

# Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL



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Thursday, 13 July 2023 at 10.00 am  
Council Chamber - South Kesteven House,  
St. Peter's Hill, Grantham. NG31 6PZ

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**Committee Members:** Councillor Virginia Moran (Chairman)  
Councillor Lee Steptoe (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Emma Baker, Councillor Anna Kelly, Councillor Zoe Lane, Councillor Penny Milnes, Councillor Habibur Rahman, Councillor Jane Wood and Councillor Paul Wood

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## Agenda

This meeting can be watched as a live stream, or at a later date, [via the SKDC Public-I Channel](#)

### 1. Public Speaking

The Council welcomes engagement from members of the public. To speak at this meeting please register no later than 24 hours prior to the date of the meeting via [democracy@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southkesteven.gov.uk)

### 2. Apologies for absence

### 3. Disclosure of Interest

Members are asked to disclose any interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.

### 4. Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service

### 5. Housing Regulatory Compliance Update

(Pages 3 - 32)

This report seeks to update Committee on actions to ensure regulatory compliance of the Council's social housing landlord function following the non-compliance notice issued by the Regulator of Social Housing.

- 6. Housing Repairs & Maintenance Policy** (Pages 33 - 80)  
To inform the Committee of the new Housing Repairs Policy which sets the framework for the delivery of all aspects of the repairs service to include repairing responsibilities and the processes of delivery of planned, cyclical and reactive repairs.
- 7. Housing Pipeline update** (Pages 81 - 85)  
This report provides Members with an update on the HRA new build programme.
- 8. Key Performance Indicators** (Pages 87 - 108)  
This year-end update report outlines South Kesteven District Councils performance against the Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the year of 2022/2023. The end of year data represents information up to 31 March 2023.
- 9. Voids Performance and update** (Pages 109 - 127)  
This report seeks to update members on the progress of the Council's void properties, the changes in the process in the past year and current performance measures.
- 10. Housing Allocations Policy** (Pages 129 - 193)  
This report seeks to update members on the progress of the Council's allocation of properties since adoption of the new policy in July 2022 and an update on the implementation of a Choice Based Lettings system.
- 11. Work Programme 2023/24** (Page 195)
- 12. Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent**



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## Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 July 2023

Report of: Councillor Phil Dilks  
Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

## Housing Regulatory Compliance Update

### Report Author

Craig Spence, Acting Director of Housing



[craig.spence@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:craig.spence@southkesteven.gov.uk)

This report seeks to update Committee on actions to ensure regulatory compliance of the Council's social housing landlord function following the non-compliance notice issued by the Regulator of Social Housing.

### Recommendations

#### That Committee:

1. That the Committee notes the latest compliance position following the ongoing meetings with the Regulator of Social Housing.
2. That the Committee receives a further update report at its next scheduled meeting.

### Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Housing that meets the needs of all residents
Which wards are impacted?	All

## 1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

- 1.1 The financial considerations arising from the compliance requirements have been incorporated in the HRA budgets presented and approved by Council on 1 March 2023.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer

### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.2 This compliance update provides Members with an opportunity to track and consider progress against key risk areas, which is to be welcomed from a governance perspective. The legal implications for non-compliance are incorporated within the risk ratings.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

### ***Risk and Mitigation***

- 1.3 The necessary risk issues, logs, and mitigations will be identified through the necessary work plans, and any work outputs agreed with the Regulator. Clearly dealing with significant compliance matters requires a comprehensive approach to risk management, particularly in respect of assessing priorities and critical actions. The necessary and agreed risk assessment process will be discussed

and agreed with the Regulator at the appropriate time to ensure outcomes are as far as possible managed and objectives achieved.

### ***Health and Safety***

- 1.4 The key focus in meeting the regulatory standard is to ensure tenants, leaseholders, their households and visitors live in homes that are, as far as is reasonably practicable, safe with hazards minimised. This is reflected in the key compliance areas that are monitored and reported to Committee.

### ***Diversity and Inclusion***

- 1.5 All the necessary safeguarding and equality issues will be identified and complied with as the necessary compliance and improvement activities take place. Each equality and safeguarding impact are carefully considered when actioning a compliance or regulatory change. This is especially so when managing such matters for vulnerable households and particularly those occupying specialist accommodation such as designated sheltered accommodation.

### ***Climate Change***

- 1.6 Any capital improvement plans especially in the context of dealing with essential gas, electrical and other works will aim to maximise energy efficiency measures, and reductions in carbon emissions.

## **2. Background to the Report**

- 2.1 The Committee will be aware the Chief Executive determined, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, to self-refer the Council to the Regulator of Social Housing in 2021. Since this referral Officers have been providing further data and details relating to the core issues of non-compliance for the Regulator to consider and review.
- 2.2 Monthly meetings have been taking place with the Regulator to cover issues of focus in terms of the regulatory framework, focussing on the Homes Standard. Our current performance and plans are shared at this meeting. The discussions and requests for information have been provided as required, and this has allowed the Regulator to continue to work with Officers in a constructive and helpful way.
- 2.3 The Rural Overview and Scrutiny Committee has previously received eleven update reports since March 2021. This is the first update report to the newly formed - Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These update reports have confirmed the Regulatory Notice served on the Council and provided an outline

of the work that officers would continue to ensure we logically and methodically progress through a programme of improvement.

- 2.4 The Rural Overview and Scrutiny Committee determined that it would wish to receive update reports on progress at each of its meetings to ensure that Members had oversight of broad progress around the key areas of activity and could engage with Officers and scrutinise work where required.
- 2.5 This update report will now be presented to the new Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This will still identify the following core headings as a means of updating Members and would identify the following information to assist this process, including the latest version of the Improvement Plan (Appendix 2).

### 3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 **Updating Tenants and Members:** Following on from previous briefings, further All Member Briefings will be arranged to ensure Members are fully informed on progress and continued challenges.
- 3.2 A full tenant consultation exercise was undertaken – “The Big Listen” – in 2022. This involved several questions on both the current experience of tenants in terms of the services the Council offers as a landlord, and what they would like to see prioritised in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, which will require a complete review in 2022/23. The questions were based on the Regulator of Social Housing’s proposed Tenant Satisfaction Measures and the initial report was provided to Rural Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the meeting on 23 June 2022.
- 3.3 We commit to an ongoing programme of stock condition surveys to inform a proactive, planned maintenance programme and reduce the need for more expensive reactive repairs.
- 3.4 A key activity to support the HRA Business Plan review is up-to-date information on the Council’s housing stock. The last full Stock Condition Survey was completed in 2009; good practice suggests comprehensive Stock Condition surveys should be completed every 5 years, usually by undertaking a survey of 20% of the stock each year.
- 3.5 The Council continues to utilise its Rant and Rave feedback, seeking real time feedback from tenants following responsive repairs. We continue to see overall satisfaction of 4.5 out of 5 following completion of more than 1,200 responses, demonstrating sustained high satisfaction at the point where repairs are undertaken.
- 3.6 SKYline continues to provide key information to all tenants and ensure positive engagement for what is happening in the housing service. The next edition is for Summer 2023 and can be seen in appendix 3.
- 3.7 **Regular Meetings with the Regulator:** Monthly meetings between the Chief Executive, Acting Director of Housing and the Regulator’s Officers take place as

scheduled; the next meeting at time of writing is due on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July 2023. Progress has been significant right across the landlord health and safety compliance function (latest monthly figures attached as Appendix One to this report) and the relationship with the Regulator is positive, with the Regulator acknowledging that the Council is moving to a position to seek removal of the Notice that was formally served in February 2021.

- 3.8 That removal is contingent on three issues:
- (a) Sustained maintenance of performance in relation to the key landlord health and safety areas (i.e. those shown on Appendix One)
  - (b) Clear programmes of work related to the actions that arise from those areas (these are provided to the Regulator on a monthly basis)
  - (c) A satisfactory external audit of the above, providing external assurance. Scoping work in relation to this external audit is underway, with actions to address potential gaps identified and clear responsibilities and timescales for those actions delegated.
- 3.9 To enable the Regulator to remove the notice we are required to undertake an external audit of our compliance related functions. The outcomes of this audit shall then provide assurance to the Regulator on our current performance and governance structures. The audit commenced in mid-December, we shall update committee on its findings in due course.
- 3.10 Committee may find additional comment on Appendix One helpful:
- 3.10.1 Legionella – 100% compliance in relation to water hygiene.
  - 3.10.2 Gas – 99.33% in May, this has increased slightly since February 2023 and of the thirty-one properties without valid certificates all have appropriate up to date actions.
  - 3.10.3 Electrical testing – this shows the position in relation to properties (both dwellings and communal areas) with a valid electrical certificate, with the current position being 90.29% in May, this is a significant milestone and the first time we have reported performance above 90%.
  - 3.10.4 Asbestos – this shows 100% compliance in terms of asbestos inspections.
  - 3.10.5 Fire Risk Assessments – 100% compliant, this shows all communal blocks assessed as “higher risk” have been inspected, and corrective actions are being programmed and completed. It is consistent with the Council’s Fire Safety Management Plan.
  - 3.10.6 Lift inspections – all properties are currently compliant at 100%.
  - 3.10.7 Smoke and CO – this shows the position for all the alarms within our properties being 99.76% compliant. This is a Regulatory requirement which came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2022, again those properties that are non-compliant totalling twenty-two in February are being dealt with through due process.

- 3.10.8 Damp and mould – this shows 99.74% compliance and the appointments for CAT1 and CAT2 inspections and works have been made with several tenants refusing access.
- 3.11 **Leadership Compliance Meetings:** Chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Housing, and the Acting Director of Housing, these meetings have been a continued feature of the more detailed compliance review process being undertaken. Members of this group ensure specific responses to the changing compliance review process and manage tenant and communication responses to actions associated with key service and regulatory responses.
- 3.12 **Regular Reports to Committees and Cabinet:** the necessary reporting to appropriate committees will continue and have changed as per the committee needs. Members are invited to comment on this report content and confirm their views and observations relating to the detail contained within this report.

## **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 These will be further determined through work with the Regulator, the adjusted Improvement Plan, and consideration of key outputs by Members, Leadership Compliance meetings, and All Member briefing sessions as arranged.

## **5. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 5.1 To secure as determined by the Regulator a return to full compliance in respect of housing services, including the identification of appropriate resources, funds, and service improvements in a timely manner.

## **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 The necessary consultation with the tenants and Members of the Council has been undertaken through timely reporting, dispatch of letters to advise tenants of progress, the latest Skyline publication, dedicated customer telephone enquiry line, and an updated web site detailing compliance issues and signposting services. This process will continue as required and the engagement with tenants particularly will be amended to reflect changing needs and requirements.

## **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Summary Paper relating to core compliance areas as at May 2023.  
Appendix 2 – Improvement Plan May 2023.  
Appendix 3 – Summer 2023 SKYline edition



South Kesteven District Council - Landlord H&S KPIs

	31/12/2022				31/01/2023				28/02/2023				31/03/2023				30/04/2023				31/05/2023				Comments
	Baseline number	Compliant	Non Compliant	% Compliant	Baseline number	Compliant	Non Compliant	% Compliant	Baseline number	Compliant	Non Compliant	% Compliant	Baseline number	Compliant	Non Compliant	% Compliant	Baseline number	Compliant	Non Compliant	% Compliant	Baseline number	Compliant	Non Compliant	% Compliant	
Legionella	33	33	0	100.00%	33	19	14	69.00%	33	33	0	100.00%	33	33	0	100.00%	33	33	0	100.00%	33	33	0	100.00%	
Gas	4635	4602	33	99.29%	4635	4586	49	98.94%	4626	4590	36	99.22%	4626	4589	37	99.20%	4625	4591	34	99.26%	4625	4594	31	99.33%	Of the 31, 16 are awaiting execution of warrants to enter which are scheduled for wc 12th June. 3 are void/ decant awaiting completion and 2 are commerical which have been attended and awaiting parts for completion.
Electrical	6053	5300	753	87.56%	6051	5323	728	87.97%	6049	5304	745	87.68%	6049	5304	745	87.68%	6045	5360	685	88.67%	6044	5457	587	90.29%	
Asbestos (re-inspections)	213	213	0	100.00%	213	213	0	100.00%	259	259	0	100.00%	259	259	0	100.00%	259	259	0	100.00%	259	259	0	100.00%	
Fire Risk Assessments	146	146	0	100.00%	146	146	0	100.00%	146	146	0	100.00%	146	146	0	100.00%	146	146	0	100.00%	146	146	0	100.00%	
Lift inspections	13	13	0	100.00%	13	13	0	100.00%	13	13	0	100.00%	13	13	0	100.00%	13	13	0	100.00%	13	13	0	100.00%	
Smoke & CO	5868	5837	31	99.47%	5868	5846	22	99.63%	5868	5846	22	99.63%	5865	5845	20	99.66%	5860	5844	16	99.73%	5860	5846	14	99.76%	2 appointments scheduled with tenants, 3 with legal and 9 repair action being taken.
Damp & Mould	5868	5842	26	99.56%	5868	5845	23	99.61%	5868	5853	15	99.74%	5865	5853	12	99.80%	5860	5845	15	99.74%	5860	5848	12	99.80%	Cat 1 - 4 all in progress Cat 2 - 11 outstanding; 4 refused

V29 -  
12/06/23

Compliance Activity	Red	Amber	Green
Legionella	<95%	95.01-99.99%	100.00%
Gas	<99.00%	99.01%-99.99%	100.00%
Electrical	<85%	85.01-99.99%	100.00%
Asbestos	<85%	85.01-99.99%	100.00%
FRA Actions	<97%	97.01%-99.99%	100.00%
Smoke & CO	<97%	97.01%-99.99%	100.00%
Damp and mould	<97%	97.01%-99.99%	100.00%

RAG rating adjusted for January 2023 figures following feedback from RSH.

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Action number	Issue	Detail	How identified	Action to address	Target	Budget	Lead Officer	RAG	Direction of travel	Progress update				
										Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23
HIAP1	Current IHMS inadequate	Northgate implementation paused Summer 2021 to review, plan, costs, scope, and await senior management recruitment and re assess resource needs to manage a future implementation. Report to CMT 24.11.21 to agree project implementation and procurement method	Self assessment Nov 20 and ongoing	Procurement and project implementation	Framework procurement December 2021, evaluation January 2021, with system go-live April 2023.	Budget approved in HRA for 21/22 and future years projections.	ADH		+	Initial go-live delayed due to finance interface issues which we are working hard to resolve, go-live to be as soon as we have confidence in interfaces.	Work ongoing to resolve issues towards a go-live date.	Following the announcement by the supplier that the system shall not be further developed has left us to decide our future direction.	Contract variation signed and approved, revised Go-Live date agreed as 13th of November 2023.	Project plan circulated to the Board and agreed.
HIAP2	Allocations based on offers, not CBL	Consultation on CBL carried out during the first 3 weeks of September – surveys sent out & workshops undertaken. Discussion paper to Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting early 2022. Members briefing discussion in January.	Self assessment Nov 20 and ongoing	Complete Choice Based Lettings and Allocation review process and achieve introduction of revised policy and CBL solution including training.	April 2022 Policy; Launch October 2022	Costs TBC	ADH		=	Contract with HUUME has been signed and recruitment for a project manager underway.	Implementation underway, with budget and roles being finalised.	Project Manager appointed and project plan being finalised.	Project plan underway. Initial training delivered drafts for changes to Policy in progress awaiting approval.	Project plan agreed and key milestones commenced.
HIAP3	Lack of performance management framework allowing real-time, automated information	Complete review of core housing KPI and customer standards for Housing service. This to include key issues such as void times, jobs out of time, compliance etc.	Self assessment Nov 20 and ongoing	Service blueprints provide key Pis, agreed by management team. Strong link to IHMS project	April 2023 full roll-out	Existing resources	DHP		=					
HIAP4	Grounds maintenance contract review.	Uncertainty around VFM and contract management anecdotally poor	Self assessment Nov 20 and ongoing	Clear roles for contract management as part of Estate Management function		Budget agreed and included in 21/22 budget significant uplift approved for better spec.	HofHS		=	In source model agreed by Cabinet February 2023.	Consultation linked to service charges with tenants imminent.	Service charges to be introduced October 2023 following consultation and adoption by Cabinet.	Service charges to be considered at Cabinet in September 2023, following the consultation and review of relevant committee.	Ongoing.
HIAP5	Lack of strategy and policy framework	Complete review of key documents and identify work plan and timelines. Revised Tenant engagement Strategy planned.	Self assessment Nov 20 and ongoing	Complete review of key documents and identify work plan and timelines based on risk. Aids and Adaptations Policy, Right to Buy Policy, Compensation Policy and Rechargeable Repairs Policy in first tranche.	Complete first tranche July 2022	Existing resources	ADH		+	Forward plan is discussed at each managers meeting along with the progress of policies. The policy framework is being reviewed to ensure it is still accurate and any changes required.	Reviewed policy framework discussed at the housing managers meeting on 3/3/23, with further changes to be made.	Final changes and comments being made to the policy framework document by managers.	Final version awaiting political input following recent elections.	Final version still awaiting political input following recent elections.
HIAP6	Review Asset Management Plan and HRA Business Plan.	This is a document that can only be drafted once the outcome of the stock condition survey is determined.	Self assessment Nov 20 and ongoing	Stock Condition Survey underway. Asset Management Strategy to be developed as survey data is analysed. The Target date for completion of this work is end of March 2022.	Jul-22	Existing resources	DHP (supported AD Finance)		=	Working is ongoing and consultants engaged.	Ongoing.	Draft HRA Business Plan received and feedback from team is being work on. Further partnership meeting in April with consultants and team.	HRA business plan changes being made internally and meeting with consultants this month.	Changes ongoing with the business plan for the draft to be finalised this month.
HIAP7	The Council does not have an Empty Homes Strategy		Self assessment Nov 20 and ongoing	Draft complete	Apr-22	Existing resources	DHP		+					

Action number	Issue	Detail	How identified	Action to address	Target	Budget	Lead Officer	RAG	Direction of travel	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23
HIAP8	Engagement with Tenants to inform and seek views on service standards	Lack of real time feedback	Self assessment Nov 20 and ongoing	Rant and Rave procured.	Apr-22	Budget approved	HoTS		+	Rant & Rave 898 interactions scoring 4.4/5.	Rant & Rave 973 interactions scoring 4.5/5. Next edition of SKyline first planning meeting scheduled for April 2023.	Rant & Rave 1000+ interactions scoring 4.5/5. Next edition of SKyline first planning meeting scheduled for this month and initial ideas drafted.	Rant & Rave in excess of 1,100 interactions scoring 4.5/5. First planning meeting complete and draft awaiting approval.	Rant & Rave in excess of 1,200 interactions scoring 4.5/5. SKyline draft awaiting approval.

Regulatory Reference	Summary	Action number	Issue	Detail	How identified	Action to address	Target	Budget	Lead Officer	RAG	Direction of travel	Progress Update				
												Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23
		HS2	Lack of stock condition information	Last full Stock Condition Survey completed 2009. Sample Stock Condition surveys by internal surveyors been undertaken annually, but not consistent around detail and numbers.	Self Assessment Nov 20	Commission full stock condition survey in 2021/22.	Mar-22	£780k Budget approved by Full Council in December 2020.	HofTS		+					
		HS3	Revised capital improvements programme for 21/22 and future financial years. This to include potential new priorities such as fencing programme, windows/door entry systems, FRA's and electrical certificates.	Heavily dependent on Action 2	Self Assessment Nov 20	Revised capital programmes based on previous years and emerging issues.	Jul-22	Budget setting 2022/23	ADH		=	Awaiting outcome, expected Febraury / March 2023.	Capital programme approved at full council, awaiting SHDF bid outcome March 2023.	Full bid approved enabling energy works to 332 properties. Contract discussions ongoing with mobilisation due within 6-8 weeks.	Ongoing.	Fire Compartmentation contract awarded at Cabinet in May 2023
		HIAP6	Review Asset Management Plan and HRA Business Plan.	This is a document that can only be drafted once the outcome of the stock condition survey is determined.	Self assessment Nov 20 and ongoing	Stock Condition Survey underway. Asset Management Strategy to be developed as survey data is analysed. The Target date for completion of this work is end of March 2022	Jul-22	Existing resources	DHP (supported AD Finance)		=	Ongoing, sourcing contractor for continued surveys to cover 20% of stock annually, report going to Council FEDCO OSC on use of survey data.	HRA business plan in draft form, on forward plan for scrutiny May/June 2023.	HRA business plan in draft form with further changes being made from team feedback, on forward plan for scrutiny in June 2023.	HRA business plan further changes underway and meeting with the consultant this month.	Finalisation of draft in preparation for consultation with tenants and members
1.1c	<i>in agreeing a local offer, ensure that it is set at a level not less than these standards</i>	HS4	No local offer	Not a requirement; low priority pending relaunch of tenant engagement function and result of "Big Listen" survey.	Self Assessment Dec 21						=	Tenant engagement strategy is being reviewed and feedback from Big Listen.	Engagement strategy on the forward plan for development and adoption.	This years TSM survey is being planned for completion in July 2023 with the work for the new engagement strategy ongoing.	TSM survey procured through Acuity.	TSM survey to be issued 3rd of July with report due Sep/Oct
1.2a	<i>provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants, and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time</i>	HS5	Anecdotal evidence of poor service, lack of pre and post inspection, lack of benchmarking, limited stock condition information.	Service blueprint and restructure to clarify roles and resources, strong link to IHMS procurement and process reviews; confusing number of contractual terms for trades team	Self assessment Nov 20 and ongoing	Restructure; identify and improve processes on a risk basis; IHMS procurement; training and performance management.	Jul-22		DHP		+	New structure adopted and recuirment underway. Last vacancies been advertised.	Structure adopted and final recruitment underway.	Phase one of the restructure complete.	Phase two of the restructure pending, this is for the areas not covered in phase one.	Phase two has been delayed awaiting politcal input following recent elections.

Regulatory Reference	Summary	Action number	Issue	Detail	How identified	Action to address	Target	Budget	Lead Officer	RAG	Direction of travel	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23
1.2b	<i>meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes.</i>	HS6	No effective IT solution for monitoring and managing compliance requirements	Fire, gas and electrical priority	Self Assessment Nov 20	Propeller System procured and launched 2021.	Apr-22	Budget approved. Costs £76k 20/21 financial year then £39k per year.	HofTS		=	Work ongoing, to be linked to new IHMS system after go live.	System use ongoing integration to IHMS in near future post go-live.	Ongoing.	Options being considered and review for compliance and interfacing possible to IHMS system.	Current options being reviewed with the systems contract coming to an end.
		HS7	Sheltered housing compliance and operational review required.	Separate Action Plan	Self assessment June 21		Apr-22				+	Procurement being looked into by the Head of Service.	In early procurement stages.	Procurement ongoing.	Initial conversations with external consultant in progress.	Consultant being considered for the review.
		HS8	Wide issues of non-compliance identified by Internal Audit report	Delivery of key Audit recommendations	Audit report November 2020 and October 2021	Close monitoring of KPIs; reporting to Scrutiny Committees	Apr-22	Existing resources	DHP		=	Finalisation of draft in readiness for Rural OSC in April.	Finalisation of draft.	Finalisation of draft and design prior to consultation.	Final draft with wider management team prior to political and tenant consultation.	New hosuing Scrutiny meeting convened by members, initial meeting held to agree scope and points to be covered
2.1.1	<i>shall ensure their tenants are aware of the reasons for any period of non-compliance, their plan to achieve compliance and then report on progress delivering this plan.</i>	HS9	Provide information and reassurance for tenants regarding regulatory notice and improvements	Information and updates provided on service of notice	Self Assessment Nov 20	Ongoing	Ongoing	Existing resources	DHP		=	No change.	First planning meeting scheduled for April 2023 for summer SKyline edition.	Meeting scheduled for this month for SKyline to identify content and timeline for compilation.	Timeline agree and work underway for documents to go into SKyline, this will include a complainece section.	Draft SKyline edition for Summer is being reviewed for approval.
2.2.1	<i>ensure a prudent, planned approach to repairs and maintenance of homes and communal areas. This should demonstrate an appropriate balance of planned and responsive repairs, and value for money. The approach should include: responsive and cyclical repairs, planned and capital work, work on empty properties, and adaptations.</i>	HS10	Anecdotal evidence of poor service, lack of pre and post inspection, lack of benchmarking, limited stock condition information.	Service blueprint and restructure to clarify roles and resources, strong link to IHMS procurement and process reviews	Self assessment Nov 20 and ongoing	Restructure; identify and improve processes on a risk basis; IHMS procurement; training and performance management	Jul-22	Existing resources	DHP		+	New structure adopted, changes ongoing for implementation.	Links to IHMS go-live.	Restructure embedding well with workflow development ongoing, KPI suites identified on service plans.	Recruitment to first positions within phase two of restructure ongoing.	Phase two has been delayed awaiting politcal input following recent elections.

Regulatory Reference	Summary	Action number	Issue	Detail	How identified	Action to address	Target	Budget	Lead Officer	RAG	Direction of travel	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23
2.2.2	<i>co-operate with relevant organisations to provide an adaptations service that meets tenants’ needs.</i>	HS11	Engagement with OT service haphazard, general approach is to complete adaptations regardless of practicality	No clear policy on Aids and Adaptations	Self assessment December 2021	Adopt Aids and Adaptation Policy	Apr-22	Existing resources	HofHS		+					
2.2.3	<i>Asbestos Action Plan.</i>	HS12	Coordinated action plan to mitigate current asbestos risks, ensure constant data management moving forward.	Action plan	Self assessment May 22	Action identified on plan	Dec-22	Existing resources	HofTS		+					

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# Skyline

Summer 2023 for tenants of South Kesteven



Essex Road, Stamford, Sheltered housing scheme



# Your tenant update

Welcome to the Summer 2023 edition of Skyline – we hope you find it informative and relevant.

In this edition you will find an update on our ongoing progress in relation to the Regulator of Social Housing covering all aspects of our regulatory compliance.

It was great to see so many of you enjoying the recent Coronation weekend - our communities really came together and celebrated this historic event.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you all to take the time to let us know your comments and thoughts in relation to our performance as a landlord by completing the soon to be issued Tenancy Satisfaction survey. Your opinion really does matter, and the results will inform the way that we shape our future service delivery.

There is an update on the ongoing work to improve our fire escapes and the introduction of service charges relating to building safety. We also explain how we need your help to provide access for our contractors undertaking important gas and electrical safety checks in your homes. These checks are required for regulatory compliance and ensure your homes are maintained to a safe standard.

Your opinions matter. Elsewhere,

we have included a section explaining our complaints process and the timelines within which you should expect to receive a response.

It is important that we still recognise and understand the impact of the increasing cost of living and have again included an advice section covering the numerous agencies and support opportunities available to those in need of aid.

We have some exciting updates in relation to recently completed temporary accommodation near to the Riverside area of Grantham delivered in partnership with Homes England; along with our Earlesfield Estate project where properties are undergoing extensive renovations and improvements.

We have recently secured significant funding to enable us to provide 21 properties to assist with the ongoing migration crisis through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF), and we have also secured funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) to undertake energy efficiency improvement works to more than 330 of our properties.

We close this edition sharing some recent news in relation to the successful use of anti-social

behaviour powers delivered by our tenancy team in partnership with the police.

I do hope you find this edition informative and should you have any comments or feedback that you would like to share then please send me your comments to [craig.spence@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:craig.spence@southkesteven.gov.uk)

I hope that you all have an enjoyable summer and look forward to the next edition of Skyline which is due to be with you before Christmas 2023.

*Best wishes*



**Craig Spence**  
Acting Director of Housing  
✉ [craig.spence@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:craig.spence@southkesteven.gov.uk)



**Celebrating community champions**  
Make your nominations at  
[www.southkesteven.gov.uk/SKawards2023](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/SKawards2023)



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

# New measures raise standards

Registered providers of social housing must meet certain standards on key aspects of compliance, with seven of the eight areas reaching over 99% for South Kesteven District Council's most recent inspections.

The Council's Chief Executive and Acting Director of Housing continue to meet monthly with the Regulator of Social Housing updating on our extensive progress.

We have now engaged an external auditor to verify our compliance position with a view to enabling the lifting of the regulatory notice, which was put in place to

ensure improvements to the service.

As part of the drive to make improvements, the Council put in place a series of measures in a new housing action plan. These include a dedicated team to respond to queries; bringing in new systems and processes to ensure repairs and inspections are managed more effectively; commissioning a housing stock survey; and making new staff appointments to take the service forward.

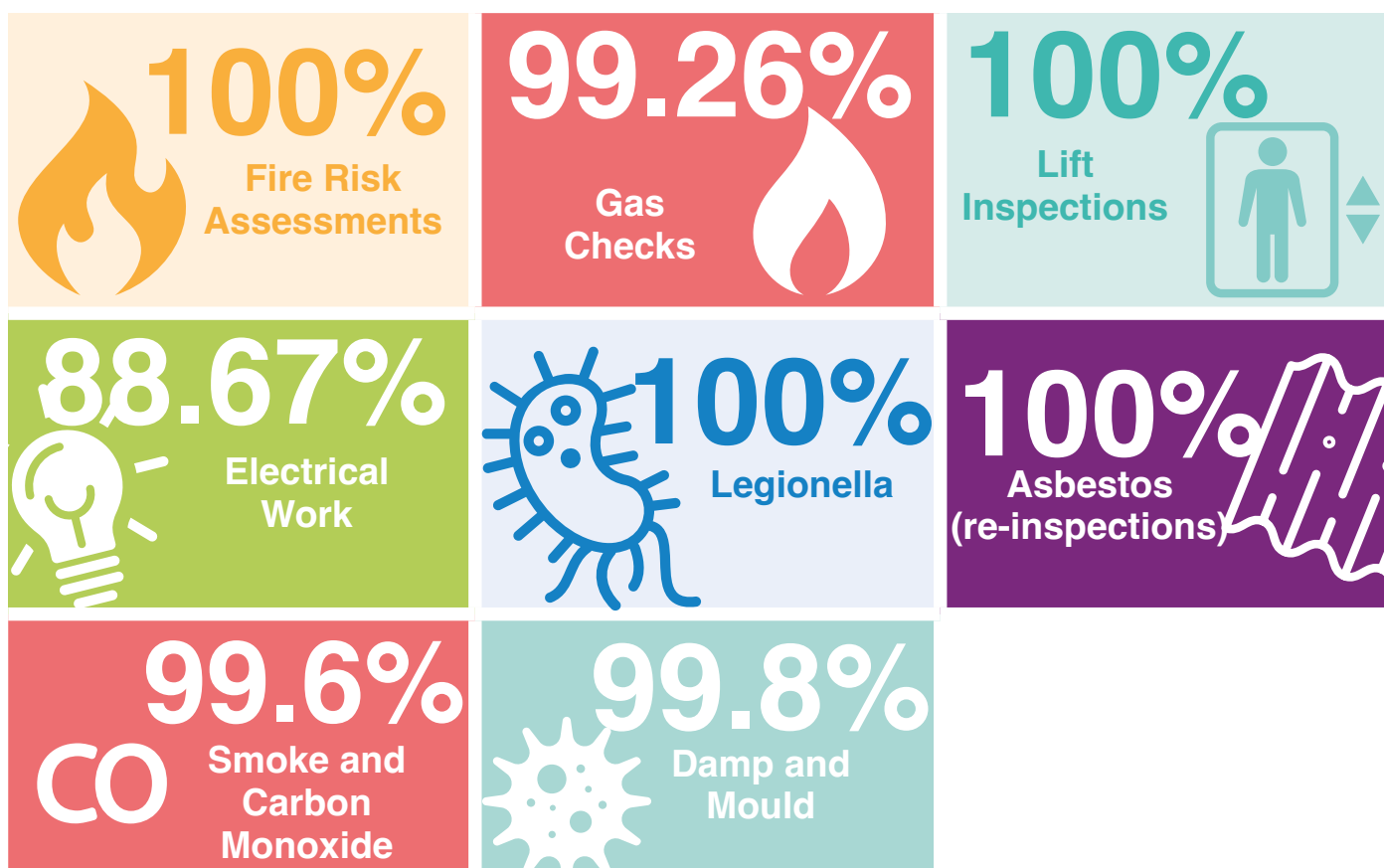
We take immediate and appropriate action to ensure the safety of tenants during this process and beyond.

For your safety, we continue to share the latest performance figures for landlord health and safety – gas servicing, water hygiene, electrical safety, asbestos re-inspections, fire risk assessment, lift inspections and smoke and carbon monoxide detection – along with updates on the various improvement plans that are being delivered.

Some of the figures are below 100% mainly due to limited access to homes.

Up-to-date reports, improvement plans and performance figures are available on the Council's website at <https://bit.ly/RuralOS>

## The latest figures reported to the Regulator for Housing Compliance in April 2023 are:



**If you have any questions**, we have a dedicated team to help.

Email [housingaudit@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:housingaudit@southkesteven.gov.uk) or call us on **01476 40 61 23** or **01476 40 60 80** from Monday to Friday 8.45am to 5pm, press option 3 and then option 4.



# Help shape landlord services for a chance to win £50 vouchers

As you know, SKDC is committed to providing high quality housing services to our tenants.

To do this we need to hear your views, which are important opinions in helping us shape the landlord services we offer and ensure that we provide value for money for the tenants and leaseholders of South Kesteven.

Your views will tell us what we do well and where we need to improve. We also want you to tell us what additional things you think we should be doing.

You will soon be receiving an invitation to complete a short survey of around a dozen questions. You might get this through your door, via email or in a phone call from our trusted partner **Acuity** who are running the survey for us.

They will ask about your home,

value for money, our contact and communication with tenants, repairs and maintenance, how we can improve – and your overall satisfaction with the work we do as a team.

You don't have to take part, but the more responses we get, the better the feedback will be and the better decisions we can make based on this. We would like to hear from as many of our tenants as possible – this is your chance to tell us what you think.

Please rest assured that your response will remain anonymous, unless you ask us to act on something specific that we need your details for, or you wish to supply your details to take part in future feedback projects.

Every response will go towards helping improve the housing service

at SKDC. As well as promoting action in key areas, we will also publish the results in Skyline, so that you can see what other people thought – and what we will do as a Council to continue to improve our service.

Every completed entry will go into a prize draw to win one of four £50 shopping vouchers – so by helping us you can also help yourself! But please respond when we ask, or you may miss the deadline.

- This survey is designed to help the Council to meet regulatory requirements to collect tenant satisfaction measures on an annual basis.
- Please note that any information you provide will be held by South Kesteven District Council securely and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

## Music In Quiet Places



£16 (£14 concessions) £8 under 26s

June/July 2023

This popular concert series is back for another year showcasing talented musicians, performing in some of the most beautiful and historic churches in the area.

[guildhallartscentre.com](http://guildhallartscentre.com) | [stamfordartscentre.com](http://stamfordartscentre.com)

01476 406 158 | 01780 763 203

# Safety first in the event of a fire

**S**outh Kesteven District Council takes its fire safety responsibilities as a landlord very seriously.

Every effort is made to ensure buildings are safe – and this is regularly reviewed by a competent, independent person.

We must ensure that we are ready to act in the event of a fire and this is where you can help us and play your part.

In the unlikely event that a building would need to be evacuated it is crucial that fire exits, the corridors inside the building to the fire exits and the escape routes outside, are kept free from any items that might impede or delay residents and guests of those in the buildings.

This includes trolleys, scooters, or packages being left in corridors or items and furniture in communal areas being moved near to, or blocking, fire exits.

We understand that everyone enjoys being outside and using the communal spaces provided but it is important to remember that these spaces form part of routes that allow people to make it to a place of ultimate safety. We would again ask you to help us by not blocking these



routes with garden furniture, pots or any other items that could create hazards for fellow residents.

## What you can do stay safe?

Fire safety is everyone's responsibility, so the Council asks all residents in South Kesteven to follow these tips to stay safe at home:

- Test your fire smoke alarm
- Take care when cooking, as most fires start in the kitchen
- Never leave unattended candles burning

- Make sure cigarettes are properly extinguished
- Take responsibility for rubbish and make sure it's disposed of appropriately
- Know your escape routes should they be required in an emergency – and make sure everyone who lives in your home knows how to escape

## If you discover a fire:

- Do not tackle the fire yourself unless you are properly trained and it is safe to do so
- Alert everyone else and leave the area, stay together and close doors behind you if possible when you leave
- Do not waste time by stopping to collect valuables or investigating what has happened
- Before you open a door use the back of your hand to check if it is warm. If it is warm do not open the door as there may be a fire on the other side
- Dial 999 and ask for the fire service (or in sheltered schemes raise the alarm at the nearest fire alarm point)
- Leave the building by the nearest exit





# Allowing home access will avoid risk of financial penalty

**S**ometimes the Council needs access to your home to allow our team to make important checks in order to protect you and your family.

This may be to service an appliance, make a gas or electricity check, assess the property as a whole and in case any maintenance work needs carrying out.

The services we provide as a responsible landlord are completely free when we work together and get the job done first time around.

Anyone who doesn't let either Council staff or our contractors into their home are breaching their tenancy agreement, which costs us time and money, as we need to rebook. The associated costs of an abortive or missed appointment can be charged to the tenant.

We usually write well in advance when we need to get in for essential maintenance or gas/electric safety checks. But we continue to experience an increase in the number of properties where we cannot get access.

If we have made multiple attempts and still cannot get in, SKDC can serve Court papers to get an



injunction or warrant which gives us a legal right to enter your home. The costs of this can be significant, and we aim to recharge all our costs for legal action and missed appointments back to tenants.

In extreme cases we could pursue eviction, which puts you at risk of losing your home.

Taking tenants to court is always a last resort which can easily be avoided. Either make sure you will be home for your appointment or,

if you cannot make it, rearrange the appointment to avoid any charges.

Please rest assured that SKDC works hard to ensure its tenants are safe.

We would like to thank everyone who helps us with our work to carry out surveys and services by granting access – and if anyone would like to discuss this with us, please contact the Compliance Team on **01476 406080 (extension 6433)**.



# How to make a complaint

We always welcome feedback letting us know when we are doing something right or if there are areas in which we can improve.

This helps us know how well we are performing and also enables us to improve our service.

The best place to register a complaint is online at [www.southkesteven.gov.uk/feedback](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/feedback) or via our Customer Service team if you don't have online access.

There are two stages:

## Stage 1

- The Customer Services team will acknowledge your complaint within three working days
- A senior officer will investigate and provide a response directly to you within 10 working days
- If it is not possible to respond this quickly, we will contact you and give you an estimated response date, which will not exceed a further 10 working days without good reason

## Stage 2

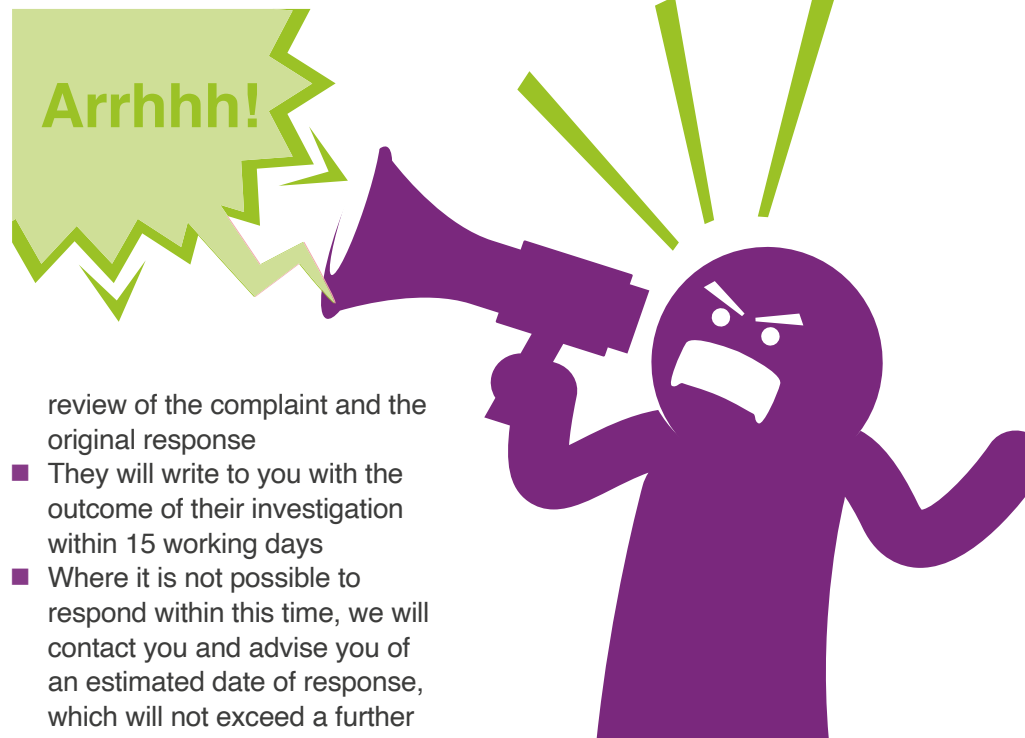
- If you are not happy with your Stage 1 response, you can request Stage 2
- This must be received by the Council within three months of getting the Stage 1 response
- Your complaint will be referred to a director or a business manager not involved in Stage 1
- They conduct a further thorough

review of the complaint and the original response

- They will write to you with the outcome of their investigation within 15 working days
- Where it is not possible to respond within this time, we will contact you and advise you of an estimated date of response, which will not exceed a further 10 working days without good reason

Complaints are not usually accepted where the issue occurred more than six months previously, because such a lapse of time makes a full investigation more challenging.

The Housing Customer Feedback Policy sets out how we deal with customer feedback. It can be found online via [www.southkesteven.gov.uk/housingfeedback](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/housingfeedback)



If you feel we have not dealt with your complaint satisfactorily, you have the option of taking your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman, who will investigate.

In most circumstances the Ombudsman will expect you to have followed the Council's complaint process first. You can contact them directly or you can ask your local councillor to do this for you: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

## Complaints procedure for Council tenants





# New roles to help tackle cost of living

**T**wo experienced staff have started work in new roles to help South Kesteven residents cope with increases in the cost of living.

The posts have been funded for 12 months from the UK Support Prosperity Fund and will ensure a dedicated resource is maintained.

Cost of Living Co-Ordinator Funmi Reilly and Support Officer Stella Darker will take their lead from the Council's dedicated working group, to set up and ensure the smooth operation of a range of projects.

They will also provide advice and support with:

- Household budgeting, money management and welfare benefits
- Helping residents to claim benefits that they may be due
- Completing income and expenditure assessments to access Government support
- Working with charities and community groups to help the vulnerable
- Debt advice

SKDC's online cost of living advice can be found at:



[www.southkesteven.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/costofliving)

Information includes energy saving, financial support, health and wellbeing, support for older people and grants.

## Household costs

South Kesteven District Council administers several schemes which can help local people with the costs of council tax and rent. They include:

- Council Tax Support Scheme
- Household Support Fund
- Discretionary Housing Payments (additional payments to those in receipt of Universal Credit/ Housing Benefit)

**To find out more about these schemes please go to**

📄 [www.southkesteven.gov.uk](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk) and search for Council Tax support scheme, household support scheme and/or discretionary housing payments

☎ **01476 40 60 80**

✉ [customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk)

## Utility bills

Households can check to see if they are entitled to switch to a social tariff. These include:

- Basic/Essential Phone and Broadband packages
- 📄 [www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/social-tariffs](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/social-tariffs)
- Help to pay water bills
- 📄 [www.ccw.org.uk/save-money-and-water/help-with-bills/](http://www.ccw.org.uk/save-money-and-water/help-with-bills/)

## Energy costs

- Ofgem has announced that from July 1<sup>st</sup> the energy price cap for an average dual fuel household paying by direct debit based on typical consumption will be set at £2,074 until the end of September.

📄 [www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/customers-pay-less-energy-bills-summer](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/customers-pay-less-energy-bills-summer)

- Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. SKDC has been awarded £3.4m from the Government to install energy efficiency upgrades in its social housing stock that is currently below an energy performance certificate D rating. If your property is eligible, you will be contacted.

## Dealing with debt

Support is available from various voluntary sector providers. These include:

- Citizens Advice South Lincolnshire
- ☎ **0808 278 7996**
- 📄 [www.citizensadvice.southlincs.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.southlincs.org.uk)
- Money Advice and Pensions Service
- ☎ **0800 138 7777**
- 📄 [www.maps.org.uk](http://www.maps.org.uk)
- Step Change Debt Charity
- ☎ **0800 138 1111**
- 📄 [www.stepchange.org/contact-us](http://www.stepchange.org/contact-us)
- Christians Against Poverty, Stamford
- ☎ **0800 328 0006**

## Unemployed or on a low income

- Check if you're eligible to claim Universal Credit:

☎ **0800 328 5644**

[www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit)

- Apply for new style Jobseekers Allowance:

📄 [www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance)

- If you're on the minimum wage, check your pay:

📄 [www.gov.uk/am-i-getting-minimum-wage](http://www.gov.uk/am-i-getting-minimum-wage)

📄 [checkyourpay.campaign.co.uk](http://checkyourpay.campaign.co.uk)

## Benefits entitlement

Additional financial assistance includes:

- Three Cost of Living Payments of £300 for households on Universal Credit, Pension Credit and Tax Credits

📄 [www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment)

- Budgeting Loan – an interest free loan which can be used for various household purchases

📄 [www.gov.uk/budgeting-help-benefits/eligibility](http://www.gov.uk/budgeting-help-benefits/eligibility)

- Help to Save – a type of savings account. If entitled to working tax credit or in receipt of Universal Credit, the saver can get a bonus of 50p for every £1 saved over 4 years



- 📞 [www.gov.uk/get-help-savings-low-income/eligibility](http://www.gov.uk/get-help-savings-low-income/eligibility)
- Job Centre Plus Travel Discount Card – issued through your local job centre, this card entitles those eligible and actively seeking employment to a 50% discount on selected rail tickets.
- 📞 [www.nationalrail.co.uk/times\\_fares/jobcentre-plus-card.aspx](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/times_fares/jobcentre-plus-card.aspx)
- Don't forget to:
- Check that you're claiming all the benefits you're entitled to
- 📞 [benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk](http://benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk)

## Health & wellbeing

Support available from various voluntary sector providers including:

- Connect to Support Lincolnshire
- 📞 03455 564 144
- NHS Lincolnshire Partnership – Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
- 📞 0303 123 4000
- ✉ [lincs.spa@nhs.net](mailto:lincs.spa@nhs.net)
- Wellbeing Lincs
- 📞 01522 782 540
- 📞 [www.wellbeinglincs.org](http://www.wellbeinglincs.org)
- Help with Health Costs Helpline
- 📞 0300 330 1343
- 📞 [nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-help-health-costs](http://nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-help-health-costs)
- NHS Low Income Scheme
- 📞 0300 330 1343
- 📞 [nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme](http://nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme)

## Living with a health condition or disability

These vary according to an individual's circumstances but can include:

- Disability Living Allowance (currently being replaced by other benefits and now only available for those aged under 16)
- 📞 0800 121 4600
- 📞 [www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children](http://www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children)
- Personal Independence Payment (if not reached state pensionable age)
- 📞 0800 121 4433
- 📞 [www.gov.uk/pip](http://www.gov.uk/pip)
- Attendance Allowance (if state pensionable age or older and

- not claiming Disability Living Allowance)
- 📞 0800 731 0122
- 📞 [www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance)
- Employment & Support Allowance
- 📞 0844 811 3390
- 📞 [www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance)
- Disability Cost of Living Payment A payment of £150 will be made to those eligible during summer 2023. Eligibility is dependent on being in receipt of specific benefits on a particular date.
- 📞 [www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment#disability-cost-of-living-payment](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment#disability-cost-of-living-payment)
- Learning Disabilities
- 📞 0808 808 1111
- ✉ [helpline@mencap.org.uk](mailto:helpline@mencap.org.uk)
- 📞 [www.mencap.org.uk/help-with-food-energy-and-money](http://www.mencap.org.uk/help-with-food-energy-and-money)

## Marriage Allowance

Check that you're claiming the Marriage Tax Allowance. This lets you transfer £1,260 of your personal allowance to your husband, wife or civil partner

- 📞 [www.gov.uk/marriage-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/marriage-allowance)

## Help for children

- Free childcare 15 or 30 hours of free childcare for children aged 2,3 and 4 (dependent on eligibility)
- 📞 [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)
- 📞 [www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds](http://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds)
- 📞 [www.gov.uk/apply-30-hours-free-tax-free-childcare](http://www.gov.uk/apply-30-hours-free-tax-free-childcare)
- Tax free Childcare
- 📞 [www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare](http://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare)
- Child Benefit
- 📞 0300 200 3100
- 📞 [www.gov.uk/child-benefit](http://www.gov.uk/child-benefit)
- If you have children and are claiming Universal Credit you may also be eligible to:
- Claim back up to 85% of costs of childcare
- 📞 [www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-childcare-costs](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-childcare-costs)

- Free school meals
- 📞 01522 782 030
- 📞 [www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals](http://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals)
- Access to free activities and food in school holidays
- ✉ [HAF@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:HAF@lincolnshire.gov.uk)
- 📞 [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-pupil-support/holiday-activities-food-programme](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-pupil-support/holiday-activities-food-programme)
- Healthy Start Vouchers
- 📞 0300 330 7010
- ✉ [healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk](mailto:healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk)
- 📞 [www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/)
- Help with maternity costs
- 📞 [www.gov.uk/sure-start-maternity-grant](http://www.gov.uk/sure-start-maternity-grant)

## Help for pensioners

There are various schemes to help pensioners. They include:

- Winter Fuel Payment Cost-of-Living Payment of between £150 and £300 (paid alongside the Winter Fuel Payment)
- 📞 [www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment](http://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment)
- Pension Credit - check eligibility
- 📞 0800 99 1234
- 📞 [www.gov.uk/pension-credit](http://www.gov.uk/pension-credit)
- Housing Benefit - check eligibility
- 📞 [www.gov.uk/housing-benefit](http://www.gov.uk/housing-benefit)
- Free TV Licence (eligible if 75 or over and in receipt of Pension Credit)
- 📞 0300 790 6117
- 📞 [www.tvlicensing.co.uk/check-if-you-need-one/for-your-home/aged-74-and-over-aud3](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/check-if-you-need-one/for-your-home/aged-74-and-over-aud3)
- National concessionary travel pass
- 📞 0345 456 4474
- ✉ [concessionaryfares@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:concessionaryfares@lincolnshire.gov.uk)
- 📞 [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/public-transport/apply-free-bus-pass](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/public-transport/apply-free-bus-pass)

Don't forget to check that you are claiming everything you're entitled to

📞 [www.entitledto.co.uk/benefits-calculator/Intro/Home](http://www.entitledto.co.uk/benefits-calculator/Intro/Home)

## Caring for someone

Check if you're eligible to claim a carer's allowance

📞 [www.gov.uk/carers-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance)



[www.southkesteven.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/costofliving)



Riverside units - Housing Options officers  
Helen Brown and Pippa Bryden



## Revamped building brings flats to relieve homeless pressure

Three single-bed units are now available in Grantham where South Kesteven District Council can accommodate its most vulnerable homeless individuals.

This follows extensive redevelopment of a property with Homes England support funding of £62,000.

The units are developed to an excellent specification in a prime location in town to ensure that key support and facilities can be accessed during challenging times in an individual's life.

The units are fully furnished to meet basic needs and add much needed extra properties to enable the council to offer accommodation as part of our statutory obligations to support homeless people.

Cllr Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning said: "SKDC works both with the homeless and with those at risk of becoming homeless.

"This accommodation offers a more stable environment than the hotels or B&Bs that we currently use and will give individuals a real opportunity to make changes to their current circumstances.

"People will be supported through a personal housing plan to enable security and future stabilisation, this could include access to education and or employment and future secure accommodation.

"Ultimately, our role is to prevent homelessness wherever possible, by helping those at risk to solve whatever problems may lead to an individual or family becoming homeless."

The funding enabled redevelopment of a former derelict building adding much needed

one bedroom accommodation to SKDC's housing portfolio.

Cllr Dilks added: "By purchasing and developing a derelict building the council has made a difference, helping to improve its neighbourhoods and grow communities."

The units are owned by the Council and form part of its temporary accommodation offer, relieving the burdens on the current homelessness crisis that has an increasing impact on the District.

Anyone currently homeless should call the Council on **01476 40 60 80** for assistance. If you have nowhere to stay tonight and it is outside of our usual office hours, please call our Emergency Helpline: **01476 59 00 44**.



The SKDC Housing team driving forward improvement in the Earlesfield area



# Home refits take shape as tenants move back in after upgrades

The first tenants to benefit from refits in a £3.28m housing project from South Kesteven District Council have returned to their refurbished homes.

Replacement kitchens and bathrooms are being fitted in 143 homes, with electrical, heating, and door upgrades in a similar number – as well as removal of asbestos materials from these and a further nine post-war built properties.

United Living Group is carrying out

the improvements for the Earlesfield Estate Capital Works Project which will deliver numerous benefits for our tenants and is further evidence of the wider improvements we continue to see from the SKDC Housing service.

Around 112 households are being temporarily rehomed to allow the work to take place using ten vacant properties on the estate on a rolling programme. Another property is being used as an estate office

where residents can find out more and keep up to date with progress.

There has been detailed consultation with tenants to understand any vulnerabilities, particular housing needs and personal circumstances. SKDC has also contributed to all the associated additional costs of removals and utility bills during the process.

Cllr Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, said: “This important work is part of our clear commitment to improving their homes as we work to provide good quality housing that meets the needs of all residents. We recognise there is significant inconvenience for many of the affected residents, for which we apologise.”

Work being carried out includes:

- New kitchens including wall tiles, floor covering and extractor fan
- New bathrooms including wall tiles, electric shower, extractor fan and floor covering
- New toilet and basin plus floor covering for the downstairs cloakroom
- Full rewire where required
- New heating system where required
- New front and rear composite doors







Local families support a Peace Walk for Ukraine in Stamford.

## New social housing will help evacuee families and increase Council stock

**T**wenty-one new homes are being purchased as South Kesteven District Council expands its social housing stock.

They will initially provide homes for refugee families as the Council works to ease the national homelessness crisis.

As they move on, the new housing will pass to people on the SKDC Housing Register.

Families fleeing war-torn countries will be the first to be provided with temporary homes offered to them through a Government scheme.

SKDC will invest £4.482m to purchase the new-build homes thanks to an allocation from the Government-funded Local Authority Housing Fund, supplemented by its own financial reserve.

The initial use will be by Afghan and Ukrainian evacuee families

who have arrived legally in the UK.

Cllr Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, said: "Afghan resettlement prioritises those who assisted the UK with military operations in the country, plus those at greatest risk from the Taliban.

"Schemes to assist Ukraine nationals focus on legal resettlement and support for women and children refugees displaced by the conflict.

"The Local Authority Housing Fund is to ease pressure on local housing demand and create a new and permanent supply of accommodation for local authorities to assist UK nationals in the future."

The idea is to help refugees in their hour of need and create a lasting legacy by providing housing to help address local

demand, and then reduce future homelessness pressures for local people as the evacuees move out of the system.

South Kesteven residents provide homes for the highest number of Ukraine refugees in the whole of Lincolnshire.

The Local Authority Housing Fund helps provide affordable accommodation for legal evacuees until their visas expire in around 3-5 years' time, by supporting local authorities. SKDC expects to approach developers with a view to purchasing 19 two- or three-bedroom new-build homes and two four-bed+ properties.

SKDC is one of three local authorities in Lincolnshire, among just 180 nationwide to be selected to benefit from this fund, from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.



## Green light for energy efficiency thanks to £7.26m funding package

**M**ore than 330 Council houses across South Kesteven are to benefit from a £3.4m Government grant to fund energy efficiency upgrades.

The funding comes after SKDC identified a programme of energy efficiency and low-carbon heating upgrades.

Cllr Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, said: "There will be clear benefits to tenants including an improved living environment and reduced energy consumption to help address cost of living pressures.

"With recent rises in energy bills, there's never been a more appropriate time to make the homes of our tenants easier to heat. These improvements will make a real difference to them.

"This project also takes forward the Council's wider work to reduce carbon emissions.

"Although the homes outlined for the bid are not included in the Council's own carbon footprint, energy efficiencies will be achieved through delivery of the project.

"The funding will allow us to make substantial improvements to improve the quality, efficiency and safety of our social rented

homes which will not only support householders but leave a positive environmental change in the area."

The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1 grant of £3.4m will be supported with £3,847,516 from the Council's Housing Revenue Account.

A programme of energy efficiency and low-carbon heating upgrades has been prepared for the 333 homes identified for this work, spread across predominantly rural areas of the district.

This investment, which could pay for improvements such as loft insulation or new windows, will help households to heat their homes for less and keep them warm for longer.

The money will go towards improvements to vulnerable households and off-gas grid homes with an EPC rating of D or below and could save tenants between £220 and £400 a year on energy bills.

Work is expected to begin this summer with upgrades taking place through a two-year programme.

It dovetails with the Council's revised Climate Action Strategy, which focuses on specific areas relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

SKDC's target is to reduce its own carbon footprint by at least 30% by 2030 and endeavour to become net-zero carbon as soon as viable before 2050.





# Housing Team on call round-the-clock

**W**ith over 100 services to deliver, across 365 square miles, no two days are the same for staff at South Kesteven District Council.

Our dedicated Housing team supports thousands of tenants by providing a safe and comfortable place for them to call home, organising emergency and regular repairs – and by providing advice and help on all kinds of topics, 24/7.

## 8am – 10am

The first task is to assess all incoming enquiries and make contact with those in need of help, whether that is a request for a repair or homelessness advice.

For the Tenancy Services team, this could include welcoming new tenants or progressing mutual exchange applications.

## 10am – 11am

It is now time for our Tenancy Services team to attend a multi-agency panel, alongside some of the Council's key partners, including education, social care and medical providers, and Lincolnshire police.

## 11am – 12noon

An important part of the Housing Options team role is to source both emergency and long-term accommodation. This can include organising nightly paid accommodation, managing allocations from the Housing Register or liaising with private landlords to seek alternative,



The Housing Services team provides support to tenants living in a range of accommodation across the District

affordable places to live.

## 12noon – 3pm

Housing Officers are often the first point of contact for many tenants, whether it's a concern about anti-social behaviour or for advice about managing their finances.

They can even put tenants in contact with the Revenues and Benefits Team at SKDC or external experts like Citizens Advice.

Housing Officers also make home visits to ensure everything is working as it should, and that we all comply with national safety regulations and the law, including for gas and electrical safety, or dealing with damp and mould.

## 3pm – 4pm

As well as providing rough sleepers with a temporary place to stay, the Housing Options and

Tenancy Services team can support them in their transition into a long-term and settled future, assisting with managing finances, beating substance abuse and offering benefits support.

## 4pm – 5pm

Our Housing Services Team complete regular training so that they are fully informed of all changes, whether big or small, to social housing legislation and policies.

## 5pm – 8pm

In the daytime, tenants can speak to a member of our Customer Services Team. There are also online forms to fill in during the day or after the offices close.

Out of hours in an emergency, tenants can phone the emergency line and there will always be someone on hand to resolve the problem.

Through the night (8pm – 8am SKDC staff respond to emergency calls, organise urgent repairs and provide an outreach service to rough sleepers, as well as for neighbouring districts as part of the Change4Lincs partnership.

This includes the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP), which when activated allows staff to identify and respond to reports of rough sleepers and quickly find them suitable accommodation.

Urgent repairs are carried out day and night



# Court backs Council efforts to reduce anti-social behaviour

**S**outh Kesteven District Council obtained possession of a flat from where there was significant anti-social behaviour at Eastwell Place, Grantham.

A warrant was executed on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and the property is undergoing renovation so it can be made available again for an applicant on the Housing Register.

Care will be taken to ensure that the property is let sensitively to minimise the possibility of future anti-social behaviour in the area.

It follows a series of incidents and a court ruling after partnership work between the Council's Housing Services department and the police regarding several tenancies at Eastwell Place.

A dossier of "significant issues," video footage and police statements

were presented to Lincoln Magistrates on March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023. Evidence included records of anti-social behaviour, CCTV footage, street violence, neighbour complaints and witness statements from Council staff.

The eviction was secured at an earlier hearing when the Council was granted possession of the flat.

A spokesperson for the Council said: "This robust and successful partnership action with the police means that our tenants and their neighbours are once again able to live their lives without the regular disruption caused by these tenants and their visitors.

"We take instances of anti-social behaviour very seriously and as a responsible landlord have a duty to all our tenants to deal with that.

"It is very important for the other

residents of Eastwell Place to know they are supported by their landlord and that incidents of this nature are taken very seriously.

"The situation there was unacceptable and with support from the courts, we will take action where necessary to allow people to feel safe at home and in their neighbourhood."

The Full Closure Order meant the tenant could not live at the flat for six weeks ahead of potential eviction. A Partial Closure Order at a second flat prevents named visitors at the property, which if breached could ultimately result in eviction.

A copy of the Closure Order is displayed outside each property and anyone breaching the order could be arrested and, if found guilty, face a punishment of up to 51 weeks in prison and/or an unlimited fine.

# SKtoday

for residents of South Kesteven

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## Our services

### South Kesteven District Council

You can contact the Council about benefits, rent or other issues. We are open by appointment only for Council services as follows:

#### Grantham:

Monday - Friday 9am to 1pm

**Bourne:** Monday 9am to 5pm,

Wednesday 9am to 6pm

Friday and Saturday, 9am to 1pm

Bourne is also for library services

☎ 01476 40 60 80

**Out of hours** 01476 40 60 40

✉ [customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk)

**South Kesteven:**

#### Tenant Engagement

Contact Ken Linford, Community Engagement Officer

☎ 01476 40 60 80

✉ [HousingFB@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:HousingFB@southkesteven.gov.uk)



#### Emergency repairs

☎ 01476 40 60 80 / 01476 59 00 44

#### Reporting Anti-Social Behaviour

☎ 01476 40 60 80

🌐 [www.southkesteven.gov.uk/nuisance](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/nuisance)

✉ [HousingManagement@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:HousingManagement@southkesteven.gov.uk)

For other kinds of anti-social behaviour, such as criminal activity, you should contact the police - use **101** if it is not an emergency. **(999)** if it is an emergency)

## Other organisations that can help:



### Age UK (Lincoln and South Lincolnshire)

Companionship, advice and support for older people.

☎ 01522 696 000

🌐 [www.ageuk.org.uk/lincolnsouthlincolnshire/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/lincolnsouthlincolnshire/)

### Lincolnshire County Council

Information and advice on council services and support available in Lincolnshire.

☎ 01522 552 222

✉ [customer\\_services@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:customer_services@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

🌐 [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk)

For advice and support to live independently, contact the county

council's adult social care team.

☎ 01522 782155

🌐 <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/adult-social-care/social-care-support>

### Grantham & District Poverty Concern Group

Supports vulnerable members of the community to relieve both poverty and homelessness.

**Contact Chris Thomas on**

☎ 07517 943 792 or via

✉ [granthampovertyconcern@gmail.com](mailto:granthampovertyconcern@gmail.com)

🌐 [www.granthampovertyconcern.org.uk](http://www.granthampovertyconcern.org.uk)

## National advice lines

### Citizens Advice

☎ 03444 111 444

🌐 [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us)

### Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

☎ 0345 606 0265

🌐 [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions)

### Victim Support

☎ 0808 506 1688

🌐 [Victimsupport.org.uk](http://Victimsupport.org.uk)

### The National Domestic Abuse Helpline

☎ 0808 200 0247

### NHS- non-urgent medical need

☎ 111

🌐 [www.111.nhs.uk/](http://www.111.nhs.uk/)

### Scope

Provides support, advice and information to disabled people and their families.

☎ 0808 800 3333

🌐 <https://www.scope.org.uk>

### Shelter

A nationwide charity which provides advice for tenants

🌐 [https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice/council\\_housing\\_association](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/council_housing_association)

### If you are online

You can find the latest information, and browse our services on our website at [www.southkesteven.gov.uk](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk)





**SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**



## Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 July 2023

Report of: Councillor Phil Dilks  
Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

## Housing Repairs & Maintenance Policy

### Report Author

Julie Martin, Head of Technical Services



[Julie.martin@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.martin@southkesteven.gov.uk)

### Purpose of Report

To inform the Committee of the new Housing Repairs Policy which sets the framework for the delivery of all aspects of the repairs service to include repairing responsibilities and the processes of delivery of planned, cyclical and reactive repairs.

### Recommendations

#### That the Committee:

1. The Committee notes the Housing Repairs & Maintenance Policy is in line with best practice and will ensure clear operational guidance for staff and all customers.
2. The Committee recommends that the Director of Housing make alterations and amendments to the Policy to incorporate comments arising from consultation, for submission and adoption at full Council.

### Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Housing that meets the needs of all residents
Which wards are impacted?	All

## 1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

- 1.1 The Housing Repairs and Maintenance spend in 2022/23 was £9.21m against a budget of £8.94m, this included an allocation of £1.3m for the Earlesfield Project, the approved budget for 2023/24 is £7.836m. Due to the significant levels of spend it is important that the Council has a policy in place which clearly sets out the Council and Tenant responsibilities for repairs and maintenance to ensure that value for money is achieved.
- 1.2 Any additional costs incurred by the policy will need to be met from within existing budgets.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer

### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.3 A failure to effectively repair and maintain properties can be subject to legal challenge with a resulting negative impact upon the finances, reputation and image of the Council, leading in turn to a loss of public confidence.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

### ***Risk and Mitigation***

- 1.4 The recording of repairs activity, mitigation of claim risk and the production of performance reports is reliant on the development and maintenance of both the Integrated Housing Management System and Asset Management Data Systems.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance & Risk Officer

### ***Health and Safety***

- 1.1 Failure to provide effective and timely repairs or maintenance to properties could result in an increased risk of injury or ill health related matters to both tenants and employees of SKDC. This failure also carries risk of prosecution, both criminal and civil with associated fines in the event that safety failings and material breaches are identified.

Completed by: Phil Swinton, Compliance and Health and Safety Manager

### ***Diversity and Inclusion***

- 1.2 The Policy sets a clear framework to ensure its implementation will be carried out equally. Any requirement to adapt provision as a direct response to a relevant protected characteristic will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, free of discrimination or bias to meet the Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.3 The Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out by the author of the policy and can be seen in appendix 3.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

### ***Human Resources***

- 1.5 The Council needs to ensure that adequate resources and its staffing levels are sufficient to implement the Council's policy effectively.

Completed by: Fran Beckitt (Interim Head of HR)

### ***Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing***

- 1.4 Living conditions of a person's home can have an effect on their mental health and wellbeing. The principles contained in the Policy and the defined framework for delivery will provide transparency and reassurance for our customers.

Completed by: Fran Beckitt (Interim Head of HR)

### ***Climate Change***

- 1.6 The policy positively addresses issues of carbon reduction through improved management of resources, selection and standardisation of materials.
- 1.7 The policy provides a framework for the Council to upgrade a property in a way in which improves the Energy Performance Certificate, whilst addressing tenant improvements which may have an adverse effect on the energy rating. This enables the Council to address fuel poverty and reduces carbon emissions associated with the whole housing stock in line with our commitments.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Officer

## **2. Background to the Report**

- 2.1 The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2020-2023 to provide “*Housing that meets the needs of all residents*”. As a stock-retained local authority, the Council has around 5,900 properties. One of the critical Landlord activities is the provision of an effective repairs and maintenance service.
- 2.2 Following the exhaustive work as a result of the self-referral to the Social Housing Regulator, one of the actions within the Housing Improvement Plan was the creation of a robust and transparent repairs & maintenance policy.
- 2.3 The Housing Repairs & Maintenance Policy (Appendix 1) aims to define, at a strategic level, the guiding principles that underpin repair and maintenance activities. It sets out the framework for delivery together with key performance targets.
- 2.4 Previous policy and guidance have taken the form of a series of protocols which were last reviewed in 2017 and are no longer relevant. The Repairs Policy has incorporated and updated these elements into a transparent policy framework compliant and in line with current legislation and best practice.
- 2.5 Further work will be required to amend the Tenant Repair Handbook and develop Standard Operating Procedures following consultation and adoption of the Repairs Policy.
- 2.6 The Policy indicates the use of the Council’s website to communicate statutory elements of the Councils repairing obligations as a Landlord and the Housing Repairs webpages will need to be updated following adoption of this Policy.

## **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1 The Repairs Policy is a critical working document which enables the Council to meet the legislative and regulatory requirements, to respond to tenant’s needs, and improve satisfaction with their homes and the services they receive.
- 3.2 The Council recognises that the efficient and effective repair and maintenance of the housing properties is an important service to tenants and leaseholders, and an essential part of a much wider asset management function.
- 3.3 The Council currently delivers its repairs services through an in-house repairs service and external contractors, whilst it sets out the framework for delivery, the Policy does not aim to define how the service is delivered.
- 3.4 The general principals of managing damp and mould are the same as managing other repair issues, however the Damp and Mould Protocol (Appendix 2) has been added to the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy in response to Awabs Law and the likelihood of additional regulations being introduced.

## **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 Review the existing protocol framework, however this approach means that multiple documents require review on a routine basis with potential inconsistencies as documents are reviewed separately.

## **5. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 5.1 The clarity provided by The Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy, enables staff working in the service to make operational decisions efficiently and consistently. This in turn provides greater transparency and understanding for tenants of the standards and activities the repairs and maintenance service will deliver.

## **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 Consultation has been undertaken within the wider teams in the Housing Directorate. The presentation of this Policy for Scrutiny is a key element in the wider engagement strategy, and we will be undertaking a period of four weeks consultation with tenants.
- 6.2 The consultation period reflects the impact of the Policy.

## **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Housing Repairs & Maintenance Policy  
Appendix 2 – Damp & Mould Protocol  
Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

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# HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

DRAFT

Service Area	Housing
Policy Owner	Director for Housing and Property
Introduced	
Version	1.0
Review date	

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## 2.0 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out South Kesteven District Council's Housing Repairs & Maintenance Policy.

South Kesteven District Council recognises that the efficient and effective repair and maintenance of the housing properties is an important service to tenants and leaseholders and an essential part of a much wider asset management function.

The overall aim of this Policy is to set a framework enabling the delivery of an effective maintenance service which fulfils our statutory obligations, protects council assets, and offers value for money.

## 3.0 Principles and Scope of the Repairs and Maintenance Policy

The Council will ensure that its repairs and maintenance service reflect the following overall principles:

- Meet all our landlord obligations to you in relation to repairing your property.
- Ensure our approach to Health and Safety meets best practice and all our contractual and legal obligations.
- Explain your tenant responsibilities in relation to the tenancy agreement.
- Set out the service standards detailing what you can expect when you report a repair and how work is delivered.
- Clarify what you can expect from the repair's contractors delivering the gas servicing, repairs, and planned works.
- To seek continuous improvement through customer feedback.
- To provide a service which reflects our commitment to equality of access for all customers and to take account of the needs of vulnerable people.
- To maximise economic benefits where possible by creating employment and training opportunities in maintenance related work and by purchasing goods and services locally
- To reduce the carbon footprint associated with the management of the service and by strategic asset investment to our stock in line with Government and the objectives of the Council.
- Consult and involve tenants in repairs activities to ensure we meet their priorities and expectations.

## 4.0 Relevant legislation and regulatory compliance

The Council will ensure that properties are repaired and maintained in accordance with best practice and legislation, including the following:

- Social Housing Regulator Economic and consumer standards
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 (HFHHA 2018)
- Housing Acts 1985, 1988, 1996, 1998 and 2004
- The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations SI. 1994 No 133
- The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for Improvements) regulations 1994, SI 1994 No 613
- The Leasehold Reform, Housing and Development Act 1993
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 – Section 11
- Defective Premises Act 1972 - Section 4
- Environmental Protection Act 1990 – Part III
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Equalities Act 2010
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Housing Health & Safety Rating System

## 5.0 Relevant Council Policies

- Tenancy agreement and Tenants' Handbook
- Recharge Policy
- Decant Policy
- Voids Policy and Lettable Standards
- Aids & Adaptation Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Complaints & Feedback Policy
- Asbestos Management Plan
- Fire Management Plan
- Water Hygiene Procedure
- Service Charge Policy

In order to respond to best practice, the Policy also seeks to have strong reference to the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England by specifically addressing the following expectations:

To provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants and have the objective of completing repairs and improvements 'right first time.'

To meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes.

To ensure a prudent, planned approach to repairs and maintenance of homes and communal areas, demonstrating an appropriate balance of planned and responsive repairs, and value for money.

## **6.0 Responsibilities for Repairs**

The Council's repairing obligation differs dependent upon whether the property is held under a tenancy or a leasehold interest. The extent of the council's obligations for Leaseholders is determined by the lease and statute. Responsive repairs is not a service provided to tenants but also covers the communal areas of a block of flats occupied by leaseholders.

### **6.1 Leaseholder Responsibilities**

Leasehold properties which have been sold under the Right to Buy provisions and which form part of a building have different maintenance responsibilities which are set out in the lease. The council is required to keep in repair, the main structural parts of the building including the roof and foundations, tenant responsibilities may vary and are set out under the terms of the lease. This obligation is subject to the payment of a service charge as provided within the provisions of the lease.

### **6.2 Garage Repair Responsibilities**

Demand for garages has reduced significantly over the last 5 years. As a result, we will undertake a wider asset review on garage sites where significant repairs are required and, in some cases, longer term alternative uses for sites will be identified. Repairs to garages will only be undertaken if there is a significant risk of harm or is demonstrable demand for the garages on a particular site. Tenants may be offered an alternative garage which is in good condition if repairs to their current garage are deemed uneconomical.

### **6.3 Landlord and Tenant Repairs Responsibility**

Landlord and tenant responsibilities are set out generally in the tenancy agreement, but the responsibilities are not always clear. The table shows clearly the responsibilities of each party.

Ref	Item	Type of Repair	Us	You	Notes and exceptions
BP1	Bathroom	Baths, shower trays and wash basins This is the bath / basin itself, for taps, plugs etc please see individual items listed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except unblocking wastes and cleaning of heavy soiled or lime scale damaged baths or basins
BP2	Bathroom	Chains and plugs on any sink, bath or basin		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
BP3	Bathroom	Bath panels (if fitted by South Kesteven District Council)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
BP4	Bathroom	Seals around the bath and sink units.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Cleaning including limescale & mould treatment of seals is the responsibility of the tenant
BP5	Bathroom	Tiling or aqua boarding (where supplied and fitted by SKDC)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Cleaning including limescale & mould treatment of seals is the responsibility of the tenant
BP6	Bathroom	Showers -electric or mixer (unless fitted by you)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except shower curtain track/rail
BP7	Bathroom	Shower head & hose	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except damage through lack of cleaning & limescale removal
BP8	Bathroom	Toilets / WC and associated plumbing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except blockages caused by tenant misuse, e.g., nappies, wipes etc.
BP9	Bathroom	WC / toilet seats		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
CA1	Communal Areas	Communal areas, such as lifts, entrance halls, stairs, passageways and TV aerials.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Service Charges may apply
CA2	Communal Areas	External areas, lighting, pathways, car parking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Service Charges may apply
TM1	TV & Media	TV aerials & Wi-Fi, sockets, and cabling.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unless Communal
TM2	TV & Media	Telephone points & cabling		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Including the installation of telephone lines where one has not been installed previously.
E1	Electrical	Fixed wiring, sockets and lighting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
E2	Electrical	Fuse board / Consumer Unit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Unless resetting trip switches / RCD's which should be checked before reporting.
E3	Electrical	Light Fittings (Fitted by the Council)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except light bulbs, dimmer switches, fuses, fluorescent tubes and starters
E4	Electrical	Switches and socket fittings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except where damaged by tenants, dimmer switches or switches/sockets fitted by tenants
E5	Electrical	External front entry light	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Tenants are responsible for exterior lighting to the garden.
EX1	External	Garden paths	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Including steps, footpaths and ramps that provide access to your front, rear or side door only

EX2	External	Garden patios & decking		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
EX3	External	Gardens, cut lawns, trim hedges, shrubs and trees.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hedges should be maintained to a height of approximately 2 metres. Tenants are required to request permission to plant new trees / hedging or fast-growing shrubs
EX4	External	Driveways installed / adopted by the Council	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		The Council will not repair tenant installed or any type of gravel / paving slab /grass driveways.
EX5	External	Fencing & Gates		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Except where a recognisable hazard exists e.g., some communal paths or roadway. An assessment of a fence meeting these criteria will be made following an inspection by the Council. The Council may choose to do the repair as planned programme work, rather than a response repair.
EX6	External	Drains, Gully's	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Tenants are responsible for keeping gullies free of leaves and other debris.
EX7	External	External decoration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Where previously painted by the Council
H1	Heating	Includes all main Boiler or heat pump repairs or breakdown	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
H2	Heating	Electric heating systems repairs or breakdown	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
H3	Heating	Leaking radiators	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
H4	Heating	Thermostatic Radiator Valves	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except where damaged by tenant
H5	Heating	Bleeding Radiators		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
H6	Heating	Topping up water pressure		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
H7	Heating	Relighting Pilot light		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Including the setting of any heating controls or programmers
H8	Heating	Secondary heating, gas/electric/solid fuel fires and surrounds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Only where these have been provided by SKDC
HW1	Hot Water	Hot water cylinders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
HW2	Hot Water	Immersion heaters	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
IR1	Internal Repairs	Carpentry e.g., skirting, window boards, stairs, stair rails, weather boards.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except where damage has been caused by tenants
IR2	Internal Repairs	Floorboards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Unless broken due to carpeting.
IR3	Internal Repairs	Floor covering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Excludes fitted thermoplastic vinyl tiles. These can only be removed or altered by the Council.

IR4	Internal Repairs	Internal doors (including frames, hinges, door jambs and handles).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Tenants are responsible for adjusting internal doors to suit floor covering.
IR5	Internal Repairs	Internal door locks		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
IR6	Internal Repairs	Internal walls and plaster	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except minor plaster cracks up to 10mm wide/ repair of small holes. The Council will not reskim or plaster following the stripping of wallpaper.
IR7	Internal Repairs	Internal decoration to your home		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Council will not be responsible for repairs arising from decorating activity
K1	Kitchen	Domestic appliances		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	E.G., cookers and built in appliances, fridges, washing machines etc, unless supplied by the Council.
K2	Kitchen	Kitchen units, cabinets and door, unit handles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except damage caused by tenant misuse. E.g., child or pet damage, painting unit doors.
K3	Kitchen	Kitchen sink & taps	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except blockages caused by tenant misuse, e.g., food waste and fats.
K4	Kitchen	Dishwasher waste traps		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
K5	Kitchen	Washing machine waste trap	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Excluding blockages
K6	Kitchen	Worktops	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except damage caused by tenant misuse.
K7	Kitchen	Tiling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except damage caused by tenant misuse, painting tiling etc.
K8	Kitchen	Cooker supply - gas & electric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Tenants are responsible for the correct connections of appliances to supply
P1	Plumbing	Plumbing repairs and leaks to any part of the dwelling.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except for tenant appliances e.g., washing machines and dishwasher taps/hoses
S&S1	Safety & Security	Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Detectors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Hard wired detectors will be maintained by the Council, Battery operated detectors will be maintained by the tenant including replacement of batteries.
S&S2	Safety & Security	Front / Back door Locks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		We will replace all defective locks through normal wear and tear, except where damage has been caused by tenants or loss of keys.
S&S3	Safety & Security	Loss of keys or door entry fobs		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Including repairs to forced entry if you get locked out
	Safety & Security	Communal doors & access systems	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

	Safety & Security	Infestations in your home.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Of any kind, to include mice, cockroaches and bed bugs. The Environmental Health Department will be able to offer advice on dealing with infestations.
	Safety & Security	Infestations in communal areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		This may be subject to a service charge
	Structure	External Doors (including frames, hinges, locks, door jambs, letterboxes and handles).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except where damage has been caused by tenants
	Structure	Glazing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except tenant damage. If criminal damage, the Council will replace but a crime number must be obtained (the Council will not accept an incident number) within 24 hours of the damage. Tenants will be recharged for broken glazing replacement without a crime reference number.
	Structure	Windows and frames	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Except loss of window keys.
	Structure	Roofs, including guttering and external rainwater goods, soffits and fascia's	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Structure	Brickwork & Render	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Structure	Garages / Out buildings/Storage Sheds, where these are provided by the Council	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Where these are used by tenants for other than the original purpose, e.g. For washing/drying/fridge/freezer, the Council will not be responsible for contents or tenant alterations.
W1	Waste	Waste and rubbish		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Including dustbins and refuse areas within your own garden. Dustbin and refuse areas in common parts will be maintained by the Council. Recharges will be made for inappropriate disposal of goods in communal areas.

#### 6.4 Tenant Responsibilities

The tenant is responsible for reporting repairs to the Council and must allow access to their home for the repair work and associated inspections to be carried out.

The tenant is responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of certain minor items within the home or improvements and alterations they make to the property, as set out and in conjunction with the Tenancy Agreement and the Tenants' Handbook.



The tenant is responsible for allowing access for essential maintenance visits and surveys to support the repairs team. These include the annual gas or heating check, electrical installation condition check, stock condition survey to undertake an assessment of the property's key components so that future works can be programmed and asbestos surveys to ensure that we can work safely in your home.

## 6.5 Landlord Responsibilities

The Council is responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of the structure and common parts of its properties, as set out in the Tenancy Agreement and Tenants' Handbook.

The Council fulfils its repairing responsibilities through a combination of the following type of repairs:

- Responsive Repairs
- Planned improvements.
- Cyclical maintenance, which includes decorating and servicing and inspection of gas and electrical installations.
- Re-chargeable repairs
- Repairs to Empty (Void) Properties
- The Right to Repair
- Adaptations

Responsive repairs will normally replace fixtures and fittings supplied by the Council on a like for like or improved basis or, where this is not possible, we will aim to provide the tenant with choices in relation to the replacement.

If a component cannot be fully repaired, we may make a temporary repair and arrange for a full planned replacement to follow on and this will be discussed with you.

The Council is making all efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of both its properties and associated activities and we may identify that a planned replacement or an alteration to a system is the preferred option to meet our obligations, for example we may choose to remove solid fuel based heating systems or block up a chimney, rather than make repairs and we will discuss these types of decisions with you so that you are fully aware of the reason for the decision.

The Council will repair or make safe any fencing for which it is responsible, but if the fencing cannot be repaired or made safe it may be removed or replaced. Any decision to provide new or replacement fencing will be based on Health and safety, privacy and amenity. It is not the Council's responsibility to ensure adequate fencing for the purpose of securing areas for pets, this is the responsibility of the tenant. The replacement of fencing which is beyond repair will be included in planned works programmes and estates improvement programmes.

The Council may undertake the work listed above in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Council's Responsive Repairs Manager. This particularly relates to vulnerable tenants or where there is a risk to tenant's health & safety.

The Council will charge for undertaking repairs to the property where damage has been caused by the tenant, members of their household or visitors to the property.

If the tenant undertakes any works in the property and as a result they cause damage which could result in significant risk to the tenant, visitors to the property or local tenants, (for example, a tenant doing DIY and has broken a water pipe, damaged a gas pipe or exposed electrical wiring) then the Council reserves the right to undertake any necessary resulting repairs and re-charge the Tenant for the cost it incurs in putting it right.

The Council may undertake any necessary repairs to the property if damage has occurred as a result of a crime for which the tenant has a crime reference number and is actively supporting the investigation, however the Council will recharge for the repair works if:

- The damage was as a result of criminal activity which involved the tenant or a member of the household, except in exceptional circumstances.
- The repair is required as a result of forced entry by the Police if this action results in a successful conviction of the tenant or member of the household.

Tenants are responsible for damage to the contents of the property and are encouraged to ensure they have appropriate insurance in place to cover their personal possessions.

Tenants are required to treat Council staff and contractors with respect whilst they are working on their property. Tenants are expected to refrain from smoking whilst technicians are working in the property. Tenants are also expected to remove and control their children and animals from the areas where technicians are working. Tenancy Services will be informed of any person acting unreasonably towards Council staff or contractors and action for breach of tenancy may be progressed.

## **7.0 Responsive Repairs**

The Council will provide an effective responsive repairs service to its tenants to ensure that their home is safe and secure and that the value of the Council's assets is maintained.

Responsive repairs are those carried out when components fail, and which cannot wait to be undertaken under a cyclical, planned or improvement programme. These

works, which are revenue funded, comprise of responsive repairs to items such as plumbing/sanitary equipment, door/window fittings, heating appliances and electrical installations.

The Council's policy for carrying out day to day repairs is built around a number of key principles:

- To provide an open, accountable, and consistent level of service.
- To optimise the balance between cost and service quality to achieve value for money.
- To involve tenants, to ensure the service responds to the needs of customers and remains 'fit for purpose.'

The council, and contractors employed by the council, will aim to ensure that responsive repairs are completed correctly at the first visit and that disruption to the tenant and their home is minimised. When this is not possible, we will ensure that this is communicated with the customer and they understand what will happen next, and when it will happen.

### 7.1 Heating & Associated Repairs

Where pre-existing council owned heating provision is beyond economic repair the Council will consider replacement with an alternative form and this may not be a like for like replacement.

The Council does not provide a secondary source of heating as standard. Secondary sources of heating will only be provided on a discretionary case by case basis depending on the circumstances involved (for example identifiable medical needs). When any existing secondary sources are beyond economic repair they will be removed.

Heating repairs are usually carried out quickly and with minimum disruption to tenants, however there are occasions when temporary heating will be supplied by our contractor. For practical reasons, these are supplied in the form as fan heaters, however the Council will retain a small stock of alternative heating forms which can be provided on request.

### 7.2 Reporting Repairs

Tenants can report repairs to the Council in any of the following ways:

- by telephone (including an out-of-hours number for reporting emergency repairs)
- online (Routine Repairs)

Appointments will be offered for all non-emergency responsive repairs. Tenants

will be able to choose from several specific appointment slots including morning, afternoon, and we endeavour to facilitate specific requests for example, avoiding school run, or first appointments.

### 7.3 Repair Priorities

All repair orders are prioritised according to the urgency and nature of the work. Repairs that are required as a result of component failure or breakdowns that put tenants' health and safety, or the property, at risk will be dealt with faster than those that can safely wait.

#### 7.3.1 Emergency Repairs – within 24 hours

These are repairs that need to be carried out to avoid danger to the health and safety of the occupants, or where a failure to carry out the repair could cause extensive damage to buildings and property.

Examples of emergency repairs would include loss of all electrical power in the property, loss of all heating and hot water in the property, blockage of the toilet where this is the only facility in the property, or an insecure property.

Emergency repairs will be attended within 24 hours of the defect being reported to the Council. The out of hours emergency repairs team only deals with jobs that cannot safely be left until normal working hours. They may only make safe or undertake temporary repairs, in which case permanent repairs will be completed as soon as possible during normal working hours.

#### 7.3.2 Urgent Repairs – within 5 working days

This category of repair covers more urgent repairs which over time can get worse and damage property and belongings and examples include containable water leaks, partial loss of electric or water supplies, blocked sink, bath or basin, broken locks which do not affect the security of the property, broken or cracked electrical accessories, plugs and sockets extractor fan etc.

#### 7.3.3 Routine Repairs – by mutually agreed appointment.

These are repairs that are not emergencies, although they may cause inconvenience to tenants. Examples of routine repairs would include replastering, easing an internal door, clearing an overflowing gutter. Routine repairs will be completed by appointment.

The Council aims to complete all repairs at the first visit, however this is not always possible due to unforeseen circumstances, for example where parts are not readily available, or we suspect there may be asbestos. In these cases, follow on works will

be required and these will be booked in according to the priority and availability of materials.

In some instances, the Council may need to inspect the property to establish the precise nature of the work required. In such cases the Council will undertake a Pre-inspection which will be by appointment. These may include damp and mould related problems, repairs where the scope of the job is not known or if the diagnosis given by the tenant is not detailed enough.

In some cases, planned repairs may be identified following repair work, or inspections. This may include certain types of improvement work, for example, the fitting of extract fans, damp proof work. This work may require further surveys and this work will be classed as planned works and not subject to the responsive repair timeframes.

#### **7.3.4 Out of Hours Emergencies**

The Council operates an out of hours service to complete emergency repairs in order to make the property safe until a full repair can be undertaken.

An emergency repair is restricted to circumstances where there is a danger to life, a safety hazard, the potential for more extensive damage or is needed to ensure a home is secure. Examples of these include:

- Gas escapes.
- Exposed live electrical cables.
- Severe water leaks.
- Major drainage problems.

The priority in instances of emergency repairs, will be to make the property safe; as such follow-up visits may be required to undertake a full repair, this will be undertaken at a convenient date and time agreed with the tenant in line with the approach to routine repairs.

During the winter period the out of hour's service for emergency repairs will include heating and hot water repairs. During the summer period these repairs will be undertaken as a routine repair.

## **8.0 Planned and Cyclical Maintenance**

### **8.1 Planned Maintenance**

Planned maintenance includes all planned improvement works and planned repairs to the housing stock.

The Council gathers and uses information relating to each property to plan and develop its planned maintenance programmes. Typically, this will include:

- information from a periodic stock condition survey
- condition of property elements & components
- expected component and material lifecycles
- information about asbestos present in the property
- information about the energy performance of properties
- Information from the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Repair history

In developing its annual planned maintenance programme, the Council will consider the current condition of the property and assess this against the component lifecycle and the decency standards as defined by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. Consideration will also be given to the impact on other maintenance work streams.

Expenditure on planned maintenance will be limited by the constraints of the Business Plan. A realistic programme of works will be produced which balances the requirements of the stock database and its affordability.

The Council will publish information about its planned maintenance programme each year in its annual report to tenants. This will include details of how much money has been spent on planned maintenance and what type of works have been carried out.

The Council will achieve value for money in delivering planned maintenance programmes by tendering contracts on a regular basis and entering into partnering arrangements with contractors. Information about contracts awarded and partnering arrangements will be published on the public contract's website.

The Council will actively engage with tenants and leaseholders when considering major contracts, such as the gas service and maintenance contract.

## 8.2 Cyclical Maintenance

These are maintenance works that are undertaken at defined time intervals as routine preventative maintenance. The works are undertaken on regular planned cycles for servicing, inspection and testing of equipment, often as required by statute or regulations or to maintain the generation condition of the stock, and particularly the electrical and mechanical installations within the stock.

The Council will undertake the following programmes on a cyclical basis:

Work Programme	Frequency
Gas Appliance Servicing	Annual
Solid Fuel System Service & Sweep	Annual
Air Source Heat Pump / Electric Heating	Annual

Smoke & CO Detector check	Annual
Fire Detection Systems to blocks and schemes	Weekly/quarterly/half yearly/annually (as applicable for installed equipment)
Emergency Lighting in blocks and schemes	Monthly/half yearly/annually (as applicable for installed equipment)
Fire Fighting Equipment	Annually
Fire Door Assemblies	Monthly/half yearly/Annually (Based on setting & risk)
Periodic electrical installation condition inspection - Dwellings	5 yearly
Periodic electrical installation condition inspection - Communal Areas	5 yearly
Internal & External Decoration	7 yearly
Water hygiene/Legionella testing monthly on sheltered schemes and relevant flat-block schemes	weekly/Monthly/quarterly/half yearly/annually (based upon task & setting)
Passenger Lifts	Annual service & independent safety inspection

Communal areas to flats, sheltered accommodation common rooms, etc. may require painting at different intervals. Communal areas that are subject to reduced traffic or wear and tear will not require decorating at the same frequency as other parts subject to heavier traffic. Inspections will be undertaken and assessment made before any work is undertaken. Where work is not required in the area it shall be re-scheduled for a future inspection within a suitable timescale.

Gas servicing and the landlord gas safety checks are carried out annually and at the checks on smoke and carbon monoxide detectors should be tested at the same time in individual dwellings. The combination of these programmes reduces tenant disturbance, improves access rates for smoke detector checking, and increases value for money by using one contractor.

The Council will publish details of works undertaken and its adherence to regulatory compliance in its annual report to tenants.



### 8.3 Enabling Tenant Choice

Where the Council undertakes major repairs or works of improvement it will offer the tenant of the property choice of selected finishes. This will apply to the:

- colour of finish of internal decoration from an agreed range of colours
- the door and worktop finish of kitchen units
- colour of tiles or wall finish in the bathroom and kitchen
- colour of floor covering
- style of external door

## 9.0 Appointments and Access

### 9.1 Responsive Repairs

Appointments are generally made at the time of reporting a repair. Tenants will be advised of an appointment date during the phone call and a follow up reminder text will be sent. Where the online reporting system is used, you will be contacted with an appointment by the Council by letter, email or in person. Occasionally we use subcontractors and are not able to give an appointment. You will be advised where this is the case and should the tenant wish to arrange an appointment, they are able to contact the contractor on the telephone number provided and arrange a convenient appointment for the work to be completed.

### 9.2 Planned and cyclical maintenance repairs

The Council will write to inform tenants if they are due to have major planned works to their properties. They will arrange for asbestos surveys to be undertaken and the asbestos contractors will contact you directly to arrange a suitable time to survey the property.

Planned and cyclical works appointment are managed and co-ordinated by our appointed contractors and they will call or write to you directly to manage and arrange appointments. There will usually more than one visit to scope the work, discuss colour options and agree final designs for the work.

The appointment process for cyclical works, including gas and electrical safety checks are vitally important for tenant safety and the Council takes a robust approach to ensuring access is maintained.

Our contractors will write offering an appointment, where this is missed, they will send a further appointment. If this is missed the Council will make contact and start



preparing for legal action. This can take the form of a warrant of entry, injunction or possession proceedings which can result in the loss of a tenant's home.

### 9.3 Missed Appointments

The Council are experiencing an increase in the number of properties where we cannot get access.

In many instances, multiple attempts to carry out essential safety checks have been made.

Missed appointments is a breach of the Tenancy Agreement and effectively represents financial loss to the Council whilst at the same time affecting service levels to other tenants.

The process for appointments issued by contractors is to make two fixed appointments, which can be rearranged to suit the tenant. A minimum of 7 days notice is given for all appointments other than emergency or urgent appointments. A call card is left at the tenant's property and photographic evidence of the visit obtained.

Further efforts to contact tenants and or their family is made directly by phone or as visits to the tenants' home.

The Council as a Landlord has a right to access to repair and carry out safety inspections and to mitigate the risks associated with missed appointments the Council may take one or more of the following actions to ensure that risks are mitigated in a timely manner:

- Obtaining a Warrant to enter the premises under Schedule 3 2(3) Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Obtaining an injunction to enter the premises. We will apply for a lifetime injunction where a tenant is repeatedly refusing access.
- Serve a Notice to Quit. These may be issued in addition to other enforcement action to gain entry.
- Serve notice of possession proceedings for breach of tenancy.
- Serve an abandonment notice where it appears that no one is living at the property.

Legal action can be costly, and the Council will minimise the cost by recharging tenants for missed appointment and any legal costs it incurs in trying to gain reasonable access.

## 10.0 Quality Control

The Council believes that the quality of its maintenance service is extremely important, not only to ensure the health, safety, comfort and satisfaction of its tenants, but also to protect the fabric and value of its property.

The Council requires all staff and contractors working in tenants' homes to comply with its published code of conduct.

The Council's Repairs Officers, in partnership with tenants, are responsible for monitoring the standard of work completed.

All tenants who receive maintenance works will be encouraged to complete a tenant satisfaction questionnaire after the works have been completed. These will generally be through a text service.

The Council will ensure that a proportion of responsive repairs are inspected once they have been completed. Any performance issues arising from these post-inspections will be referred to the contractor for investigation.

Where a tenant has recorded dissatisfaction with any service work carried out to their home, this will be investigated by Council Officers, who will ensure that any necessary remedial works are carried out.

Tenants may make a formal complaint about the standard of work or service and the Customer Feedback Policy is also available to any tenant who is dissatisfied with the maintenance works provided.

## **11.0 Recharging tenants for repairs**

The Council aims to maximise its financial resources to enable improvements to be conducted to homes and services. The Council will ensure that tenants meet the costs of repairs they have responsibility for.

The Tenancy Agreement sets out tenants' responsibilities for repairs, these are set out in the table of responsibilities and form part of the Tenant Handbook.

The Council will charge tenants for repair works undertaken on their behalf, where this expenditure has been caused either by damage which is not the result of fair wear and tear, or by unauthorised alterations to the property.

Payment will be required in full before any re-chargeable repairs work is carried out, with the following exceptions where:

- an emergency response is required.
- the property must be made secure at the direction of the police where they have forced entry (costs will be recharged as appropriate to either the tenant or the police)
- the repair is prejudicial to the health and safety of the household.
- (For example, a blocked WC)
- the disrepair could cause or is causing damage to other parts of the property or to other properties.
- the Council considers that the disrepair could lead to deterioration in the appearance of the area.

Where tenants are in hardship and may not be able to afford the cost of the repair, this will be discussed with the tenant and a plan will be agreed in writing with the tenant and the Council.

In exceptional circumstances, the Council may consider waiving the cost of the re-chargeable repair. All cases will be considered on an individual basis.

### 11.1 Rechargeable Repairs undertaken during a tenancy

Each year the Council spends a considerable sum of money on cleaning, clearing, and repairing its properties due to neglect and damage caused by its tenants, their families, and their friends. This is money that could be better spent on enhancing properties and the environment and the Council will ensure that all aspects of the tenancy are enforced. This means we can make sure that we are spending money where it is most needed.

All requests for repairs reported by tenants will be assessed against the Council's repairing obligations, as outlined in the tenancy agreement and the Repairs Policy. Where a reported repair is deemed to be the responsibility of the tenant, the tenant will be informed that they are responsible for that repair under the terms of their tenancy agreement. This includes damage that may have been caused accidentally, for instance a window broken by children in the property.

Where a repair is needed as a result of criminal activity that has not been caused by the tenant, a member of their family or a visitor to their home, the tenant will not be charged for the cost of any works providing written confirmation with a crime reference number is obtained from the Police (an Incident Number is not sufficient).

Where a repair is needed as a result of criminal activity that has been caused by the tenant, a member of their family or a visitor to their home, the tenant will be charged for the cost of any works. Where appropriate, the Police will also be informed of any criminal activity that has taken place.

Where damage is caused by the Police whilst executing a warrant and a conviction is secured against the tenant or a member of their household or a visitor to their home, the tenant will be held liable for the cost of the repair. Where no conviction is secured, the Council will seek to recover the cost of the repair from the Police.

### 11.2 Rechargeable Repairs at the end of a tenancy

On receipt of a valid notice to end a tenancy, arrangements will be made with the tenant for the property to be inspected. Following this inspection, the tenant will be informed in writing of any work for which they are responsible prior to vacating the property.

Any re-chargeable works not carried out by the tenant before they vacate the property will be undertaken by the Council and the cost of the works will be re-charged to the former tenant.

A situation may arise where an end of tenancy inspection is not able to be conducted in the presence of the tenant, for instance where the property has been abandoned. Further, some repairs for which the tenant is responsible may occur after the end of tenancy inspection has taken place. In these circumstances an empty property inspection will take place and a photographic record taken of any damage caused or

work required to the property which is deemed to be the former tenant's responsibility.

Where the Council is aware of a forwarding address, the former tenant will be advised in writing that they will be re-charged any costs incurred by the Council and the debt will be pursued in a manner which accords with the Councils Rent and Other Income Collection and Recovery Policy.

Where no forwarding address is known, a record will be kept of any outstanding re-chargeable repairs. The Council will pursue the debt from the former tenant should their new address later become known.

## **12.0 The Right to Repair Scheme**

Under 'The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994' secure and introductory tenants are entitled to have certain repairs carried out within a prescribed period of time. Such tenants may be entitled to compensation if their repair is not completed within the prescribed time limits.

Damage to internal decorations as a result of a general responsive repair will not generally be compensated.

The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations SI. 1994 No 133, sets qualifying times for certain qualifying repairs and requires all local authorities to advise tenants who are reporting any of the qualifying repairs of:

- their rights under the Right to Repair Scheme
- the timescales set out in the Right to Repair Scheme to complete the repair (either 1, 3 or 7 days)
- the details of a second contractor should the Council's main contractor fail to undertake the work within the required timescale

The Right to Repair provides tenants with a right to receive a prescribed amount of compensation, should the Council's contractor fail to undertake the repair within the qualifying time.

### **12.1 Implementing the Right to Repair Scheme**

The Council will implement the Right to Repair Scheme by:

- ensuring that information about the Right to Repair Scheme is available on the Council's website
- advising tenants who are reporting qualifying repairs of their rights under the Right to Repair Scheme

- providing compensation to tenants where they have enacted their rights and we have failed to undertake repairs within the qualifying time, at the levels prescribed

The Council will ensure that it:

- Ensures that information about the Right to Repair is available on the Council's website
- Provide details about the scheme in the Tenant Handbook

## 12.2 Qualifying repairs under the right to repair scheme for local authority tenants

Repair type	Response time (working days)
Total loss of electric power	1
Partial loss of electric power	3
Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting	1
Total loss of water supply	1
Partial loss of water supply	3
Total or partial loss of gas supply	1
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1
Heating or hot water not working between 31 October and 1 May	1
Heating or hot water not working between 1 May and 31 October	3
Blocked/leaking foul drain, soil stack or toilet	1
Toilet not flushing (if there is only one toilet in the property)	1
Blocked sink, bath or basin	3
Tap cannot be turned	3
Leak from a water pipe, tank or cistern	1
Leaking roof	7
Insecure external window, door or lock	1
Loose or detached banister or handrail	3
Rotten timber flooring or stair tread	3
Door entry phone not working	7
Mechanical extractor fan not working	7

## 13.0 The Right to Undertake and Receive Compensation for Improvements

### 13.1 Introduction

Part IV of the Housing Act 1985 established that all local authority tenants are secure tenants<sup>1</sup> and that all secure tenants have the right to undertake improvements to their home, subject to receiving the landlord's consent.



The Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993 gives secure tenants the right to compensation for certain tenant financed improvements that have had the written permission of the Council.

The right to compensation for improvements is subject to certain qualifying criteria and regulations contained in the Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for Improvements) Regulations 1994 Statutory Instrument 1994 No. 613.

### 13.2 The Right to Undertake Improvements

All secure tenants have the right to undertake improvements to their homes, on condition that they have been given prior written consent from the Council.

Introductory tenants do not have the same rights and must not carry out any alterations or improvements to your home or property.

On receipt of a written application, the Council will assess the proposed alteration to ensure that the property asset and value is not adversely affected.

Permission to carry out an improvement will not be unreasonably withheld, but permission may be withheld if the requested improvement will:

- make the dwelling more difficult to let in the future
- create long term maintenance issues
- be unsuitable to future occupants
- adversely affect the energy performance rating

Tenants who undertake improvements to their home will be responsible for the maintenance of the improvement, throughout the lifetime of their tenancy.

Consent for alterations will not be provided retrospectively and tenants who undertake alterations without consent may be required to reinstate the property to its former state or may be recharged for rectification and reinstatement works.

Tenant improvements which are considered major, conservatories, driveways, porches, and structural alterations including new walls, can only be left in-situ when a tenancy ends with the written permission of the council. Permission will be granted if the council considers that the maintenance works meets the criteria set for permission. In all other instances the works should be removed by the tenant and the property returned to the original state.

### 13.3 Compensation for Improvements

Compensation payments for improvements are not payable until the tenancy comes to an end.

The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for Improvements) Regulations 1994 Statutory Instrument 1994 No. 613 sets out:

details of tenants who will qualify for compensation for improvements, a list of qualifying improvements together with the notional life of the improvement, and the formula used in the calculation of compensation to qualifying tenants.

The Council will provide tenants with information about their right to undertake improvements and receive compensation for undertaking improvements by ensuring that information about the Right to Compensation for Improvements is available on the Council's website.

## **14.0 Adaptations to Homes of Tenants with Disabilities**

The Council will ensure that its housing stock meets the needs of tenants of the district who have disabilities by:

- maintaining a register of homes which have either been purpose built or substantially adapted to meet the needs of a disabled person/persons.
- Ensuring that purpose built and substantially adapted property is retained in stock and not sold under the Right to Buy Scheme.
- establishing an annual budget which it will use to fund works of adaptation to the homes of existing tenants.
- Maintain a policy framework setting out the strategy and framework for delivery. This policy is available on the Council's website.

### **14.1 Works of Adaptation to the Homes of Existing Tenants**

The Council will set aside a specified sum of resources each year, to enable adaptations to be undertaken to the homes of tenants who have disabilities.

Tenants requiring adaptations will need to engage with the Occupational Therapy Service, who will assess the tenant's requirements.

The Council may conduct an options appraisal and further investigations to look in more detail at the proposals and how the need is best met, in some cases this may be through rehousing.

Any applications for adaptations are processed in line with the Council's Aids and Adaptations Policy

## **15.0 Commitment to Equality**

### 15.1 Introduction

The Council is committed to providing an equal opportunity to the service for all its tenants and leaseholders. Any action taken under this policy will comply with current equalities legislation.

### 15.2 Council Staff and Contractors

The Council' staff and contractors will operate in such a way to ensure that they meet the needs of individual tenants and to ensure that they do not discriminate on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

All contractors will be asked to provide copies of their Equality and Diversity Policies to the Council, prior to the award of any contract.

### 15.3 Procedures and Practices

The Council' staff and contractors will operate in such a way to ensure that their procedures and practices are sensitive to the needs of individual tenants and to ensure that they do not discriminate on the grounds of:

- race and ethnicity
- age
- disability
- religion or belief
- gender
- sexual orientation
- gender identity

Repair work and Maintenance programmes may from time to time need to be tailored to meet the needs of individuals, for example the priority of a repair may be increased for vulnerable tenants. All cases will be considered on an individual basis.

## 15.4 Information

The Council will in all reasonable circumstances make information available in a variety of information formats, including for example:

- large print
- audio tape
- community languages

Where specialist services are required to ensure that information is accessible to the tenant or leaseholder, we will ensure that these are made available.

## 16. Performance Monitoring

### 16.1 Introduction

The Council will monitor its performance in delivering its repairs and maintenance service to ensure that the programmes are delivered effectively and to assist in the delivery of continuous improvement.

### 16.2 Performance Monitoring

To help achieve the Council's aim of ensuring continuous improvement in the services it provides and to ensure that it meets all statutory obligations, the Council will put in place systems and processes in place which allow it to monitor and evaluate performance.

The Council will constantly monitor service standards and the performance of its contractors. Appropriate action will be taken if the service works are not performed to the required standard.

The Council will continually review its standards by measurement against the performance of other social housing providers, with the aim of achieving continuous improvement and to ensure compliance with best practice.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and the Corporate Management Team will receive quarterly updates detailing the following information:

- % of jobs completed within the target timescales for emergency and urgent repairs
- Percentage of Properties meeting the Decent Homes Standard
- % of tenants satisfied with their repair
- Average Void Relet Time (Calendar Days)
- Spend reports detailing expenditure on capital works

To ensure a quality service, additional responsive repairs key performance indicators and management reports will be monitored on a regular basis to help ensure

that cost, quality and performance targets are met.

Other key performance indicators we will record, and monitor include:

- % of responsive repairs completed by appointment
- Number of missed appointments
- Average number of repairs per property
- Average cost of repairs per property.
- % of tenants satisfied with the responsive repair service overall
- Average time to complete routine repairs (working days)
- % of tenants satisfied with their planned or cyclical work% of repairs completed “right first time.”

## **17. Review of Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy**

The policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it is consistent with changes in legislation and regulation.

This policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis, or sooner if there are any changes in the relevant legislation.



# HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

## Damp & Mould Protocol

Service Area	Housing
Policy Owner	Director for Housing and Property
Introduced	
Version	1.0
Review date	

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# 1. Introduction

Damp and Mould are conditions caused by too much moisture in your home. The Repairs and Maintenance Policy generally cover the repairs needed to the property but do not address how damp and mould specifically, will be managed by the council.

The age and construction type of the Council's property stock are contributing factors alongside poor thermal performance, which can create difficulties for tenants to provide sufficient heating and ventilation, creating ideal conditions for mould

The ability for a tenant to effectively heat and ventilate their home is a key consideration and recent increases in fuel costs are adding to the overall impact and increase in reports of damp and mould.

The aim of this protocol is to detail the Council's response to the management of damp and mould, and to set a framework to proactively manage potential risks and promptly diagnose and prevent issues which may arise from damp and mould in our properties, including communal areas through the following:

Undertake effective investigations and implement reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to manage damp, mould and condensation.

Offer advice and assistance to customers living in our properties, including information on how to prevent damp, mould and condensation.

To signpost residents who are experiencing difficulties managing their heating costs to charities and other support agencies for assistance.

Ensure staff and contractors are trained on how to recognise, manage, and identify solutions to damp, mould and condensation

# 2. Relevant legislation and regulatory compliance

This protocol is written in the context of the current legal and regulatory requirements as set out in the Repairs and Maintenance Policy with particular focus on the

Landlord and Tenant Act, 1985, the Housing Health and Safety Rating System within the Housing Act 2004, Home (Fitness for habitation) Act 2018 and Decent Homes Guidance

In order to respond to best practice, the Policy also seeks to have strong reference to the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England by specifically addressing the emerging requirements and expectations set by the Social Housing Regulator and amendments to the Social Housing Bill.

## **3. Responsibilities**

### **3.1 Tenant Responsibilities**

Damp and mould caused by condensation can often be controlled by simple measures which can be adopted by the tenant. These responsibilities include:

- Following all advice and guidance issued by us, on managing and controlling damp, mould and condensation.
- Regularly checking for and reporting any leaks, or faulty heating, windows, or extractor fans.
- Ensuring of the general upkeep and cleaning of extractor fans and vents (i.e., that they are not blocked).
- allowing access for inspections and for the carrying out of all remedial works.
- Not allowing the property to become overcrowded or using the property as a business or for purpose it was not originally intended.

### **3.2 Landlord Responsibilities**

The Council is responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of the structure and common parts of its properties, as set out in the Tenancy Agreement and Tenants' Handbook.

The repairing obligations in relation to damp and mould are set out generally in the Housing Act 2004. The Housing Health & Safety System is a mechanism to inspect and assess hazards in property and grade these according to risk.

Damp and Mould are specifically addressed under section 9 of the Housing Act 2004,

## 4. Identifying Damp and Mould

Damp is a general term used to describe conditions where there is high moisture level in a building.

**Rising damp** is due to a defective, breached or non-existent damp course. This will leave a 'tide mark' about 1m above the floor. Fixing rising damp is a job for a qualified builder.

**Penetrating damp** is moisture entering the house through leaking pipes, a damaged roof, blocked gutters, gaps around window frames and cracked rendering and brickwork etc. All these problems can be remedied.

**Condensation** occurs when moist air meets a colder surface like a wall, window, mirror etc. The air can't hold the moisture and tiny drops of water appear. It also occurs in places the air is still, like the corners of rooms, behind furniture or inside wardrobes.

Mould is a general term used to describe a type of spore-producing hyphomycetes fungi and there are many different types.

Mould is an ever-present part of our ecosystem, and their spores and fragments are always present to a greater or lesser extent in our homes, workplaces and public buildings. It is virtually impossible to completely get rid of them.

As mould spores land on places where there is excessive moisture, such as properties suffering from condensation, rising damp, penetrating dampness or leaks, these spores will grow. Many building materials provide nutrients that encourage growth.

Mould grows on organic materials, for example wood, paint and fabric, all it then needs to thrive is oxygen and moisture. Moisture is likely to be the key element because organic materials and oxygen are also present in homes which do not have problems with mould.

It is important to recognise that not all damp and mould presents the same risk to our tenants. The most immediate risk relates to severe mould growth which may cause airborne toxicity and is therefore especially dangerous to some of our vulnerable tenants.

We will not generally undertake any tests to identify specific mould types but deal with all mould types in the same manner.

## 5. The Impact of Damp & Mould

Exposure to mould spores can cause a wide range of symptoms including rashes, itchy eyes, sneezing, coughs, dizziness and nausea.



The long-term effects of mould exposure can be more severe for those with a weakened immune system. As the body goes into overdrive trying to fight the foreign pathogens, it is left weakened, exposed and vulnerable to other diseases.

The elderly, children and those with existing allergies are all considered to be more susceptible to mould exposure.

## 6. Investigation and Repair Process

### 6.1 Investigative Process

It is essential to correctly identify root causes of damp. Condensation is the main cause of mould, however there may be defects causing or contributing to high humidity levels.

The need to act quickly to identify and manage damp and mould as a hazard may entail several visits to assess the severity of the damp and to carry out follow up surveys.

Visual observations both externally and internally are of vital importance and should be detailed within the report. The inspection should adopt a holistic whole house approach that considers the implications of:

- Location
- Building structure
- Construction materials
- Maintenance / Condition / Defects
- Thermal performance
- Ventilation
- Number of occupants
- Pattern of occupancy
- Heating pattern
- Family economics –heating costs
- Domestic appliances – e.g., condenser dryers
- Arrangements for drying washing and wet clothing
- Existing ventilation – especially bathrooms and kitchens

### 6.2 Initial Report Actions<sup>1</sup>

1. We will log an inspection on the Repairs recording system.

---

<sup>1</sup> Properties within the Disrepair Process will not be managed in the same way and any inspections, works and communications will be through the tenant's solicitor.

2. We will carry out an Inspection to assess the severity of the mould and to establish whether there are any property issues causing or contributing to the problem. This will be carried out within 14 days of the first report of mould.
3. Information on managing condensation and advice will be given to tenants.
4. We will arrange any initial works which will usually involve a clean of the mould to remove the immediate hazard. The target timescale for these works is within 28 working days.
5. Further surveys will be arranged following recommendations for additional technical surveys, monitoring and or follow up repairs. Timescales for repairs will be allocated in accordance with prioritisation based on the severity of the problem.
6. Signposting to other agencies and referrals for support with energy bills will be provided where appropriate.
7. Where damp and mould is severe and the risk posed to tenants is significant, we will arrange to temporarily decant tenants whilst investigations and works are carried out.
8. A communication will be sent to tenants to advise them that we have completed our investigations and works and reaffirm any guidance they need to follow. This will formally close the case.

### **6.3 Case Management**

There may be occasions where there are factors which make the standard process of inspecting and carrying out repairs more difficult, for example tenants in fuel poverty or where there is overcrowding.

A complex case panel has been established to record cases, actions required and decision making to support successful outcomes.

Case management decisions include the following:

- Initiating a temporary Decant property
- Approval for funding to support
- Agreement to apply management discretion for a direct let.
- Seeking support from other agencies

Each case is discussed on its own merit and may involve referral or case conference with other agencies.

## **7. Monitoring the effectiveness of the Protocol**

## 7.1 Performance

The formal closing of a case will allow us to track the effectiveness of the investigation and repair process.

Where further reports of damp and mould are recorded, an inspection will be raised, these will be flagged as a 2<sup>nd</sup> visit and the previous repair number will be recorded in the text to ensure that staff are aware that the property has had previous inspections and work.

Second visits will take place and a review of information collected from the visit together with previous information and property history, will be held with the management team to identify issues not resolved at first contact.

The outcome of the review will be an action plan for the property and tenants will be prepared and discussed with the tenant.

The total numbers of damp and mould cases, status and how long they have been open, will be recorded and reported to the Corporate Management Team as part of the overall compliance reporting on a monthly basis.

The percentage of visits within the 14 day target will also be monitored to ensure that sufficient resources are maintained to support the robust approach to the management of damp and mould in our properties.

## 7.2 Review

The protocol will be reviewed annually but should there be any changes or recommendations the Social Housing Regulator it will be carried out earlier.



### Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Repairs and Maintenance Policy
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	The policy sets a framework to enable the delivery of an effective maintenance service which fulfils our statutory obligations, protects council assets and offers value for money.
3. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	South Kesteven District Council tenants and leaseholders
4. Has there been any consultation with, or input from, customers/service users or other stakeholders? If so, with whom, how were they consulted and what did they say? If you haven't consulted yet and are intending to do so, please complete the consultation table below.	Consultation will take place with the stakeholders affected (SKDC tenants and leaseholders). This will be for a 6 week period via the policy being placed on the SKDC website consultation page. Consultation with tenants who have special needs will be undertaken separately.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	A new housing IT system and processes are being put into place, which will monitor and evaluate the impact of the policy.

Protected Characteristic	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact e.g. adjustment to the policy <i>(The Action Log below should be completed to provide further detail)</i>
Age	Positive	<p>Tenants will be able to choose from a number of specific appointment slots eg. mornings, afternoons, and specific requests - for example, avoiding the school run.</p> <p>Should the tenant wish to arrange a responsive repair appointment, they are able to contact the contractor on the telephone number provided and arrange a convenient appointment for the work to be completed.</p> <p>All contractors will be asked to provide copies of their Equality and Diversity Policies to the Council, prior to the award of any contract.</p> <p>Repair work and maintenance programmes may from time to time be tailored to meet the needs of individuals, for example the priority of a repair may be increased for vulnerable residents. All cases will be considered on an individual basis.</p>	n/a



		<p>The repairs which are the tenants' responsibility eg. changing a light bulb can be undertaken by a repairs operative for elderly and disabled tenants but this would have to be re-charged to the tenant; alternatively they can choose for a relative/carer to do this for them.</p> <p>The Council will in all circumstances make information available in a variety of information formats, including for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• large print</li><li>• audio tape</li><li>• community languages</li></ul> <p>Where specialist services are required to ensure that information is accessible to the tenant or leaseholder, we will ensure that these are made available.</p>	
Disability	Positive	<p>Tenants will be able to choose from a number of specific appointment slots eg. mornings, afternoons, and specific requests - for example, avoiding the school run.</p> <p>Should the tenant wish to arrange a responsive repair appointment, they are able to contact the contractor on the telephone number provided and arrange a convenient appointment for the work to be completed.</p> <p>All contractors will be asked to provide copies of their Equality and Diversity Policies to the Council, prior to the award of any contract.</p> <p>Repair work and maintenance programmes may from time to time be tailored to meet the needs of individuals, for example the priority of a repair may be increased for vulnerable residents. All cases will be considered on an individual basis.</p> <p>The repairs which are the tenants' responsibility eg. changing a light bulb can be undertaken by a repairs operative for elderly and disabled tenants but this would have to be re-charged to the tenant; alternatively they can choose for a relative/carer to do this for them.</p>	n/a



		<p>The Council will in all circumstances make information available in a variety of information formats, including for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large print</li> <li>• audio tape</li> <li>• community languages</li> </ul> <p>Where specialist services are required to ensure that information is accessible to the tenant or leaseholder, we will ensure that these are made available.</p>	
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	The Council will not treat the resident less favourably due to gender reassignment.	n/a
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neutral	n/a (applicable only to employment legislation)	n/a
Pregnancy and Maternity	Positive	Tenants will be able to choose from a number of specific appointment slots eg. mornings, afternoons, and specific requests - for example, avoiding the school run.	n/a
Race	Positive	<p>The Council will in all circumstances make information available in a variety of information formats, including for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large print</li> <li>• audio tape</li> <li>• community languages</li> </ul> <p>Where specialist services are required to ensure that information is accessible to the tenant or leaseholder, we will ensure that these are made available.</p>	n/a
Religion or Belief	Positive	<p>The Council will in all circumstances make information available in a variety of information formats, including for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large print</li> <li>• audio tape</li> <li>• community languages</li> </ul> <p>Where specialist services are required to ensure that information is accessible to the tenant or leaseholder, we will ensure that these are made available.</p>	n/a
Sex	Neutral	The Council will not treat the resident less favourably due to their sex.	n/a
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	The Council will not treat the resident less favourably due to their sexual orientation.	n/a





<b>Other Factors requiring consideration</b>			
<b>Socio-Economic Impacts</b>	Positive	The Council will ensure that tenants meet the costs of repairs they have responsibility for. Payment will be required in full before any re-chargeable repairs work is carried out. Where people are in hardship, we will discuss their personal circumstances. In exceptional circumstances, the Council may consider waiving the cost of the re-chargeable repair. All cases will be considered on an individual basis.	n/a
<b>Carers</b> (those who provide unpaid care to a family member, friend or partner)	Positive	Tenants will be able to choose from a number of specific appointment slots eg. mornings, afternoons, and specific requests - for example, avoiding the school run.	n/a

## Consultation

Negative impacts identified will require the responsible officer to consult with the affected group/s to determine all practicable and proportionate mitigations. Add more rows as required.		
<b>Group/Organisation</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Response</b>
SKDC tenants and leaseholders		Consultation will take place with the stakeholders affected (SKDC tenants and leaseholders). This will be for a 6 week period via the policy being placed on the SKDC website consultation page. Consultation with tenants who have special needs will be undertaken separately.  Any responses including any equality, diversity and inclusion issues highlighted from this consultation will be considered and changes will be made to the policy if deemed necessary.

## Proposed Mitigation: Action Log

To be completed when barriers, negative impact or discrimination are found as part of this process – to show actions taken to remove or mitigate. Any mitigations identified throughout the EIA process should be meaningful and timely. Add more rows as required.				
<b>Negative Impact</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Status</b>

## Evaluation Decision



Once consultation and practicable and proportionate mitigation has been put in place, the responsible officer should evaluate whether any negative impact remains and, if so, provide justification for any decision to proceed.		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Explanation / justification</b>	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?		
<b>Final Decision</b>	<b>Tick</b>	<b>Include any explanation/justification required</b>
1. <b>No barriers</b> identified, therefore activity will <b>proceed</b>		
2. <b>Stop</b> the policy or practice because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. <b>Adapt or change</b> the policy in a way that will eliminate the bias		
4. <b>Barriers and impact identified</b> , however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to <b>proceed with caution</b> with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision		

Did you consult with an Equality Ally prior to carrying out this assessment? **Yes**

#### Sign off

<b>Name and job title of person completing this EIA</b>	Celia Bown – Senior Housing Policy and Strategy Officer and Julie Martin – Head of Housing Technical Services
<b>Officer Responsible for implementing the policy/function etc</b>	Julie Martin – Head of Housing Technical Services
<b>Date Completed</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
<b>Line Manager</b>	Craig Spence – Acting Director of Housing
<b>Date Agreed</b> (by line manager)	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
<b>Date of Review (if required)</b>	

Completed EIAs should be included as an appendix to the relevant report going to a Cabinet, Committee or Council meeting and a copy sent to [equalities@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@southkesteven.gov.uk).



Completed EIAs will be published along with the relevant report through Modern.Gov before any decision is made and also on the Council's website.



**SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**



## Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 July 2023

Report of Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

## Housing Pipeline Update Report

This report provides an update on the HRA new build programme.

### Report Author

Debbie Roberts, Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance

 [Debbie.roberts@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:Debbie.roberts@southkesteven.gov.uk)

### Recommendations

**It is recommended Members of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

- 1. Note this report to inform and support their ongoing work programme.**

### Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?

No

What are the relevant corporate priorities?

High Performing Council

Which wards are impacted?

All

## **1. Implications**

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

- 1.1 The Capital Programme for 2023/24 Housing Development investment has been established at £4.5m and will be utilised to fund the Swinegate Grantham and Elizabeth Road Stamford new build schemes. In the proposed 2024/25 programme there is an allocation of £2.8m which can be utilised to fund further schemes as required. It is important that the HRA has a continual housing growth strategy that incorporates a range of interventions including acquiring properties directly from developers, new build and acquiring former Right to Buy properties that meet the housing needs.

**Completed by Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer**

### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.2 Regular reporting on agreed actions and measures is to be welcomed from a governance point of view, as it provides a transparent mechanism for reporting on performance.

**Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer**

### ***Risk and Mitigation***

- 1.3 No significant risks have been identified.

### ***Climate Change***

- 1.4 The contents of this report do not have a direct impact on the Council's carbon emissions or the carbon emissions of the wider district. More detailed information on carbon impact of individual projects are outlined within the relevant project documentation.

## **2. Background to the Report**

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update regarding the new build housing pipeline (Appendix 1 – Programme)

- 2.2 The approved Corporate Plan 2020-23 clearly sets out how South Kesteven District Council intends to meet our vision to “be the best district in which to live, work, and visit.”
- 2.3 The Corporate Plan identifies ‘Housing that Meets the Needs of Residents’ as a key priority with the following: -
- High quality housing is essential for all and the council is committed to working with partners to provide this by:
- Offering the new homes that people need, at a price they can afford.
  - Ensuring new developments are in keeping with the character of South Kesteven and benefit the people who already live here.
  - Providing high quality homes and services to those who rent property from the council
- 2.4 There are a number of schemes under consideration on HRA owned land. In the south of the district we are focusing on examining opportunities within garage sites with a view to packaging these in to several lots for future development. Most garage sites can accommodate a maximum of four units per site.
- 2.5 The Council has a new build pipeline for delivery of new build units and an update for each of these is below: -

### **Swinegate, Grantham**

- 2.6 Lindums will be constructing the 20 apartments via a direct award on a framework (circa £3.5m tbc). The scheme has planning consent granted. A Section 73 application to make amendments and discharge some pre-commencement conditions has been submitted and will be considered by Planning Committee in July 2023.
- 2.7 Lindums programme currently shows a start on site in October 23 due to awaiting the completion of enabling works that are required to amend the access to the Watergate car park and some service disconnections and diversions to be undertaken by utility providers.
- 2.8 The site is extremely complex to deliver due to the existing car park, services, party wall notices and the fact that it is in a conservation area, but the design team have worked closely to mitigate any disturbance and to deliver the scheme.

### **Elizabeth Rd, Stamford**

- 2.9 Planning consent has been granted and a report to award the contract to build the 4 units is being considered by Cabinet on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2023. If Cabinet approve the award for £665,000 the scheme will commence in October 2023 for approximately 30 weeks.



2.10 The need to deliver the 1 bed units in Stamford is essential due to the number of people waiting for this type of property so a scheme to develop other garage sites is critical.

### **Larch Close, Grantham**

2.11 The 21-unit development is currently with the local planning authority for determination, there are some minor amends to the design to re-submit which will be completed in July 2023.

2.12 The procurement process will be programmed for autumn 2023 once the outcome of the planning application is known. The funding allocation for next year is anticipated to be used for delivering this scheme.

### **Wellington Way, Market Deeping**

2.13 There are outlines plans for 14-unit scheme in this location that had received pre-application advice from 2021. We are exploring this advice with a view to adding this scheme to the future development pipeline.

## **3 Key Considerations**

3.1.1 In order to achieve the numbers of housing that the Council has a requirement to deliver each year there will be a hybrid approach to new builds to work closely with developers on planning schemes which need to include a number of affordable units, the Council will discuss purchasing these (similar to a Registered Provider). There have been some initial discussions with house builders and the team are working closely with the planning department, housing and finance in order to purchase units as and when available to secure sufficient volume of properties in the pipeline.

## **4. Reasons for the Recommendations**

4.1 This is a regular report where Members are invited to scrutinise and comment on performance.

## **5. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Programme

## HRA New Build Programme

Summary table showing the position of the current  
HRA New Build Programme correct as of July 2023

<b>Project</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>	<b>Planning Consent</b>	<b>Progress Stage</b>	<b>Construction Commencing</b>	<b>Completion date</b>
Swinegate, Grantham	20	Yes	Discharge of conditions to be determined by LPA July 23	October 23	November 24
Elizabeth Rd, Stamford	4	Yes	Construction contract to be awarded	October 23	May 24
Larch Close, Grantham	21	No	With LPA for determination	June 24	Oct 25
Uplands Drive, Grantham	6	No	Pre-app advice received	TBC – 2025	
Wellington Way, Market Deeping	14	No	Pre-app advice received	TBC – 2025	
Garage Sites – Stamford	TBC	No	Feasibility	TBC – 2025/26	

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**SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**



## Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 July 2023

Report of Debbie Roberts, Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance

## Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators 2022/2023 Year-End Report

This year-end update report outlines South Kesteven District Councils performance against the Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the year of 2022/2023. The end of year data represents information up to 31 March 2023.

### Report Author

Debbie Roberts, Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance



Debbie.roberts@southkesteven.gov.uk

### Recommendations

**It is recommended Members of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

- 1. Review and scrutinise the performance against the Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators in relation to the delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes.**
- 2. Use this report to inform and support their ongoing work programme.**

### Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? High Performing Council

Which wards are impacted? All

## 1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

- 1.1 The financial considerations where appropriate are referenced throughout this report.

**Completed by Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer**

### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.2 Regular reporting on agreed actions and measures is to be welcomed from a governance point of view, as it provides a transparent mechanism for reporting on performance.

**Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer**

### ***Risk and Mitigation***

- 1.3 No significant risks have been identified.

### ***Climate Change***

- 1.4 The contents of this report do not have a direct impact on the Council's carbon emissions or the carbon emissions of the wider district. More detailed information on carbon impact of individual projects or activities are outlined within the relevant project documentation or service plans.

## 2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The South Kesteven Corporate Plan 2020-2023 was approved by Council on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2020. It was agreed by Council actions, key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets would be developed by the relevant overview and scrutiny committee, which would retain oversight of the performance management arrangements at a strategic level. These actions and indicators were then presented to the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and agreed on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2020.
- 2.2 The Mid-Year report for 2022/2023 was presented to the Committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2022 and outlined the performance against the Corporate Plan for the financial year to date and included the annual review of all Corporate KPIs and contained recommendations for changes, additions, and removals.
- 2.3 This report builds on these historical reports to provide an update on performance to the end of the 2022/2023 financial year. It incorporates the changes recommended by the last KPI review to outline areas of the council's performance which are successful and to advise where challenges may lay.
- 2.4 Given the changes to the scrutiny committee structure and new Members on them, it is worth noting that questions to senior officers during the agenda item or more detailed investigations can be added to the committee work programme as agreed.
- 2.5 A further review of actions is due to be carried out to coincide with the Quarter 2 report. It should be noted 2023/2024 is the final year of monitoring these existing KPIs and all Members will have the opportunity to engage in the new Corporate Plan.
- 2.6 **Appendix A** outlines the overall performance against the original actions, as well as specific performance against the sub measures. Specific commentary is provided for each action, which is summarised as follows:
- 5 actions are rated Green. These are actions which are on or above target as planned.
  - 2 actions are rated as Amber, these are those off target by less than 10% or where milestone achievement is delayed but with resolution in place to be achieved within a reasonable timeframe.
  - 2 actions are rated as Red, this is falling significantly below target.
- 2.7 As part of the final KPI report for the financial year of 2022/2023, it is beneficial to review the work carried out against those actions being reported over the year in its entirety, as opposed to just the most recent quarter. With that in mind, the following actions, grouped by corporate priority, have had a brief summary provided:



**2.8 Housing That Meets The Needs Of All Residents 1** - Work in partnership with the housing market to stimulate housing growth.

The Council's Local Plan was adopted on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2020. The Local Plan sets out the Council's planning policies against which planning applications are assessed. The Plan sets out the District's housing needs for the period 2011-2036 and allocates sites to meet that need. The Plan's annual target for housing completions is 650 dwellings. A total of 642 net additional dwellings were completed in the monitoring year (2022/2023).

Whilst the delivery in the year 2022/2023 was below the target of 650 dwellings per year, it is important that the Council can demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (HLS). This is set out in paragraph 2.14.

Officers are reviewing the Council's housing needs as part of the Local Plan review which will include allocating any additional development sites should there be a need to increase the housing supply. The new Local Plan will cover the period upto 2041.

**2.9 Housing That Meets The Needs Of All Residents 2** - Work to reduce and prevent homelessness in our District.

This year the Council has undertaken a complete team restructure to ensure the service delivery can be met efficiently with the resources available. Additional funding has been drawn upon to ensure the Council are fully equipped to deal with the Homes for Ukraine resettlement scheme and Afghan resettlement scheme.

A Domestic Abuse Support Officer role has been created to provide additional support to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness due to domestic abuse. Options within the private rented sector continue to be explored, as has working in partnership with a local management company to maximise -options within the private sector. The performance of the team will continue to be reviewed and monitored, with the aim of proactively responding to emerging pressures as they arise.

**2.10 Housing That Meets The Needs Of All Residents 3** - Increase the supply of high quality, sustainable Council houses.

Due to recent restructuring of the Housing Directorate and loss of several staff within the Housing Development team, a process has been undertaken to re-align the method in which new build housing is brought forward and delivery has now moved to the Corporate Projects area.

The Council are now looking to bring forward the pipeline of schemes on our own land whilst working in partnership with external developers to bring forward new build schemes to increase the number of council housing across the district.

Regarding solid fuel heating replacements, over 150 properties have now received heating upgrades in the form of modern efficient storage heaters or air source heat pumps through the Local Authority Delivery (LAD2) scheme which has now come to an end. 97 electric storage heating systems and 81 air source heat pumps have been installed. The aim is to continue with this valuable workstream in future capital programmes and for these works to form a part of the bid into the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF). To better reflect the work that will be carried out, additional measures will be considered as part of the Corporate Plan refresh to allow performance monitoring of more than heating upgrades going forwards.

**2.11 Housing That Meets The Needs Of All Residents 5** - Undertake a Housing Review to provide the highest quality service possible to our tenants.

2022/2023 was a significant year in relation to the Housing service enabling the receipt of grant funding to support service delivery.

- Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) - Successfully awarded the full grant requested enabling energy efficiency upgrades to more than 330 properties. The grant award totalled £3.4m, supported with £3.8m Housing revenue Account (HRA) funding.
- Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) - Following Full Council agreement, a £2,098,750 allocation was secured from the Government-funded Local Authority Housing Fund. This will be supplemented by £2,383,750 from the Council's Housing Revenue Account reserves giving a total £4.482m project to purchase 21 properties.

External funding has been secured to support a Domestic Abuse worker (as 2.9), as well as liaison officers for both Ukraine and Afghan related business.

**2.12 Housing That Meets The Needs Of All Residents 6** - Work with housing associations and developers to ensure quality affordable housing is delivered.

The Council allocates land for development in the Local Plan. It is a requirement for proposals of 11 or more dwellings that 30% of the development (20% in Grantham) should be affordable housing. Those affordable units can be delivered by the Council or by housing associations. In 2022/2023, a total of 151 affordable dwellings were completed. Of the total delivered, 78 dwellings were delivered in the four main towns as follows: Stamford (5), Grantham (34), Bourne (8), Market Deeping (31)) and the rest (73) in the Larger Villages (Barrowby (49), Morton (15), Corby Glen (9)).

During 2022, two fully affordable schemes were completed - a development of five bungalows at Land off Trinity Road, Stamford (a Council scheme) and 49 units delivered by Longhurst in Barrowby (part of a wider allocation for 270 dwellings). The Council continues to work closely with developers to deliver housing schemes

both through planning applications and the Local Plan Review to ensure the Council continues to meet the needs of local residents.

- 2.13 Housing That Meets The Needs Of All Residents 7** - Ensure the ambitions of the adopted Local Plan are met and a review framework is developed to deliver sustainable growth in the District.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires Council's identify a supply of deliverable sites to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against the required number of dwellings per year. The supply looks at planning permissions and allocated sites due to come forward over the next five years. It was confirmed in the most recent Annual Position Statement (2022), the Council had a 5.2-year housing land supply (HLS). The Council has completed a consultation on the 2023 Annual Position Statement, and it is currently anticipated in excess of 5 years HLS will be demonstrated. Once the results of the consultation have been analysed, it is expected the Council will submit the final Annual Position Statement for examination by the Planning Inspectorate at the end of July 2023.

The review of the Local Plan commenced in April 2020. A Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation was launched in October 2020 which sought the scope of the Local Plan review. A Call for Sites was launched, inviting landowners to submit details of any land that could come forward for development during the Plan period. A revised Local Development Scheme setting out the timetable for the Local Plan Review was agreed by Cabinet (June 2023) The Council has been preparing a Draft Local Plan in accordance with Regulation 18 for consultation. The consultation is now expected to commence in October/November 2023.

- 2.14 Housing That Meets The Needs Of All Residents 9** - Ensure that major developments in South Kesteven are high quality, with sustainable, good design.

The Council uses Building for a Healthy Life as a tool to assess Major residential applications (10 dwellings or more), along with other guidance such as the Council's Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and National guidance. Although the tool is widely used at various stages of the planning process, data for schemes which have been approved by Planning Committee is recorded in order to assess the quality of schemes granted permission.

In 2022/2023, there were five schemes assessed against the Building for a Healthy Life. Of those schemes, four (80%) reached the target (minimum six greens and no reds).

Other notable successes in terms of design quality which have now been constructed, for example the new Aldi store at Stamford, had significant amendments to its design before it was approved. The result is a development which is considerably better than the original store proposed. This is testament to

processes such as the monthly Design PAD review, at which many improvements were negotiated by the multidisciplinary team.

Officers and Councillors attended study tours in July and November 2022 to review completed schemes and reflect on their design. This is a positive experience for all and is an opportunity to learn from examples of good development.

- 2.15 **Housing That Meets The Needs Of All Residents 10** - Prioritise bringing private sector empty properties back in to use.

The average number of empty properties in South Kesteven continues to be well below the national average. There will be continuance of a proactive approach when monitoring this number through meetings of the empty homes project group, with the aim of driving further reductions in how many properties are left empty for any significant length of time.

### **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1 The KPIs are produced and presented to each relevant scrutiny committee twice a year. These are the mid-year Q2 data and Q4 year-end data.
- 3.2 The new Corporate Plan is due to be adopted in Autumn 2023. At that point, new KPIs will be approved by each Committee and collection of outcomes will commence from 1 April 2024.

### **4. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 4.1 This is a regular report where Members are invited to scrutinise and comment on performance.

### **5. Background Papers**

- 5.1 Previous KPI updates available on Modern.gov.
- 5.2 *Adoption of the South Kesteven Local Plan* – Report to Council, Published 30 January 2020, available online at:  
<http://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s24718/Council%20report%20300120%20Local%20Plan.pdf>
- 5.3 *Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Update* - Report to Council, Published 1 March 2023, available online at:  
<https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s37055/Local%20Authority%20Housing%20Fund.pdf>

### **6. Appendices**

- 6.1 Appendix A: End of year KPIs

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## Healthy & Strong Communities

Priority Number	Action	Responsible Scrutiny Committee	Priority Status	Action Status
1	Invest in sustainable, high quality leisure facilities across the district.	Finance & Economic	Reported Q4 2022-23	Below Target
2	Embed the work of the SK Community Hub to support volunteering and the Voluntary & Community Sector.	Rural & Communities	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
3	Work with partners from all sectors to tackle health, employment, and other inequalities in areas of highest need.		No Longer Reported	Not Reported
4	Continue to work in partnership with the police and the community in tackling crime, investing in the CCTV service	Rural & Communities	Reported Q4 2022-23	Below Target
5	Celebrate and enhance the rich history of the District.		Replaced with 13	Not Reported
6	Adopt a new Cultural Strategy for the District, including the local Arts, Events and Festivals programme.		Replaced with 13	Not Reported
7	Develop and adopt a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.		Replaced with 14	Not Reported
8	Meet the Mental Health Challenge	Rural & Communities	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
9	Make best use of different funding sources to support the voluntary and cultural sector within the District.	Rural & Communities	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
10	Protect our most vulnerable residents with robust safeguarding processes.	Rural & Communities	Reported Q4 2022-23	Significantly Below Target
11	Improve and invest in the local arts & cultural venues across the District.	Culture & Leisure	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
12	Promote and make progress against the Council's Equality Objectives	Rural & Communities	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
13	Review Arts services within the district with ambition to provide improved, efficient and accessible arts within the district.	Culture & Leisure	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
14	Develop and adopt a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.	Culture & Leisure	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target



## A Clean & Sustainable Environment

Priority Number	Action	Responsible Scrutiny Committee	Priority Status	Action Status
1	Reduce the Council's carbon footprint by at least 30% by 2030 and endeavour to become net-zero carbon as soon as viable before 2050.		Reported Mid-Year	Not Reported
2	Deliver the 'Big Clean' programme and maintain higher street standards.		No Longer Reported	Not Reported
3	Continue to innovate our approach to waste management to build on our strengths and maximise commercial and other opportunities.	Environment	Reported Q4 2022-23	Below Target
4	Maintain and enhance our green areas across the District, aiming to secure Green Flag status for Queen Elizabeth Park, Dysart Park and other relevant areas.		Reported Mid-Year	Not Reported
5	Work proactively with Environment SK to deliver high quality services and maximise commercial opportunities.	Environment	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
6	Work with the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership to reduce waste and further improve recycling.	Environment	Reported Q4 2022-23	Below Target
7	Recognise the changes in environmentally friendly modes of transport and seek to work with others to adapt required infrastructure	Environment	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
8	Explore opportunities to build on the success of the food waste pilot and ensure the service is sustainable.		No Longer Reported	Not Reported
9	Build a new, modern depot which is fit for the future.	Environment	Reported Q4 2022-23	Below Target

## Delivery of Growth of Our Economy

Priority Number	Action	Responsible Scrutiny Committee	Priority Status	Action Status
1	Delivery of the St Martins Park development scheme in Stamford.	Finance & Economic	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
2	Regeneration of Grantham town centre, supported by the Future High Street (FHSF) bid and delivery of the Heritage Action Zone programme (HAZ).	Finance & Economic	Reported Q4 2022-23	Below Target
3	Identify funding & other opportunities to support the development of the town centres of Bourne, The Deepings and Stamford, and apply lessons learnt from the Future High Street Fund & other initiatives.	Finance & Economic	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
4	Develop a package of measures to support the recovery of the local economy to safeguard local jobs wherever possible.	Finance & Economic	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
5	Review the scope and focus of InvestSK to maximise the support to local businesses and attract inward investment.		Removed as Complete	Not Reported
6	Continue to attract investment and encourage diverse businesses to the District and ensure appropriate land and property is available	Finance & Economic	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
7	Work with the education providers to increase opportunities for local learning and apprenticeships in the District.		No Longer Reported	Not Reported
8	In partnership with LCC bring forward housing and employment opportunities linked to the delivery of the Grantham Southern Relief Road.		No Longer Reported	Not Reported
9	Work with partners and attractions, to promote visitor economy and increase visitor spend in the District, including the adoption of a Tourism Strategic Framework.	Culture & Leisure	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
10	Support the roll out of improved broadband and other key infrastructure to support local businesses and rural areas.		No Longer Reported	Not Reported
11	Work closely with markets across South Kesteven and seek to maintain their viability.	Culture & Leisure	Reported Q4 2022-23	Below Target

## Housing That Meets The Needs Of All Residents

Priority Number	Action	Responsible Scrutiny Committee	Priority Status	Action Status
1	Work in partnership with the housing market to stimulate housing growth.	Housing	Reported Q4 2022-23	Below Target
2	Work to reduce and prevent homelessness in our District.	Housing	Reported Q4 2022-23	Significantly Below Target
3	Increase the supply of high quality, sustainable Council houses.	Housing	Reported Q4 2022-23	Significantly Below Target
4	Undertake a Planning Review to improve performance and support local sustainable, high quality growth.	Housing	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
5	Undertake a Housing Review to provide the highest quality service possible to our tenants	Housing	Reported Q4 2022-23	Below Target
6	Work with housing associations and developers to ensure quality affordable housing is delivered.	Housing	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
7	Ensure the ambitions of the adopted Local Plan are met and a review framework is developed to deliver sustainable growth in the District.	Housing	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
8	Work with Homes England, the Ministry of Defence and other partners to develop holistic masterplans for the delivery of Grantham's Southern Urban Extension.		No Longer Reported	Not Reported
9	Ensure that major developments in South Kesteven are high quality, with sustainable, good design.	Housing	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
10	Prioritise bringing private sector empty properties back in to use.	Housing	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target

<div>Priority▲</div> <div>Housing That Meets The Needs Of All Residents 1</div>					<div>Measured</div> <div>Quarterly</div>		<div>Responsible Director▲</div> <div>Growth &amp; Culture</div>	
					<div>Below Target</div> <div>Current Status</div>		<div>Responsible Cabinet Member▲</div> <div>Planning &amp; Planning Policy</div>	
<div>Action</div> <div>Work in partnership with the housing market to stimulate housing growth.</div>								
<div>Measure▲</div> <div>1. Number of houses complete</div> <div>2. Number of houses complete In Grantham</div>							<div>Target</div> <div>650</div> <div>300</div>	<div>Achieved</div> <div>642</div> <div>95</div>
<div>Measure History▲</div> <div>1. Number of houses complete</div> <div>2. Number of houses complete In Grantham</div>					<div>Q1 2022-23</div> <div>104</div> <div>9</div>	<div>Q2 2022-23</div> <div>244</div> <div>28</div>	<div>Q3 2022-23</div> <div>380</div> <div>38</div>	<div>Q4 2022-23</div> <div>642</div> <div>95</div>
<div>Commentary▲</div> <div>The Local Plan was adopted on 30th January 2020. The Plan’s annual target for housing completions is 650 dwellings. A total of 642 net additional dwellings were completed in the monitoring year (2022/23). The Local Plan identifies land to provided 53% of housing in Grantham, 18% in Stamford, 7% in Bourne, 8% in the Deepings, and 14% in the villages across the plan period (2011-2036).</div> <div>Completions in the four main towns accounted for 75% of the completions, with 95 dwellings completed in Grantham. A dwelling is counted as a completion when it is substantially complete; this means that it has working facilities (kitchens and bathrooms) and is ready for occupying (it does not need to be furnished).</div> <div>Officers are reviewing the Council’s housing needs as part of the local plan review which will also include reviewing where to allocate any additional housing should we need to increase our housing supply.</div> <div>*(Please note these are provisional figures and will be confirmed at the end of the year through the publication of the Annual Position Statement or the 5-Year Housing Land Supply Statement).</div>								



The demand for affordable social housing continues to far outweigh the supply so its essential that our policies and proceeedures support prioritising those in the most need of affordable housing





There are some vacancies within the team that have resulted in increased workloads for individual officers resulting in a slight drop in performance over the quarter. Performance remains high tested against the KPI and the nationally set performance targets. Recruitment is currently taking place and performance will be monitored closely.

<div>Priority</div> <div>Housing That Meets The Needs Of All Residents 5</div>					<div>Measured</div> <div>Quarterly</div>		<div>Responsible Director</div> <div>Housing &amp; Property</div>	
					<div>Below Target</div> <div>Current Status</div>		<div>Responsible Cabinet Member</div> <div>Housing &amp; Property</div>	
<div>Action</div> <div>Undertake a Housing Review to provide the highest quality service possible to our tenants</div>								
<div>Measure</div>					<div>Target</div>		<div>Achieved</div>	
1. Rent Collection (inc. arrears)					97.35%		97.66%	
2. % Properties with a valid gas certificate					100%		99.2%	
3. Average Void Relet Time (Calendar Days)					TBC		106.74	
4. Percentage of responsive repairs resolved on first visit					TBC		Unable to report	
5. Percentage of Properties meeting the Decent Homes Standard					100%		94.77%	
<div>Measure History</div>					<div>Q1 2022-23</div>	<div>Q2 2022-23</div>	<div>Q3 2022-23</div>	<div>Q4 2022-23</div>
1. Rent Collection (inc. arrears)					23%	48.45%	72.03%	97.66%
2. % Properties with a valid gas certificate					99.81%	99.16%	99.29%	99.2%
3. Average Void Relet Time (Calendar Days)					57.83	80.97	97	106.74
4. Percentage of responsive repairs resolved on first visit					-	-	Unable to report	Unable to report
5. Percentage of Properties meeting the Decent Homes Standard					94.26%	94.49%	94.61%	94.77%
<div>Commentary</div> <div>Despite the cost-of-living issues being faced by tenants Rent Collection is £83,746 above target - a total of £26,149,501 has been collected against a target of £26,065,755</div> <div>Our housing compliance is continuing to be reported to the Regulator with the March 2023 gas performance detailed. Our void turnaround has been impacted through staff and contractor capacity issues, we have now addressed this through the restructure and have confidence in our revised procedures and policy as reinforced by the recent voids audit. Our Decent Homes Performance continues to increase steadily with the upcoming Social Housing Decarbonisation Funded works looking to address in excess of 330 of our poorest performing properties.</div>								

Priority

Housing That Meets The Needs Of All Residents 6

Measured

Quarterly

Responsible Director

Growth & Culture

On Target

Current Status

Responsible Cabinet Member

Planning & Planning Policy

Action

Work with housing associations and developers to ensure quality affordable housing is delivered.

Measure	Target	Achieved
1. Number of affordable homes delivered in South Kesteven	100	151

Measure History	Q1 2022-23	Q2 2022-23	Q3 2022-23	Q4 2022-23
1. Number of affordable homes delivered in South Kesteven	11	66	76	151

Commentary

Of the 642\* dwellings completed. 151 dwellings were affordable houses. 78 dwellings were delivered in the four main towns (Stamford (5), Grantham (34), Bourne (8), Market Deeping (31)) and 73 in the Larger Villages (Barrowby (49), Morton (15), Corby Glen (9)).

The Council has been working with developers and Registered Providers to deliver quality affordable housing in the District. During 2022, two fully affordable schemes were completed; a development of five bungalows at Land off Trinity Road, Stamford (SKDC scheme) and 49 units delivered by Longhurst in Barrowby (part of a wider allocation for 270 dwellings).

The Council continues to work closely with developers to deliver housing schemes both through planning applications and through the Local Plan Review to ensure that the Council continues to meet the needs of local residents.

\*(Please note these are provisional figures and will be confirmed at the end of the year through the publication of the Annual Position Statement or the 5-Year Housing Land Supply Statement).

Priority  
▲

# Housing That Meets The Needs Of All Residents 7

Measured  
Annually

Responsible Director  
▲  
Growth & Culture

On Target  
Current Status

Responsible Cabinet Member  
▲  
Planning & Planning Policy

## Action

Ensure the ambitions of the adopted Local Plan are met and a review framework is developed to deliver sustainable growth in the District.

## Measure ▲

1. Maintaining a 5-year housing supply

### Target

Maintain a 5 year housing land supply, including any appropriate buffer.

### Achieved

5.2 years supply

2. Adherence to review programme - consultation on draft pre-submission (reg 19) by Spring 2023.

Statutory (Regulation 19) consultation on Pre-Submission Local Plan review.

Preparing draft Local Plan (Regulation 18)

## Measure History ▲

1. Maintaining a 5-year housing supply

### Q4 2021-22

5.22 Years Supply

### Q4 2022-23

5.2 years supply

2. Adherence to review programme - consultation on draft pre-submission (reg 19) by Spring 2023.

Preparing Local Draft Plan

Preparing draft Local Plan (Regulation 18)

## Commentary ▲

The Council has a housing land supply equivalent to 5.2 years' supply of deliverable sites which is confirmed for one year through an Annual Position Statement until 31st October 2023. The Council's housing need is identified in the adopted Local Plan as 650 dwellings per year. Local Authorities are required to demonstrate sufficient allocated and permitted housing land to meet the authority's need for 5 years. The Council is required to publish the 5 year housing land supply result annually, either through a statement or if eligible through an Annual Position Statement.

The review of the Local Plan commenced in April 2020. A Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation was launched in October 2020 which sought the scope of the Local Plan review. A Call for Sites was also launched which invited landowners to submit details of any land that could come forward for development during the plan period. The Council has been preparing a Draft Local Plan in accordance with Regulation 18 for consultation. The consultation expected to commence in March 2023 has been delayed to review the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework which are due to be published in Spring 2023. A revised Local Development Scheme which sets out the timetable for the Local Plan Review will be presented to Cabinet in May.

<div>Priority</div> <div>Housing That Meets The Needs Of All Residents 9</div>		<div>Measured</div> <div>Biannually</div>		<div>Responsible Director</div> <div>Growth &amp; Culture</div>			
		<div>On Target</div> <div>Current Status</div>		<div>Responsible Cabinet Member</div> <div>Planning &amp; Planning Policy</div>			
<div>Action</div> <div>Ensure that major developments in South Kesteven are high quality, with sustainable, good design.</div>							
<div>Measure</div> <div>1. Residential developments of 10 dwellings or more should perform positively when assessed against Building for a Healthy Life</div>				<div>Target</div> <div>50%</div>	<div>Achieved</div> <div>100%</div>		
<div>Measure History</div> <div>1. Residential developments of 10 dwellings or more should perform positively when assessed against Building for a Healthy Life</div>				<div>Q4 2021-22</div> <div>63%</div>	<div>Q2 2022-23</div> <div>50%</div>		
				<div>Q4 2022-23</div> <div>100%</div>			
<div>Commentary</div> <div>The Planning team operates a pre-application advice service which includes Design PAD. Design PAD is a monthly meeting that brings together different disciplines to provide feedback on development proposals. The aim is to improve design quality and bringing people together is an efficient and effective way of achieving the desired results. Collaboration between the key disciplines such as planning, highways, local lead flood authority, the drainage board, urban design, conservation and landscape. The Design PAD is also used in relation to planning applications.</div> <div>In the period January to March 2023 a total of two residential schemes of 10 dwellings or more were approved at Planning Committee and assessed against BfHL. Both of these scored above the target (min 6 greens and no reds). One scheme (Spittlegate Farm, Gorse Lane, Grantham S22/1116) scored 8 greens and the other scored 10 greens (Gas Street, Stamford, S22/1718) although this was only Outline, there was sufficient information to assess it.</div>							

Priority  
▲

# Housing That Meets The Needs Of All Residents 10

Measured  
Annually

Responsible Director  
▲  
Housing & Property

On Target

Current Status

Responsible Cabinet Member  
▲  
Housing & Property

Action

Prioritise bringing private sector empty properties back in to use.

Measure  
▲

1. Introduce a new Empty Homes strategy

Target

2021/22

Achieved

Approved By Cabinet

2. Proportion of long term empty homes within the district

Below East Mids avg.

471

Measure History  
▲

1. Introduce a new Empty Homes strategy

Q4 2021-22

Approved By Cabinet

Q4 2022-23

Approved By Cabinet

2. Proportion of long term empty homes within the district

460

471

Commentary  
▲

The number of empty homes as of 31 March 2023 is comfortably under the average for the East Midlands which during the same period was 624.

## A High Performing Council

Priority Number	Action	Responsible Scrutiny Committee	Priority Status	Action Status
1	Implement the Covid-19 Recovery Plan.		Removed as Complete	Not Reported
2	Deliver a balanced, sustainable financial plan over the medium term.	Finance & Economic	Reported Q4 2022-23	Not Reported
3	Undertake a Constitution review and implement outcomes.		Removed as Complete	Not Reported
4	Implement the findings of the Governance review across the Councils assets (including companies).		Removed as Complete	Not Reported
5	Develop a People Strategy (including a pay review) to support the retention and attraction of high quality staff.	Finance & Economic	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target
6	Develop and implement commercial and transformation strategies to deliver additional net revenue benefit.		Removed as Complete	Not Reported
7	Undertake a fundamental review of the organisation to meet current and future needs.		Removed as Complete	Not Reported
8	Support the implementation of an IT investment roadmap to align future solutions with the Councils ambitions.		Removed as Complete	Not Reported
9	Embed an agile approach to working by building on the cultural and technological changes.		Removed as Complete	Not Reported
10	Deliver the ambitions of the Customer Experience Strategy.		No Longer Reported	Not Reported
11	Maximise the value of the Councils own spend by using local suppliers wherever practical.	Finance & Economic	Reported Q4 2022-23	Not Reported
12	Undertake an Asset Management Review.		Removed as Complete	Not Reported
13	Ensure that support packages are in place for ensuring the welfare of the districts most vulnerable residents and to enable small businesses to flourish in the district	Finance & Economic	Reported Q4 2022-23	On Target





**SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**



## Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 July 2023

Report of: Councillor Phil Dilks  
Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

## Voids Performance and Update

### Report Author

Craig Spence, Acting Director of Housing



[craig.spence@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:craig.spence@southkesteven.gov.uk)

### Purpose of Report

This report seeks to update members on the progress of the Council's void properties, the changes in the process in the past year and current performance measures.

### Recommendations

#### That the Committee:

1. The Committee notes the performance for 2022/23 regarding void properties.
2. Recommends future reporting on voids to be quarterly, advising on the progress and the performance measures being met.

### Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Housing that meets the needs of all residents

Which wards are impacted? All

## 1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

- 1.1 The void rate of the Council's housing stock for 2022/23 was set at 1.5% but the outturn void rate was 2.31%; this is an actual income loss of £646k compared to a budgeted loss of £419k. For 2023/24 the year to date void rate is 3.72% compared to a budgeted rate of 1.5% and therefore the Policy and improvement actions outlined in the report is intended to improve the Council's overall void performance during the course of this financial year.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Chief Finance Officer

### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.2 There are no legal or governance implications arising from this report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

## 2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2020-2023 to provide "Housing that meets the needs of all residents". As a stock-retained local authority, the Council has statutory and regulatory obligations to maintain and repair all our properties.
- 2.2 There is a total of approximately 5860 properties the Council manages and around 370 properties become vacant each year (known as void properties). Void days

are the days that are accumulated between the property becoming vacant and subsequently relet.

- 2.3 During this period where a property is void there is no rental income being received and we try to ensure that the property is let to the right applicant as soon as possible, in accordance with our Allocations Policy, to minimise rent loss.
- 2.4 In January 2022 a new Void Policy was adopted along with a Void Quality Standard, this was approved by Cabinet at the meeting on Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2022.
- 2.5 The void policy ensures that a clear process is in place for both Officers and residents, adhering to best practice. This also includes practices to make sure that the Council is compliant with current legislation, for example the Regulator of Social Housing's Home Standard and current Landlord Health and Safety, Gas and Electrical requirements. The full policy can be seen in Appendix 2.
- 2.6 Similarly, the Void Quality Standard safeguards that all of the Council properties meet a 'property standard' and the full list can be found in Appendix 1 for the requirements that are to be met. All tenants should refer to their Tenancy Agreement and Tenants Handbook to source their responsibilities for maintaining the property after it has been let from void and properties that do not meet these required conditions are subject to recharges for damage.
- 2.7 Earlier this year we received substantial assurance for the procedures and policy being utilised through the void process via internal audit. Since the introduction of the policy and standard we can evidence an enhanced satisfaction with the properties being relet and are no longer undertaking numerous additional works to properties post re-let.
- 2.8 **Staffing and Restructure**
- 2.9 Through the restructure of the housing directorate, we put enhanced focus on the requirements for the void team. The restructure was signed off in December 2022 and we have recently completed the recruitment to roles within this important team. In the new structure we have a Repairs and Voids Surveyor who takes overall responsibility for the void team and performance, a Voids Contract officer, Voids Supervisor, Voids Inspector, a team of eleven operatives solely focused on minor works void properties and a Customer Contact Voids officer. The structure of the Repairs team can be seen at Appendix 3 – Repairs Team Structure.

## **2.10 Void performance 2022/23:**

- 2.11 The Council currently categorises voids into two classifications of void works, these are:
- Minor works (completed by the in-house team) – this includes day to day repairs including light fitting replacement, replacing broken door furniture, replacing internal doors, rehang doors, minor electrical and plumbing activities, some decorations and matters of a similar small scale.
  - Major works (completed by external contractors) – this includes replacement of elements of the property such as windows, kitchen and/ or bathroom, new doors and rewiring.
- 2.12 Our target for void turnaround is set at sub 60 days. In 2022/23 we completed 241 void properties at an average turnaround of 106.74 days. This performance is detailed in Appendix 4 – Void Performance for 22/23. This screenshot is from our voids performance dashboard and shows the location of the voids that were completed along with the approximate void rent loss resulting from those properties re-let within the year.
- 2.13 Our year end performance is obviously not where we want to be and I can provide assurance that the new team are working very hard to address this position. Best practice within the housing sector has historically been sub 40 days for void turnaround. However, the sector is currently experiencing significant supply chain and resourcing implications and numerous social landlords are now struggling to maintain sub-100-day turnaround.
- 2.14 The Earlesfield project, since early 2022 we held back twelve properties for use on the Earlesfield refurbishment programme. Initially our aim was to utilise these properties throughout the programme to temporarily decant our tenants in to whilst works were undertaken on their properties, since the commencement of the programme it has become more apparent that several the tenants within the programme require smaller properties than they are currently a tenant of. This has resulted in several of the smaller decant properties being let to the tenant rather than being moved back to their previous property, however as these properties have been classified as void for in excess of 420 days this has had a negative impact on our current void performance. The positive impact of this is that we have released several larger properties for relet as a result.
- 2.15 All of our contractors and indeed ourselves have been impacted by supply chain issues. This often results in delays of up to four weeks for such items as kitchen units to be delivered.

- 2.16 The entire sector is suffering from a labour shortage at present with there being a reported shortfall in qualified trades persons in the region of 50,000 nationally. This affects both us and our contractors. To mitigate this, we currently have three contractors delivering void major works for us and we are seeking to add additional contractors to enable us to meet our targets.
- 2.17 We have seen a higher proportion of the properties coming back as voids in need of major works. Historically we had around 20/25% of our voids requiring major works, recently we are seeing upwards of 55/60% of properties requiring major works.

### **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1 That scrutiny notes the year end performance relating to void properties and understands the national picture in relation to resourcing and supply chain issues.
- 3.2 That scrutiny schedule further updates to this committee to provide assurance that continued progress is made in this key area of business.

### **4. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 4.1 This report is for noting, comment and discussion.

### **5. Appendices**

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – Void Quality Standard 2022  
Appendix 2 - Void Policy January 2022  
Appendix 3 – Repairs Team Structure  
Appendix 4 – Void Performance for 22/23 (dashboard)

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## **South Kesteven Void Quality Standard - SKVQS**

### **What you can expect in your new home**

We want to make sure we deliver a clean, safe and secure property to incoming tenants, within our targets for turnaround times, standard and cost. All our properties should meet our 'property standard'. Here's what our standard covers:

#### **Security**

We will:

- Renew locks to all lockable doors, including any outbuildings.
- Check any other security measures like window locks are working properly and give you the keys.
- Provide any communal entrance fobs or keys that are required.
- Where a Tunstall system is installed we shall ensure it is operational and upgrade the unit if required.

#### **Electrics**

We will:

- Carry out an electrical inspection, provide an electrical safety certificate and complete any necessary repairs to make sure electrical fixtures and fittings are safe.
- Ensure the property has a working mains smoke and carbon monoxide detector system as well as heat detector.
- Install 24-hour trickle fans or a Positive Input Ventilation (PIV) unit depending on property requirements and upgrade if required.
- Provide a minimum of x1 double USB socket in bedrooms, living room and kitchen in addition to standard sockets.

#### **Gas**

We will:

- Undertake a gas safety check, provide safety certificate and carry out any necessary repairs.
- Arrange for a turn on and test of the gas once the tenant is in situ.

#### **Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide Detectors**

We will:

- Adequate numbers of smoke alarms will be fitted, and Carbon Monoxide Detectors where required.
- Where these are provided, they will be checked and serviced.

#### **Plumbing**

We will:

- Flush all systems to minimise the risk of Legionella and ensure there is hot and cold running water, and all taps are working properly.
- Check all accessible pipe work and tanks for leaks and blockages and carry out any repairs as necessary.
- Install a Surestop valve to the mains water supply.

#### **Heating and energy efficiency**

We will:

- Make sure the heating system is working properly.
- Provide a valid energy performance certificate.



- Provide advice and/or guidance on operation of heating system.

### **Damp**

We will:

- All properties will be free from damp.
- The Council will ensure an exhaustive inspection whenever damp or mould is present and will undertake whatever works are needed, e.g., upgrading fans and ventilation

### **Kitchens**

We will:

- Make sure the kitchen is adequate and has:
  - A kitchen sink unit with cupboard underneath
  - An electric cooker point
  - An electric point for a fridge freezer
  - At least two usable cupboards
  - Adequate work surface
  - Space and plumbing for a washing machine (unless communal facilities are provided)
  - A minimum of three rows of splashback above the cooker

### **Bathrooms**

We will:

- Make sure all toilets, showers, baths, sinks and taps are working properly.
- Fit an electric shower
- A minimum of three rows of splashback around the sink and full height tiling in shower
- Ensure all sealant around baths, basins and sinks is in good condition.
- Remove any existing shower curtain where present and/or replace with new.
- Replace all toilet seats.

### **Roofs, guttering & outside maintenance**

We will:

- Ensure the property is wind and weather-proof
- Clear the loft of any rubbish and ensure the fire break is intact.
- The loft hatch is to be fitted with a suitable Fire Brigade lock so that it is kept out of use.
- Check rain-water goods are in good condition and clear any blockages or make repairs if necessary.
- Remove any outbuildings or structures which are not safe.
- Ensure any outbuildings are in good condition and watertight.
- Provide an outside light at front of property.

### **Doors, windows & stairs**

We will:

- Make sure all doors are in good working order and that any glass panels in doors and side panels meets current safety standards
- Make sure all windows and locks are in good working order and reseal any gaps around the windows.
- Replace any blown or cracked double glazed units.
- Check that staircases, banisters and balustrades are secure and safe
- Make sure there are curtain battens fitted above all windows.

## **Walls & ceilings**

We will:

- Check the plasterwork on exposed walls and ceilings is in good condition and repair/replaster where condition is poor.
- Strip wallpaper where damaged or where it is suspected that walls underneath may be damaged.
- Remove all polystyrene ceiling tiles and skim coat plaster repair over area of removal if required.
- Mist coat emulsion paint to walls where wallpaper has been removed or to all newly plastered surfaces.
- Ensure that where signs of damp are identified we will treat it.

## **Floors and floor coverings**

We will:

- Remove any fitted carpets and floor coverings, except any non-slip flooring to kitchen and bathroom which is in good condition.
- Install non-slip flooring to kitchen and bathroom if not present.
- Secure and/or repair any loose or broken floorboards.
- Ensure that your flooring is level and safe allowing you to fit the floor covering of your choice.

## **Decoration & cleaning**

We will:

- Offer you a decorating allowance for some rooms if they are in a poor condition.
- Ensure all surfaces, including woodwork are free of flaking paint and ready for decorating.
- Remove any graffiti
- All floors and stairs will be swept and wet mopped where possible.
- Bathroom and WC floors will be disinfected.
- All doors (internal and external), doorframes, windows, window frames, windowsills, skirting boards, radiators, and pipe works will be washed down and wiped cleaned.
- Cobwebs will be removed from all areas.
- All sinks, basins, taps, tiled areas, and showers will be cleaned and sanitised.
- Kitchen units, including all work surfaces, cupboards and drawers will be cleaned and sanitised internally and externally.
- All toilets and pipe work will be cleaned.
- If the property shows signs of vermin or insect infestation, then fumigation or other appropriate treatment will take place. Prior to this becoming the tenant's responsibility from commencement of tenancy.

## **Aids and Adaptations**

We will:

- These will be left in situ unless instructed to remove. All aids and adaptations will be checked, and repairs undertaken as necessary to ensure they are safe to use.

## **Gardens**

We will:

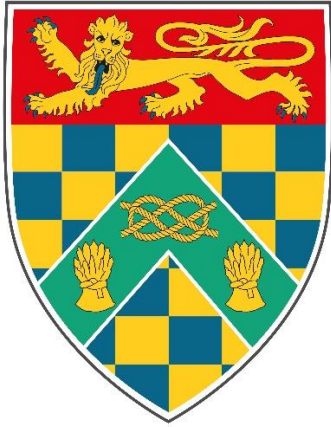
- Clear the garden of any rubbish.
- Ensure grass and hedges are cut where necessary
- Fill or remove any garden ponds
- Ensure fencing that borders a public space is in good condition and that all other boundaries will be marked by at least post and wire.

- Ensure that paths leading to main doors are free from trip hazards.

### **General maintenance and future upgrades**

We will:

- Inform you of any works due to be carried out at your property within the following 12 months.
- Check the property for asbestos and where it is identified it will either be removed or left in a safe condition.
- Not all repairs will be carried out before re-letting. Some repairs may be completed once the incoming tenant has moved in. These will be repairs that wouldn't prevent the tenant from living in the property.
- The new tenant will be advised of any outstanding work during viewing and/or during sign-up. New tenants will be asked to sign an acceptance form that confirms the property is of an acceptable standard, with any repairs due after re-let clearly noted.



**SOUTH  
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**South Kesteven District Council  
Voids Policy  
2022 – 2025  
January 2022**

## **(1) Policy Summary**

1.1 This Policy details South Kesteven District Council's approach to managing void properties with the goal of:

- Delivering a clean safe and secure property to incoming tenants, within our targets for turnaround times, standard and cost.

## **(2) Introduction**

2.1 A property is Void in the period between tenancies.

2.2 Voids are vacant properties and therefore no rent is being paid. This results in a loss of income for The Council. Therefore, we aim to minimise this loss by ensuring that a property is let to the right applicant as quickly as possible.

2.3 The Council aims to let every property to a household which is the best match for that property in order to meet the households current, and where possible, future needs. Although one of the Council's aims is to minimise rent loss, we will also seek to maximise the best match for the property through the allocations process.

## **3. Policy Scope**

3.1 This policy applies to all properties held by the Council within its Housing Revenue Account and is triggered by a tenancy ending and it being appropriate for the Council to re-let the property.

3.2 This Policy will ensure compliance with current legislation, promote good practice, ensuring consistency of approach and has regard but is not limited to:

- Regulator of Social Housing's: Home Standard
- Current Gas and Electrical safety requirements
- All current Landlord Health and Safety requirements
- Ensures value for money in void property works
- Achieves the minimum property quality standard through application of the re-let standard
- Achieves high levels of customer satisfaction with the overall allocation process and property condition
- Is consistent with the aims of our corporate plan

3.3 This Policy applies to all aspects of void management.

#### **4. Policy Objective**

4.1 This policy is designed to meet the following key themes in the Council's corporate plan:

- Housing that meets the needs of all residents
- Healthy and Strong Communities
- A Clean and Sustainable Environment
- A high performing Council

#### **5. Policy Delivery**

5.1 The operational delivery and monitoring of this policy is the responsibility of the Head of Housing Services and Head of Housing Technical Services.

5.2 The Council's staff involved in the void process have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied.

5.3 Properties will be re-let in accordance with the Council's:

- Allocations and lettings policy
- Void's policy and relet standard
- Chargeable policy
- Asset management strategy
- Compliance policies and procedures
- Financial standing orders

#### **6. Tenancy Sustainment**

6.1 The Council will seek to minimise unnecessary voids through:

- Effective tenancy management
- Financial inclusion advice
- The installation of aids & adaptations so that tenants and their families can remain in their home where economically viable in accordance with the Aids & Adaptations policy
- Signposting tenants to the relevant resources for the provision of housing support

6.2 The Council will record reasons as to why properties have become empty and will undertake regular root cause analysis to identify if the void could have been avoided. If the void could have been avoided, the Council will take action to minimise the potential for this happening again in future.

#### **7. Repairs and Improvements**

7.1 Repairs and improvement work are often the main factor for a delay in the re-letting of void properties. Therefore, the Council will have a void quality standard (SKVQS) detailing the standard required to let a property (see

appendix 1). This SKVQS addresses the key principles of safety, security, cleanliness and repair. This is not an improvement standard and therefore improvement work will be undertaken after the new tenant has moved in, and only prior where a repair is not viable.

7.2 Where prospective tenants have specific requirements in order to occupy a dwelling, and these are not included within the relevant void standard, then approval should be sought from the Head of Technical Services or the Head of Housing Services.

7.3 The Council will utilise their Housing IT systems to efficiently manage the void process from start to finish.

7.4 Aids and adaptations which are essential to make the property habitable for a new tenant or their family will be carried out prior to the property being let. A cost benefit analysis shall be undertaken with any decision being taken by the Head of Technical Services, Head of Housing Services in consultation with the Assistant Director of Housing.

7.5 Improvement work will normally be undertaken after the new tenant has moved in. If a repair is not viable then improvement work can be undertaken at the void stage

## **8 Tenancy Termination - Tenant Responsibilities**

8.1 All tenants will be required to comply with the terms of their tenancy agreement, including providing 28 days' notice of their intention to terminate their tenancy. A shorter period may be agreed, but this is subject to agreement by the Head of Housing Services.

8.2 Tenants must leave the property in an acceptable condition, subject to fair wear and tear. Where this is not the case, the Council will recharge outgoing tenants for any repairs required to the property which are due to tenant damage, disrepair or neglect, for changing locks or replacing keys if not returned, and for the cost of removing rubbish, furniture or personal belongings. Further guidance is detailed within the Council's chargeable policy.

## **9 Voids – The Council's Service Commitment**

9.1 We will ensure that prospective tenants are kept fully informed about the commencement date of their tenancy.

9.2 We will ensure that all void properties are brought up to our current SKVQS (appendix 1) prior to being let to the new tenant.

9.3 All new tenants will be surveyed to ensure that they were happy with the allocations process and standard of their new home. The results of these surveys shall identify and inform continuous improvement opportunities.



9.4 We will actively monitor our allocations and voids processes to minimise the period our properties are empty, so that they are available for letting to prospective tenants as quickly as possible.

## **10. Performance Management**

10.1 All activities within the Void Policy will be subject to continual performance monitoring.

10.2 Key performance targets (KPIs) will be reviewed annually. KPIs will be reported to the Council's senior housing team, committee, cabinet and periodically to our tenants.

10.3 Periodic audits will be undertaken by the heads of service to ensure compliance with the contents of this policy.

## **11. Complaints and Appeals**

11.1 All complaints regarding the service received will be dealt with in-accordance with the Council's complaint procedure.

11.2 All appeals regarding the allocation of a property will be heard in-accordance with the Allocations policy.

## **12. Other languages and Formats**

12.1 This policy will be made available in other languages and other formats on request.

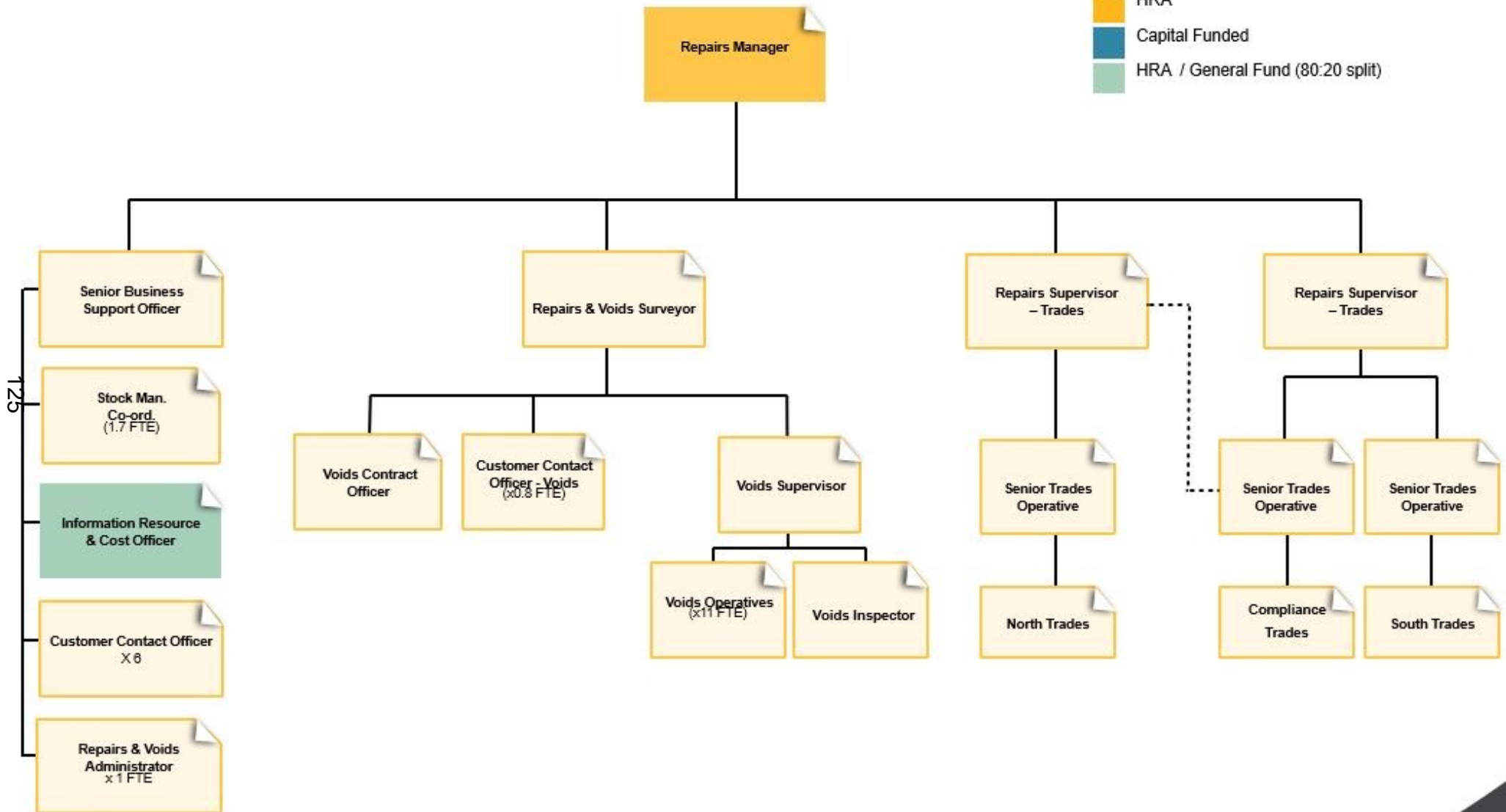
## **13. Policy Review**

13.1 The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if required, for example changes in statutory or regulatory requirements.

<b>POLICY &amp; PROCEDURE CONTROL</b>		
<b>(TO BE INCLUDED AT THE END OF ANY POLICY AND/OR PROCEDURE)</b>		
TITLE:	Void Policy	
AUTHOR:	Craig Spence Assistant Director of Housing	
VERSION:	1	
APPROVED BY:		
DATE APPROVED:		
REVIEW DATE:		

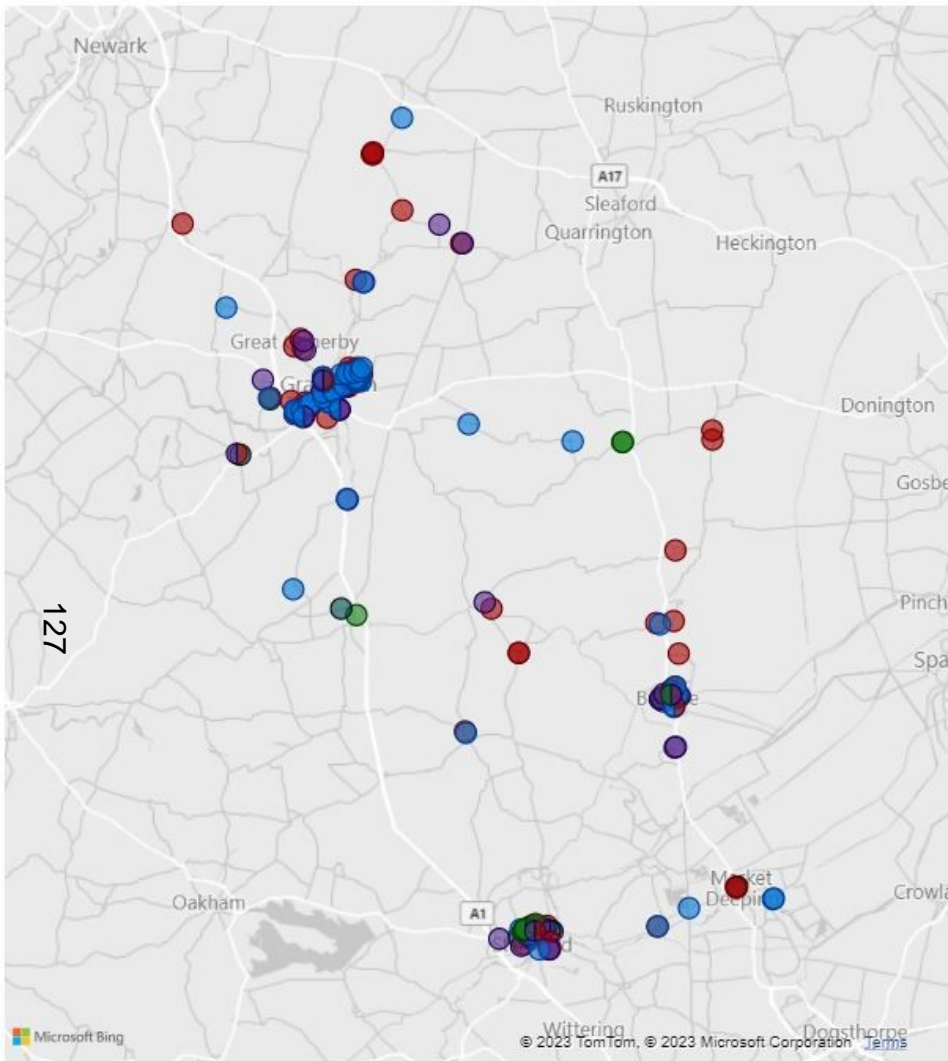
# Repairs Services after consultation

## Key to funding for post



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## Completed Voids



2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
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241

Completed Voids

106.74

Average Void Days (Complete)



See Full List of Completed Voids

£310,654.52

Approx Rent Loss Total

Pre-21/22 Rent Loss  
Approx Total

£4,810.64

21/22 Rent Loss  
Approx Total

£41,400.82

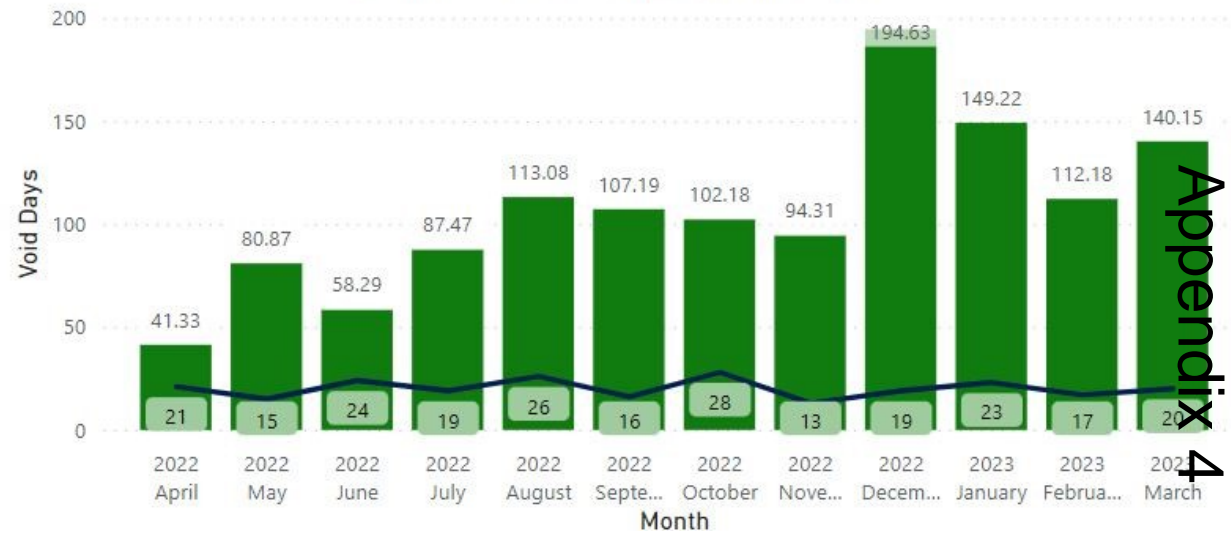
22/23 Rent Loss  
Approx Total

£277,706.76

23/24 Rent Loss  
Approx Total

Average Void Days (Complete) and Total Completions

● Average Void Days (Complete) ● Completed Voids



Appendix 4

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**SOUTH  
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COUNCIL**



## Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 July 2023

Report of: Councillor Phil Dilks  
Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

## Allocations Update

### Report Author

Jodie Archer, Head of Housing



[jodie.archer@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:jodie.archer@southkesteven.gov.uk)

### Purpose of Report

This report seeks to update members on the progress of the Council's allocation of properties since adoption of the new policy in July 2022 and an update on the implementation of a Choice Based Lettings system.

### Recommendations

#### That the Committee:

1. Notes the proposed changes to the Allocations Policy.
2. Notes the current position and timeline for implementation of the Choice Based lettings system.
3. Recommends a future update on Choice Based Lettings pot go-live in October 2023.

### Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Housing that meets the needs of all residents

Which wards are impacted? All

## 1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

- 1.1 Any financial implications arising from the proposed Policy or the implementation of the Choice Based Lettings system referenced in the report have been incorporated in the financial projections for 2023/24.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Chief Finance Officer

### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.2 There are no legal or governance implications arising from this report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

## 2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2020-2023 to provide "Housing that meets the needs of all residents". As a stock-retained local authority, the Council has statutory and regulatory obligations to maintain and repair all our properties.
- 2.2 Following adoption by Cabinet in July 2022 of the allocation policy it has become apparent that there are a number of changes required to enable consistent and compliant use of the policy. Upon adoption Cabinet delegated to the Director of Housing and Property authority to make minor amendments to the Allocations Policy as needed by changes to regulation or legislation.



- 2.3 This report is raising awareness of the amendments to be made to the original Allocations Policy that was approved in July 2022. The draft amended policy can be seen at Appendix 1 – Draft SKDC Housing Allocations Policy July 2023. With the table of changes made visible in Appendix 2 – Table of Allocations Policy changes.
- 2.4 This paper provides an update on the proposed changes to the policy to satisfy the allocation of housing stock utilising a choice-based lettings approach.
- 2.5 **Choice Based Lettings update**
- 2.6 The Choice Based Lettings system shall enable a total change in approach to the way that Social Housing properties are allocated across South Kesteven. The contract award for the Hume system was approved in December 2022.
- 2.7 The system implementation is now well underway, and the project timeline can be seen at Appendix 3 - CBL Implementation Timeline. Key points to note are that we are currently in the system configuration period until sign off in early August 2023.
- 2.8 All current applicants on the Housing Register shall be required to re-register and this re-registration shall commence w/c the 28<sup>th</sup> of August 2023 and closing on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2023.
- 2.9 The system is due to go-live week commencing the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2023.

### **3. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 3.1 This report is for noting and comment, committee may wish to schedule additional updates on the Choice Based lettings system post go-live in October 2023.

### **4. Appendices**

- 4.1 Appendix 1 – Draft SKDC Housing Allocations Policy July 2023.  
Appendix 2 – Table of Allocations Policy changes  
Appendix 3 - CBL Implementation Timeline

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# Housing Allocations Policy

2023



SOUTH  
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# 1. Contents

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## 2. Introduction

All local housing authorities are required by law to have a scheme for determining priorities and procedures when allocating social housing. This document sets out the housing allocation scheme for South Kesteven District Council (the Council). The scheme sets out who is eligible and qualifies for social housing, and how the Council decides who should have priority for those properties that are available.

The scheme supersedes the previous schemes covered. South Kesteven, like many areas nationally, is facing increasing demand for social housing that far outstrips supply. In that context, the housing allocation scheme offers households with a housing need (as defined by the scheme) some choice in bidding for a home while giving reasonable preference to those in the greatest housing need and with a local connection to South Kesteven.

This housing allocations scheme applies to:

- a) New applicants
- b) Existing social rented housing tenants who have a need to transfer from one tenancy to another with their current landlord.
- c) Existing social rented housing tenants who need to transfer from one tenancy to another with a different social landlord.

The accommodation allocated through this scheme includes housing for social and affordable rent which is owned and managed both by the Council and by housing associations operating in the area. The Council's choice-based lettings scheme provides a single access point to good quality, affordable housing for people in housing need and aims to make the task of applying for social housing as simple as possible. On a day-to-day basis, landlords advertise their vacant properties on the website and applicants, who would like to live in those properties, register their bids on the website. Properties are then allocated in accordance with the procedures and priorities set out in the allocations scheme.

Properties are then allocated in accordance with the procedures and 6 priorities set out in the housing allocations scheme. As well as operating a housing allocations scheme, the Council also provides a housing options service which works to prevent or relieve homelessness and provides housing applicants with advice on a range of alternative housing options including:

- a) Mutual exchange
- b) Renting in the private rented sector
- c) Options to remain in the current home.

## Scope of the Scheme

The following are defined as allocations within this scheme:

- a) The selection of a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of council accommodation or
- b) The nomination of a person to be a starter or assured tenant of Registered Provider accommodation

The housing allocation scheme does not apply to the following lettings:

- a) Succession of tenancy
- b) Assignment of a tenancy through mutual exchange
- c) Assignment of a tenancy to a person who would be qualified to succeed to the tenancy.
- d) Assignment of a tenancy in pursuance of a relevant court order
- e) Progression from an introductory to secure tenancy
- f) Sole to joint tenancy changes and vice versa
- g) Temporary decants to complete repairs.
- h) Lettings made by Registered Providers outside of the South Kesteven nomination agreement.
- i) Properties leased to a partner agency (e.g., support provider)

### 3. Aims and Objectives

In addition to meeting the Council's statutory duties, the aim of this housing allocation scheme is to provide good quality, affordable housing to those in the most need whilst promoting sustainable tenancies and communities.

The objectives are:

- a) To provide clear, and transparent information to people who need to find a home about the social housing that is available so that they can make realistic, informed, and affordable housing choices.
- b) To support all landlords in making the best use of their housing stock in South Kesteven, ensuring that larger homes, specialist housing, and homes adapted for disabilities, are made available to those who need them most.
- c) To support other landlords in managing their homes effectively, by ensuring properties can be let quickly and that tenants are given the best chances of maintaining their tenancies in the long term.
- d) To help prevent homelessness and enable the discharge of the Council's statutory homelessness duties, minimising the use of temporary accommodation.
- e) To ensure and promote equality of opportunity in accessing safe, secure and affordable housing, both to local people in housing need and to other categories of people that do not satisfy a local connection to South Kesteven including those that have served in the armed forces, care leavers, those fleeing domestic abuse and people who are looking to continue or take up employment.

This housing allocation scheme will be monitored and reviewed, when necessary (at least annually), to ensure that it continues to meet local needs, responds to changes in the local housing market, meets the council's strategic objectives and remains legally compliant.

As part of the development of this the Council has consulted with existing social housing tenants in the South Kesteven area, applicants on the Housing Register, landlords, and other interested client groups and partner agencies.

## 4. The Legal Framework

The Council's housing allocations scheme sits within a tight legal framework which is summarised in this section. The legislative framework applies to the Council directly and requires Registered Providers to 'cooperate to such an extent as is reasonable in the circumstances in offering accommodation to people with priority under the authority's scheme'.

The primary legislation governing the allocation of social housing is Part 6 Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Any reference to legislative sections contained within this scheme are sections contained within the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). This legislation requires councils to make all allocations and nominations in accordance with a published housing allocation scheme which determines priorities between applicants for housing and sets out the procedure to be followed when allocating housing.

Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) requires local authorities to frame their housing allocation schemes to give "reasonable preference" to certain categories of people namely:

- a) People who are homeless as defined in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).
- b) People who are owed a particular statutory duty by any local housing authority under certain provisions of homelessness legislation.
- c) People occupying insanitary, overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory housing.
- d) People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability.
- e) People who need to move to a particular locality within the district to avoid hardship to themselves or others.

In addition to the primary legislation, South Kesteven's housing allocation scheme takes full account of the associated statutory codes of guidance and statutory instruments. In developing the scheme, the Council has also had regard to its Homelessness Strategy, Tenancy Strategy, and the Lincolnshire Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The housing allocation scheme has been developed to be compatible with other relevant legislation, regulations and guidance including, but not restricted to:

- a) The Equality Act 2010
- b) The Human Rights Act 1998
- c) The Data Protection Act 2018
- d) The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- e) Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- f) The Localism Act 2011
- g) Armed Forces Covenant
- h) Armed Forces Act 2021
- i) Domestic Abuse Act, 2021
- j) Welfare Reform Act 2012
- k) Public Sector Accessibility Regulations 2018
- l) Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- m) Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local authorities (as amended January 2022)



A summary of this housing allocation scheme is available free of charge to any person who asks for a copy. It can be downloaded free of charge from the South Kesteven website. If requested a hard copy can be provided on payment of a reasonable fee (to be confirmed at time of request).

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## 5. Registration

### How to Apply

Applicants can apply for an allocation by completing a housing application form online at [www.SKhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.SKhomechoice.org.uk). Should applicants require assistance in completing the form or require the form to be made available in other formats this can be requested by telephone or by prior arrangement from the Council offices. Applicants will be required to provide supporting documentation. Once a fully completed application form has been received along with any required supporting documentation, the form will be assessed to determine if applicants are eligible and qualify for an allocation (see section 6), followed by an assessment of their housing need (see section 7), and a determination of property eligibility (see section 8).

### How it Works

South Kesteven housing advertises available social and affordable housing throughout the South Kesteven District. All available properties are advertised online at [www.SKhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.SKhomechoice.org.uk). Properties will be advertised at the point we know they will be available to allocate for a period of 7 days. This means new properties will be added to the bidding list on any day.

Applicants who are on the housing register are then able to express interest in properties that they wish to be considered for. This process is called 'bidding'.

Applicants can bid on up to three properties that are being advertised at any one time (different rules apply for homeless applicants). The system will only allow applicants to bid on properties that are the right size and type for their household requirements. Bidding on a property means that the applicant will be included on the shortlist for that property.

Applicants should only bid on properties after reading all the attributes and locality details in the advert. Bids on suitable properties which are later refused by the applicant may incur a penalty. If applicants do not express an interest in a property, they will not be considered for the allocation of that property.

Some South Kesteven housing applications may be set to auto bid. This means that the housing system will automatically place their bids after midnight on a Wednesday when all other bids have been placed. Applicants who are owed a statutory homeless duty (i.e., main duty, relief, or prevention) will be subject to an auto bid process whereby up to five bids will be made automatically on their behalf.

When a property is shortlisted, it is usually offered to the applicant with the highest band and who has been waiting in that band for the longest time (determined by an effective date). Applicants can view their bid queue position and bid outcome on their online account. Only successful applicants are contacted directly.

South Kesteven will publish information on accepted offers of accommodation from previous bidding cycles at [SKhomechoice.org.uk](http://SKhomechoice.org.uk). The following information will be published on advertised properties:

- a) Property address
- b) Property type
- c) Closing date for bids
- d) The band of the successful bidder
- e) The date they were placed in that band.
- f) The number of bids received.

Please note, under no circumstances will any personal details of the successful bidder be published.

### **'Any Time' Adverts**

South Kesteven housing also has the functionality to create 'any time adverts' which will sit outside of the weekly advert cycle and bidding process described in this scheme. 'Any time adverts' can be added on any date and for any length of time. The Council will utilise this facility for properties that are regarded as difficult to let to avoid multiple and repeated duplicate adverts week on week. In South Kesteven this applies mainly to some sheltered properties. Bidding opportunities in respect of 'any time adverts' will be in addition to the core bidding opportunities described in this scheme. An applicant that has three bids per bidding cycle will therefore have three bids plus any additional bids that are eligible to be placed on 'any time' adverts. In addition to difficult to let properties, the Council may utilise the 'any time advert' facility in other circumstances including but not limited to adverts and lettings that need to be fast-tracked. Decisions to utilise the 'any time advert' facility for any reason, other than for a difficult to let property, will be made by the Service Manager.

### **Tenancy Types**

Tenancies offered by South Kesteven can include introductory/starter tenancies, secure tenancies, affordable rent tenancies and fixed term tenancies. Applicants are responsible for deciding which properties and which types of tenancy they wish to express an interest in. However, in addition to the tenancy type advertised, the type of tenancy offered to applicants will often depend on several factors including:

- a) Their current tenure and landlord
- b) Their current circumstances
- c) The landlord of the property
- d) The type of property
- e) The location of the property

### **Verification**

To assess and verify housing applications, the following documentation will be required:

- One form of photographic ID for main and joint applicant such as a passport or driving licence
- One form of ID for all other household members such as passport, driving licence or birth certificate

- Proof of current address for all adults in the household dated within the last 3 months, such as a utility bill.
- 3 months proof of income for all adults in the household, such as wage slips or UC payments
- 3 months bank statements for all adults in the household, for all accounts held.
- Proof of child benefit (if applicable)
- Proof of pregnancy (if applicable)
- Proof of housing need, such as a doctor's letter or police incident number
- Any other information deemed necessary to process the application.

The council may make additional enquiries with current or former landlords or other relevant agencies, such as a GP. Council officers may also need to arrange a home visit or office interview. Where this is necessary, a council officer will contact the applicant to arrange a convenient appointment. If, after a 28-day period, applicants have not provided information that has been requested, the Council will cancel the application.

Verification includes checks on an applicant's full circumstances including their eligibility, qualifying criteria, housing need and property eligibility. Circumstances will be verified at the point of application and at the point of nomination prior to a formal offer. It is the applicant's responsibility to notify South Kesteven District Council of any significant changes to their circumstances which may affect their application. An applicant's circumstances can change at any point and accordingly can be reassessed by the Council at any time.

Prior to any formal offer of accommodation, South Kesteven landlords will also conduct a tenancy assessment and other checks to verify an applicant's circumstances. This will include an affordability assessment. Applicants that fail the verification checks and/or affordability assessments will not be offered the accommodation for which they have been nominated. The application may then be reassessed depending on the reasons for refusal.

### **Disability, Medical and Mobility Needs**

If an applicant or joint applicant, or other member of the household identified on the housing application have any of the following then it is the applicant's responsibility to provide any medical evidence that they would like to be considered in assessing their application:

- a) A permanent physical disability
- b) A mobility problem
- c) A medical condition, or
- d) A mental health condition.

The Council may need to contact the applicant for further information regarding the condition to help the Council to assess and establish in which band to place the application and what type of property is suitable. In some circumstances the Council may need to seek independent medical advice to help inform this decision and specifically to explore:

- a) Whether the applicant's current home is having a detrimental impact on the health or mobility of anyone in the household, and the extent of the detrimental impact.

- b) What type of accommodation would suit the needs of the households or if a move is necessary.
- c) What adaptations the household may require

If, after the Council's enquiries, it is established that the applicant requires specific adaptations to a property, the application will be amended to reflect this. Households that require specific adaptations will only be nominated to accommodation that is suitable for their needs.

It is recognised that applicant's circumstances are individual and that the medical banding criteria cannot specify every circumstance that might apply. Exceptional banding decisions pertaining to medical issues that sit outside of the normal banding criteria will be made by the manager that oversees the South Kesteven housing team or an officer of equivalent level.

### Timescales

When a South Kesteven housing application is received, the Council will:

- a) Contact the applicant within 15 working days of receiving the application to confirm if any additional supporting information is required.
- b) Contact the applicant to confirm that the application is active within 15 working days of receiving a fully completed application form including any relevant supporting information that is required.
- c) Let the applicant know if it cannot register the application within 15 working days of receiving the fully completed application form due to delays which may be caused by the Council requiring additional information from another agency or for other administrative reasons.

These timescales may vary depending on staff resources and are to be used as a guide only. Once all necessary enquiries have been made, and the application has been fully processed, the council will email/write to the applicant to inform them:

- a) If the applicant does not qualify to join the South Kesteven housing register, the reasons for this and their right to a review of the decision or.
- b) That we have accepted the application and the applicant can start to place bids for properties advertised on South Kesteven housing.
- c) The applicant's unique housing reference and log in details
- d) The South Kesteven housing band in which we have placed the application.
- e) The date on which the application was placed into the band – the effective date.

### Band Effective Date

The 'effective date' is used to prioritise between applicants within the same band. The 'effective date' of an application is normally the date that a complete application is accepted onto the housing register. If there is a change in circumstances after initial registration, then the application will be reassessed, and the applicant may:

<b>Change in circumstance</b>	<b>Effective date</b>
Gain greater priority and be placed in a higher priority band.	The date at which the higher band applies will be used.
Be assessed as being in the same band.	The original effective date will be used.
Lose priority due to their circumstances and be placed in a lower priority band.	The original effective date will be used.
Become ineligible or may no longer qualify for an allocation.	The application will be removed from the housing register. Applicants may reapply at a later date if circumstances change, and a new effective date will then apply.

### **Suspension of Application**

Once we have assessed an applicant's priority for rehousing, the Council may suspend the application if the applicant or a member of their household has done something that has deliberately made their housing circumstances worse. The applicant's application may be suspended if they have:

- a) Abandoned or terminated previous accommodation without securing suitable alternative accommodation first.
- b) Sold a property or given notice on a tenancy without securing alternative accommodation first.
- c) Accepted a property owned by a South Kesteven housing landlord which the applicant now claim is unsuitable despite there being no change to their circumstances.
- d) Moved into accommodation which is unaffordable when being aware of the associated financial implications.
- e) Previously had their application cancelled for failing to bid.
- f) Been found to have deliberately disposed of assets or capital that would have enabled them to secure suitable accommodation.
- g) Ending of any homeless duty due to a deliberate and unreasonable refusal to cooperate.

There may be other circumstances where an applicant has moved to new accommodation that is 'worse' than their previous accommodation and where this appears to be without good reason. South Kesteven District Council will consider the facts of such cases on an individual basis to determine whether an applicant's decision to move accommodation was made solely or largely to acquire a housing need for the purposes of securing accommodation via the housing allocation scheme. Decisions to move from suitable accommodation into accommodation that is overcrowded, insecure or lacks basic amenities for example, will be scrutinised.

When a decision is made to suspend the application, the Council will suspend for a period of twelve months from the date of the decision. Applicants may ask for a review of this decision.

## Changes of Circumstances

Applicants must inform the Council if the circumstances of any person included in the South Kesteven housing application changes as this may affect their eligibility or qualification status, band, or property eligibility. Changes in circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- a) A change in eligibility status
- b) A change in assets or savings including home ownership / beneficiary of a property.
- c) The accrual of new housing related debt
- d) New criminal convictions
- e) A change of address
- f) A change of contact details
- g) People leaving the household or new household members.
- h) A change in a household member's health or wellbeing

If the Council later discovers a change in circumstances that has not been disclosed to the Council, this may result in a housing application being cancelled, an offer of accommodation being withdrawn, or possession action being taken to recover a property allocated under this scheme.

The Council will endeavour to process changes of circumstance within 15 working days.

## Annual Reviews

Annually, all applicants are required to complete an online review. The review is to ensure:

- a) The number of applicants on the South Kesteven housing register reflects the immediate needs for social housing.
- b) Applicants still want to stay on the South Kesteven housing register and
- c) Applicants' details are accurate and up to date.

Applicants will be notified when a review is due. If an applicant fails to respond to the review within 28 days of notification, the application will be cancelled.

Should applicants require assistance in completing the form or require the form to be made available in other formats this can be requested by telephone or by prior arrangement from the Council offices.

## Cancellation

South Kesteven housing applications may be cancelled if, for example, the applicant:

- a) Becomes ineligible for an allocation.
- b) Requests their application is cancelled.
- c) Fails to respond to a review.
- d) Has been re-housed by a private landlord.
- e) Moved and did not inform the council of their new address.
- f) Fails to respond to a request for information within 28 days.
- g) Deliberately provides false or misleading information.



- h) Refuses offers of suitable accommodation.
- i) Fails to qualify for the housing register.
- j) Fails to place bids on suitable properties.

### **Who Can be Included on an Application?**

The applicant should include on their housing application other persons who normally reside with them or who would reasonably be expected to reside with them as a member of their household. All household members who will be living in the new tenancy must be included on the application in order that qualification checks can be conducted. Applicants and household members can only be on one South Kesteven housing application.

The following can be included on an application if they normally live with the applicant(s) or could reasonably be expected to do so:

- a) Partner or spouse,
- b) Children dependent on the applicant / joint applicant
- c) Adult children
- d) Other adults who are dependent on the applicant / joint applicant

Other people will only be considered if there are demonstrable extenuating circumstances that require them to live with applicants; for example, to provide or receive ongoing and substantial care which can be evidenced.

In all circumstances, the Council may decide whether a person is normally resident as a member of the applicant's family and whether they will be considered for rehousing as a member of the applicant's household. The Council will consider each applicant's individual circumstances when deciding whether to allow persons to be included on the application.

### **Dependent Children**

A dependent child is defined as being aged 0-15 years or 16-18 years and attending or enrolled in full-time approved non-advanced education or training. The Council will usually expect that an applicant receives Child Benefit in respect of dependent children. In determining whether a dependent child can be considered as part of the household where there is shared parental responsibility, the Council will consider whether there is a sufficient degree of permanence or regularity to constitute normal residence as a member of the family. The Council may also consider the demand for and supply of accommodation, as well as any under occupation which may result where a child spends part of a week with one parent and part of a week with another.

Factors that the Council will consider include:

- a) Who has the main parental responsibility of the child / children?
- b) What is the child's main and principal home?
- c) What address is registered with GP/School/Nursery?
- d) Who predominantly cares for the child?
- e) What is the frequency and length of residence at the applicant's property?
- f) Does the child have other accommodation available to them which it is reasonable for them to occupy?



g) Is there an order of the court pertaining to the child's residency?

If a child has no suitable accommodation with either parent, then both parents can include the child on their South Kesteven housing application until such time as suitable housing for the child has been secured. At this time, the other parents' South Kesteven housing application will be reassessed accordingly. For clarity, only one social / affordable rented property with a garden will be offered for the children.

Single parents/couples with a housing need, with children who do not permanently reside with them can be considered for properties with up to two bedrooms (excluding family accommodation with its own garden), however they will only be offered a two-bedroom property if there is no demand from households who require that size of property. Household income may be assessed by the landlord of the property against their affordability criteria to ensure that the property is affordable before an offer of tenancy is made.

### **Adult Children and Other Non-Dependents**

Non-dependent children are defined as any children of the applicant or joint applicant who do not meet the definition of a dependent child. A non-dependent child is usually aged 18 years or over or aged 16/17 and who is not attending or enrolled in any full-time approved non-advanced education or training.

Where the household includes people aged 18 years or over that can live independently, the Council will assess the needs of the whole household and may refuse to allow them to be included on an application, for example if it is unable to meet the need through existing social housing in the South Kesteven. The Council may require such non-dependent members of the household (including adult children, or extended family members) to apply for housing separately.

The Council will allow adult children living with their parents who are serving in the armed forces or resident at university to be included on an application. In these circumstances their parental home will be considered as their principal home.

Where it is determined that an adult child, or other non-dependent is not capable of living independently, for example because of a disability or severe learning difficulties, family accommodation may be awarded if it benefits the wellbeing of the household.

### **Family Members Not Resident in the UK**

If applicants are applying to include family members who are not living in the UK, the application may be registered but the family members will not be part of the household until the family has been reunited in the UK.

### **Children in Care**

Children in compulsory or voluntary care can be included on an application subject to written confirmation from social services that the children are to live on a permanent basis with the applicant(s).

Households currently undertaking fostering may be able to include foster children as part of their application. Written confirmation from social services of the fostering arrangement will be required and considered to inform the decision.

### **Provision/Receipt of Care**

Applicants or applicant household members, who require a full-time residential carer which is evidenced by social services or a primary health care professional, may include the carer on their application.

People who provide substantial long-term care to another person which requires that person to live with an applicant to receive the care, may include that person on their application. Care needs which cannot be provided by visiting carers must be verified by social services. The care needs must be substantial, i.e., a need for personal care with basic daily activities (dressing, feeding, bathing, toileting), or an inability to live independently certified by a medical professional.

### **Split and Non-Traditional Households**

The Council will consider applications from households where the main and joint applicants do not currently reside at the same address, or applications from non-traditional households, e.g., friends sharing. In reaching a decision whether to accept applications from non-traditional households, the Council will consider, amongst other factors, the relationship between applicants and the demand for and availability of the property type and size required. If accepted, both applicants will need to meet the eligibility and qualifying criteria and the priority awarded to the application will be based on the housing circumstances of the applicant in the highest band.

## 6. Eligibility and Qualification

Any person can approach the Council for advice and assistance regarding housing however, due to the high demand for social and affordable rented housing in South Kesteven, the Council does not maintain an 'open' housing register. In considering an application, the Council will firstly assess if an applicant is eligible for accommodation, and secondly, whether an application qualifies for an allocation of accommodation. Any applicant assessed as either not eligible or who does not qualify will not be considered for an allocation and will therefore not have access to the housing register.

### Eligibility

The legislation and accompanying regulations regarding eligibility for housing are complex and subject to regular change. This section provides an overview of the main rules. The main law on eligibility in England is contained in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) which allows the government to introduce regulations about eligibility for allocations. South Kesteven will determine whether applicants are eligible for housing assistance ensuring compliance with UK immigration and nationality regulations.

### Applicants who are eligible

The following groups are eligible for an allocation of housing:

- a) British Citizens
- b) Certain Commonwealth citizens with a right of abode in the UK
- c) Irish citizens, who are not subject to immigration control in the UK.
- d) EEA nationals with an EEA 'right to reside' that qualifies for housing (including but not limited to those that are working or self-employed)
- e) Classes of persons subject to immigration control who are eligible for an allocation of accommodation as set out in Regulation 3 of the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended. These groups include but are not limited to:
  - people granted refugee status.
  - people granted exceptional leave to enter or remain without a 'no public funds' condition.
  - people granted humanitarian protection.
  - EEA nationals who have been granted settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme and who are 'habitually resident' in the British Isles or Ireland
- f) European Economic Area (EEA) nationals, and their family members, who have citizen's rights under the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020.

### Applicants who are not Eligible

Some classes of people are not eligible to join the housing register, specifically those who are:

- a) Subject to immigration control (unless in a class re-included by regulations made by the Secretary of State – see reference to Regulation 3 in section above)
- b) Not habitually resident in the UK, Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or the Republic of Ireland

- c) Other persons from abroad excluded by regulations made by the Secretary of State including:
- EEA nationals whose only right to reside is derived from their status as an EEA jobseeker or as the family member of an EEA jobseeker.
  - EEA nationals whose only right to reside is the initial three-month period under Regulation 13 of the EEA Regulations
  - Non-EEA nationals whose only right to reside is as the parent of a UK citizen child who has no other rights to reside in the UK (known as a 'Zambrano carer')
- d) Persons granted limited leave ('pre settled status') under the EU settlement scheme where their only other right to reside is a non-qualifying right (i.e., as a jobseeker, is within his/her first three months or as a Zambrano carer)
- e) Required to leave the UK by the Secretary of State.
- f) Ineligible due to changes contained in the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Act 2020:  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/20/contents/enacted/data.htm>

## **Qualification**

The Localism Act 2011 enabled local housing authorities to decide which classes of persons are, or are not, qualifying persons for the purposes of allocating housing. This section sets out the classes of persons which are not considered to be qualifying persons and will therefore not be accepted to join the South Kesteven register for an allocation of housing.

In exceptional circumstances, an applicant who would not ordinarily qualify for the housing register but who has an urgent housing need (defined by being awarded Bands 1 or 2 under this housing allocation policy) may be allowed to join. The decision to allow a non-qualifying applicant to join the register, will be determined by a panel of senior housing officers. Other professionals, for example those with social care expertise, may be invited to contribute to the panel and decision making where relevant.

The council retains a discretion to deal with individual cases where there are exceptional circumstances, for example where such circumstances arise in relation to the wider Armed Forces community.

The Council works in partnership with the Police, Probation Service, Community Safety Partnerships, and housing providers to manage risk to the community. If there are any details pertaining to an applicant or application which leads the Council to believe there may be implications for community safety, the Council may refuse an applicant housing in certain areas.

## **Applicants who do not qualify**

### **1. Homeowners**

The definition of a home is a freehold or leasehold property, a static caravan situated on a site open all year round or a boat which has a mooring. Applicants who have a beneficial interest or home rights in a property will be classed as a homeowner and will therefore not qualify for the housing register.

All applicants must declare whether they own a home or have a legal interest in any land or property in the UK or abroad.

Homeowners (including joint homeowners) will not qualify for the housing register unless they have an urgent housing need to move (Bands 1 and 2) and have insufficient equity, capital, or assets to resolve their housing difficulties. (See income section). This will include the possibility of adapting their current home. A financial assessment will be required to assess the level of equity. An Occupational Therapists report will be needed to establish if adaptations are required.

Elderly homeowners who are accepted as eligible for sheltered housing will qualify to join the South Kesteven register but are exempt from bidding for bungalows and are eligible for sheltered complex properties only.

*Homeowners who have been awarded a duty under the homeless legislation may be exempt from these criteria. Each case will be decided on its own merit and will depend on the applicant's circumstances, amount of equity in the property and any medical needs which render the property unsuitable.*

## **2. Applicants with financial means**

Applicants who have the financial means to purchase a property within South Kesteven that meets their housing needs (and who do not meet any of the exemptions) or who could access the private rented market will not qualify for the Housing Register.

**Savings** - Applicants who have total household savings, investments and/or assets of £16,000 or more will not qualify for the housing register.

**Income** - Applicants who have a total annual household income of £25,000 (single persons / lone parents) or joint household income of £45,000 or more (couples / couples with children / other household types) will not qualify for the housing register. Passported benefits, and non-contributory disability benefits are not included for the purposes of income in this definition. Certain compensation payments may be disregarded as savings when assessing an applicant's financial resources.

Exemptions:

- Applicants who qualify for older person's sheltered accommodation schemes
- Applicants who have a need for specialist accommodation that is not available or affordable in the private sector within South Kesteven, for example wheelchair standard accommodation.
- Applicants who are unable to safely access their property or finances, for example because they are fleeing domestic abuse, and who are taking legal action to recover their funds/share of the funds.
- Other exceptional circumstances (such cases will be referred to a Senior Officer for consideration and if approved will require final authorisation from the Head of Housing Services).

*Homeless applicants who have been awarded a statutory duty under the homeless legislation will be exempt from these criteria however they will be given a reduced priority on the register.*

### **3. Persons with no Local Connection**

Applicants who do not establish a local connection to South Kesteven will not qualify to join the South Kesteven housing register. A local connection to South Kesteven will be established by virtue of any permanent member of the household (permanent meaning anyone who normally resides within the household and the accommodation is their only or main residence) meeting any of the criteria set out below:

- Residence – Applicants currently live in the district and have done for at least 6 out of the last 12 months or past residence of at least 3 out of the last 5 years. Residency may be verified by way of tenancy references, electoral roll, information held on any local authority or third-party database, such as Experian and will be verified at the point of application and at the point of allocation/nomination. This includes those people who currently live in an institution, hospital or are serving a custodial sentence outside of the area but were resident in the area for at least 6 out of the 12 months or 3 out of the last five years prior to entering that institution, hospital, or custody.
- Current employment – Applicants currently work in South Kesteven and have done for a minimum of 16 hours per week consistently for 6 out of the last 12 months. Regularly means 16 hours per week or more, and either have a permanent contract (and passed any probationary period) or be able to demonstrate they have worked for at least six months and there is no reason to believe this arrangement is due to cease.

Applicants who are self-employed, or their profession requires them from time to time to work outside the area, will need to demonstrate that their employment has mainly been based in South Kesteven for a minimum of six months prior to application and at the point of any allocation/nomination.

Applicants on leave due to maternity or sickness who remain employed will qualify for this criterion if there is no reason to believe their employment is due to cease.

- Family associations - Immediate family members currently resident in South Kesteven i.e., parent, sibling, or adult son or daughter who has lived in the area for a minimum of five years continuously prior to acceptance onto the South Kesteven housing register.

Residency may be verified by way of tenancy references, electoral roll or information held on any local authority database. Relationship may be verified by Birth Certificates or information held on any local authority database.

Family members would normally be parents (biological or adoptive), adult children, brothers, or sisters provided there are sufficiently close links in the form of frequent contact, commitment, or dependence.

## Exemptions:

- Right to move - This applies to current social tenants in England who are employed, or who have been offered permanent employment in South Kesteven AND who need to move to avoid hardship.
- Armed Forces personnel - Certain members of the Armed Forces community are exempt from any residency / local connection requirements, by virtue of regulations made under section 160ZA (8) which prevent local authorities from applying a local connection test to disqualify such applicants.

These are:

a) Those who are currently serving in the Regular Armed Forces or who were serving in the Regular Forces at any time in the 5 years preceding their application for an allocation of social housing

b) Bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the Regular Forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease, to be entitled to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their Service spouse or civil partner, and (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service

c) Serving or former members of the Reserve Armed Forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service

d) Divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Service personnel who need to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence.

- Applicants owed a homeless duty by South Kesteven District Council - Applicants with the following duties:
  - S193(2) - Main Duty
  - S195(2) - Prevention duty
  - S192(3) - Power to secure for non-priority and not intentionally homeless.
  - S189B - Relief Duty
  - S190(2) - Intentionally homeless
- Other special circumstances as approved by a Service Manager - In some special circumstances, the Council will accept people onto the South Kesteven housing register who cannot demonstrate a local connection as defined above. These circumstances include:
  - Those needing to move to provide or receive essential care and support in South Kesteven
  - Applicants who were resident in the area for three years or more before moving to supported housing / care placements out of area to prevent homelessness.
  - Applicants who are leaving care (confirmed by Lincolnshire County Council)
  - Applicants who do not have a clear local connection anywhere which may include those under the Ukrainian Resettlement Scheme and the Afghan Resettlement Scheme
  - Applicants who cannot live in the area in which they have a local connection because of harassment, violence or abuse or the need to move elsewhere for reasons of rehabilitation or personal safety. This includes applicants subject to MAPPA, MARAC arrangements or the National Witness Mobility Scheme.



- Local Connection to a Section 106 / Village exception site - Applicants who satisfy an established local connection to a Section 106 or village exception site (as defined in relevant legal agreements) and that do not meet any of the other local connection qualifying criteria.

Verification of an applicant satisfying this criterion will be required at point of application and at point of nomination. Applicants accepted as qualifying due to this criterion will only qualify to bid on properties within the village development to which they satisfy a local connection.

#### **4. Persons who have behaved in an unacceptable way.**

Applicants who have previously behaved in a way which led to them losing a tenancy, or which could have led to such action being taken by a landlord, or who have behaved in an unacceptable way will only qualify for an allocation via South Kesteven if they can demonstrate that such behaviour is unlikely to occur again. Applicants may not qualify to join the register due to the behaviour of any member of the applicant's household, including partner and children. This includes existing South Kesteven tenants; new applicants and those who are reporting a change of circumstances. Behaviour which may lead to someone failing to qualify to join South Kesteven housing register includes (but is not limited to):

Outstanding housing related debt - Applicants with outstanding housing related debt within the last 5 years, totalling more than £1000 will fail to qualify for the housing register. Debt will be checked at application stage and again at allocation stage.

Housing related debt is defined as:

- Current and former rent arrears (owed to social or private landlords)
- Recharge arrears
- Court costs (against social or private tenancies)
- Homeless prevention loans or other similar schemes

The £1000 debt owed threshold will be defined utilising information obtained as part of the application to include the applicant's current or most recent address. Cumulative debt within a 5-year period more than this threshold, will fail to qualify.

Debt Relief Orders - Housing related debts included in a Debt Relief Order will remain as outstanding until 12 months from the date of issue, at which point the debts are formally written off by creditors and the debtor is discharged. Households owed a statutory homeless duty will be exempt from the 12-month criteria.

*Households owed a homeless duty will be exempt from this non-qualifying criteria, however, a suitable repayment plan (this depends on how much is owed, how much they have repaid and the consistency of payments) must be in place and strictly adhered to, to satisfy housing register requirements that applicants are proactively addressing past unacceptable behaviours. Repayment plans will be considered on a case-by-case basis.*



*If the homeless applicant fails to set up a plan or adhere to the conditions of a plan, they will be given reduced priority on the register.*

Serious breaches of tenancy or unacceptable conduct within a tenancy - Applicants will fail to qualify where there is evidence of a serious and deliberate breach of social or private tenancy within the last 5 years. Breaches of tenancy are considered serious when, had the applicant been a tenant of the local authority, the authority would have been entitled to a possession order under Section 84 of the Housing Act 1985 on any ground detailed in Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Act, except for ground 8.

This includes:

- Rent arrears
- Breach of tenancy agreement
- Nuisance or annoyance to neighbours including anti-social behaviour
- Illegal or immoral use of the property
- Damage or neglect
- Conviction for an arrestable offence committed in the locality of the premises
- Domestic abuse
- Making a false statement to gain a tenancy

Applicants evicted from a social tenancy for sub-letting or abandoning a property within the last 5 years will also fail to qualify.

Other breaches of tenancy - The applicant has a history of other unacceptable behaviour relating to tenancy conduct including:

- Persistent / repeated breaches relating to property condition
- Persistent / repeated breaches relating to garden condition
- Not allowing reasonable access for statutory safety checks
- Other non-engagement in essential activities e.g., preventing housing officer visits and repairs

Existing tenants may be subject to an inspection of their property prior to being accepted onto the South Kesteven housing register. Applicants who fail the inspection, or do not engage with their landlord to complete the required actions will not be accepted onto the housing register.

Guilty of criminal offences relevant to rehousing - Any offence that is not spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (amended by the Legal Aid and Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012) must be declared. Cautions should also be declared.

Relevant criminal offences include but are not limited to the following serious arrestable offences:

- Violence including ABH, GBH, terrorism, explosions, and riots
- Harassment, threats of violence or intimidation including racially motivated and domestic abuse offences
- Offences relating to offensive weapons (firearms and certain offences involving knives)
- Offences against property including offences under the Theft Act 1968 such as robbery and burglary, and offences under Section 1 of the Criminal Damage Act 1971 of destroying or damaging a property
- Drug-related offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (restriction of production and supply of controlled drugs and possession of controlled drugs with intent to supply)
- Sexual offences
- Offences under Part 2 Serious Crime Act (encouraging or assisting one of the above offences to be committed)

Antisocial behaviour - Acts of antisocial behaviour are defined as acts where the applicant has been subject to some level of formal warning and/or enforcement action.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Closure Order granted because of antisocial behaviour in or near the applicant's current or previous property
- Civil Injunction such as injunctions preventing nuisance and annoyance
- Criminal Behaviour Order
- Notice or an Order to abate noise served under the Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Community Protection Warnings and Notices
- Convictions for breaching any of the above
- Any other enforcement action / prosecution under the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Antisocial behaviour also includes any act whereby an applicant has been proved to have interfered with security and safety equipment or landlord's electricity supply to communal blocks.

Demonstrated unacceptable behaviour towards any officer, official agent, or property of the Council or South Kesteven landlord forum - This includes having received any warning letters from the Council or any South Kesteven partner, and/or criminal or civil action. Unacceptable behaviour includes but is not limited to verbal and physical abuse, intimidation, violence and/or threats of violence by any form and harassment. Damage, defacing or graffiti upon any property is also included.

The Council does not operate a blanket policy in relation to the above considerations but will consider each case on its own merit. Applicants are invited to provide evidence of a change of behaviour. This will be presented to the Service Manager for overall sign off.

This could include, for example, evidence of regular payments towards a previous housing debt; evidence from a support agency of undertaking training to develop the skills necessary to manage a tenancy or being ready to move on from supported housing.

*Please note: Where the Authority owes a duty under the Homelessness Legislation, certain criteria relating to unacceptable behaviour listed in the table above, may be waived and applicants may be allowed on the register within the original banding as per the policy. Alternatively, applicants could be given a reduced priority. Each case will be looked at on its own merit and be presented to the Service Manager for overall sign off.*

## **5. Persons who are incapable in law of holding a legal tenancy**

Applications will not normally be accepted by a person under the age of 18. However, the following may be considered:

- a) The applicant is in the care of the Council or is a care leaver.
- b) The applicant has been defined as a child in need because of a S17 Children Act 1989 statutory assessment.
- c) The applicant is owed a full statutory homeless duty following a S20 Children Act 1989 statutory assessment.
- d) The applicant has an adult or adults who will act as a trustee(s) and hold a legal tenancy until the legal incapacity to hold a tenancy ends, and the Council accepts the adult as a suitable trustee.

## **6. Persons with no housing need**

Persons/households assessed as having no housing need as defined in the Bands will not qualify to join the housing register.

## **7. Refusals of offers of social housing.**

Applicants who have refused two offers of suitable accommodation in any 12-month period will fail to qualify for the South Kesteven housing register.

Households owed a homeless duty who refuse a suitable offer are discussed separately on page 43. Those who do not qualify by virtue of this category will not have a reapplication considered for 12 months from the date of non-qualifying decision.

Applicants can request a review of this decision if there has been a significant change in their circumstances through no fault of their own which adversely affects the household or would otherwise result in the South Kesteven housing band increasing.

## **8. Exceptional circumstances**

In exceptional circumstances, an applicant who would not ordinarily qualify for the housing register but who has an urgent housing need (defined by being awarded Bands 1 or 2 under this housing allocation policy) may be allowed to join. The decision to allow

a non-qualifying applicant to join the register, will be determined by a panel of senior housing officers. Other professionals, for example those with social care expertise, may be invited to contribute to the panel and decision making where relevant.

The council retains a discretion to deal with individual cases where there are exceptional circumstances, for example where such circumstances arise in relation to the wider Armed Forces community.

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## 7. Assessment of Need

Only applicants who have been assessed as eligible and who qualify will have their housing need assessed.

### Reasonable Preference

The Council is required by law to determine the relative priority that housing applicants are awarded. This is particularly important as the demand for social housing is greater than the availability of homes.

The law, as it applies to local housing authorities, requires that reasonable preference for housing must be given to those in the categories set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Applicants with reasonable preference must be given a reasonable head-start in terms of accessing housing over those who do not have reasonable preference. Reasonable preference does not mean that applicants will have an absolute priority over all other applicants.

The statutory reasonable preference categories in section 166A (3) (a) to I of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) are:

- a) People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part VII of the 1996 Act)
- b) People who are owed a duty by any housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under section 192(3)
- c) People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- d) People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability.
- e) People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others).

### Additional Preference

The following applicants will be given additional preference over other applicants who are within the same Band:

- Applicants who are former serving members of the regular armed forces
- Applicants who are serving or former serving members of the regular armed forces or reserve forces who suffer from a serious injury, illness or disability sustained as a result of their service.
- Applicants who are a bereaved spouse/civil partner of a former serving member of the regular armed forces and have recently ceased (or will soon cease) to be entitled to reside in services accommodation following the death of their spouse/civil partner.

### Other Specified Groups

The Council includes other local priorities alongside the statutory reasonable preference categories. Local priorities can be included providing:

- a) That they do not dominate the housing allocation scheme, and
- b) Overall, the scheme operates to give reasonable preference to those in the statutory reasonable preference categories over those who are not.

### The Banding System

The Council awards each housing application a level of priority for housing using Bands: 1, 2, 3 and 4. Applications in Band 1 have the highest of priority for rehousing.

## **Band 1**

Band 1 is only awarded with the documented approval of the Service Manager. Homeless applicants awarded a Band 1 will be authorised by a senior officer or above.

### Homelessness

Main duty. The applicant is homeless and owed a S193(2) Main Homeless Duty because they are assessed as being in a priority need, unintentionally homeless and establish a local connection as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.

### Medical Needs

Examples include:

Severe medical need. The applicant or a member of the household must have a permanent medical condition or disability AND remaining in the current property is a major and direct contributory factor to pose a severe and life-threatening risk to the member of the household. It will only apply where the current property cannot be made suitable or adapted within 3 months. It is expected that these criteria apply to those few exceptional cases only specifically where:

A household member is receiving palliative care.

A household member is unable to escape their current property in an emergency due to being permanently housebound. Households will only be considered for properties which meet all their housing needs and improve their condition / quality of life.

Included in this category will be household members currently receiving ongoing treatment from primary or secondary mental health services for a diagnosed severe mental health condition and there is evidence to suggest that remaining in the property will have a severe detrimental effect on their mental health and recovery and a need to move to alternative accommodation is paramount.

Hospital discharge. The applicant or a member of the household cannot be discharged from hospital or a rehabilitation centre because they have no accommodation, or their

current accommodation has been deemed hazardous to their health and the situation cannot be rectified to enable them to continue to live there, and they are accepted by South Kesteven District Council as being able to sustain their own independent accommodation (with or without tenancy support).

### Housing Conditions/Needs

Examples include:

Category 1 hazard. The applicant is a private sector, housing association tenant or owner occupier and South Kesteven District Council has determined that their current accommodation poses a Category 1 Hazard (excluding overcrowding) under the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme, the problem cannot be rectified within a reasonable period i.e., six months and by continuing to live there poses a significant risk to health.

Major repairs. The applicant is a tenant of a social or affordable rented property living in South Kesteven who needs to move because their accommodation needs major renovation or extensive repairs. This only applies when all decant options have been exhausted and it is deemed that a permanent move is the most cost effective and practical option.

Statutory overcrowding. The applicant is living in accommodation that is defined as statutorily overcrowded using the room and space standards under the Housing Act 1985 [Housing Act 1985 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk).

Demolition. The applicant needs to move because their home is about to be demolished or redeveloped. This only applies when the demolition or redevelopment is beyond the applicant's control.

Natural disaster. The applicant's home is uninhabitable due to flood, fire, or natural disaster through no fault of the applicant and there is no prospect of the problems being remedied within a reasonable period i.e., six months.

Releasing an adapted property. The applicant is occupying a social or affordable rented property in South Kesteven that is either fully wheelchair accessible or offers a level access shower/wet room and is willing to transfer to suitable non-adapted accommodation. This band will not apply where the adaptation does not offer a realistic solution to others i.e., a level access shower in a first floor flat.

Releasing a large family property. The applicant is under occupying family sized social or affordable rented accommodation in South Kesteven. Family sized is defined as either 3 or 4 bed properties. and is willing to transfer to suitable smaller accommodation. Households awarded this band will only be considered for properties that offer fewer bedrooms than their current accommodation.

Supported move on, with local authority nomination rights. The applicant is ready to move on from an approved supported accommodation provider or care in South Kesteven, where there is a formal arrangement in place that enables South Kesteven District Council nomination rights to vacancies. The applicant must have been accepted as ready for independent living by a relevant support provider. This band will not apply to those applicants who do not have sufficient awareness and/or mental capacity to be able to accept and manage a tenancy and live in a reasonably independent way. Where the

supported accommodation or care is out of South Kesteven, this band will not apply, unless the placement in that accommodation was due to it being the only suitable specialist placement (e.g., residential care or refuge) available to meet the needs of the applicant at the time, and the applicant has a local connection to the South Kesteven housing partnership area.

### Welfare Needs

Risk of harm. The applicant or a member of the household is at serious risk of harm (physical or emotional trauma) resulting from violence or threats of violence, or other abuse or serious trauma and needs to relocate to ensure their safety. This will be verified by the Police and/or other agencies as necessary. This may include a move to protect a witness of criminal acts under the National Witness Mobility Scheme. Any offer of accommodation from this criterion will have restrictions attached in terms of eligible areas to minimise any risk as far as is reasonably practical.

In addition to the Band 1 criteria above, the Council may also award Band 1 status to households in emergency circumstances not covered by the groups above. In such exceptional circumstances, the Head of Housing Services or their delegated representative has discretion to determine whether an applicant has a need to move which is sufficient to warrant placing an application in Band 1.

## **Band 2**

### Homelessness

Relief duty. The applicant is homeless and owed a S189B Relief Duty.

Prevention duty. The applicant is threatened with homelessness and owed a S195 Homeless Prevention Duty.

### Medical Needs

Examples include:

Current accommodation is unsuitable on medical grounds. The applicant or a member of the household has a permanent medical condition or disability which is seriously adversely affected by their current accommodation. This band will apply in the following circumstances for example:

A household member requires ground floor accommodation (or a stairlift) AND requires alternative bathing facilities to that in their current accommodation.

A household member is a permanent wheelchair user, and their current property is ground floor with suitable bathing facilities, however, it does not have suitable floor space, widened door frames or ramp access and the property cannot be made suitable or adapted.



A household member requires medical equipment supplied by a health authority/hospital and the current property/living conditions cannot be altered to make sufficient space (this does not include mobility scooter storage).

A household member is currently receiving treatment from primary or secondary mental health services for a diagnosed serious mental health condition, and there is evidence to suggest that continuing to live in their accommodation is adversely affecting their mental health and a move to alternative accommodation would assist in their recovery.

### **Housing Conditions/Needs**

**Overcrowding.** The applicant's household has been assessed as being overcrowded by 2 or more bedrooms based on the Council's minimum bedroom standard as defined in Section 8 of this policy.

South Kesteven may consider certain households as being overcrowded where one or more members of the household require their own room due to medical needs, for example a child with autism who is unable to share with a sibling. In these circumstances evidence would be required from a medical professional to show that they are unable to share and need their own room.

**Under occupying.** The applicant is under occupying a two or three bedroom social or affordable rented property in South Kesteven and is willing to transfer to suitable smaller accommodation. Households awarded this band will only be considered for properties that offer fewer bedrooms than their current accommodation.

**Supported move on.** The applicant is ready to move on from an approved supported accommodation provider or care in South Kesteven, but the local authority cannot make use of the supported accommodation that will result from the applicant moving on. The applicant must have been accepted as ready for independent living by a relevant support provider. This band will not apply to those applicants who do not have sufficient awareness and/or mental capacity to be able to accept and manage a tenancy and live in a reasonably independent way.

As well as applying to those in supported accommodation schemes and to young people leaving care who are in local authority accommodation, this band criteria also applies to vulnerable applicants who live in a supportive home environment which is not sustainable in the medium to long term, for example, a vulnerable applicant who lives with elderly parents who are their carer's.

Where the supported accommodation or care is outside South Kesteven, this band will not apply, unless the placement in that accommodation was due to it being the only suitable specialist placement (e.g., residential care or refuge) available to meet the needs of the applicant at the time, and the applicant has a local connection to South Kesteven.

**Succession.** The applicant is a successor or non-statutory successor of social rented accommodation, approved for an offer of alternative suitable accommodation. If after six months from the date of qualification as a successor, the applicant has not secured alternative accommodation, the Council reserves the right to bid on the applicant's

behalf, or to make a direct offer, to ensure that the applicant receives one reasonable offer of accommodation within the twelve-month statutory time limit.

### Welfare Needs

Essential care and support. The applicant or a member of their household needs to give or receive essential care and support that is substantial and ongoing and that cannot be provided from or in their current accommodation. Applicants must either be in receipt of Carers Allowance or have a carer who is in receipt of Carers Allowance or have had an assessment by social services or similar support agency, so it can be established that care and/or support is substantial / essential.

## **Band 3**

### Homelessness

Non-priority. The applicant has received a S184 decision finding them to be homeless but have no priority need as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.

Demotion – Those homeless applicants who have refused a suitable offer of accommodation and therefore have been demoted.

### Medical Needs

Examples include:

Non urgent medical need. The applicant or a member of the household must have a permanent medical condition or disability which is adversely affected by their current accommodation. The band may apply in the following circumstances:

A household member requires ground floor accommodation (or a stairlift) OR requires alternative bathing facilities to that available in their current accommodation.

A household member is currently receiving ongoing treatment from primary or secondary mental health services for a diagnosed mental health condition which is made worse by their current accommodation and would be resolved by moving to alternative accommodation.

Households will only be considered for properties which meet all their housing needs and improve their conditions/quality of life.

### Housing Conditions/Needs

Low level overcrowding. The applicant's household has been assessed as being overcrowded by 1 bedroom based on the Council's minimum bedroom standard as defined in section 8 of this policy.

For the purposes of assessing overcrowding, single parents are regarded as requiring 1 bedspace and can utilise a single bedroom.

Accommodation that may be unsuitable. For example, an upper floor flat for families with small children (each case will be looked at on its own merit).

Insecure accommodation. This includes those who are sofa surfing, of no fixed abode, asked to leave by family/friends or have received a notice from their landlord.

Sharing with others (with dependents). The applicant's household has at least one dependent child or a pregnant woman with a confirmed due date, sharing accommodation with their family or another household and is otherwise adequately housed.

### Welfare Needs

Examples include:

Ongoing care and support. The applicant or a member of their household needs to give or receive care and support that is ongoing and that cannot be provided from or in their current accommodation. Ongoing care and/or support does not have to be substantial in that applicants may not be in receipt of qualifying care benefits or have social services involvement. It may include practical and/or emotional support that is essential to the physical or mental wellbeing of the person receiving the care/support.

Employment hardship/right to move. The applicant or a member of the household needs to move to take up or continue permanent employment in South Kesteven for 16 hours a week or more, and to avoid hardship. Hardship because of employment includes commuting distance, the availability and affordability of transport and other factors such as medical conditions or childcare. A commute between home and work of 60 minutes each way is considered reasonable. The applicant's circumstances must be able to be improved to qualify under these criteria.

## **Band 4**

### Homelessness

Intentionally homeless. The applicant has received a S184 decision finding them to be homeless but intentionally so within the definition of the Housing Act 1996, Part 7 as amended 2002.

Reduced priority. Reduced priority due to rent arrears (with no repayment plan in place or being adhered to); sufficient financial resources; unacceptable behaviour or any other reason the Council deem it necessary to reduce a homeless applicant's priority.

### Housing Conditions/Needs

Examples include:

Sharing with others (without dependents). The applicant (or a couple) has no dependents and is sharing accommodation with their family or another household and is otherwise adequately housed. This will also apply when applicants have experienced a relationship breakdown where a move would prevent the homelessness of any dependent children.

Local Connection to a S106/Village Exception Site. The applicant has no housing need but establishes a local connection to a S106 or village exception site whether the connection is to the specific village where the development is located, or a neighbouring

village. Local connection to such sites will be verified at the point of application and at the point of nomination.

### Welfare Needs

Seeking sheltered accommodation. The applicant and any other members of their household have no housing need but are eligible to be considered for, and are seeking, sheltered, supported, or assisted living accommodation. The applicant's current housing tenure will determine which property type they are eligible for. Homeowners are exempt from bidding for sheltered bungalows and are eligible for properties in sheltered housing complexes only.

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## 8. Allocating and Property Eligibility

### Statement of Choice

The Council operates a Choice Based Lettings system. To support choice, available social and affordable rented housing vacancies within the South Kesteven local authority area will be advertised on [www.SKhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.SKhomechoice.org.uk) website. Applicants can register a bid for properties that are deemed suitable for their needs. There are some circumstances in which this will not apply, and the Council will restrict access to bidding, make bids on behalf of an applicant, or make direct offers.

Private landlords are committed to offering the greatest choice possible in the allocation of social and affordable rented housing within South Kesteven. The amount of choice that the Council can offer is limited by the fact that the demand for social housing in South Kesteven, far outstrips supply, and the legal responsibilities owed to some groups of applicants in housing need.

The amount of choice available to applicants will also be affected by the priority given to applicants under the scheme, the type of property the applicant is eligible for, and the availability of suitable properties. The Council will aid applicants with identified support needs in using the Choice Based Lettings system.

Where an applicant is on multiple shortlists, the Council reserves the right to determine which property is offered to an applicant.

### Household Composition

The size and type of property for which applicants are eligible will depend on the individual household composition and needs.

If an applicant's household composition or circumstances fall outside the rules detailed in this section, a senior housing officer will determine what size and type of property the household is eligible for. Circumstances where this might apply include where there is an evidenced need for an additional bedroom on urgent medical grounds, to discharge homelessness duties and make best use of stock.

As a minimum, the applicant's household is entitled to one bedroom each for:

- a) A single person (aged 16 or over)
- b) A married or co-habiting couple
- c) Two children both aged under 10 years regardless of gender
- d) Two children of the same gender up to the age of 16 years

This is referred to as the Council's minimum bedroom standard. Some applicants will also be eligible to bid for properties that offer an additional bedroom to the minimum entitlement detailed above, although they will receive a lower preference for this larger accommodation.

Please note there may be exceptions to the above. Each case will be discussed on its own merits.

The table below explains what size properties applicants can bid for:

	Minimum bedroom entitlement	Maximum bedroom entitlement
Single person	0 (bedsit)	2
Couple	1	2
1 child	2	2
2 children	2 or 3	3
3 children	3 or 4*	3 or 4*
4 children	3 or 4 or 5*	4 or 5*

*\*Depending on the age and gender of the children – see rules above*

For the purposes of property eligibility, the term ‘children’ refers to both dependent and nondependent children. Extended family members that are considered as members of the applicant household (e.g., stepsiblings, cousins) are expected to share bedrooms.

### **Pregnancy**

Households will only qualify as having a housing need based on pregnancy (i.e., overcrowding) when the pregnancy has reached 20 weeks. Applicants who apply prior to pregnancy reaching 20 weeks, and have no other identified housing need, will not qualify for the register at that stage. It is the applicant’s responsibility to then re-apply when pregnancy reaches 20 weeks.

Households who have an identified housing need, not related to pregnancy, but who are expecting their first child will only be considered for family accommodation, and the pregnancy considered, once the pregnancy reaches 20 weeks.

### **Family Accommodation**

Where a three-bedroom property offers two reception rooms, this is referred to as a parlour type property. Households with a minimum need for 3 or 4 bedrooms are eligible to bid for parlour-type properties. Households with a minimum 4-bedroom need can utilise the second reception room as a fourth bedroom.

Where applicants are occupying and wish to downsize from a property in high demand and/or short supply such as 3-bed parlour, 4 bed or 5 bed social / affordable rented property, they may be able to bid for properties larger than that defined above in the household composition section. Such decisions will be made by the Service Manager.

### **Adapted Properties**

Properties advertised on South Kesteven housing may have the following adaptations:

- a) Full Mobility Adaptations
- b) Wet room
- c) Level Access Shower
- d) Stairlift
- e) External Ramp
- f) Shower Over Bath
- g) Minor Adaptations
- h) Lift

Where a property has been adapted, the Council reserves the right to let the property directly rather than advertising on South Kesteven housing in the first instances. This is to make best use of specialist social housing stock.

Where an adapted property is advertised on South Kesteven housing, households with a need for all the adaptations and who will utilise all other property attributes will be identified via a filtering process first. If no household meets this criterion, the Council will filter the shortlist according to which household will make best use of the adaptations and/or other attributes (such as utilising all the bedrooms) taking into consideration band and effective date.

This may mean a household requiring a three-bedroom family home is offered a three-bedroom house with a wet room over a household requiring a two-bedroom property with a wet room.

Properties situated on the ground floor with an adaptation will first and foremost be offered to households requiring ground floor accommodation due to a disability.

### **Bungalows**

General need bungalows (not sheltered accommodation) offering no adaptations have a minimum age preference of 60 years of age applied in the first instance. Such properties will be allocated in the following order:

- a) Households over 60 years of age with a ground floor need
- b) Households of any age with a ground floor need
- c) Households over 60 without a ground floor need

General need bungalows (not sheltered accommodation) offering disabled adaptations will be allocated in the following order:

- a) Households of any age with a ground floor need requiring adaptations
- b) Households over 60 years of age with a ground floor need
- c) Households of any age with a ground floor need
- d) Households over 60 without a ground floor need

Where there are joint applicants, the minimum age preference of 60 years referred to in this section need only apply to one applicant. For example, if an application is received from a couple with one individual aged under 60 years and one individual over 60 years, these joint applicants will be eligible to receive a preference for general need bungalows as described in this section.

### **Sheltered Accommodation.**

Sheltered accommodation is usually only available to older people with a support need. Dependent on the sheltered scheme the advert may stipulate an age criteria. While sheltered housing provides some support, it is not suitable for people with high care and support needs. Sheltered housing is a form of independent living, so residents must be able to leave the building unaided in the event of an emergency.

Depending on an applicant's circumstances, some applicants such as homeowners and those with no housing need are restricted to bidding for properties in sheltered housing complexes only.



Applicants who bid for sheltered accommodation will be subject to further eligibility assessments conducted by the specific landlord / provider if they are nominated for sheltered accommodation. This is to check factors such as support needs, suitability, and risk issues in line with the individual provider's policies. Landlords of sheltered accommodation reserve the right to refuse nominations if their criteria are not met.

### **Discretion**

The Council has discretion not to offer a property to the person who is at the top of the list when taking all circumstances into account. This discretion may be exercised when the Council decides that it would not be in the interest of the applicant, another party, or the good management of the housing stock to do so. Examples where this may happen include:

- a) Where there is a history of domestic abuse, and the property is deemed by the Council to be too close to the perpetrator so as not to resolve the applicant's housing need.
- b) Where the Council deems there to be implications for community safety
- c) Where the applicant cannot access or adequately use the property because of mobility problems, where their health and safety would be endangered.
- d) Where on completion of a financial assessment, the South Kesteven private landlord and Council has determined that the property would be unaffordable to the applicant.
- e) Where an offer of accommodation would be counter to an applicant's stated housing need. For example, where an applicant is awarded priority due to a need to move to a particular area to provide / receive care and support, they will not be considered for areas that do not resolve this housing need.
- f) Where an applicant's individual support needs are such that they are likely to severely impact upon other residents in a housing scheme and affect a landlord's ability to manage the applicant's needs / risk within that scheme.

Any decision to bypass will be made by a senior officer or above.

### **Direct Offers**

In some circumstances, the Council will not advertise available properties on South Kesteven housing register. Instead, a direct offer of accommodation may be made to an applicant. Any direct offer will constitute a formal and suitable offer, and if refused will be subject to the same sanctions for refusal as set out on page 43.

Decisions regarding direct offers will be made by two senior housing officers. A senior housing officer is defined in the glossary. The circumstances in which direct offers may be made include:

- a) Where the Council considers that it is inappropriate for the applicant to participate in choice-based lettings. For example, applicants who are placed in South Kesteven through the National Witness Mobility Scheme or are subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). In these cases, applicants are considered on a case-by-case basis, and the full range of housing options will be considered.
- b) Where the Council makes a direct offer by way of discharging a housing duty. This may include but is not limited to statutory homeless households.



- c) Where it is necessary for the Council or a private landlord to move (decant) one of its tenants on a permanent basis to carry out major modernisation or rehabilitation works to the property.
- d) Where it is necessary for the Council to provide an alternative property to a successor tenant within the 12-month statutory time limit.
- e) Where a joint social tenant has given notice to quit, and the property is suitable for the remaining tenant to continue to occupy, and this allocation is supported by the landlord.
- f) Where the property offers a specialist housing solution and/or is in particularly short supply e.g., large properties / disabled adapted properties.
- g) In cases where South Kesteven District Council or a private landlord requests an urgent move due to serious antisocial behaviour issues that cannot be resolved via any other housing management intervention
- h) Where the Council considers it necessary to suspend choice-based lettings for a period of time, for example due to a public health emergency or another similarly significant event. Such decisions will be taken by the Head of Housing Services, or an officer of equivalent or higher seniority within the Senior Housing Management Team.
- i) Any other circumstance that enables the Council to make best use of housing stock and/or to respond to emerging local housing needs.

### **Local Lettings Policies**

South Kesteven District Council may from time to time agree a local lettings policy for specific areas or developments to reflect local circumstances. Local lettings policies allow the Council to support communities to become or remain safe, cohesive communities where people want to live.

Some local lettings policies giving a preference to residents with a local connection to a specific town or village may also be applied. This is usually because there is a legal requirement to do so because of the original planning consent for the property. Advertisements for these properties will highlight that preference will be given to applicants who fulfil the criteria set out in the legal agreement.

For existing communities, any local lettings policy will be drawn up in consultation with existing tenants and residents and will have regard to housing management considerations such as the social mix of tenants, density, age range, vulnerability of tenants, for example, because of insufficient facilities for vulnerable people, as well as community stability.

Once implemented, local lettings policies will remain in force for a fixed period specified within the policy. Upon expiry, the allocation of properties in the area will be made in accordance with the normal housing allocation scheme, unless there is an evidenced need for a further local lettings policy.

Any local lettings policies in place will be advertised in the property advert on South Kesteven housing. Please see the South Kesteven housing website [www.SKhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.SKhomechoice.org.uk) for current local lettings policies applicable in South Kesteven.

### Property Advert Details

To help applicants choose the properties that would best suit their needs, South Kesteven District Council will advertise all properties with information on size, location, and property features. The adverts will also include:

- a) At least one image of the front of the property
- b) Which South Kesteven private landlord owns the property
- c) Weekly rent and any other applicable charges
- d) If known, an estimated date that the property will be available to move in to
- e) The closing date for applicants to express an interest.
- f) Other available information such as the type of heating supply, adaptations, number of steps leading to the property, priority floor level and restrictions on pets.
- g) Whether a local lettings policy is applicable

At times, similar properties may be grouped together and advertised with one property identification number. In these cases, applicants only have to express an interest once to cover all the properties grouped within the adverts. This may happen when advertising a new build development which includes a number of the same size and type of property.

## 9. Management of Scheme

### Bidding and Auto Bidding

Most applicants on the housing register are entitled to select which properties they will bid for. However, applicants are expected to place bids regularly. If bids have not been placed within a six-month period and suitable properties have been advertised during this time, their housing application may be cancelled.

Auto bid means that the South Kesteven housing system software will place bids on an applicant's behalf. The system places bids on suitable properties which provide the best possible chance of a nomination i.e., the best queue position as at the end of the advertising period. Auto bids are placed at the end of advertising period once all other bids have been placed.

Any successful bid will be classed as a formal offer of accommodation and the refusal sanctions set out on page 43 will apply.

### Band 1 and band 2 homeless applicants

Applicants awarded band 1 or 2 priority due to homelessness (main duty, prevention, or relief) will receive additional support to ensure a timely resolution of their emergency housing needs. All applications accepted as band 1 or 2 homeless are placed onto auto bid.

Main duty and relief – applicants can choose either the North or South of the District only. All other choice will be taken away on area and property type.

Prevention – applicants can choose the area (i.e., specific areas within the district, not specific roads) but not the property type.

The table below summarises the bidding mechanism and number of bids that different categories of applicants are entitled to:

<b>Band and criteria</b>	<b>Bidding mechanism</b>	<b>Number of bids permitted</b>
Band 1, 2 where a Statutory homeless duty is owed (main duty, prevention, and relief duties)	Auto bid (no choice)	Up to 5
Band 1 where a statutory homeless duty is not owed	Manual bidding – Choice	Up to 3
Bands 2, 3 and 4	Manual bidding – Choice	Up to 3

### Households Owed a Homeless Duty

South Kesteven District Council can end any statutory homeless duty (prevention, relief and main duty) by providing an offer of suitable accommodation of any tenure to homeless households. This includes a Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO) that the

Council deems to be suitable with a fixed term of at least 12 months for those who are owed the main housing duty.

If an applicant believes any offer to be unsuitable, they are entitled to ask for a review. The applicant may ask for a review whether or not they accept the offer of accommodation, but the Council may require the household to vacate any temporary accommodation provided whilst the review is conducted. Any applicant considering refusing an offer should first discuss this with a Housing Options Officer.

When reviewing an offer and before making a final decision, the Council will check that:

- a) The property is the right size and type for the applicant's household.
- b) The property is safe for the applicant's household to live in
- c) The property is affordable for the applicant.
- d) Consideration has been given to the location of the property.
- e) Consideration has been given to any special needs the applicant and their household members may have.

Consideration is given to any other relevant circumstances that the applicant has told the Council about.

A failure to engage in the nomination, viewing, or verification process which results in a property offer being withdrawn, will be regarded as an implied refusal of a final offer.

Where applicants may be successful on more than one property shortlist the Housing Options team will determine which property will constitute the applicant's offer. This is likely to be based on the individual circumstances of the applicant, which property is ready to let soonest and/or a decision that allows the council to maximise the number of allocations to homeless households in that period.

### Offers

If applicants are successful with a bid, they will be contacted by the South Kesteven Housing team directly. If the Council is unable to contact an applicant within 24 hours, they will no longer be considered for the property and will be bypassed on the shortlist. Homeless applicants will be demoted, and duties discharged.

If an applicant verbally accepts the offer, the South Kesteven private landlord that owns the property will then contact the successful applicant with details of the potential offer. Each South Kesteven Housing landlord may have a different process that they follow.

All South Kesteven private landlords reserve the right to:

- a) Request suitable identification for all household members.
- b) Carry out checks on the information the applicants have provided as part of the South Kesteven housing application. Usual checks include whether the applicants have rent arrears or criminal convictions. If the applicant's circumstances have changed and they did not inform the Council of the change(s), they may not receive an offer until the changes have been fully assessed.
- c) Withdraw an offer if checks reveal issues that are not included in the South Kesteven housing application.
- d) Withdraw an offer of sheltered accommodation if an applicant does not meet the landlord's own eligibility criteria.

- e) Withdraw an offer if a notice to vacate a property is withdrawn or the property becomes unavailable for letting.
- f) Withdraw an offer if verification checks confirm that the applicant(s) would be a nonqualifying person.
- g) Carry out a financial assessment of the household to establish if the rental payments will be affordable.
- h) Withdraw an offer if, following a financial assessment, it is established that the household cannot afford the required rental payments.
- i) Carry out a property inspection of the household's current home.
- j) Withdraw an offer if the applicant has failed a property inspection.
- k) Withdraw a property from advertisement if advertised incorrectly.
- l) Request up to 4 weeks rent in advance.
- m) Request rent payments are paid by direct debit only.
- n) Request the applicant(s) complete a tenancy workshop / pre-tenancy training or equivalent.

Applicants must tell the South Kesteven private landlords whether they wish to accept an offer of a tenancy. The time limit for responding to offers may differ between landlords. If the applicant does not contact the landlord or the Housing Options Team within the timescale given, the Council will assume that the applicant does not wish to accept the tenancy and the offer will be withdrawn.

### Refusals

Specific rules apply to homeless applicants who refuse an offer of accommodation:

Those owed a prevention duty will be allowed two offers of accommodation, meaning if they refuse the first offer (or fail to engage with the process), no sanctions will be imposed. If they refuse their second offer, they will be demoted to a band 3 and their prevention duty discharged under the homeless legislation.

Those owed a relief or main duty will be allowed one offer of accommodation only, meaning if they refuse an offer (or fail to engage with the process) they will be demoted to a band 3 and their relief/main duty discharged under the homeless legislation.

All other applicants are entitled to:

- a) place up to three bids on any properties advertised at any one time.
- b) refuse one suitable offer of accommodation without any sanctions.

Applicants who refuse two offers of suitable accommodation within any 12-month period will fail to qualify for the South Kesteven housing register. For the purposes of this scheme, an offer of accommodation can include a formal written offer of accommodation from a South Kesteven private landlord or a verbal offer of a nomination from the South Kesteven Housing Options team. In the case of joint applications, the main or joint applicant can refuse the offer, and this will constitute as a refusal (i.e., agreement of both is not required).

A failure to engage in the nomination, viewing, or verification process which results in a property offer being withdrawn, will be regarded as a refusal for the purposes of this section, albeit an implied refusal.

All applicants that refuse their final offer of accommodation will not qualify for the South Kesteven housing register for a period of 12 months. The Council may consider a re-application within the 12-month non-qualifying period if there has been a significant change in their circumstances through no fault of their own which adversely affects the household or would otherwise result in the housing band increasing.

### Landlord Rejection

In some circumstances landlords may refuse to offer a tenancy to a nominated applicant in accordance with their own policies. If a landlord rejects an applicant, they will inform the applicant in writing how they have reached decision and if the applicant wishes this to be reviewed, the applicant or their representative must make a written request directly to the landlord concerned within 21 days of receipt of the decision.

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## 10. Reviews, Complaints and Compliments

### Reviews

If an applicant does not agree with a decision made by the Council in respect of their application, they have the right to request a review of the decision. Circumstances in which an applicant may request a review include:

- The Council has decided that an applicant is not eligible or does not qualify for the Housing Register.
- The applicant believes their application has been assessed incorrectly and placed in the wrong band.
- The applicant believes they should be eligible to bid for a size or type of property that they have not been permitted to bid for.
- The Council has decided to withdraw an offer of accommodation.
- An application has been cancelled and the applicant's request to have the application reinstated has been refused.

The applicant, or the applicant's representative, must make a request to the Service Manager at South Kesteven District Council in writing within 21 days of receiving a written decision. The applicant, or the applicant's representative, may give the reasons for requesting a review in person, if it is difficult to tell the Council these reasons in writing.

The Service Manager or someone who has been designated by the Service Manager not involved in the original decision, will review the decision and consider the reasons for the review being requested. If the applicant submits new information or evidence that was not available when the original decision was made, such as information relating to a change in circumstances, the application may be referred for a reassessment rather than a review. If the applicant does not agree with the decision made following the reassessment, they have the right to request a review. In some cases, the Service Manager or equivalent may need to request more information from the applicant to inform a decision.

The Service Manager or equivalent will provide the applicant with written confirmation of the outcome of the review and reasons for the decision within eight weeks of the request for the review. A longer period may be agreed with the applicant. The Council's decision on review is final and can only be challenged by way of a judicial review or by contacting the Local Government Ombudsman.

In some circumstances, South Kesteven private landlords may refuse applicants the offer of a tenancy. Reasons for this may include if an applicant fails the verification checks or it is demonstrated that the applicant cannot afford the rental payments following a financial assessment conducted by the landlord. If an applicant wishes for this decision to be reviewed, the applicant or the applicant's representative must make the request in writing direct to the given South Kesteven housing landlord within 21 days of receiving their written decision.



### Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Applicants who wish to give a compliment, comment, or complain about South Kesteven District Council should use the contact 01476406080 or email [customerservies@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:customerservies@southkesteven.gov.uk).

South Kesteven District Council's Customer Compliments, Comments and Complaints policy is available at [www.southkesteven.gov.uk](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk).

Applicants who remain unhappy can make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman or the Independent Housing Ombudsman. They are independent services run by central government to make sure that local authorities and housing providers provide a certain standard of service to their customers (see below for contact details):

The Local Government Ombudsman for complaints about councils:

- Local Government Ombudsman  
PO Box 4771  
Coventry  
CV4 0EH  
Telephone: 0300 061 0614  
Website: [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

The Independent Housing Ombudsman for complaints about Registered Providers:

- Housing Ombudsman Service  
Exchange Tower  
Harbour Exchange Square  
London  
E14 9GE  
Telephone: 0300 111 3000  
Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)  
Website: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)



# 11. General Provisions

## Data Protection and Information Sharing

The General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (known as information legislation) provide a statutory framework which sets out the responsibilities of the Council as a data controller when it is collecting and processing applicants' personal data. It also defines applicants' rights in relation to their data and provides them with control over how their information is used in various circumstances.

The Council will, through appropriate management, ensure compliance with information legislation, the Housing Act (1996), and the Council's Privacy and Data Protection Policies. More information on the Council's data protection and privacy policies can be found at [www.southkesteven.gov.uk](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk). The Council will process applicants' data within the confines of the law and will only share applicants' data where there is a lawful basis to do so.

Below are the seven key data protection principles that will be followed when processing personal data. Applicants' personal information will be:

- a) Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner.
- b) Collected for a specified, explicit, and legitimate purpose and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with that purpose.
- c) Adequate, relevant, and limited to what is necessary.
- d) Accurate and kept up to date.
- e) Not kept for longer than is necessary.
- f) Processed securely, using technical and organisation measures.
- g) The Council will demonstrate accountability with principle.

The information that the Council collects from applicant's, together with information that is gathered from third parties during an application will be used to assess and administer a request for housing. Applicants' information may also be used for other purposes where the law permits such as those relating to child protection, public protection, and preventing and/or detecting fraud or other criminal activities. The privacy notice for the housing register can be found on the Council's website at [www.southkesteven.gov.uk](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk).

Applicants have the right to access their personal data processed by the Council including electronic and hard copy files. Applicant's personal data is information that relates to an applicant as an identifiable individual.

## Fraudulent Activity and Withholding Information

Applicants must supply full information about their circumstances and must provide supporting evidence where required to do so. It is a criminal offence for applicants and/or anyone providing information in relation to this scheme to make false statements knowingly or recklessly or knowingly withhold reasonably requested information relevant to their application (section 171, Housing Act 1996). An offence is also committed if a third party provides false information whether or not on the instigation of the applicant. This would apply at any stage of the application process.

Where there is suspicion or an allegation that a person has either provided false information or has withheld information, the application will be excluded from being considered for offers during the investigation and until an outcome is reached.

In addition, the Council reserves the right to take legal action including prosecution under any relevant legislation including fraud where it possesses the evidence. If the outcome of any investigation is that an applicant did not provide false information or did not withhold information or was not found to be withheld knowingly, then the application will be reinstated from the date of registration, meaning the relevant applicant should not suffer prejudice.

If the Council determines that an applicant directly, or through a person acting on his or her behalf, has given false information or withheld required information it may result in an applicant being disqualified from an allocation.

Ground 5 in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by the 1996 Act, S146) enables the landlord to seek possession of a property where it has been granted because of a false statement by either the tenant or a person acting at the tenant's instigation. Where this is the case, the Council will actively pursue recovery of possession.

### **Councillors, Board Members, Employees, and their Close Relations**

Councillors, board members and employees of South Kesteven District Council, landlords and their close relatives, can apply to the Housing Register. However, applicants must make their position or relationship with the Council known at the point of application. If the applicant does not do this and it is discovered later that such a relationship exists, the application/tenancy may be adversely affected. Applicants who declare an interest will neither be advantaged nor disadvantaged. Any application assessment, banding decision or allocation of accommodation must be done with prior approval from the Head of Housing.

### **Equality and Diversity**

South Kesteven District Council and partner landlords are committed to promoting equality of opportunity in housing services. We aim to implement, maintain, and deliver quality services which ensure that no potential or current applicant is treated less favourably on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, age, or sexual orientation, nor is disadvantaged by the application of a rule, condition, or requirement, which has a discriminatory effect which cannot be justified by law. Allocations will only be made to those persons who are eligible.

The policy fully complies with the Equality Act 2010 and an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is available to view on the Council's website. For more information on South Kesteven District Council's Equalities policy and scheme, please visit [www.southkesteven.gov.uk](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk).

### Monitoring of the Scheme

The Council recognises that it is important for applicants for housing and the wider community to understand how social housing is allocated and who is getting social housing. Therefore, information on the Housing Register and lettings outcomes will be published and made available on the South Kesteven District Council website.

The Council will also regularly monitor to ensure that the scheme remains relevant and continues to prioritise the allocation of affordable rented housing to those people in the most need. Reviews of this policy will be undertaken by the Council annually in response to any policy issues identified and/or changes in legislation / national guidance.

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# Appendix 1

## PROPERTY ELIGIBILITY TABLE

	BS	1BB	1BF	1BH	2BB	2BF	2BH	3BH	3BB	4BH	5BH
Single person	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Couple without children		X	X	X	X	X					
Household expecting their first child (from 20 weeks)					X	X	X				
Household with 1 child					X	X	X				
Household with 2 children					X	X	X	X	X		
Household with 3 children								X	X	X	
Household with 4 children								X	X	X	X
Household with 5 children or more										X	X

Please note:

- Minimum and maximum age and occupancy criteria may apply to some properties.
- Age and gender of the children will be taken into consideration when determining the size of the property needed. The table above shows the property types they may be eligible for.
- Applicants who have a confirmed medical or welfare need for additional bedrooms will be permitted to bid for properties with the required number of bedrooms.
- Applicants with 4 or more children may be considered for a 3-bed property where there is a large dining room available which can be utilised as a separate bedroom.
- If a household's circumstances do not fit any of the criteria outlined in this matrix, the Service Manager will decide what size and type the household will be eligible for
- Applicants bidding for a property with more bedrooms than their minimum need will receive a reduced preference.
- Applicants that will be under occupying any property defined in this matrix can be refused on the grounds of affordability.
- Bungalows may have additional age or disabled adaptation eligibility restrictions.

# Contact Details

**Alternative formats are available on request:  
audio, large print and Braille**

**South Kesteven District Council**  
**01476 40 60 80**  
 **[www.southkesteven.gov.uk](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk)**

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**SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**

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# Appendix 2

## Allocation policy changes (31/05/2023)

Existing policy	Amendment	Rationale
Homeowners are not allowed onto the register.	Homeowners who have been awarded a duty under homeless legislation are allowed on the register (will consider circumstances, equity etc.)	If a duty has been awarded under homelessness, a decision has been made that it is not reasonable for them to continue to live in their home, so we need to allow them access to the register
Savings/investments of £21,450 or more cannot go on the register (single and couples)	Changed to £16,000 for total household savings	Falls in line with the threshold used for Universal Credit
Income cap of £45,000 for singles, and £60,000 for couples	Changed to £25,000 for single person without children, and £45,000 for couples or single person with children	Original thresholds were too high, would allow too many people who could afford a private rent onto the register. Falls in line with other policies
Applicants who have financial resources are not allowed on the register.	Applicants awarded a homeless duty will be exempt from the income criteria and allowed on the register but will be given a reduced banding	Homeless applicants are in a reasonable preference category so we should allow them on the register. We are allowed however to give them reduced priority because they have funds (unlikely scenario).
Current residency and past residency criteria: 2 out of the last 5 years  (Includes people currently living in an institutions, hospital, or prison outside of our area but were resident prior)	Current residency of 6 out of the last 12mths or 3 out of the last 5 years  (Includes people currently living in an institutions, hospital, or prison outside of our area but were resident prior)	Falls in line with the local connection criteria under the homeless legislation. Negates scenarios when a customer has a LC under homelessness but not under the allocations policy
No definition of what a family member is in reference to local connection.	Defined family members as parents (biological/adoptive), adult children, brothers or sisters provided there is regular contact etc.	Rules out any ambiguity

Intentionally homeless not included in the exemption criteria under LC rules.	Intentionally homeless applicants excluded from local connection rules and allowed on under normal banding	We may have people in our TA who are intentionally homeless who should have access to the register (most applicants without a LC are referred to another area before this decision is made anyway so this scenario will not crop up very often)
Applicants with no LC anywhere are exempt from LC rules – does not include those here under the Ukrainian or Afghan re settlement schemes	Added those here under the Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement schemes as being exempt from the LC rules	Most will have a LC by now, but it enables us to allow those who haven't established a connection anywhere yet onto our register
MARAC applicants not included in LC exemption rules	MARAC applicants added to exemption rules for LC purposes	MAPPA and Witness Protection applicants already included. MARAC are high risk victims of DV so should be afforded the same discretion
Debt amounts no more than £500 will not be allowed on the register	Increased to £1000	£500 is too low. That would not even cover one month's rent
Homeless applicants exempt from debt criteria providing repayment plan adhered to	Added clarification that repayments plans will be agreed on a case-by-case basis and that if they fail to set up a plan or adhere to it, they will be given a reduced banding	To incentivise homeless applicants to set up a repayment plan otherwise they lose their priority banding
Unacceptable behaviour section does not mention homeless applicants	Advised that where we owe a duty under the homeless legislation, certain criteria relating to unacceptable behaviour may be waived and the applicants may be allowed on the register in original banding or be given reduced priority. Decisions made on a case-by-case basis	We may create a backlog in our TA if we accept a duty but do not allow the applicant onto our register. It also increases their chances of us preventing or relieving their homelessness when not able to afford or be accepted for a private rent
References South Kesteven website through the policy	Changed to our new CBL website <a href="http://www.SKhomechoice.org.uk">www.SKhomechoice.org.uk</a>	To enable applicants to register via the correct website
Properties advertised on a weekly cycle from Thursday at 00:01 until Tuesday 23:59	Properties will now be advertised as soon as they become available but still on a weekly cycle	To reduce void times and get the adverts out as soon as the property is available to let.
Applicants owed a statutory homeless duty will be subject to auto bid	Clarified this will be for those in main duty, prevention, or relief	To clarify what we mean by a statutory duty and to make sure all applicants under those duties know they will be on an auto bid

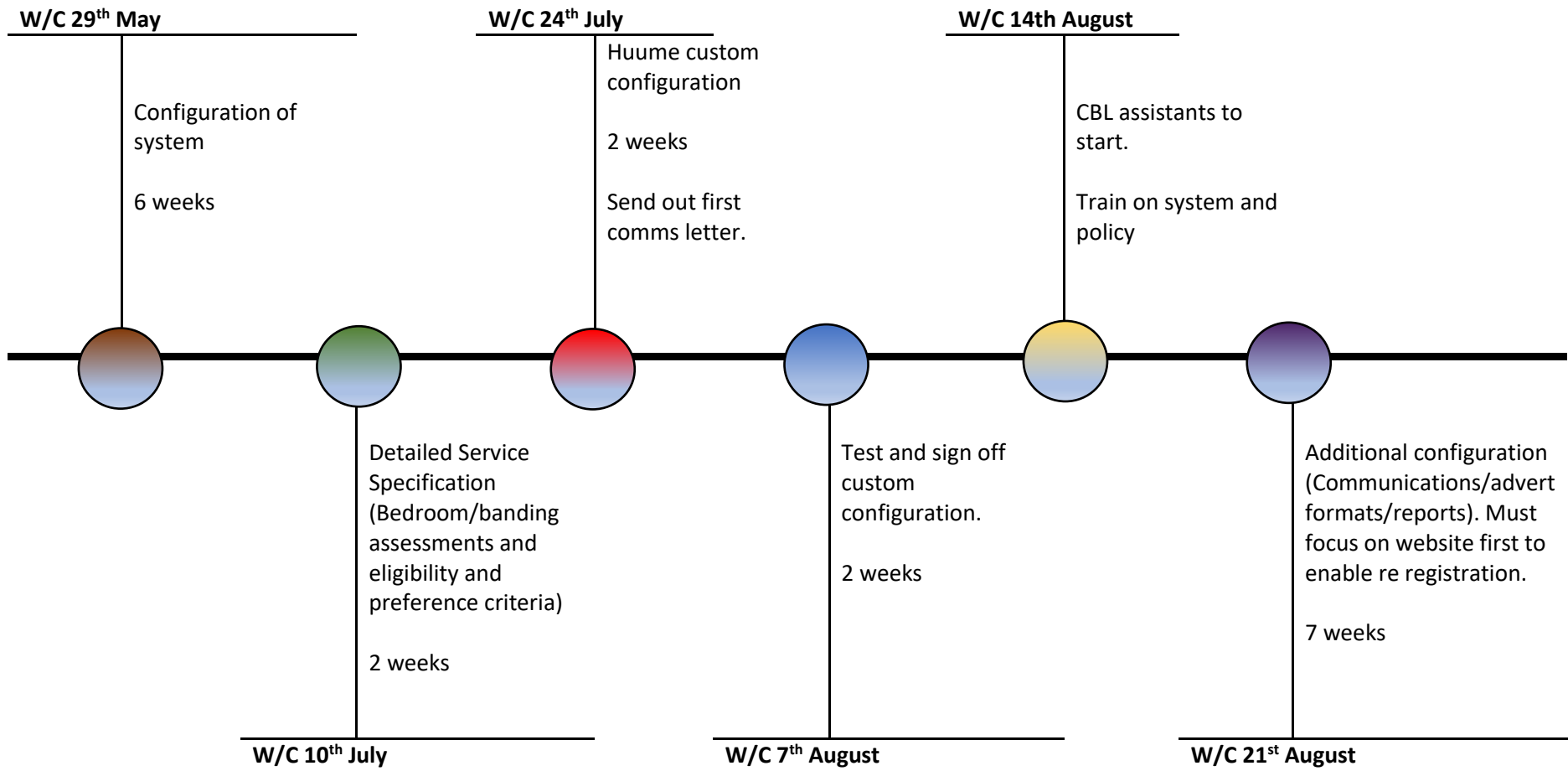


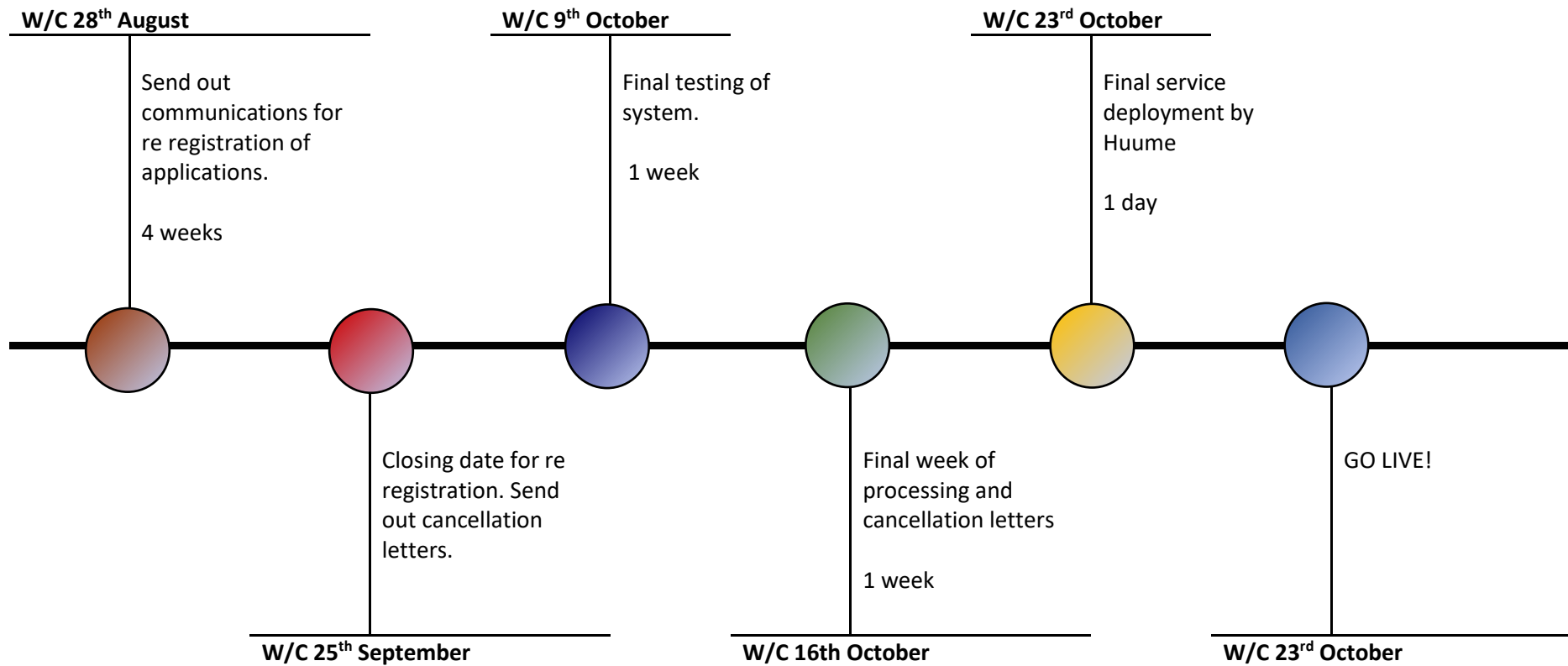
No section detailing what documents applicants will need to provide	New paragraph added informing applicants what documents will be required to assess their application	Transparency around what each applicant must provide for both applicants and staff administering the policy
Band 1 awarded with the documented approval of the service manager	Homeless applicants awarded a Band 1 can be authorised by a senior officer or above	To allow delegation for authorise homeless bandings
Relief and prevention cases awarded banding proving they have a LC	Removed the LC statement	All prevention and relief applicants go on the register regardless of LC
Statutory overcrowding not included	Add a Band 1 definition of stat overcrowding	Standard in all policies
Prevention applicants awarded Band 3	Prevention applicants now awarded Band 2	Need to be banded higher than non-priority cases who are in Band 3
Mental health not covered under medical examples in band 1 or Band 2	Added mental health to medical need under Band 1 and Band 2	To make sure we are considering people with mental health conditions as well as physical conditions
Band 2 overcrowding section does not include those who need an extra bedroom due to medical need	Added paragraph advising that we may consider certain households as being overcrowded where a household member needs their own room for medical purposes	We receive a lot of applications from households whose family members cannot share for medical reasons, so we need to include this specific scenario in the policy
Band 2 overcrowding section states children can share up to any age if same sex unless 10-year age gap and one is 16 years	Changed to same sex can share up to aged 16. Over 16 needs own room (same as benefits)	Falls in line with other policies
Band 2 overcrowding section did not cover scenarios involving non-binary/other possible scenario's	Added in a sentence stating there may be other scenarios not covered and each case will be discussed on its own merit	To cover cases which do not fit into our standard categories for overcrowding purposes
Low level overcrowding includes a bullet point stating two children of same gender sharing a room, and at least a 10-year age gap or one is 16 years old.	Removed and changed wording to: Low level overcrowding – The applicant's household has been assessed as being overcrowded by 1 bedroom.	Not required.
People living in insecure accommodation not included	Added those living in insecure accommodation to Band 3	To cover those who are NFA, received notice, sofa surfing etc prior to making a homeless application
Prevention and relief applicants awarded Band 4 if they have worsened their circumstances	Removed	Intentionality/worsening of circs is not looked at under homelessness until relief duty has ended therefore we should not penalise an

		applicant prior to this decision being made
No reduced priority criteria	Added a section in Band 4 which includes applicants who have been awarded a reduced priority due to rent arrears/finances/unacceptable behaviour	To allow certain households onto the register but with a reduced banding (mentioned above)
Pregnancy section advises when an unborn baby is recognised	<p>Re worded pregnancy section as this was very confusing and removed checking property eligibility at 27 weeks.</p> <p>Unborn recognised at 20 weeks for overcrowding purposes. If no other housing need and unborn not yet at 20 weeks, applicant will not qualify.</p> <p>Applicants with an identified housing need, not related to pregnancy but expecting first child, will be considered for family accommodation once pregnancy reaches 20 weeks</p>	To clarify when we take an unborn baby into account as existing wording was very confusing
Family accommodation definition	Removed	Problematic to define family accommodation in this way
Decision to bypass	Added sentence stating this will be decided by a senior officer of above	Clarification in policy over who will make the decision
Auto Bid for Band 1 applicants	Removed auto bid for those in Band 1 that are not homeless applicants	They should be given the opportunity to bid themselves
Offers – unable to contact	Added in a sentence stating any unsuccessful attempts to contact homeless applicants will count as an offer being made	Clarity over offers to homeless applicants and what happens if we cannot get hold of them
Reviews will be done by Service Manager	Included someone who has designated authority as well	To give team leader and senior officers flexibility to do the reviews
Glossary and sections	Removed	The glossary and sub sections are not needed and make the document longer than it needs to be
Armed Forces – Band 1	<p>Removed and changed to an additional preference category.</p> <p>Any applicant who is or has been in the Armed Forces and</p>	Existing draft policy places all Armed Forces into Band 1 regardless of their housing need. The covenant is not about them being given

	satisfies the criteria will be given additional preference in the banding they have been awarded. For instance, if they are in Band 2 for overcrowding, they will be given additional preference when shortlisting.	preferential treatment, therefore giving them additional preference in their allocated band is a fairer approach.
Refusals  No clarification on number of offers for prevention/relief cases and consequences of refusal.	Clarified that prevention can have two offers, if refuse 2 <sup>nd</sup> offer, then they will be demoted to a Band 3 Relief and main duty will have one offer, demoted on refusal and duty discharged	Outlines consequences of refusal of homeless offers more clearly and number of offers permitted
Bidding cycles	Changed the wording of bidding cycles to state properties will be advertised when they become available for a week. Also clarified how maximum number of bids are monitored	To prevent extended void times by advertising properties when they become available.
Did not include a banding definition for families with young children living in flats higher than ground floor	Added banding definition to Band 3	We receive many applications for households with babies/young children living in flats with no stairs who are struggling to cope so added a new definition to cater for this group. Not a blanket policy – each case discussed on own merits
Property eligibility table not accurate and section did not explain how decisions are made	Updated the table and explanatory bullet points added	To reflect what properties we do and do not have and what we can offer. Provides clarity over how decisions are made.

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- Processing of applications for re registration purposes will take place from 30<sup>th</sup> August (earliest date someone may re register) until go live date of w/c 23<sup>rd</sup> October giving us 7.5 weeks to process.

Approx 1800 on register currently

Approx 900-1000 will re-register

1 app – 30 mins (These timings are a guestimate. Once familiar with system it may take less time to process. More complicated ones will take longer)

2 apps – 1 hour

1 assistant working 7hrs per day – 14 applications.

2 assistants working 7hrs per day – 28 applications.

900 applications = 32 days, approx. 6 weeks

Allocation Officers can also help with the processing and will deal with those who need help with registration. They can also assist with the cancellation letters.

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## Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Draft Work Programme 2023/24

No	Item	Meeting Date	Lead Officer	Requirements	Notes (including reporting timeframes)
1.	<b>Regulatory Compliance update</b>	21/09/23	Craig Spence		September 2023
2.	<b>Housing Revenue Account (HRA)</b>	21/09/23	Craig Spence		September 2023
3.	<b>Earlesfield Programme update</b>	21/09/23	Craig Spence		September 2023

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