

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Thursday, 16 November 2023 at 2.00 pm
Council Chamber - South Kesteven House, St. Peter's Hill,
Grantham. NG31 6PZ

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

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
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Disclosure of Interest**
Members are asked to disclose any interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.
- 4. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2023** (Pages 3 - 13)
- 5. Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service**

Published and dispatched by democracy@southkesteven.gov.uk on 8 November 2023..

01476 406080

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
www.southkesteven.gov.uk

6. **Housing Regulatory Compliance Update** (Pages 15 - 36)
This report seeks to update Committee on the Council's social housing landlord function and the removal of the non-compliance notice issued by the Regulator of Social Housing.

7. **Total Housing Compliance Policy** (Pages 37 - 54)
To inform the Committee of the new Total Housing Compliance Policy which sets a framework for the monitoring of key consumer standards. To advise members on key responsibilities and the process of achieving compliance with the standards and regulations.

8. **Earlesfield Project Overview November 2023** (Pages 55 - 60)
To update the committee on the progress of the Earlesfield Project, providing an overview of the project position, completed works and projected timescales.

9. **Housing Options Workshop feedback** (Pages 61 - 90)
The purpose of this report is to give feedback on the questions and enquiries raised at the Housing Options members workshop on 19th October 2023.

10. **Housing Pipeline Update Report** (To Follow)
This report provides an update on the Housing Revenue Account New Build programme including acquisitions.

11. **Choice Based Lettings** (Verbal Report)
Members to receive a demonstration on an application in respect of Choice Based Lettings.

12. **Work Programme 2023/24** (Pages 91 - 94)

13. **Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent**

Meeting of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 21 September 2023, 3.00
pm



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee Members present

Councillor Virginia Moran (Chairman)
Councillor Lee Steptoe (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Emma Baker
Councillor Zoe Lane
Councillor Penny Milnes
Councillor Habibur Rahman
Councillor Charmaine Morgan

Other Members present

Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Ian Selby

Cabinet Members

Councillor Ashley Baxter, Deputy Leader
Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning
Councillor Rhea Rayside, Cabinet Member for People and Communities

Officers

Craig Spence, Acting Director of Housing
Jodie Archer, Head of Housing
Julie Martin, Head of Technical Services
Ayeisha Kirkham, Interim Head of Public Protection
Tom Amblin-Lightowler, Private Sector Housing Team Leader
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer

14. Public Speaking

There were no public speakers.

15. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jane Wood, Councillor Paul Wood and Councillor Anna Kelly. Councillor Anna Kelly was substituted by Councillor Charmaine Morgan.

16. Disclosure of Interest

None disclosed.

17. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED**.

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

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning informed the Committee that there had been significant progress towards the Council's Corporate Priority of Housing that Meets the Needs of all Residents. He paid tribute to the work of the Housing Team which was led by Craig Spence, the Acting Director of Housing and highlighted the following:

- That the Council was moving towards coming out of housing special measures.
- That the Choice Based lettings system would be introduced from 23 October 2023 which allowed applicants to actively bid for properties they were interested in. Housing authorities across the country had been using the system for a number of years and work was currently being undertaken to verify the housing register. To date 780 applications had been received in the first two weeks to reapply to remain on the housing register. Residents had up until 3 October 2023 to reapply to remain on the Housing Register.
- Voids had been highlighted at the last meeting of the Committee and the time taken from a tenant leaving a property to a new tenant taking over the occupancy which was over 100 days on average. The average sector voids time was half this figure. As the Committee were aware a Voids workshop was arranged with the Acting Director of Housing and the Housing Team for Members of the Committee and any other Member interested in Voids. The workshop had enabled Members to have a better understanding of how voids were tackled and the challenges faced due to the lack of investment in the properties over a long period of time. Progress in the backlog was being made and in the last three months more properties had been let then had been received back. In the last month over 30 voids had been relet which was the best turnaround since February 2022. He referred to the Chairman's plans to hold future workshop/briefings on housing issues and challenges.

Under the Right to Buy scheme, between 40 and 50 homes were lost from the housing stock a year. This had diminished the housing stock as they were not been replaced with either new builds or purchases. At the last Cabinet meeting steps had been taken to make £1 million from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) available, to purchase suitable homes as they became available. Progress on new build projects was also being made, with building work starting next month on four, one bed apartments in Stamford and also 20 new homes in Swinegate, Grantham.

- Reference was then made to the closure of the Urban Hotel in Grantham and its use as temporary accommodation for 290 Afghan refugees. The Housing Team had worked closely with colleagues from Lincolnshire County Council and had successfully secured alternative accommodation for the refugees, outside the district, mainly in the Birmingham area. Work by the dedicated Officer and the team involved had been recognised by the Home Office.
- The Local Authority Housing Fund Initiative from the Government had been utilised to purchase 21 houses to meet the Council's obligations to house Ukrainian's and Afghans who had been invited by the Government to seek refuge in this country. The Housing Team were asked to identify suitable properties and 12 newly built homes were purchased in Langtoft. News of the purchase had not been universally welcomed in Langtoft and a public meeting was arranged in Langtoft to which the Acting Director of Housing, the Deputy Leader, the Chairman of the Housing OSC and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning attended. It was explained how the purchases had come about and questions were answered. The following week a letter was sent by the Council to every property in Langtoft explaining the reasoning and the funding behind the homes. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning made it clear that the purchases were completed in line with well-established processes and procedures of the Council. An assurance was given at the public meeting that an examination of the purchases and the Council's communication strategy would be carried out with a view to learning any lessons which could be used for future purchases. Discussion had taken place with the Acting Director of Housing, the Director of Growth and Culture and the Communication Team and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning suggested to the Chairman of the Committee that the Housing OSC add the them to their work programme.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for his presentation.

Questions were then asked about the response rate in respect of numbers on the Housing Register to which the Acting Director of Housing responded that there were 1,583 on the register, and the response rate so far was good and it was confirmed that further communication was being carried out. Concern was expressed by some Members in relation to those people who were on the register who had special needs and completion of the necessary paperwork to continue to be on the Housing Register. The Acting Director of Housing stated that this was being addressed with the right tools being put in place so that help and assistance could be accessed and given to those who needed it through the dedicated project team, whether that was by telephone calls or home visits.

The Chairman indicated that the purchase of the housing at Langtoft could be added to the Committee's work programme.

A further comment was made about the Choice Based Letting process and those vulnerable residents on the system. It was confirmed that those who couldn't access the system for any reason would receive the necessary help and guidance from the team managing the system.

19. Regulatory Compliance update

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning presented the report which gave an update to the Committee on the actions taken by the Council to ensure regulatory compliance of the Council's social housing landlord function. Members were aware that the Chief Executive in consultation with the then Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning self-referred the Council to the Regulator of Social Housing in February 2021 following the failure to meet legal requirements regarding checks on fire, gas and electric services were identified.

Monthly meetings had been held with the Chief Executive, the Acting Director of Housing and the National Regulator to cover issues of work in respect of the regulatory framework. Following the documents that are appended to the report and the work done by the Council, the Regulator recommended that the Council sought the formal removal of the Regulatory Notice. It was confirmed that the letter was sent by the Chief Executive to this effect. A further meeting with the Regulator was scheduled for the following week and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning was confident that the Council would soon be out of special measures.

The Acting Director of Housing referred Members to Appendix 1 of the report which dealt with the current compliance performance for July 2023 and was reported in August to the Regulator. The format of the report was slightly different as it was a benchmarking document. The Acting Director of Housing highlighted the following:

- Five 100% compliance areas were reported in July.
- Gas compliance was at 99.13%
- Electric compliance was 90.80%, which was a huge increase from when the Council went under Notice.
- Asbestos compliance was at 100%.
- The standout item was the completion of fire risk assessments which when the Council went under Notice was below 50% it was now at 100% and this had been sustained since late 2022.

The Acting Director of Housing reiterated what the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning had stated, that the Regulator had invited the Council to send a letter requesting the removal of the Notice and this was submitted the next day and data for the end of July had been submitted in August 2023.

The line graphs appended to the report showed the continuous improvement made, which had been reported to the Rural and Communities OSC when its remit included housing since the Council went under special measures. The work was not yet complete, but the Council should hear within the next six to eight weeks in respect of the removal of the Notice.

Members agreed with the fantastic progress that had been made and congratulated the Acting Director of Housing and his team and asked how further improvement could be made. It was stated that continuous improvement would be instilled into the work undertaken with the right tools in place to continue the positive progress.

The compliance would form part of the KPI reporting to both the Housing OSC and the Governance and Audit Committee and through the Corporate Plan.

Further discussion followed with comments being made in respect of the positive change in culture within the housing team, the consolidation of working practices being reactive and responsive to regulations such as the damp and mould, smoke and CO2 issues and incorporating them into working practices and policies without being asked too. The Acting Director of Housing informed the Committee that there would be suite of compliance policies and procedures coming forward within the next few months for adoption by Cabinet.

One Member asked how information was monitored, such as when inspection were due and what tools were in place and also whether the Council had any responsibility in respect of private landlords and their tenants. It was stated that the private sector was not strictly within the remit of the Council.

There were systems in the background such as 'propeller' which captured the information such as fire risk inspections and monitored the work and the actions required. The future asset management system and the integrated housing management system would allow for a single version of data which wasn't available two years ago.

The report also included the external audit actions in respect of policy and procedures and having the correct procedures in place to ensure they were fit for purpose. It was stated that following the Housing restructure there was a permanent dedicated team in place that monitored the information and looked to make improvements.

The Chairman stated that although going into special measures had been viewed with dismay, the work that had been undertaken by the Housing team to date had ensured that all properties were safe for the tenants and the quality of housing being offered was of a high standard.

One Member asked whether Fabric First was being used alongside the compliance areas and if it wasn't whether it should be. The Acting Director of Housing replied that one of the key deliverables between now and March 2025 was the energy efficiency upgrades across 332 properties which was being funded through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF). Future legislation would not allow properties with a EPC rating below a C to be rented, therefore those current properties with a D or below rating would be targeted to ensure their energy efficiency was increased. The first strand of SHDF work would soon be undertaken and Eon would be working on behalf of the Council and the first tranche of letters would be going out within the next few weeks. Work covered would be in respect of solar panels, external wall insulation and also different heating systems.

The Technical Services Manager referred to the internal team which was having retrofit training so that the resources were inhouse for that particular knowledge and expertise. The Technical Services Manager then gave details of the proposed works with the caveat that they were subject to change. It was proposed that 149 had solar panels plus insulation to walls and lofts. 136 conversions to air source

heat pumps and 48 to external wall insulations, she reiterated that the numbers weren't fixed until the properties had been surveyed.

Members noted the update.

20. HRA Capital Programme - Progress Monitoring

The Acting Director of Housing introduced the report on the HRA Capital Programme which had been requested at the last meeting of the Committee. It was stated that the figures contained within the report mirrored those that had been reported to the recent Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday of that week.

The Acting Director of Housing referred Members to the sizable variances shown within Table 12, (*the table should read Table 2*) of the report and the significant underspend. He then went through each line of the table.

- Heating and Ventilation – work was to be delivered through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and was due to go live imminently and would increase the spend on this item and carried forward until May 2025.
- Housing System Enhancements – Savings were due to the reduced scope of the project.
- Kitchen Refurbishments – There had been a significant spend in respect of kitchen refurbishments, the profile had been changed since the report had been compiled and it was felt that the underspend would not be near the £248,000 shown.
- Bathroom Refurbishments – same as with kitchen refurbishments and the re profiling of the budgets.
- Passenger Lifts - It was known that eight lifts needed replacing and that there was between an eight and nine month lead in time. Two were in progress at the present time at Riverside and were near completion. The bulk of the underspend would be committed before the year end or would form a further carry forward.
- Re-roofing – Unfortunately the current roofing contractor had not been willing to extend the current contract for a further year and therefore procurement of a new contractor was currently being undertaken. Emergency roof repairs could still be undertaken as required.
- Re-wiring – A lot the work was built into the Earlesfield programme with approximately 110 properties as part of the programme and 160 overall. The programme was being extended due to time constraints and the money would be carried forward to the next year.
- External Wall Finishes – through work with the SHDF bid which was why the underspends seemed great at the present time. Profile work was being done under the SHDF bid.

The Capital Programme was approximately £18million for the year with a forecast underspend of £3million however, £15million was a huge investment in the housing stock compared to previous years.

The Chairman asked about the date in respect of the Riverside lift and the Technical Services Manager indicated that she would send the information to the Chairman.

➤ **Action**

Riverside lift completion date to be circulated to the Chairman.

A Member asked if it was possible to know when refurbishment work was to be carried out on properties and she specifically highlighted two areas within her ward to which the Technical Services Manager replied that it was difficult to specify, as there was then an expectation that the work would be carried out at a specific time and it was not always possible to fulfil and therefore generated complaints.

The programmes were drawn from the Apex database and the stock condition data and where people had let the surveyors into the house that information was up to date, other information may need to be qualified. The decency standard was around age and condition and the stock condition survey tended to drive the investment programmes.

Members noted the current position.

21. Earlesfield Programme update

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning introduced the report which updated the Committee on the current position of the Earlesfield project. Despite some early delays with the project work was progressing. There were 152 properties of a post war non-standard construction on the Earlesfield estate which contained some asbestos material. The asbestos was being removed as part of the programme with the tenants being decanted to other properties whilst the work was being carried out. Nineteen had been successfully completed with refurbishments including doors, heating, kitchens and bathrooms. In a couple of cases, the tenants had realized that the property was too big and had down sized.

Although the report stated that the Cabinet Member had visited the site, this referred to the previous portfolio holder and it was hoped that a visit to the area would be arranged soon for the current Cabinet Member. The Chairman of the Housing OSC asked if she could also attend when the visit was arranged.

The Vice-Chairman of the Committee who was also one of the Ward Councillors for the Earlesfield area, commented on the successfulness of the project and he thanked the Housing Team for their work.

22. Update following Void Workshop (Future workshops)

The Chairman referred to the Void workshop that had been held at the end of August. She felt that the afternoon had gone very well and that Members had received from the Housing team information that enabled them to understand why the void turn around could take an average of 100 days and the importance of getting the properties in the right condition before they were re-let.

Questions had been constructive and a different view had been given to that of the void paperwork generated. Although the date had been fixed before the funeral of an ex Councillor of the Council had been set and some Members were unable to attend, it was stated that depending upon numbers the Housing team were happy to re-run the event and any Member should speak to the Chairman of the Housing OSC direct.

The Chairman wished to continue to hold either a workshop or a briefing session on individual topics between meetings of the Housing OSC that were relevant to housing. The next briefing would be in respect of Homelessness and would be held on Thursday 19 October at 2pm. The briefing would be open to all Members who had an interest in the topic. She thanked the Housing team for the information and work done in respect of the voids briefing.

23. Fee Policy Licensing of Mobile Homes

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning presented the report which dealt with the policy in respect of fee charging for the licensing of mobile home and caravan sites. The Council was required to publish a policy if it was to charge for these sites. The Council had an existing policy and the fees were reviewed on an annual basis to reflect the true cost of the licensing process that the Council incurs in undertaking the statutory function.

The report contained a table outlining the proposed fee increase which for an annual fee increased from £81.00 to £88.00.

A question was asked in respect of the fee and who paid the fee. It was stated that the operator of the site who held the licence paid the fee.

Members noted the report and the proposed fee increase.

24. HRA Disposal & Acquisitions Policy

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning presented the report which concerned a new HRA Acquisitions and Disposal Policy which established a framework for the way in which the Council acquired and disposed of land or assets to and from the Housing Revenue Account. The Policy was a standard policy based on best practice and was in line with the Corporate Assets Acquisitions and Disposal Policy and gave a clear framework and transparency around the decisions taken.

The Acting Director of Housing stated that there were some assets within the HRA estate which lent themselves to disposal and the policy gave a framework to undertake this work. The disposal of assets would help to fund future development or extensive remodelling programmes within the HRA. He referred to some assets which were "resource hungry" and from a business perspective the Council wouldn't want to keep due to their cost, but they were important or sought after properties on the open market. There were some informed decisions to make around some properties as well as small parcels of land within the HRA estate and the report sought the Committees support before the policy went to Cabinet.

Discussion on the policy followed with Members supporting the document and giving examples where the costs of keeping properties in good repair did not out way the benefits in terms of value for money. Reference was made to the recent news coverage of RAAC (reinforced, autoclaved aerated concrete) did the Council have any properties made from this material. It was stated that the material was not use widely in the housing sector and proactive work was being undertaken to identify any properties which may fit the criteria.

One Member made reference to including consultation within the policy with local communities in respect of land that was either a common green space or play areas to protect these areas. She felt that consultation should be undertaken with the relevant Ward Member and the public.

The Acting Director of Housing stated that these areas did not tend to be within the HRA estate, requests for land were often to enable a garden to be extended. Further discussion followed with regard to the conflict of protecting the environment and quality of life and building new homes and various examples were given by Members in relation to park areas within the district. A question was asked about Beeden Park within the Earlesfield Ward and whether it was HRA land. The Acting Director of Housing stated that if the Member could confirm the exact location, he would come back to the Member outside the meeting.

Further discussion then followed in respect of derelict garage sites. The Acting Director of Housing indicated that the garage sites were being surveyed to see what opportunities there were for development and referenced the proposed new build at Elizabeth Road, Stamford which was an old garage site. Not all sites were viable due to their location and a lot of survey work was still to be carried out, it was suggested that viable options could be brought to the Committee in the New Year.

Modular building on garage sites was then raised and it was stated that these often had high costs due to the need to redirect services to sites to enable works to be carried out which made the costs prohibitive. The use of modular building and energy efficiency was always being explored and a HRA Development Officer had recently been appointed to explore the viability and plans for sites and to explore the technology available.

One Member asked if reference could be made within the policy to the protection of green spaces which were deemed to be a community asset if disposal or buying was being considered, with consultation being carried out with relevant parties prior to making any decision. The Acting Director of Housing stated that he would add suitable wording to the policy to this effect and circulate it.

Recommendation

The Committee notes the HRA Acquisition and Disposal Policy is in line with best practice and will provide clear operational guidance and recommends that the Acting Director of Housing make alterations and amendments to the Policy to incorporate comments arising from the Committee discussion, for submission and adoption at Cabinet.

25. Work Programme 2023/24

The Chairman listed the items currently on the Work programme for the Housing OSC.

- Regulatory compliance update - November
- Choice-base lettings update - November
- Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy - November

Future items were:

- The Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy - TBC
- Housing in Multiple Occupation Policy - TBC

The Chairman asked that the Review of the Properties purchased in Langtoft be added to the November meeting of the Committee.

Following the discussion on garage sites and their suitability for development, it was suggested that this item be added to the January meeting of the Committee.

A further update on the Earlesfield Programme was asked to be added also to the January meeting.

A short discussion on Fabric First followed and it was suggested that this could be an issue that could be discussed at one of the Housing briefings. Although the Member who suggested the item agreed with the proposal, she also wanted it to be an agenda item for January 2024, even if it was only in relation to the reporting of a KPI.

The Acting Director of Housing informed the Committee that he had a raft of policies and procedures to come before the Committee in November and they covered the Total Housing Compliance Policies and also Tenancy, Leaseholder and Estate Management Policies.

An update on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) would come to the Committee in March 2024.

➤ Action

Items to be included on Work Programme:

- ***Review of the Properties purchased in Langtoft – November***
- ***Total Housing Compliance Policies – November***
- ***Tenancy, Leaseholder and Estate Management Policies - November***
- ***Garage sites and their suitability for development – January 2024***
- ***Update on the Earlesfield Programme – January 2024***
- ***Fabric First – January 2024***

- *Update on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) – March 2024.*

26. Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent

None.

27. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 16:29.

This page is intentionally left blank



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

16th November 2023

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

Housing Regulatory Compliance Update

Report Author

Julie Martin, Head of Housing Technical Services



julie.martin@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of the report

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

Recommendations

That Committee:

- 1. Notes the removal of the notice effective from the 25th October 2023.**
- 2. Notes the latest compliance position following the updated figures for September 2023.**

Decision Information

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

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 implications arising from the compliance requirements have been incorporated in the HRA budgets approved by Council on 1 March 2023.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Director (Finance and ICT) 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 assessment of risk and mitigations will be identified through the necessary work plans to ensure ongoing compliance following the removal of the Regulatory Notice. Addressing significant compliance matters requires a comprehensive approach to risk management, particularly in respect of assessing priorities and critical actions.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance & Risk Officer

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.

Completed by: Phil Swinton Health and Safety Manager

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 November 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.
- 2.3 In August 2023, a full report documenting the progress and requesting the removal of the Notice was submitted by the Chief Executive to the Regulator.
- 2.4 The Council received notification from the Regulator that the Notice would be lifted with effect from the 25th October 2023.
- 2.5 The Regulator recognises that work that remains to be done in terms of the ongoing improvements on our Housing Management System and Asset Management software as the basis for effective compliance management and has requested notification once these systems are in place.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 Following the removal of the Notice, a press release was issued to advise the general public and a general release was provided for staff and Members.
- 3.2 An article will be included in the next edition of “Skyline”, the Council’s tenant newsletter.

- 3.3 The Council has come a long way and while the decision to remove the Regulatory Notice shows we are in a stronger position, there are still improvements to be made to consolidate the efforts made to date.
- 3.4 The Housing Compliance Audit completed in July 2023 to validate the work carried out did make further recommendations. These recommendations were tabled into an action plan which was reported to Committee in September 2023 and will continue to be monitored alongside the routine performance reporting.
- 3.5 The implementation of the Total Housing Compliance Policy will be a significant step towards providing a framework for the delivery of an effective Compliance monitoring function and completes a number of recommendations on the action plan.
- 3.6 The direction of travel document attached as appendix 1, shows the latest figures and charts the improvement to date.
- 3.7 Gas Safety at 99.25% shows an improvement on the last report and work is ongoing to refine the process further.
- 3.8 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 91.80% in September.
- 3.9 Asbestos – this shows 100% compliance in terms of asbestos inspections.
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 Lift inspections – shows one property waiting a statutory inspection. This was unable to be carried out due to works required on the lift. This work and the inspection have now been completed.
- 3.12 Smoke and CO – this shows the position for all the alarms within our properties being 100% compliant. This is a significant achievement and the first time we have reported total compliance in this area. This is a Regulatory requirement which came into force on the 1st of October 2022.
- 3.13 Damp and mould – this shows 99.78% compliance and the appointments for CAT1 and CAT2 inspections and works have been made with several tenants refusing access.
- 3.14 **Leadership Compliance Meetings:** Chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Housing, and the Chief Executive, 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.

3.15 **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 The amended 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 note the return to full compliance in respect of housing services and to note that work continues to ensure that the compliance of the housing function is fully embedded and a continuing journey.

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, 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 One – Compliance Areas Direction of Travel

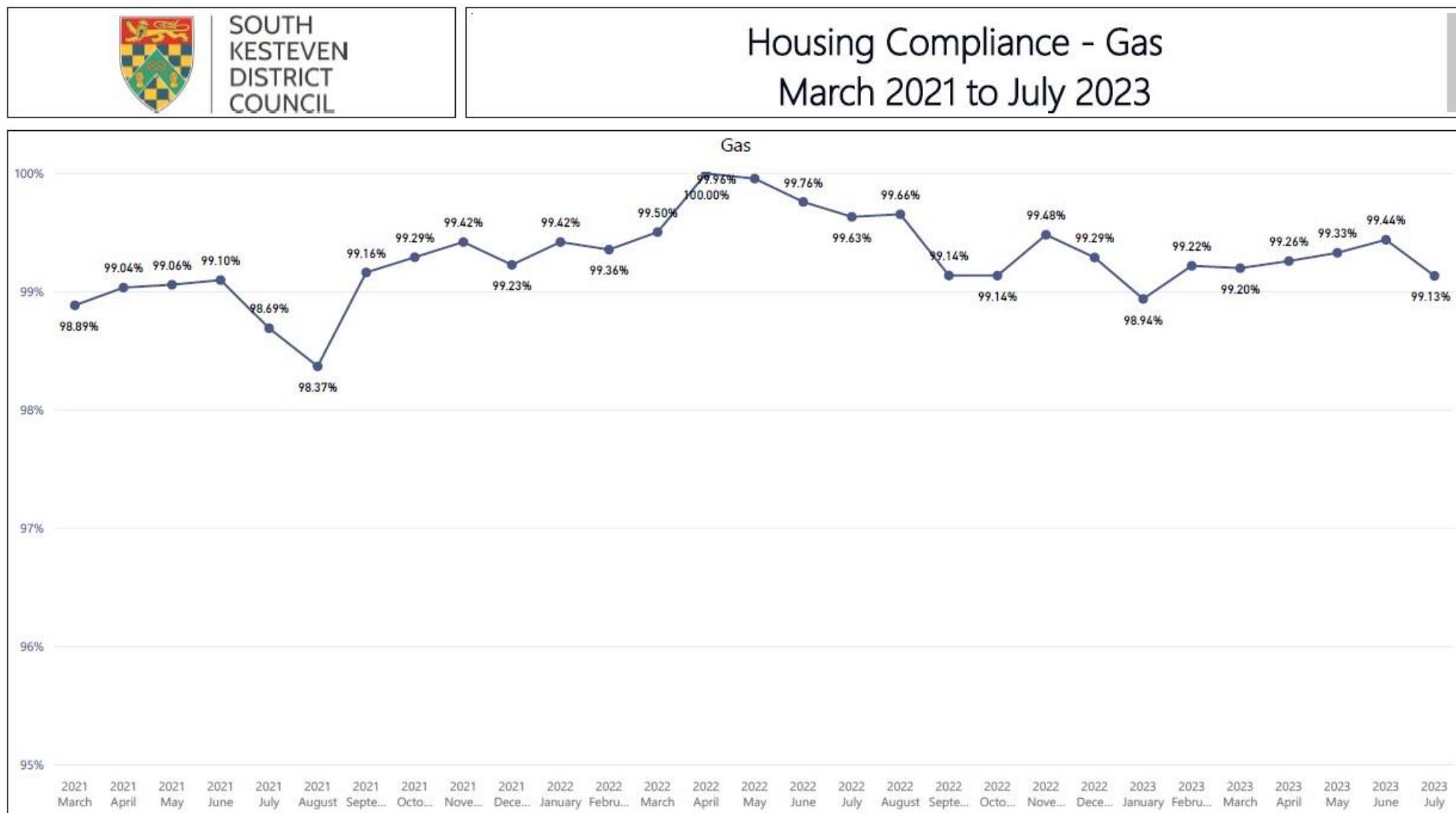
This page is intentionally left blank

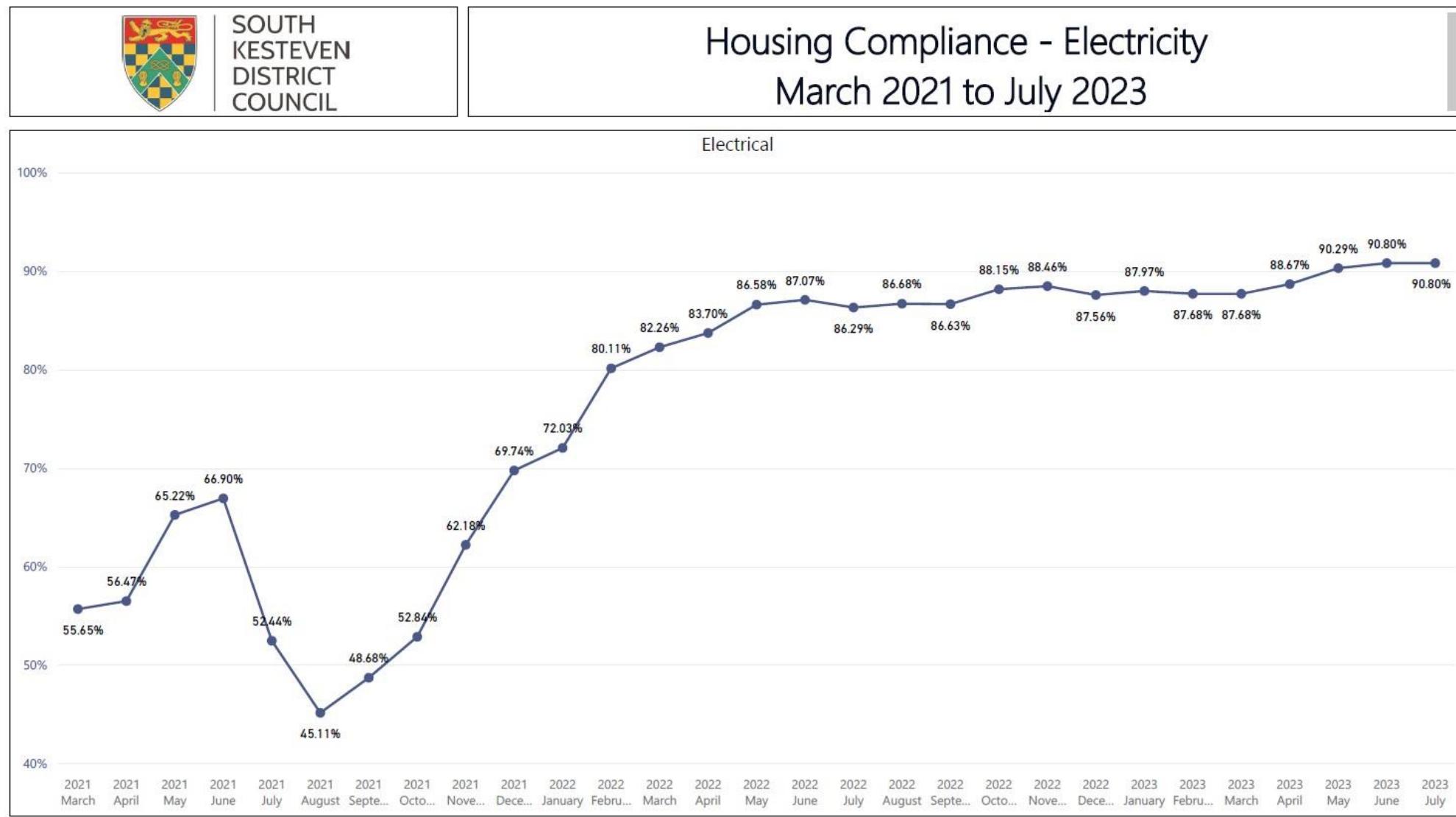
Compliance Areas – Direction of Travel

Area	Start of Notice Compliance - April 2021	Current Compliance – September 2023	Direction of Travel	Percentage of Change	Commentary
Legionella	100%	100%	≡	N/A	Sustained performance, only downturn was March 2022 and January 2023 due to additions of locations and re-inspection schedule impacted by sickness.
Gas	98.89%	99.25%	↑	0.36%	Continued performance with enhanced understanding and embedding of consistent process
Electrical	55.65%	91.43%	↑	35.78%	Sustained upward trend. Work continues to gain access to properties.
Asbestos (reinspections)	70.04%	100%	↑	29.96%	Improvement since notice with explainable variations due to alignment and inclusion of presumed sites to inspection regime.
Fire Risk Assessments	5.78%	100%	↑	94.22%	Significant sustained improvement. No high-risk actions outstanding and work continues on blocks to improve fire safety.
Lift inspections	100%	92.31%	⬇	(7.69%)	During the reporting period, one lift was awaiting a LOLER inspection which could not be completed before a repair was made. This is now complete.
Smoke & CO	92% (Sept 2022)	100%	↑	8%	Continued upward trend in completion following inclusion of reporting from September 2022

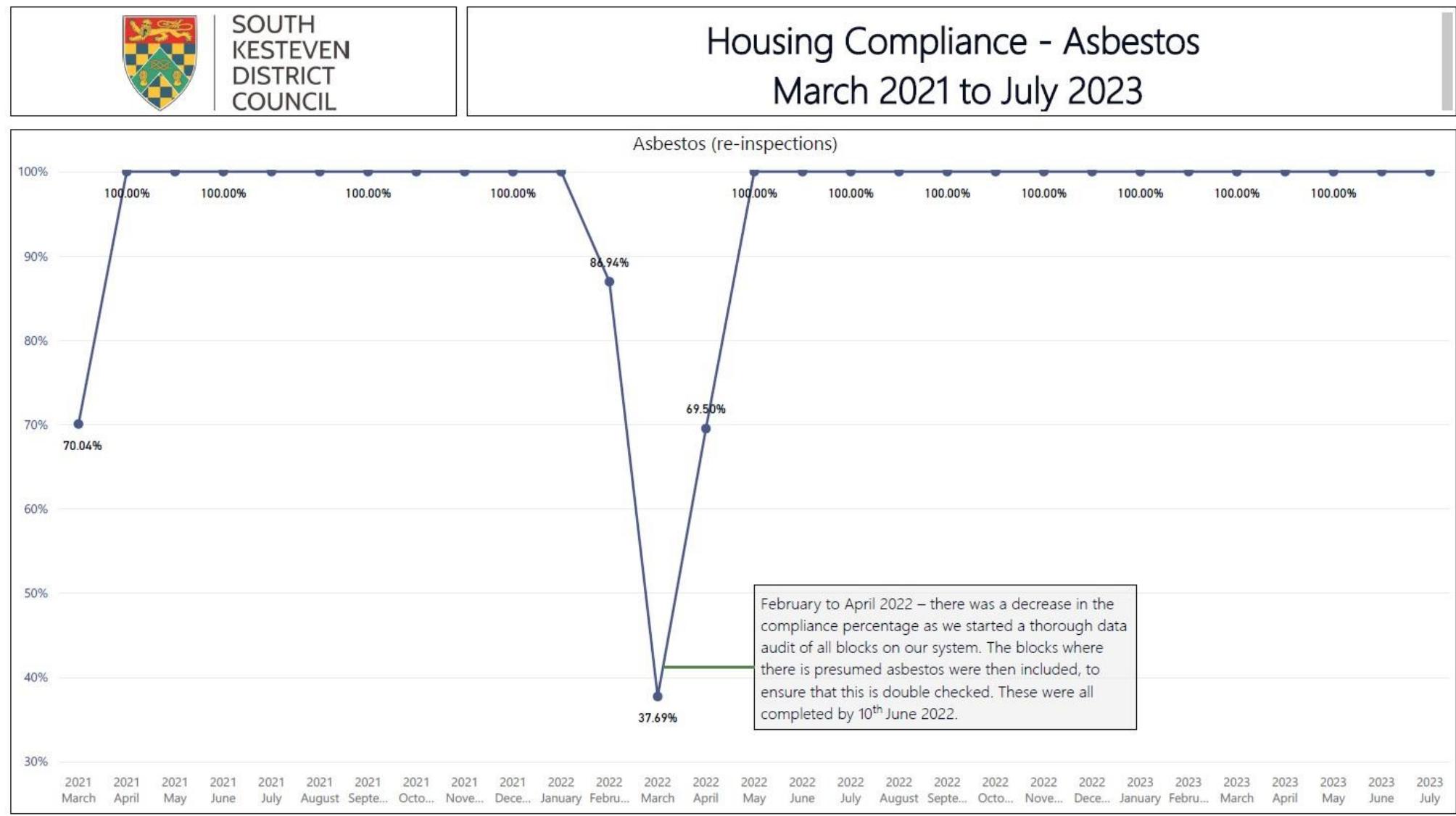
Appendix 1

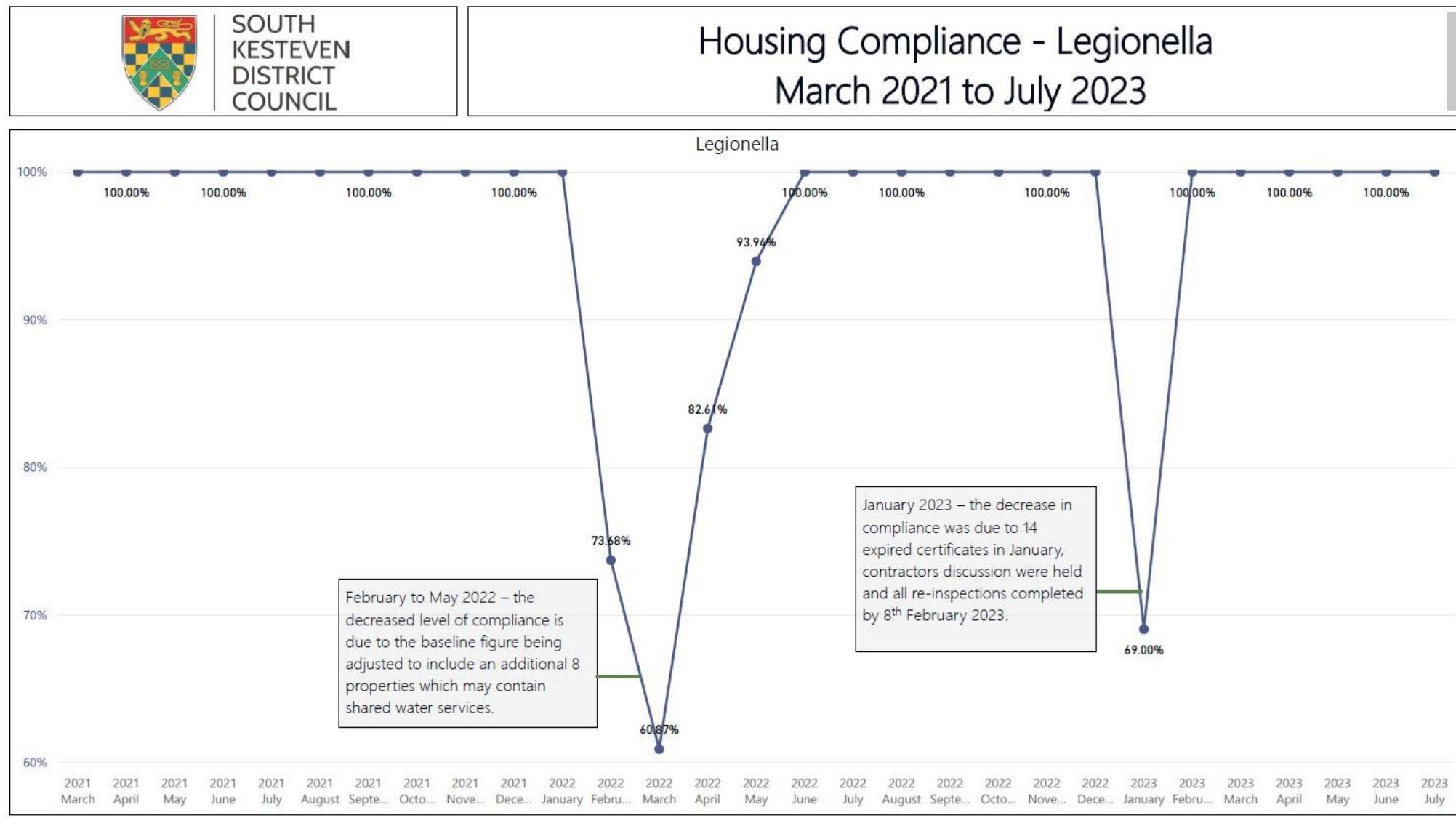
Damp & Mould	99.42% (Nov 2022)	99.78%		0.36%	Upward trend since inclusion of measure in November 2022 aided by recent stock condition data
--------------	----------------------	--------	--	-------	---





Appendix 1

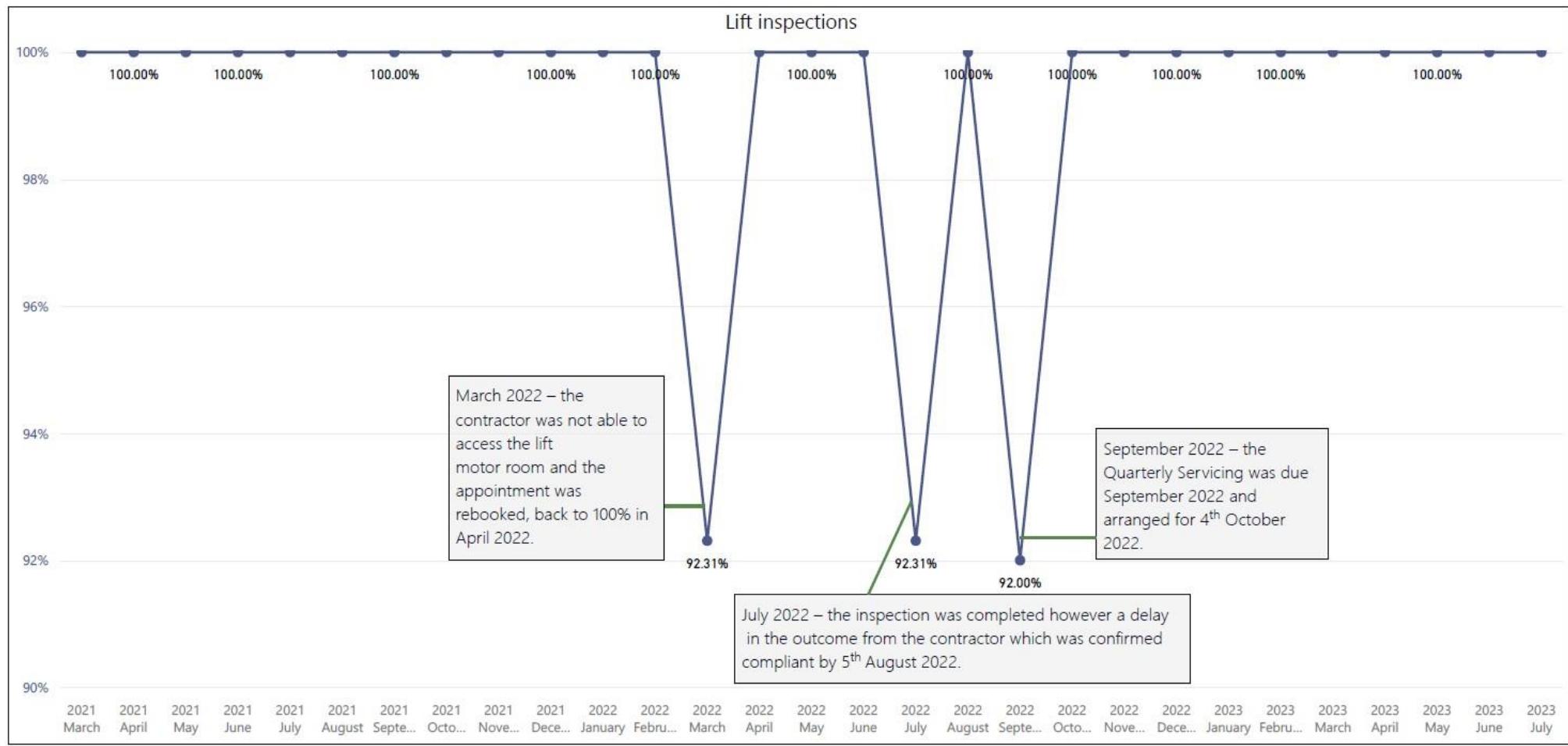




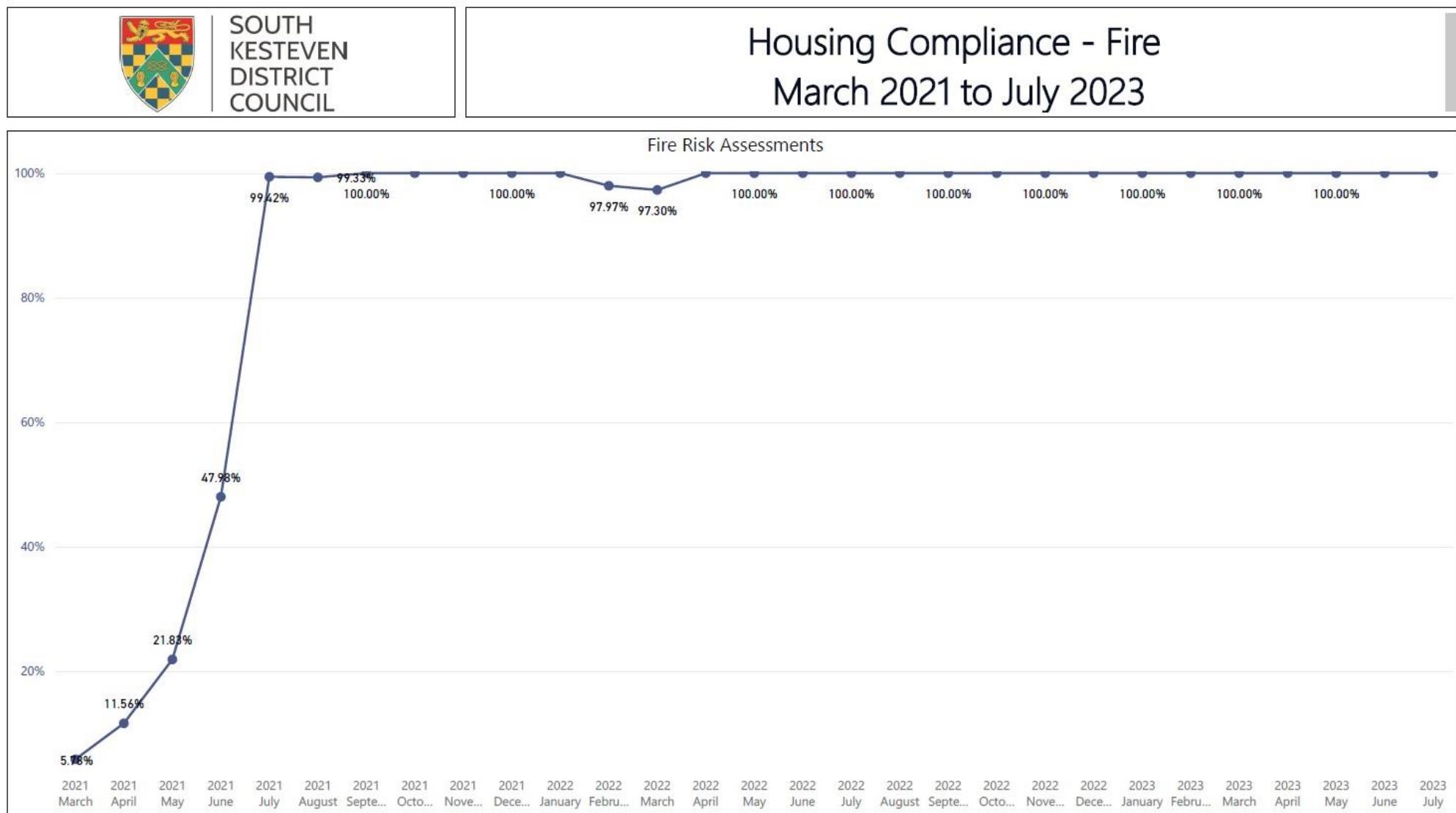


Housing Compliance - Lifts

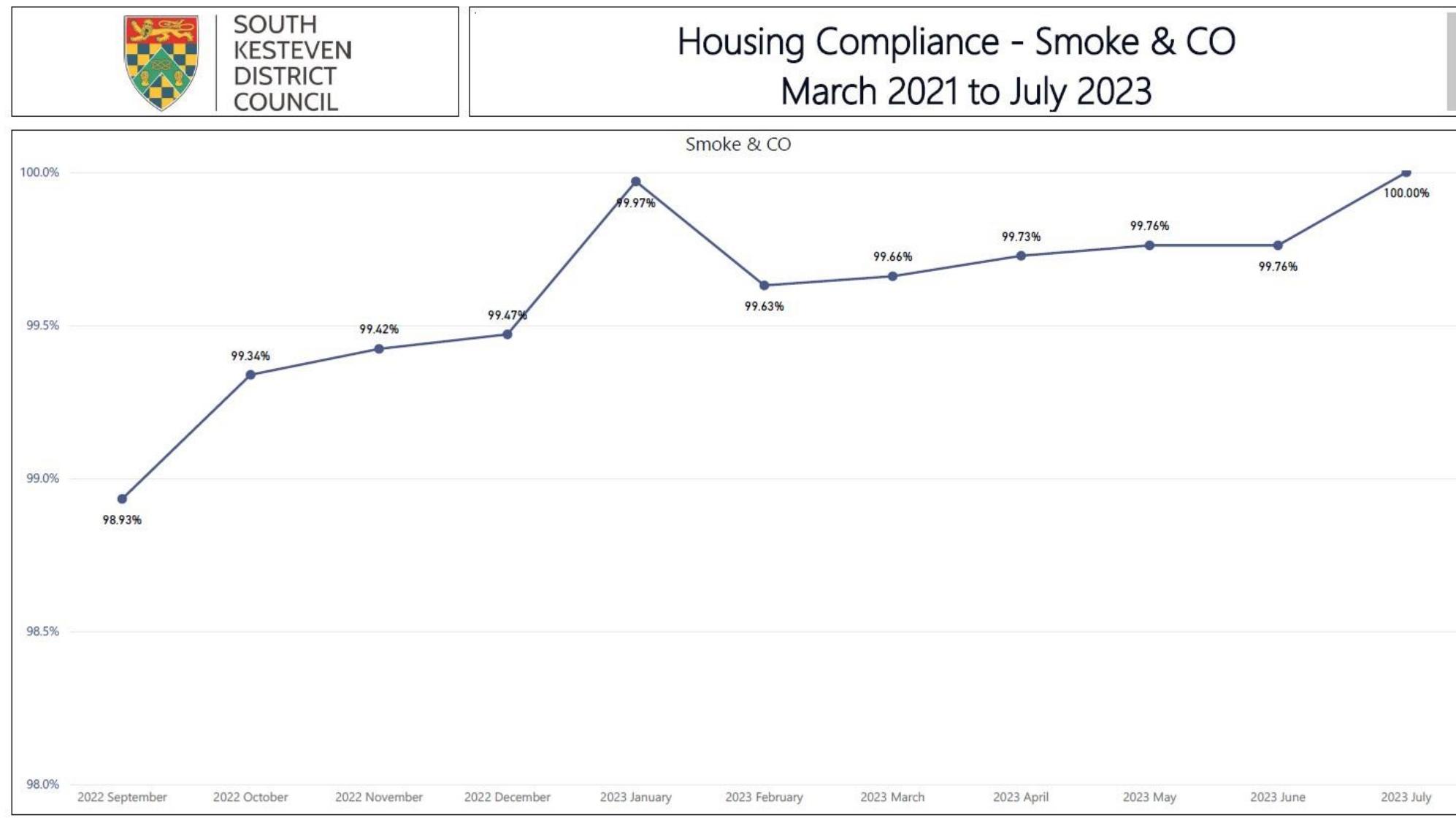
March 2021 to July 2023

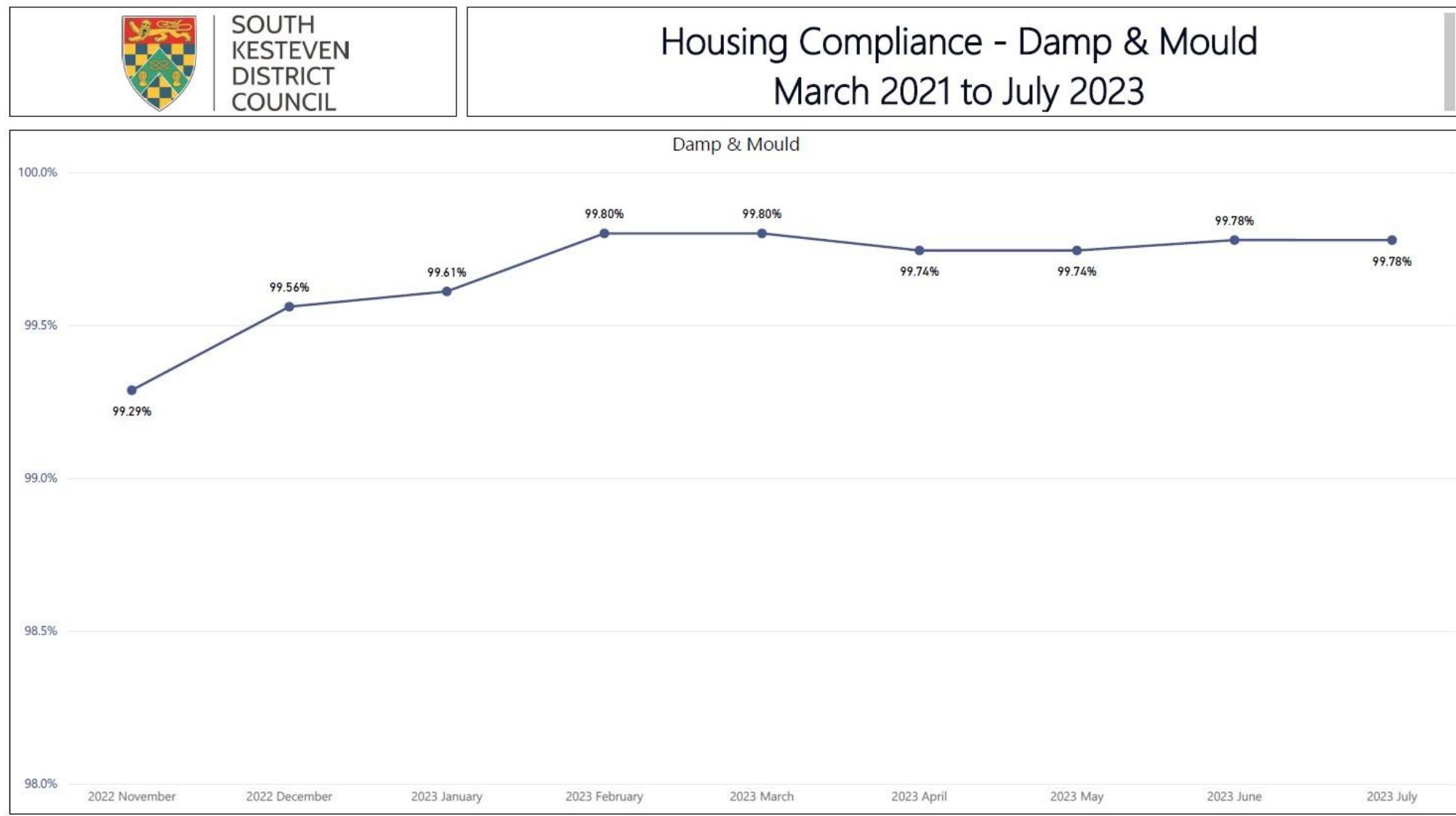


Appendix 1



Appendix 1





Appendix 1

	Mar-21	21.03.21			16.04.21			20.05.21			18.06.21				
	Baseline number required (properties/blocks)	Compliant	Non Compliant	% Compliant	Compliant	Non Compliant	% Compliant	Baseline number	Compliant	Non Compliant	% Compliant	Baseline number	Compliant	Non Compliant	% Compliant
Legionella	444	444	0	100.00%	444	0	100.00%	444	0	100.00%	444	444	0	100.00%	
Gas	4663	4614	52	98.89%	4621	45	99.04%	4663	4619	44	99.06%	4663	4621	42	99.10%
Electrical	6526	3632	2894	55.65%	3685	2841	56.47%	6526	4256	2270	65.22%	6526	4366	2160	66.90%
Asbestos (re-inspections)	257	180	77	70.04%	257	0	100.00%	257	257	0	100.00%	257	257	0	100.00%
Fire Risk Assessments	173	10	163	5.78%	20	153	11.56%	173	31	142	21.83%	173	83	90	47.98%
Lift inspections	13	13	0	100.00%	13	0	100.00%	13	13	0	100.00%	13	13	0	100.00%
Smoke & CO															
Damp & Mould															

Compliance Activity	Red	Amber	Green
Legionella	<95%	95.01-99.99%	100%
Gas	<99.8%	99.81-99.99%	100%
Electrical	<98%	98.01-99.99%	100%
Asbestos	<85%	85.01-99.99%	100%
FRA Actions	<97%	97.01-99.99%	100%

Appendix 1

	24.06.21				15.07.21				25.08.21				22.09.21				15.10.21			
	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	444	444	0	100.00%	444	444	0	100.00%	444	444	0	100.00%	444	444	0	100.00%	444	444	0	100.00%
Gas	4663	4621	42	99.10%	4663	4602	61	98.69%	4663	4596	67	98.56%	4663	4624	39	99.16%	4663	4630	33	99.29%
Electrical	6526	4368	2160	66.90%	6526	3422	3104	52.44%	6245	2751	3494	44.85%	6245	3040	3205	48.68%	6245	3300	2945	52.84%
Asbestos (re-inspections)	257	257	0	100.00%	257	257	0	100.00%	257	257	0	100.00%	257	257	0	100.00%	257	257	0	100.00%
Fire Risk Assessments	179	86	77	55.49%	173	173	1	100.00%	148	148	0	100.00%	148	148	0	100.00%	148	148	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%
Smoke & CO																				
Damp & Mould																				

Appendix 1

	21/01/2022				18/02/2022				31/03/2022				29/04/2022				31/05/2022			
	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	444	444	0	100.00%	38	28	10	73.88%	46	28	18	60.87%	46	38	8	82.61%	33	31	2	93.94%
Gas	4683	4638	27	99.42%	4683	4635	28	99.40%	4645	4622	23	99.50%	4645	4645	0	100.00%	4644	4642	2	99.96%
Electrical	6245	4498	1747	72.03%	6245	5003	1242	80.11%	6216	5113	1103	82.26%	6216	5203	1013	83.70%	6087	5270	817	86.58%
Asbestos (re-inspections)	257	257	0	100.00%	222	193	29	86.94%	260	98	162	37.69%	259	180	79	69.50%	204	204	0	100.00%
Fire Risk Assessments	148	148	0	100.00%	148	148	0	100.00%	148	145	4	97.97%	148	148	0	100.00%	148	148	0	100.00%
Lift inspections	13	13	0	100.00%	13	13	0	100.00%	13	12	1	92.31%	13	13	0	100.00%	13	13	0	100%
Smoke & CO																				
Damp & Mould																				

Appendix 1

34

	30/06/2022				31/07/2022				31/08/2022				30/09/2022				31/10/2022			
	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	33	0	100.00%	33	33	0	100.00%	33	33	0	100.00%	33	33	0	100.00%
Gas	4644	4633	11	99.76%	4644	4627	17	99.63%	4644	4628	16	99.66%	4639	4599	40	99.14%	4635	4595	40	99.14%
Electrical	6087	5300	787	87.07%	6083	5249	834	86.29%	6079	5269	810	86.68%	6074	5269	805	86.75%	6074	5354	720	88.15%
Asbestos (re-inspections)	204	204	0	100.00%	213	213	0	100.00%	213	213	0	100.00%	213	213	0	100.00%	213	213	0	100.00%
Fire Risk Assessments	148	148	0	100.00%	148	148	0	100.00%	148	148	0	100.00%	148	148	0	100.00%	148	148	0	100.00%
Lift inspections	13	13	0	100%	13	12	1	92%	13	13	0	100.00%	13	12	1	92.00%	13	13	0	100.00%
Smoke & CO													5898	5835	63	98.93%	5889	5850	39	99.34%
Damp & Mould																				

Appendix 1

	30/11/2022				31/12/2022				31/01/2023				28/02/2023				31/03/2023			
	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	33	0	100.00%	33	19	14	69.00%	33	33	0	100.00%	33	33	0	100.00%
Gas	4635	4611	24	99.48%	4635	4602	33	99.29%	4635	4586	49	98.94%	4626	4590	36	99.22%	4626	4589	37	99.20%
Electrical	6072	5364	708	88.46%	6053	5300	753	87.56%	6051	5323	728	87.97%	6049	5304	745	87.68%	6049	5304	745	87.68%
Asbestos (re-inspections)	213	213	0	100.00%	213	213	0	100.00%	213	213	0	100.00%	259	259	0	100.00%	259	259	0	100.00%
Fire Risk Assessments	148	148	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%
Smoke & CO	5887	5853	34	99.42%	5868	5837	31	99.47%	5868	5846	22	99.63%	5868	5846	22	99.63%	5865	5845	20	99.66%
Damp & Mould	5887	5845	42	99.29%	5868	5842	26	99.56%	5868	5845	23	99.61%	5868	5853	15	99.74%	5865	5853	12	99.80%

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.

Appendix 1

	30/04/2023				31/05/2023				30/06/2023				31/07/2023			
	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	33	0	100.00%	33	33	0	100.00%	33	33	0	100.00%
Gas	4625	4591	34	99.26%	4625	4594	31	99.33%	4625	4602	23	99.44%	4624	4584	40	99.13%
Electrical	6045	5360	685	88.67%	6044	5457	587	90.29%	6044	5488	556	90.80%	6043	5487	556	90.80%
Asbestos (re-inspections)	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%
Lift inspections	13	13	0	100.00%	13	13	0	100.00%	13	13	0	100.00%	13	13	0	100.00%
Smoke & CO	5860	5844	16	99.73%	5860	5846	14	99.76%	5860	5846	14	99.76%	5858	5858	0	100.00%
Damp & Mould	5860	5845	15	99.74%	5860	5845	15	99.74%	5860	5847	13	99.78%	5858	5845	13	99.78%



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

16th November 2023

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

Total Housing Compliance Policy

Report Author

Julie Martin, Head of Technical Services



Julie.martin@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To inform the Committee of the new Total Housing Compliance Policy which sets a framework for the monitoring of key consumer standards. To advise members on key responsibilities and the process of achieving compliance with the standards and regulations.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **Comment on the content of the Policy and recommend its approval to Cabinet.**
2. **Recommend the scrutiny of the procedures and management plans associated with the Total Housing Compliance Policy as part of its ongoing work programme.**

Decision Information

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

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

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 There is provision in both the HRA revenue and capital approved budgets for compliance related expenditure to ensure that the stock meets current regulatory standards.
- 1.2 Any financial implications of the policy will be contained within the existing budget.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Director (Finance and ICT) 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 (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.4 The Audit carried out in July 2023 to ratify the work undertaken by the Council facilitate the removal of the Regulatory Notice contained recommendations regarding the implementation of key policies relating to compliance activity.
- 1.5 This Policy addresses all recommendations for the creation of new, and for the review of existing policies.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance & Risk Officer

Health and Safety

- 1.6 The recording of compliance data 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: Phil Swinton,

Human Resources

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

Completed by: Jane Jenkinson, Senior HR Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Total Housing Compliance Policy aims to define, at a strategic level, the intent and arrangements for ensuring that each of the key risks meet the required standards.
- 2.2 Previous policy and guidance have taken the form of a series of management plans and protocols. The Total Housing Compliance Policy has incorporated these elements into a transparent policy framework, complemented by current legislation and best practice. It is proposed that these be submitted for review by the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee every two years.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The Total Housing Compliance Policy is a critical policy which sets the intent and delivery framework for the Council to meet the legislative and regulatory requirements required by the Social Housing Regulator.

- 3.2 The Policy framework is supported by a set of detailed management plans and protocols which set out how each of the areas will be managed and who is responsible for elements of delivery.
- 3.3 Access to property to carry out essential maintenance and health and safety checks is a fundamental aspect of achieving compliance in the Council's activities. The Policy provides a clear path of managing access and the legal implications where the Council is not able to secure this.
- 3.4 The process the Council will follow is attached as an appendix to the Policy and applies to all elements of compliance activity where access to tenanted properties is required.
- 3.5 Compliance Policy can be delivered through the creation of individual Policies covering each area of risk.
- 3.6 Some of the risk areas, for example asbestos, consist of very detailed documents covering process and guidance for staff. Many details which cover access procedures are duplicated in each process and there is risk that Policies may not be updated consistently.
- 3.7 The creation of the Total Housing Compliance Policy aims to combine the common elements of Policy and provide strategic direction for each of the risks, ensuring that all risks are considered and updated with a consistent approach.
- 3.8 The procedural and working documents are key to managing compliance and they are required to be detailed to cover all aspects of managing the key risks. These documents form the basis on which Officers manage the service. It is proposed to bring these detailed documents individually to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the ongoing work plan.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 Do nothing.

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.
- 6.2 Officers who are required to deliver services which impact this Policy have contributed to the technical aspects of the document.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 List any Appendices.
 - 1. Access Procedure
 - 2. Equality Impact Assessment

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 1

Appendix 1

South Kesteven District Council “No Access” Procedure

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for Contractors and SKDC Housing employees to follow in relation to the **NO ACCESS** procedure when attempting to access a tenanted property to carry out work required as part of our asset management or for health & safety purposes. It is intended to clearly show the key stages within the procedure showing time scales and activities that must be completed.

2. SCOPE

This procedure is to be adopted by all SKDC Housing employees involved in the process of arranging works and managing tenancies. In particular, access to ensure works and services for the following areas of work which cover planned and compliance activity:

- Gas and Solid Fuel Servicing and safety checks
- Electrical Installation Condition Reports
- Water Hygiene safety checks
- Fire safety checks
- Radon gas safety checks and monitoring
- Surveys to carry out property condition reports
- Planned maintenance and upgrades

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

It shall be the responsibility of the Contract Manager to ensure that Contractors who are engaged on work where access is critical, are aware of the procedure and maintain the standards contained in it. Any variations to the procedures must be documented and signed off by one of the following:

- Health & Safety and Compliance Manager
- Head of Housing Technical Services

It is the responsibility of the Contractor to ensure that all subcontractors and employees are aware of the procedures.

4. GUIDANCE

The Council needs to show that actions and methods used to gain access are “Reasonable” .

The majority of the access appointments that we need to undertake our landlord obligations are not supported by statute. At this time only the the requirements of the 1998 Gas Safety (Installation & use) Regulations place an absolute duty on Landlords to service and inspect gas installations on an annual basis. They allow for an “MOT” style service where the service can be completed up to two months before the due date. The certificate will still retain the original due date.

How far do I need to go if the Tenant prevents access for a gas safety check?

Appendix 1

South Kesteven District Council “No Access” Procedure

A landlord has to show that they took all reasonable steps to comply with the law. The HSE recommends the following best practice in these circumstances and strongly advises that a record be kept of all correspondence with the Tenants:

- *leave the Tenant a notice stating that an attempt was made to complete the gas safety check and provide your contact details;*
- *write to the Tenant explaining that a safety check is a legal requirement and that it is for the Tenants own safety. Give the Tenant the opportunity to arrange their own appointment;*

*HSE inspectors will look for at least three attempts to complete the gas safety check, including the above suggestions; however the approach will need to be appropriate to each circumstance. **It would ultimately be for a court to decide if the action taken was reasonable** depending upon the individual circumstances. It is also considered a good idea to include arrangements for access in the tenancy agreement. (Extract from HSE Website)*

The Council will adopt the process as defined by the HSE as part of a three stage process attached as Appendix 1.

The access process and procedure has been designed around the provision of access for gas and will be applied to all aspects of access for other compliance and property related works.

The rationale for this approach is to ensure consistency with tenants and enable a robust approach to accessing property to carry out other compliance or essential surveys and works.

Procedure

The flow chart attached at appendix 1, details the process for access and the actions which can be taken at each stage and the responsibilities of each party in the process.

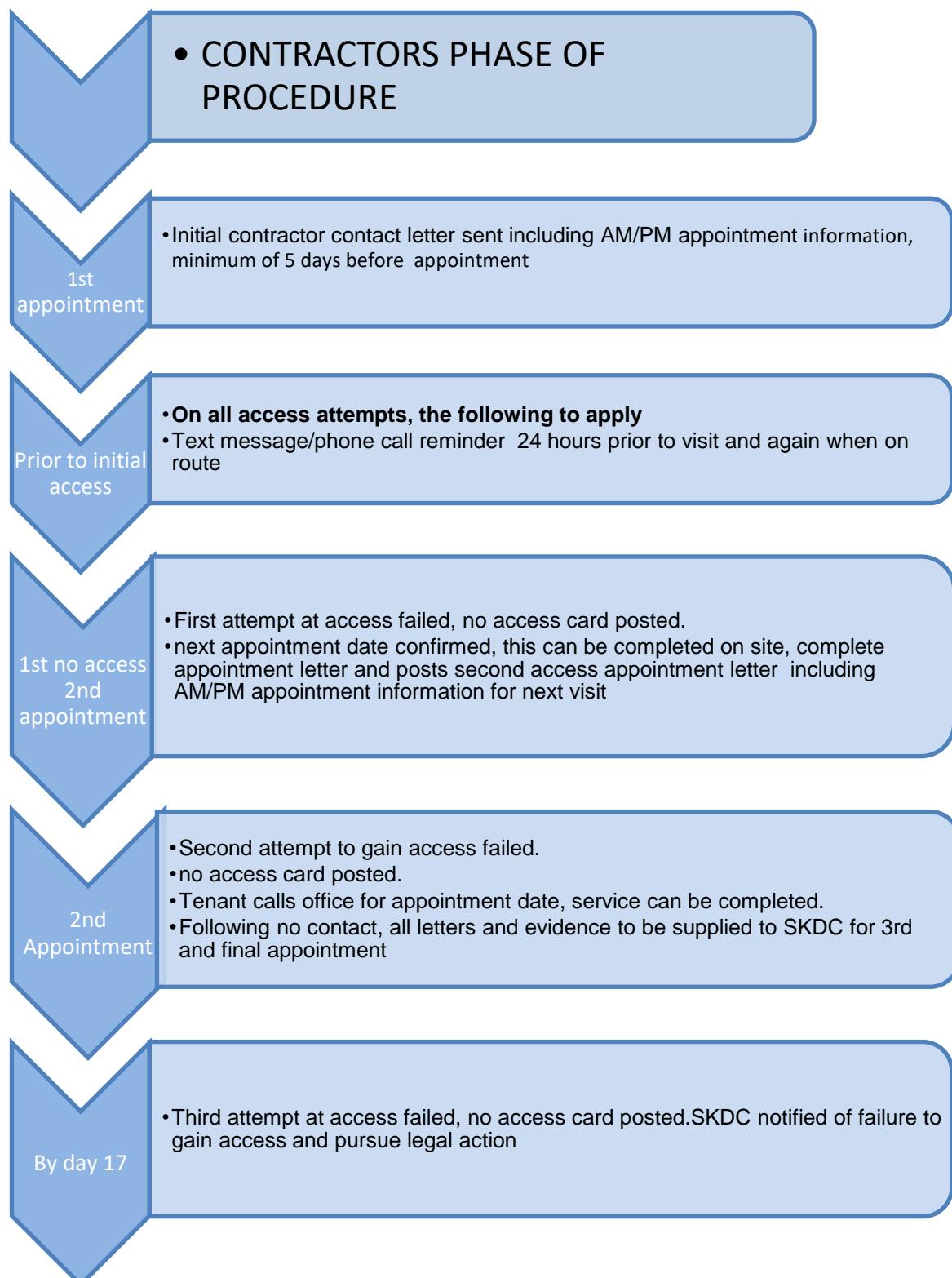
Dates of all failed access attempts and contact, will be recorded and documented and SKDC will pursue retrieval of costs for missed appointments and associated legal action.

During the process outlined below, should the Tenant contact and make an appointment with the contractor and subsequently keep that appointment, the process will stop at the point certification or confirmation is received from the Contractor.

Tenants are encouraged to rearrange appointments, rather than miss the appointment altogether and this presents a risk to the process that 1st access can move significantly further into the process and if sustained no access, or repeated rearranging of appointments occurs there is insufficient attempts and paperwork for court action. In these cases, staff and contractors need to ensure that unless there is a valid reason, e.g., holiday / contagious illness etc, that the rearranged appointment is within the 14-day appointment window for that stage. Where this is exceeded, a missed appointment may be recorded, and the property needs to be flagged and case managed.

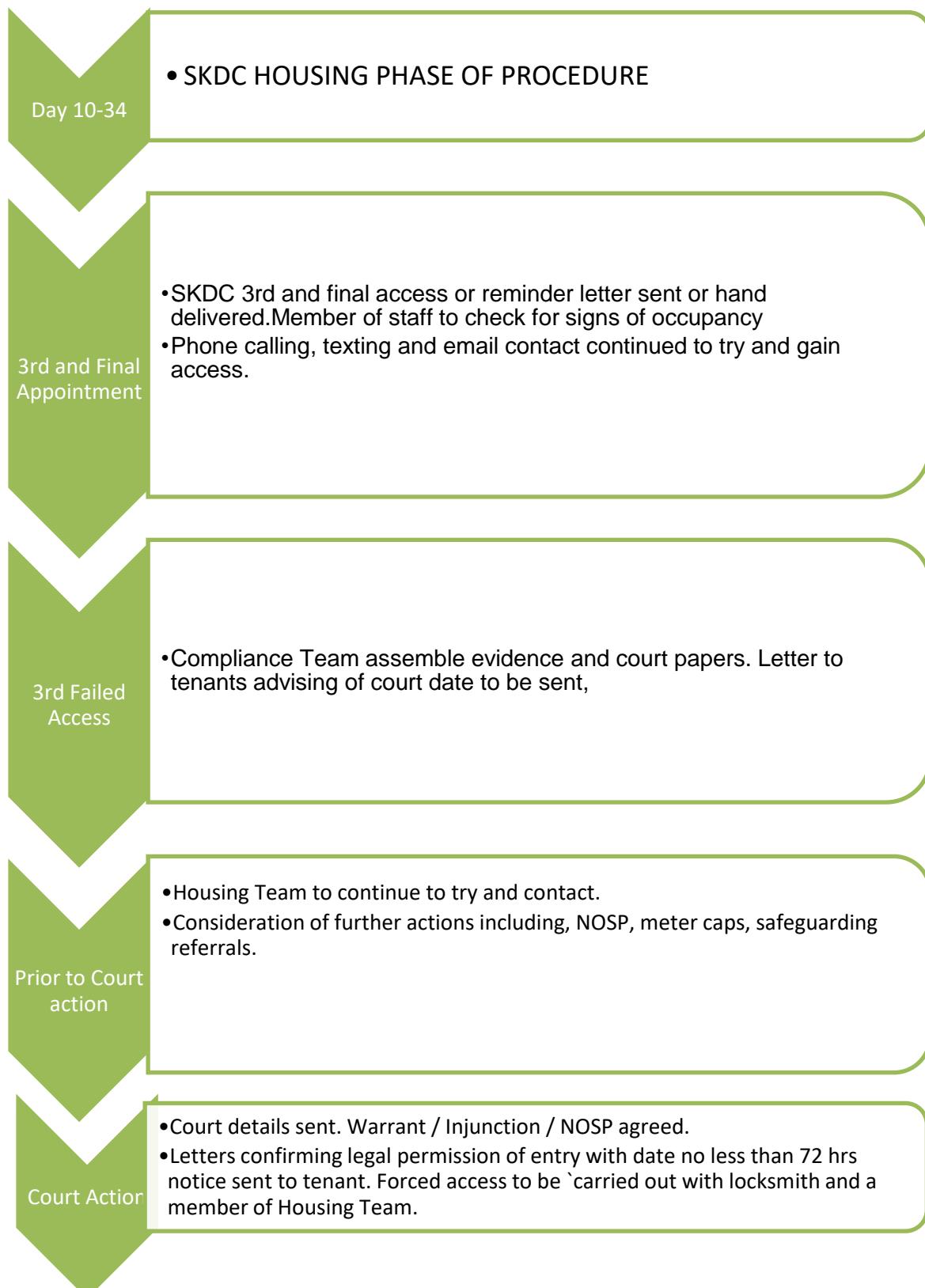
Appendix 1

South Kesteven District Council “No Access” Procedure



Appendix 1

South Kesteven District Council “No Access” Procedure



Appendix 1

South Kesteven District Council “No Access” Procedure

Guidance for complex cases

Financial Hardship

Tenants need to be in credit on their gas and electric meters during compliance visits. The gas servicing and electrical test regimes can identify tenants in financial hardship.

Visits should be made by Tenancy Services to ensure that they are signposted to the correct services.

Meters are often capped at the request of tenants who are in hardship and capped meters will be checked annually to ensure that the caps remain in place.

SKDC will retain a register of capped meters and Tenancy Services will make contact with tenants to check that the tenant is not at risk and undertake a risk assessment where appropriate.

Hoarding

It is recognised that tenants who hoard are reluctant to allow access.

Tenancy Services will engage with the tenant to agree actions to allow clear access to areas of the property required. Safeguarding referrals will be made along with signposting to support services.

Illegal Activity

The compliance testing schedules, and property surveys can often identify illegal activity, cannabis grows, meter bypass etc. Once identified Tenancy Services will engage with partners to establish what action is required.

The contractor will notify the Statutory authority of any damage or illegal activity to gas or electric meters.

Vulnerability

Previous cases of no access have identified vulnerable tenants who have been hospitalised, or who feel unable to allow access due to their health.

Where a property can be capped at the meter to safeguard the property during periods that the tenant may not be home, this should be recorded and explained to the tenant or their advocate.

Where a tenant is not allowing access due to their health, this needs to be case managed, with tenants signposted for support. Tenancy Services will lead this process, with close liaison with the Compliance Team to ensure that the property remains safe and compliant. All steps to engage the tenant need to be documented and recorded as they may form part of a legal process to gain access.

Where a tenant will not engage with us, we will need to refer this through for legal action.

Guidance for Meter Capping

Where the meter is accessible, capping can be considered in the following circumstances:

- Where the gas or electric meter is in debt.
- Where repeated access has not been provided and will proceed for legal action. A risk assessment will need to be completed for this action to be approved by the Tenancy Services Manager and Health & Safety and Compliance Manager.

Appendix 1

South Kesteven District Council “No Access” Procedure

- Where an abandonment notice has been served or where a property is believed to have been abandoned. This is as a safety precaution in the event of theft of equipment, e.g., copper pipe, boiler, wiring.

Risk Assessment

Where it becomes necessary to undertake a risk assessment, this must consider the following impacts:

- Time of year and weather conditions
- Number and vulnerability of occupants
- Any known medical conditions

The risk assessment needs to be recorded and filed.

Where meters are capped, a card should be posted to advise the tenant that the meter has been capped, with contact details to arrange for the meter to be uncapped and any works carried out.

Legal Process

The Council is not allowed to access a property without permission from the Tenant. For legal and audit purposes this will need to be made in writing if a tenant is not present and even then this presents a risk to the Authority.

Any attempt to access a property by force or without the necessary permissions or legal authorisations is illegal and exposes the Council to legal challenge, financial penalty and reputational damage.

Once all attempt at contact and case management have failed, legal access will need to be pursued to gain access in accordance with the tenancy agreement.

There are a number of options for legal action:

Legal Process	Actions Required	Team Responsible
Notice Seeking Possession Served on the basis of breach of tenancy.	Tenancy Services to collate all documentation and issue.	Tenancy Services to submit applications to Court and manage Court attendance
Warrant of Entry Can only be used for specific purpose under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Urgent access under Regulation 36(3)(a) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998	Individual Warrant applications need to be filed with corroborating evidence	Compliance Team prepare and submit warrants. Court attendance to managed by Tenancy Services

Appendix 1**South Kesteven District Council “No Access” Procedure**

Abandonment Notice Where a property does not appear to be lived	Refer to the Abandonment Process	To be managed by Tenancy Services
Injunction Injunction request made to Court on the basis of no access for safety inspections	Compliance to collate all evidence for non access to include events of gas, electric, repairs and any other no access event. This should include historic information. Tenancy Services to prepare legal injunction paperwork.	Tenancy Services to manage Court process

This page is intentionally left blank



Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Total Housing Compliance Policy
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	The Total Housing Compliance Policy aims to define, at a strategic level, the intent and arrangements for ensuring that each of the key risks defined in the Social Housing Consumer Regulations.
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.	The Policy is based around current legislation and guidance and there is an obligation on the local authority for total compliance. Due to this there is no requirement for consultation.
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 <small>(The Action Log below should be completed to provide further detail)</small>
Age	Positive	All our Housing Stock will be robustly monitored for compliance purposes inline with the policy to ensure that health and safety remains paramount for our tenants. All vulnerabilities will be considered as part of any action that is possible inline with the policy.	n/a
Disability	Positive	All our Housing Stock will be robustly monitored for compliance purposes inline with the policy to ensure that health and safety remains paramount for our tenants. All vulnerabilities will be considered as part of any action that is possible inline with the policy.	n/a
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	All our Housing Stock will be robustly monitored for compliance purposes inline with the policy to ensure that health and safety remains paramount for our tenants.	n/a
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neutral	n/a (applicable only to employment legislation)	n/a
Pregnancy and Maternity	Positive	All our Housing Stock will be robustly monitored for compliance purposes inline with the policy to ensure that	n/a



		<p>health and safety remains paramount for our tenants. All vulnerabilities will be considered as part of any action that is possible inline with the policy.</p>	
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">• large print• audio tape• community languages <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">• large print• audio tape• community languages <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	<p>The Council will not treat the resident less favourably due to their sex.</p>	n/a
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	<p>The Council will not treat the resident less favourably due to their sexual orientation.</p>	n/a
Other Factors requiring consideration			
Socio-Economic Impacts	Positive	<p>The Council will ensure that tenants meet the costs of any legal action should they prevent the council from achieving non-compliance in the event for example of failed access.</p> <p>All cases will be considered on an individual basis.</p>	n/a
Carers (those who provide unpaid care to a family member, friend or partner)	Positive	<p>All our Housing Stock will be robustly monitored for compliance purposes inline with the policy to ensure that health and safety remains paramount for our tenants. All vulnerabilities will be considered as part of any action that is possible inline with the policy.</p>	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.

Group/Organisation	Date	Response

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.

Negative Impact	Action	Timeline	Outcome	Status

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.

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?		
Final Decision	Tick	Include any explanation/justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed		
2. Stop the policy or practice because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. Adapt or change the policy in a way that will eliminate the bias		
4. Barriers and impact identified , 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 proceed with caution 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

Name and job title of person completing this EIA	Celia Bown – Senior Housing Policy and Strategy Officer and Phil Swinton – Health and Safety and Compliance Manager
Officer Responsible for implementing the policy/function etc	Phil Swinton – Health and Safety and Compliance Manager
Line Manager	Julie Martin – Head of Technical Services
Date Completed	07 th November 2023
Date of Review (if required)	

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.

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

16th November 2023

Councillor Phil Dilks
Cabinet member for Housing and Planning

Earlesfield Project Overview November 2023

Report Author

Julie Martin, Head of Technical Services

✉ Julie.martin@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of the Report

To update the committee on the progress of the Earlesfield Project, providing an overview of the project position, completed works and projected timescales.

Recommendations

That Committee:

1. Note the contents of the report and the progress being made to deliver on the Earlesfield Project to resolve long standing issues within our housing stock.

Decision Information	
Is this a Key Decision?	No
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 budget required to complete the works associated with the Earlesfield Project is included in the approved 2023/24 Revenue and Capital budgets.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Director (Finance and ICT) and Deputy S151 Officer

Legal and Governance

1.2 There are no significant legal and governance implications associated with this report which is to note progress made on the project.

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" and the timely delivery of improvements to its social housing stock, which includes a significant number of properties on the Earlesfield Estate in Grantham, is a key element to this.

2.2 The report to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 September 2023 set out the progress on the project.

- 2.3 There have been site visits undertaken to completed properties by Cabinet Members and the ward members, the most recent visit was on the 25th of October 2023.
- 2.4 To date we have completed 23 property refurbishments. Progress on the project is continues to be made on the programme but has been slower due to contractor resources on site.
- 2.5 Discussions have been held with the contractor and additional resources are being brought on to the project to increase the turnaround on completed properties and the project remains on target for completion by the end of April 2025.

3. Key Considerations and Other Options Considered

- 3.1 It is anticipated that around 30 properties will be completed by the end of December 2023.
- 3.2 An updated copy of the programme is attached as Appendix 1.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 4.1 Report is for information and noting.

This page is intentionally left blank

Surveyed awaiting dates															
1014320	15	Sturrock Court	Grantham	NG31 7RQ											
1008839	15	Kestrel Court	Grantham	NG31 7RN											
1009547	9	Mallard Court	Grantham	NG31 7RW											
1009423	27	Mallard Court	Grantham	NG31 7RW											
1012437	5	Ivatt Court	Grantham	NG31 7RF											
1014159	20	Stirling Court	Grantham	NG31 7RJ											
1007983	16	Falcon Court	Grantham	NG31 7RP											
1012379	21	Ivatt Court	Grantham	NG31 7RF	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	
1014240	5	Stirling Court	Grantham	NG31 7RJ	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓
1010588	127	Thames Road	Grantham	NG31 7SR	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
1008099	9	Falcon Court	Grantham	NG31 7RP											



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

16 November 2023

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

Housing Options Workshop feedback

Report Author

Sarah McQueen, Interim Head of Service (Housing Options)

 Sarah.McQueen@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to give feedback on the questions and enquiries raised at the Housing Options members workshop on 19th October 2023.

Recommendations

The Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the feedback from the Housing Options Workshop held on 19th 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 Healthy and strong communities
Which wards are impacted?	N/A

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 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Director (Finance and ICT) and Deputy S151 Officer

Legal and Governance

1.2 There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report which is to provide the Committee with an update on the outcomes of a recent workshop.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director, (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

2.1 The following points were raised during the workshop for feedback. This feedback can be seen below:

2.2 **Councillors requested a staffing list with contact numbers and pictures.**
This is attached with this report.

2.3 **Confirmation of distribution of settlement from Urban Hotel was requested.**
As of May 2023 when the 3 month notice was served, there were 31 families resident in the hotel. These families were resettled across the UK as follows:

- 10 left the hotel to stay with family (none in SKDC)
- 13 were offered accommodation across the UK from the Home Office (all outside SKDC)
- 8 were moved into private rented accommodation (only 1 family remained in the SKDC area)

2.4 **Distribution of slides** from the homelessness workshop was requested, and these are appended to this report.

2.5 **Details of Ukrainian Emergency Provision additional staff member in place**, funded by Lincolnshire County Council. SKDC is able to help with the upfront costs of private rental accommodation. In addition, a family can access £1000 to furnish property when sourced. As each family has been granted a temporary visa, they are able to access homelessness support and assistance.

2.6 **Details of a Mental Health Assessment: vulnerability guidance** is enclosed. This is guidance given to officers to guide them through the assessment of priority need based on the question of 'is the applicant vulnerable as a result of....'.

2.7 **Details of homelessness Out of Hours support/referral:** - there is 24 hours out of hours emergency line using the number 01476 590044. SKDC has a rota system which means there is always an officer on call to deal with emergency homelessness approaches.

2.8 **Clarity of priority need of those under 18 and care leavers:** Under 18s are classed as priority need under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

In relation to care leavers, the homelessness code of guidance states the following:

- a person under 21 who was (but is no longer) looked after, accommodated or fostered between the ages of 16 and 18 (except a person who is a 'relevant student');

Care leavers must have been in care between the ages of 16 and 18 to be classed as priority need before they turn 21.

2.9 **Clarity on local connection criteria.** The homelessness code of guidance states the following:

Assessing local connection
When a housing authority makes inquiries to determine whether an applicant is eligible for assistance and owed a duty under Part 7, it may also make inquiries under section 184(2) to establish an applicant's local connection.

Section 199(1) provides that a person has a local connection with the district of a housing authority if they have a connection with it because:

- (a) they are, or were in the past, normally resident there, and that residence was of their own choice; or,
- (b) they are employed there; or,
- (c) they have family associations living there; or,
- (d) of any special circumstances.

There was a particular mention of family connection. The code of guidance states the following:

For the purposes of (c), where the applicant raises family associations, this may extend beyond partners, parents, adult children or siblings. They may include associations with other family members such as step-parents, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts or uncles provided there are sufficiently close links in the form of frequent contact, commitment or dependency. Family associations should be determined with regard to the fact-specific circumstances of the individual case. For example, the actual closeness of the family association may count for more than the degree of blood relation. A housing authority should not identify a local connection through family associations with an area other than the one where the applicant positively wants to live.

2.10 **Information requested on the current oldest homelessness case** – The oldest case was opened on 25 July 2022, and is an extremely complex case. The individual has been placed in multiple emergency accommodation settings. They are a wheelchair user with complex drug and alcohol misuse and mental health issues.

2.11 **Can someone claiming single occupancy discount on council tax offer a spare room as a temporary arrangement without affecting the discount?** If the person staying at someone's property is liable to pay council tax elsewhere, or classes another address as their main and sole residence, then the single person discount would not be affected. However if this is not the case, then the single person discount could be affected. The Council would need to assess each case on its own merit.

2.12 **Details requested of the Armed Forces Covenant and priority/exemption confirmation:**

The armed forces covenant is a commitment by the government that people who have served in the armed forces along with their families should not be disadvantaged due to their service.

In the Council's Housing Allocations Policy, there are 2 areas where there are specific criteria applied to this cohort:

1. Exemptions to Local connection criteria:

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*

2. 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*

This means that whatever band they are placed in on the housing register, they will be listed top of that band regardless of the time they have been waiting on the register.

2.13 **Councillors requested to meet the Change 4 Lincs (C4L) team.** This has

been noted and officers will arrange this meeting.

2.14 **Request for the number of active C4L cases in SKDC.** There are currently 17 active cases, including sofa surfers and those moved on who require support.

2.15 **Number of applicants on the register who are pensioners.** 330; however please note that this is taken from the old register. An update would be provided once the new register is fully established.

2.16 **Number of applicants on register who are single households.** 558; this number is taken from the old housing register. An further update would be provided once the new register is established.

2.17 **Allocations by band:**
1st April 22 – 31st March 23
238 lets of which:

- 98 Emergency band
- 65 Band 1
- 37 Band 2
- 6 Band 3
- 30 Band 4
- 2 Band 5

2.18 **Councillors to get a copy of communications related to Choice Based Lettings** – this is attached to the Choice Based Lettings agenda item

2.19 **Review communications on the subject of Choice Based Lettings** – the Housing team will review future communications taking on board previous feedback received from Councillors.

2.20 **Review the households who do not re-register to make sure those showing as high priority aren't missed.** Housing officers can run reports to check this and if necessary re-engage those who have not applied for new system.

2.21 **Key contacts** – provided in the attached contact list

2.22 **Domestic Abuse training for Councillors** – Housing officers to arrange this in due course.

2.23 **Night stop Scheme.** Housing officers to contact the Member that requested this.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 The feedback is contained within section 2 above.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 N/A

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 Feedback was requested from the Housing Options Workshop held on 19th October 2023

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix 1: Housing Options Spotlight presentation slides
- 6.2 Appendix 2: SKDC Housing Options contacts
- 6.3 Appendix 3: Vulnerability guidance
- 6.4 Appendix 4: 1st Advisory letter, Choice based lettings
- 6.5 Appendix 5: 2nd Choice based lettings letter
- 6.6 Appendix 6: Choice Based Lettings Q and A

This page is intentionally left blank

Housing Options - Spotlight Presentation

69

October 2023



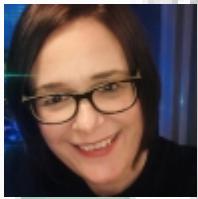
Our Team



Ricky Szulz –
Housing Options
Team Leader



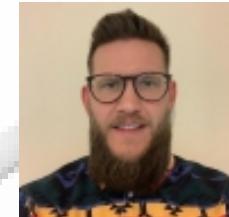
Sarah McQueen
Interim Head of Housing
Options



Helen Brown – Senior
Allocations Officer



Charlotte Cowley –
Choice Based lettings
Project manager



Robert Endersby –
Change4Lincs team
leader



Rachael Bradley – Domestic
Abuse Support Officer



Overview

- Provide the Council's statutory homelessness function
- Host a Rough Sleeper team, covering 4 districts
- Manage the Council's housing register and allocation of District wide social housing stock
- Newly created post – domestic abuse support officer
- Service Pressures
 - Afghan Resettlement Project
 - Homes for Ukraine
 - Asylum pressures
 - Increased cases with complex needs



Homelessness

The 5 tests

1. Are you eligible?
2. Are you homeless or at risk of homelessness within 56 days?
3. Are you in priority need?
4. Are you intentionally homeless?
5. Local connection

The 3 Stages

1. Prevention
2. Relief
3. Main Duty

We currently have 328 active Homeless cases.

We currently have 55 Households in Temporary Accommodation. Massive financial impact. But a necessary one

Duty officer on the desk everyday & out of hours – 24hr Service.

Afghan Resettlement / Ukrainian Resettlement.



CHANGE4LINCS

73

Rough Sleeper Team Hosted by SKDC, covering the following districts



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



North Kesteven
DISTRICT COUNCIL



West Lindsey
DISTRICT COUNCIL



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

What is Change4Lincs

- Run in partnership with 4 districts:
South Kesteven, North Kesteven, South Holland, West Lindsey

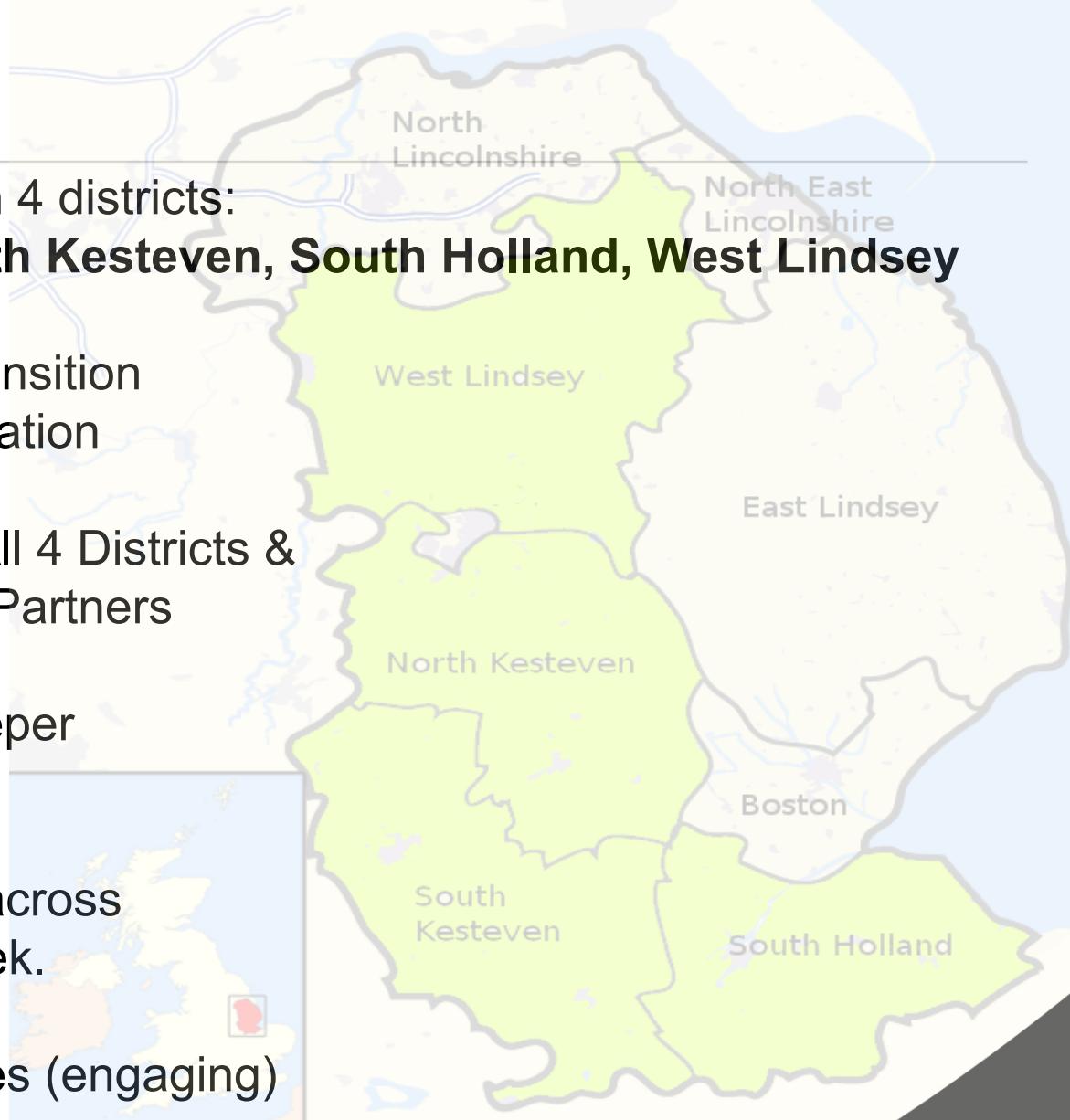
- Support provided to transition
into settled accommodation

³⁵
₁₇ Accept referrals from All 4 Districts &
Various Agencies and Partners

- Funded by Rough Sleeper
initiative grant funding

³⁵
₁₇ We provide Outreach across
All 4 Districts each week.

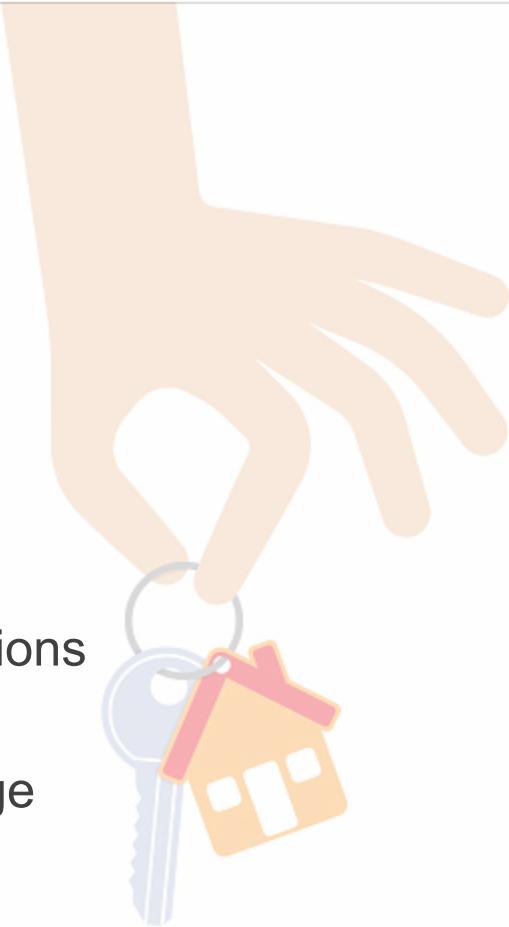
³⁵
₁₇ Currently have 41 cases (engaging)



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Allocations

- Demand vs Supply – 1582 on housing register
- Properties let last financial year: 253
- Council Stock – just under 6000 properties
- Nomination agreements with Housing Associations
- Current allocation process- The need for change



Choice Based Lettings

New allocation procedure called SK Homechoice
Launches on 23rd October 2023

- Gives customers more control over the process and they can see what properties we have available.
- All current applicants asked to re-register – over 2000 letters sent on 5th September.
- Have received approx. 990 new applications so far
- New policy – new criteria
- Looking to 'Go Live' end of October and welcome all new applications.



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

- **Domestic Abuse support**

- Newly created role in Housing Options
- Bridges the gap between the homelessness process and the support required
- Definition of Domestic abuse
- Domestic abuse can be a key cause of homelessness & reason for resettlement
- Strong links to partner agencies



Enquiries

- Please submit any enquiries to
housingenquiry@southkesteven.gov.uk
- This allows us to fully review the case and provide a fully comprehensive response.

≈



Appendix 2

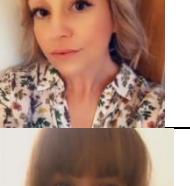


SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

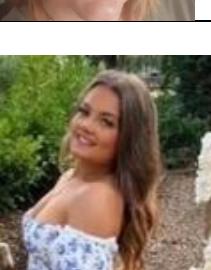
Contact details for SKDC housing options service

Housing Options (homelessness)

Please note that any new enquires for the team should be directed to our generic email:
housingadvice@southkesteven.gov.uk

	Name	Position	Email
	Sarah McQueen	Housing Options Manager	Sarah.mcqueen@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Ricky Szulz	Housing Options Team leader	Ricky.szulz@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Helen Brown	Senior Allocations Officer	Helen.brown@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Charlotte Cowley	Choice Based Lettings project Manager	Charlotte.cowley@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Rachael Bradley	Domestic Abuse Support Officer	Rachael.bradley@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Bridget Pearce	Housing Options Officer	Bridget.pearce@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Hannah Laccohee	Housing Options Officer	Hannah.laccohee@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Helen Ward	Housing Options Officer	Helen.ward@southkesteven.gov.uk

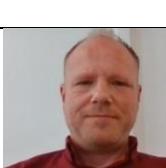
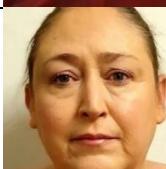


	Josh Mann	Housing Options Officer	Joshua.mann@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Melinda Hutchinson	Housing Options Officer	Melinda.hutchinson@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Tara Taylor	Housing Options Officer	Tara.taylor@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Pippa Bryden	Allocations Officer	Pippa.bryden@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Drew Palmer	Allocations Officer	Drew.palmer@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Anita Porter	Housing Options Assistant	Anita.porter@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Sheryl Jones	Housing Options Assistant	Sheryl.jones@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Lauryn Hibbitt	Housing Options Assistant	Lauryn.hibbitt@southkesteven.gov.uk



Change 4 Lincs team

Please note that any new enquires for the team should be directed to our generic email:
change4lincs@southkesteven.gov.uk

	Name	Position	Email
	Robert Endersby	Change 4 Lincs Team Leader	Robert.endersby@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Steve Ward	Support officer	Steve.ward@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Pauline Abbess	Outreach officer	Pauline.abbess@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Camilla Pitman	Outreach officer	Camilla.pitman@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Courtney Knight	Outreach officer	Courtney.knight@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Gavin Mellars	Support and reconnection officer	Gavin.mellars@southkesteven.gov.uk
	Angela Roberts	Lettings officer	Angela.roberts@southkesteven.gov.uk



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

A portrait photo of Courtney Harmston, a young woman with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a blue patterned top.	Courtney Harmston	Intensive Support Worker	Courtney.harmston@southkesteven.gov.uk
A portrait photo of Samantha Atherton, a woman with short dark hair, wearing a pink patterned top.	Samantha Atherton	Intensive Support Worker	Samantha.atherton@southkesteven.gov.uk
A portrait photo of Claire Ross, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a grey cardigan over a black top.	Claire Ross	Intensive Support Worker	Claire.ross@southkesteven.gov.uk

Vulnerability

→ It is a matter of 'evaluative judgement' whether the applicants circumstances make them vulnerable.

The test is:

"Whether, if homeless, the applicant would be significantly more vulnerable than an ordinary person would be if they became homeless"

(See relevant case law in priority need folder)

→ The assessment must take into account all of the relevant facts and circumstances. You need to consider the impact of homelessness on the applicant.

→ You may take into account the services and support available to the applicant from a third party (inc family). In order to reach a decision that a person is not vulnerable because of the support they receive; you must be satisfied that the 3rd party support will be consistent and predictable. Even with support, could they be vulnerable?

→ You must be mindful of the Equality Act 2010 and our public sector equality duties towards people who have a protected characteristic.

Things to consider:



Old age alone is not sufficient for an applicant to be considered vulnerable



Nature and extent of illness/disability

Relationship between illness/disability and their housing difficulties

Relationship with drugs/alcohol, age, offending etc etc

Requires cooperation between housing, social services and mental health agencies. You should have regard to any advice from professionals.



Make enquiries into applicant's childhood history to confirm care leaver and then assess vulnerability



Regular naval, military or air forces

Consider length of time served, type of service, whether they spent any time in a military hospital, length of time since they left the armed forces and whether they have any existing support networks

Try and obtain medical history release form from the Forces medical and welfare advisors



Consider length of time served in custody or detention, whether they are receiving any supervision from probation or YOT, length of time since they left custody and whether they have existing support networks (positive ones).

You need to take into account the assessments completed by offender manager services



This does not include domestic violence.

The safety of the applicant and ensuring confidentiality are paramount

Consider evidence from Police



Consider all of the facts and circumstances of applicant

No blanket policies

Are they vulnerable due to a combination of factors?

Consider young people, people fleeing harassment, victims of modern-day slavery or trafficking, rough sleepers or after effect of Covid-19

Make sure you have sufficient evidence of any vulnerabilities and consider all information from external agencies. Ultimately, the final decision on the question of vulnerability is **YOURS**.



**HOUSING REGISTER, IMPORTANT
INFORMATION – PLEASE READ**

name»

Address1

Address2

Address3

14th August 2023

Ref: Housing Register application

Please ask for: SK Home Choice

Tel: 01476 406437

Email:

skhomechoice@southkesteven.gov.uk

Dear

We are in the process of implementing a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system for all housing register applications, called SK Home Choice. This letter is to advise you that in the next few weeks, you will be asked to submit a new housing register application online to remain on the housing register.

Alongside the new system, South Kesteven District Council has also implemented a new allocations policy. This means that you must first complete a 'pre assessment' questionnaire to determine whether you still qualify for the housing register in line with our new policy. The possible outcomes are as follows:

- You no longer qualify for the housing register.
- You may qualify for the housing register, but further assessment is needed.
- You qualify for the housing register, but your banding will change.
- You qualify for the housing register and your banding will remain the same.

If you still qualify for the register, your band effective date will remain unchanged if your banding remains the same or lower. If your banding is increased, the new band effective date will apply.

You will receive a further letter in due course inviting you to register a new application. If you require any help or assistance or would like to speak with someone regarding these changes then please contact us at

skhomechoice@southkesteven.gov.uk.

Yours Sincerely

SK Home Choice

This page is intentionally left blank



**HOUSING REGISTER, IMPORTANT
INFORMATION – PLEASE READ**

name»

Address1

Address2

Address3

5th September 2023

Ref: Housing Register application

Please ask for: SK Home Choice

Tel: 01476 406437

Email:

skhomechoice@southkesteven.gov.uk

Dear

Further to our correspondence dated 7th August 2023, our new Choice Based Lettings system, SK Home Choice, is now ready for existing applicants on our housing register to re-register an application. As previously advised, unfortunately not all existing applicants will qualify for social housing under our new allocations policy, therefore you will be required to complete a pre assessment form which will determine whether you meet the main criteria for social housing. If you are successful, you will then be required to complete a full housing register application which will be assessed by members of the SK Home Choice team.

Please follow the steps below to re-register:

1. Visit the new SK Home Choice website at www.skhomechoice.org.uk
2. Create a new customer account.
3. Create your profile.
4. Complete the pre assessment questionnaire.
5. Continue to complete your family and address details.
6. Complete and submit a full housing register application.

Once your new application has been submitted, you will be required to upload supporting evidence. If you have previously submitted evidence which you no longer have access to, please let us know using the contact details on this form or by messaging us directly on our new website as we may be able to transfer it over from your previous application. **The deadline for re registration is 3rd October 2023.** After this date we are unable to honour any existing band effective dates (if applicable) and you would need to start the process again. If you require any help or assistance with the completion of the form or would like to speak with someone regarding these changes then please contact us at skhomechoice@southkesteven.gov.uk.

Yours Sincerely

SK Home Choice

This page is intentionally left blank

Choice Based Lettings System Q and A

SK Home Choice

Q – Why have I received this letter regarding my housing application?

A – We are moving across to a choice-based lettings system for all housing register applications. This means that applicants will need to re-apply for the register via our new system. Any existing applicants have been informed that they will need to re-apply in the next few weeks. A further letter will be sent out explaining how to do this in due course.

Q – Will I qualify on the new system?

A – Unfortunately not all existing applicants will qualify for social housing through SKDC. A new housing allocations policy has also been developed which specifies certain criteria to be able to qualify. This means that an applicant may receive notification that they no longer qualify, and their application will be cancelled.

Q – Will my banding stay the same?

A – If an applicant is successful under the new policy, their banding may change. If they receive the same banding or a lower banding, their band effective date will remain unchanged. If they are placed into a higher banding, their band effective date will change to when the band was awarded.

Q – What is a choice-based lettings (CBL) system?

A – CBL is a system which allows applicants to place ‘bids’ on suitable available properties rather than waiting to be matched to one by staff. It gives the applicants more control over the process and enables them to see what properties we have available on a weekly basis.

Q – How do I apply to go on the system?

A – Once applicants have created an account on the new SK Home Choice website, they will be directed to complete a pre assessment questionnaire. This is designed to only allow applicants who meet the criteria for social housing according to our allocations policy to go on and complete the full housing register application. Once the full application is completed, staff at SKDC will process the application and send applicants a decision letter.

Q – How are applications prioritised?

A – Successful applications will be awarded a band between 1 and 4. The date they are awarded this band is known as their ‘band effective date’. Band 1 is the highest banding for those in the most urgent housing need, and band 4 is mainly for applicants applying for sheltered housing.

Q – How do I place a bid?

A – Properties are advertised on a weekly cycle. Applicants will only be able to place a bid on properties that are suitable for them and their household (i.e., a couple with one child can only bid on two bed properties). Once the bid has been placed, a shortlist will be generated after the cycle ends and the property will be offered to the applicant who is in the highest banding. If there is more than one applicant in the highest band, the property will be offered to the applicant with the oldest band effective date.

Q – How many bids can I place?

A – Applicants can place up to 3 bids per weekly cycle. Homeless applicants can place up to 5 bids per weekly cycle.

Q – What if I don't agree with a decision made on my application?

A – Any decision made on your application comes with the right to review. Details of how to do this will be made available on your decision letter. The review will be looked at by a person who has not been involved in the original decision.

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Draft Work Programme 2023/24

No	Item	Meeting Date	Lead Officer	Requirements	Notes (including reporting timeframes)
November 2023					
1.	Regulatory Compliance update	16/11/23	Julie Martin		16 November 2023
2.	Total Housing Compliance Policies	16/11/23	Julie Martin		Cabinet 7 November 2023
3.	Earlesfield Programme Update	16/11/23	Julie Martin		16 November 2023
4.	Update following Homelessness workshop	16/11/23	Sarah McQueen		16 November 2023
5.	Build and Acquisition update including Review of Housing Purchases in Langtoft	16/11/23	Debbie Roberts/Suniel Pillai		16 November 2023
6.	Choice-based lettings plus demonstration	16/11/23	Sarah McQueen		16 November 2023
January 2024					
1.	HRA Budget – Financial update and Budget for 2024/25	22/01/24	Richard Wyles/Alison Hall-Wright		
2.	Garage Sites and their suitability for	22/01/24	Julie Martin		22 January 2024

	development				
3.	Regulatory Compliance Monitoring update	22/01/24	Julie Martin		22 January 2024
4.	Earlesfield Programme update	22/01/24	Julie Martin		22 January 2024
5.	Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy	22/01/24	Ayeisha Kirkham/Tom Amblin-Lightowler		22 January 2024
6.	Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy	22/01/24	Ayeisha Kirkham/Tom Amblin-Lightowler		22 January 2024
7.	Private Sector Housing Adaptations Policy	16/11/23	Ayeisha Kirkham/Tom Amblin-Lightowler		22 January 2024
8.	Fabric First	22/01/24	TBC		
9.	Tenancy, Leaseholder and Estate Management Policies	TBC	Jodie Archer		Cabinet 2023
10.	Build and Acquisitions update	22/01/24	Debbie Roberts/Suniel Pillai		
11.	Midyear KPI's reporting	22/01/24	Debbie Roberts		
	Repairs Workshop/Briefing	Date TBC	Julie Martin		Date of briefing to be in

March 2024					
1.	Update on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF)	21/03/24	TBC		
Future Items					
	Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy	Meeting date to be confirmed	Ayeisha Kirkham/Tom Amblin-Lightowler		TBC
	Housing in Multiple Occupation Policy	Meeting date to be confirmed	Ayeisha Kirkham/Tom Amblin-Lightowler		TBC

56

Items already considered by the Committee at a previous meeting 2023					
1.	Regulatory Compliance update	21/09/23	Craig Spence		September 2023
2.	HRA Capital Programme – Progress Monitoring	21/09/23	Craig Spence		September 2023
3.	Earlesfield Programme update	21/09/23	Craig Spence		September 2023
4.	Update following Void Workshop (Future workshops)	21/09/23	Craig Spence		September 2023

5.	<i>Fee Policy Licensing of Mobile Homes</i>	21/09/23	Ayeisha Kirkham		September 2023
6.	<i>HRA Disposal & Acquisitions Policy</i>	21/09/23	Craig Spence		September 2023 Cabinet adopted policy 10.10.23