housing Budget underspend from 2024/25 to 2025/26.
8.	Human Resources Advice and Implications
8.1	There are no human resource implications specific to this report.
9.	Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults
9.1	The Ward Housing Budget projects positively impact upon children, young people, and vulnerable adults, through investments and project delivery in local neighbourhoods, addressing identified Ward priorities.
10.	Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications
10.1	Housing Services, Rotherfed and Neighbourhoods Service will ensure that budget spend can be influenced by a diverse range of tenants, through the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding, listening, and engaging across all communities 2. Involving tenants in improving their communities as a result of Ward Housing Budget projects 3. Empowering people to engage and challenge discrimination and to promote good community relations.
11.	Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change
11.1	Ward Housing Budget funding will continue to fund projects which make environmental improvements, and which are carbon friendly.
12.	Implications for Partners
12.1	The Council has a contract in place with Rother Fed (local tenant federation) who support tenants to make applications for Ward Housing Budget funding.
12.2	Performance management reports are submitted to the Council on a monthly and annual basis to ensure contractual obligations are being met.
13.	Risks and Mitigation
13.1	The risk of failing to deliver the increased ward spend of 2025/26 will be mitigated by the agreed carry forward and by 2027/28, through the Neighbourhoods Service, who administer the budget, actively monitoring budget spend with local Councillors and Council Finance officers, ensuring that monies are spent in a timely manner on projects that benefit local communities.
14.	Accountable Officers

14.1	Paul Walsh, Head of Housing and Estate Management
14.2	John Holman, Interim Assistant Director of Housing, Adult Care, Housing and Public Health.

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