

REPORT TO:		Cabinet	
DATE:		20 March 2019	
PORTFOLIO:		Cllr Clare Cleary - Housing and Regeneration	
REPORT AUTHOR:		Fiona Goodfellow, Housing Strategy & Policy Manager	
TITLE OF REPORT:		Integrated Home Improvement Service	
EXEMPT REPORT (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A)	Options	Not applicable	
KEY DECISION:	Options	If yes, date of publication:	

1. **Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek approval to Hyndburn Borough Council's response to the Lancashire CC Integrated Home Improvement Service consultation exercise.

2. **Recommendations**

I recommend that Cabinet:-

- 2.1 Strongly disagrees with Lancashire County Council's proposals to cease funding Home Improvement Services.
- 2.2 Agrees and approves Hyndburn Borough Councils' response to the Lancashire CC Integrated Home Improvement Service consultation exercise attached at Appendix 1.

3. **Reasons for Recommendations and Background**

- 3.1 Lancashire County Council (LCC), like many councils across the country, is going through financially challenging times. This is as a result of funding not keeping pace with the increasing demand and cost of services being delivered. LCC need to continue to look at ways of reducing costs to help balance the books for future years. This means they have to consider changes to some of the services currently provided, as they do not have the resources to continue to deliver what they have done in the past. These changes were considered by County Councillors and they are now looking to consult on what impact the proposals may have.

- 3.2 The Integrated Home Improvement Service (also known as Care and Repair) provides help to people in need of extra support to make their homes safe and accessible, by assisting homeowners to maintain, repair and improve their properties. In Hyndburn this service is provided by Homewise.
- 3.3 This service supports independent living for older people, people living with physical disabilities and people living with long term health conditions. The Integrated Home Improvement Service is currently contracted to six local providers based across Lancashire for service delivery – Homewise in Hyndburn.
- 3.4 The service divides broadly into two areas:
- 1) Minor aids and adaptations – LCC are legally obliged to provide and fund works under £1,000. Examples of minor adaptations include external rails and step adaptations, additional banister rails and semi-permanent ramping. People who are eligible for this service will continue to receive it.
 - 2) The Home Improvement Service includes services that LCC are not legally required to provide and comprise:-
 - a. Handy person services - typically used for small jobs/repairs that take less than two hours
 - b. Home visit to assess and advise what jobs/repairs are needed
 - c. Help to organise/oversee home repairs, maintenance, adaptations or security measures such as drawing up plans, organising quotes
 - d. Advice about what housing is available to meet an individual's needs
 - e. Advice about what financial support is available
 - f. Advice and information about other organisations that can help
- 3.5 LCC will continue to provide funding for minor aids and adaptations (under £1,000) to people who are eligible for this service. However, they are proposing to cease funding the Home Improvement Services that they are not legally required to provide.
- 3.6 Consultation - LCC is currently consulting with partners, stakeholders and service users. The consultation period runs from 18 February to 15 April 2019. The Council's response to this consultation is attached at Appendix 1 for your consideration and approval.

4. Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 Hyndburn Borough Council could choose not to respond to the LCC Consultation exercise however as the future of Homewise is at risk should the funding for the Home Improvement Service be removed this is not a sensible course of action.
- 4.2 The withdrawal of the Homewise Home improvement Service will have a significant impact on many vulnerable households across the Borough especially elderly and disabled households and therefore the Council wants to express its strongest objection. This is a LCC run service and therefore Hyndburn Borough Council is not in

a position to propose alternative options other than oppose the proposed withdrawal of the service.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 This report details Hyndburn Borough Council's response to the Lancashire CC consultation exercise in relation to the Integrated Home Improvement Service. The consultation runs for an 8 week period from 18 February to 15 April 2019.

6. Implications

Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council)	There are no financial implications to the Council as a result of this report however the future of Homewise, Hyndburn's Home Improvement Agency, is at financial risk should the funding for the Home Improvement Service be removed.
Legal and human rights implications	There are no legal and human rights implications as a result of this report however access to a valuable service for vulnerable households in Hyndburn could be removed.
Assessment of risk	Risk of the future viability and sustainability of Homewise should the LCC funding for the Home Improvement Service be removed. The Council would lose a valuable service that helps meet the needs of vulnerable households in the Borough.
Equality and diversity implications <i>A Customer First Analysis should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.</i>	N/A

7. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985: List of Background Papers

- 7.1 *Copies of documents included in this list must be open to inspection and, in the case of reports to Cabinet, must be published on the website.*

If the report is public, insert the following paragraph. If the report is exempt, contact Member Services for advice.

8. Freedom of Information

8.1 The report does not contain exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and all information can be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.