

## ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet **Date:** 3 December 2015  
**Subject:** Repairs & Maintenance Hub – Blenheim Way, North Weald  
**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor D Stallan (Housing)

---

### **Recommending:**

**(1) That, in order to cover fees and works, a Capital supplementary estimate in the sum of £300,000 for 2015/16 from the Housing Revenue Account be approved; and**

**(2) That the land at Blenheim Way in North Weald be transferred from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account, with an appropriate adjustment made in the balances due between the two funds.**

---

1. The Council needs to re-locate its Housing Repairs Service from the Epping Depot, to enable the proposed re-development for the St Johns Road area of Epping to proceed. Having searched for alternative vacant buildings around the District and other potential development sites to relocate to, with none found to be suitable, the Cabinet have agreed to the construction of a new Repairs and Maintenance Hub on a Council-owned vacant brownfield site in Blenheim Way, North Weald.

2. This would also create the opportunity for the Housing Repairs team to be co-located with the Housing Assets Team, currently based at the Civic Offices, which would not only result in operational benefits but, more importantly, free-up accommodation at the Civic Offices – on the ground floor, close to Reception – to assist with the Council's Accommodation Strategy. With sufficient space to create additional office accommodation, the design also allows for other Council services or Partner Organisations working on behalf of the Council to occupy the building.

3. In normal circumstances, the Repairs & Maintenance Hub would be held as a General Fund asset. However, the majority of the capital reserves in the General Fund have been committed to other projects in the short to medium term. The Housing Revenue Account has the ability to borrow money following the introduction of self-financing in 2013 and it has been agreed to fund the building of the Hub from the Housing Revenue Account.

4. In order to fund the necessary works in 2015/16, the Council is requested to approve a £300,000 Capital supplementary estimate from the Housing Revenue Account. The Director of Resources has already been delegated authority to determine the most appropriate form of capital funding, including possible further loans from the Public Works Loans Board.

5. As the Repairs and Maintenance Hub would be providing services predominantly to the Housing Revenue Account, and was being funded by the

Housing Revenue Account, it was appropriate that the land involved should be transferred from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account.

6. Following the transfer of commercial properties from the Housing Revenue Account to the General Fund, there was a balance on which the General Fund paid interest to the Housing Revenue Account. A valuation of the land would be obtained and the transfer would reduce the balance outstanding between the two accounts, thus reducing the interest paid by the General Fund.

7. We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.