

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Thursday, 19 September 2024 at 2.00 pm
Council Chamber - South Kesteven House,
St. Peter's Hill, Grantham. NG31 6PZ

Committee

Members: Councillor Lee Steptoe (Chairman)
Councillor Zoe Lane (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Matthew Bailey, Councillor Emma Baker, Councillor Anna Kelly,
Councillor Bridget Ley, Councillor Penny Milnes, Councillor Habibur Rahman 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 6 June 2024 (Pages 3 - 16)

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

6. **Stock Condition Update**
Committee to receive a verbal update.
7. **Complaints Policy/Ombudsman Code**
Committee to receive a verbal update.
8. **Riverside Sheltered Housing Scheme Heating System Update (To Follow)**
To update the committee with the findings from the feasibility work undertaken on the heating system at Riverside Sheltered Housing Scheme
9. **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Update** (Pages 17 - 21)
To provide an updated overview of the current state of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping within South Kesteven
10. **Right to Buy Scheme** (Pages 23 - 32)
To inform members of the Right to Buy Scheme
11. **Housing Compliance Figures** (Pages 33 - 47)
This report seeks to update Committee on the status and progress of the compliance figures in relation to the Council's social housing landlord function
12. **Earlesfield Project Overview August 2024** (Pages 49 - 57)
To update the committee on the progress of the Earlesfield Project, providing an overview of the project position, completed works and projected timescales.
13. **New Build and Acquisitions Update** (Pages 59 - 65)
To provide an update to the Housing Scrutiny Committee on the new build and acquisitions pipeline.
14. **Garage Site Update Report** (Pages 67 - 71)
This report provides an update to the committee on South Kesteven District Councils garage sites, those sites suitable for redevelopment and sets out a strategy and next steps for the remaining garage sites.
15. **Work Programme 2024/25** (Pages 73 - 76)
16. **Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent**

Meeting of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 6 June 2024, 2.00 pm



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee Members present

Councillor Lee Steptoe (Chairman)
Councillor Zoe Lane (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Matthew Bailey
Councillor Anna Kelly
Councillor Bridget Ley
Councillor Penny Milnes
Councillor Habibur Rahman
Councillor Paul Wood
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing

Other Members present

Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Rhea Rayside

Cabinet Members

Councillor Virginia Moran, Cabinet Member for Housing
Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Planning
Councillor Rhea Rayside, Cabinet Member for People and Communities

Officers

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing
Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer
Sarah McQueen, Housing Options Manager
Debbie Roberts, Head of Corporate Projects, Performance and Climate Change
Mark Rogers, Head of Technical Services (Housing)
Nick Thacker, Interim Head of Technical Services (Housing)
Ayeisha Kirkham, Head of Public Protection
Tom Amblin-Lightowler, Environmental Health Manager
Phil Swinton, Health, Safety and Compliance Manager
Suniel Pillai, New Build Officer
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer

1. Public Speaking

A question was asked by Councillor A Bowling, Vice-Chairman of Londonthorpe and Harrowby Without Parish Council on behalf of the Parish Council in respect of the former Blessed Hugh More playing field site in Grantham and the Asset of

Community Value that appears on South Kesteven District Council Asset of Community Value Register.

"Good afternoon, I would like to ask a question on behalf of the Parish Council and their parishioners around an Asset of Community Value that appears on SKDCs ACV Register. This is the former Blessed Hugh More playing field site. In the public notes in the January meeting there is a reference to building homes on this site and we understand a meeting has been held with ward councillors in February who had no idea until that point that some detailed work had been instigated.

Could the committee please explain why after years of work and financial investment by the Parish Council plus many hours of work by community volunteers there appears to be a plan to presumably remove the ACV status in 2025, remove the covenant, and take this valuable recreational area away from all the community? Could we see what is being planned and the details behind the plan?

Thank You. "

The Cabinet Member for Housing thanked Mr Bowling for attending the meeting and responded to the question. She gave a brief history of the land in question. She said that the Ward Member had requested that another look at the site be undertaken and some plans drawn up. When the basic plans were shown it was not what had been envisaged and due to the demographics of the area it was suggested that only 20 bungalows be built which mirrored the street next to the land and the rest be landscaped and a play park built. The Cabinet Member for Housing was adamant that the site was not in the pipeline for development. No feasibility work had been carried out or any costs looked at especially with the Asset of Community Value and the covenants on the site. The meeting that had been held was with the Portfolio Holder at the time, the Director of Housing and the Ward Councillors. The request had been made by the Ward Councillors but it was agreed that nothing would be pursued any further.

Mr Bowling expressed concern with the potential design and location of the scheme especially with the amount of work that had been put into the site by volunteers and that it appeared that work was being done that the Parish was unaware of.

The Cabinet Member for Housing reiterated that nothing was set in stone, no feasibility work had been done on the site, no proper plans had been drawn up and no proper consultation had been carried out. Currently there were no plans to develop the site and until such time as any feasibility work was carried out to see if any kind of development was economically viable and proper consultation and plans drawn up nothing would be happening with the site. Any development would have to have majority agreement between all the parties concerned and it was not in the pipeline to be developed.

The Chairman encouraged Mr Bowling to keep in contact with the Cabinet Member for Housing via email if he had any future concerns and he thanked Mr Bowling for attending the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Emma Baker and she was being substituted by Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing.

3. Disclosure of Interest

None disclosed.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2024 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED**.

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

There were no announcements or updates currently.

The Chairman took the opportunity to congratulate Councillor Virginia Moran, the previous Chairman of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to her appointment as Cabinet Member for Housing.

A Member commented that a lot of the reports before the Committee were for noting and he asked what the procedure was if the Committee wished to raise further queries or comments about the items before them on the agenda.

The Chairman stated that it was within the Committee's right to make any recommendation to Cabinet or Council providing the recommendation had been proposed, seconded and agreed by the Committee.

The Director of Housing stated that items could be placed on the Cabinet Forward Plan for Cabinet and Council to consider with reports coming before the Committee to make recommendation or for review.

6. Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee Review

The Cabinet Member for Housing gave an overview of the matters that had come before the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee since it had been created following the Council Annual General Meeting in May 2023. Issues that the Committee had covered included:

Policies on Housing Repairs and Maintenance, HRA Disposal and Acquisition, Total Housing Compliance, Private Sector Housing Houses of Multiple Occupation Licensing Policy, Anti-Social Behaviour, Tenancy Management, Estate Management and the Housing Allocations Policy.

Choice Based Lettings had been implemented which allowed tenants to bid on properties that suited them and enabled them to track their bid online and see where they were placed on the property short list. The Cabinet Member for Housing stated that it was a really good system which gave tenants a realistic view of where they were when bidding on a property.

The Cabinet Member for Housing stated that at least 380 void properties had been completed during the 12 months that the Committee had been running.

Twenty-two properties had been purchased which included 21 properties funded from the Local Authority Housing Fund. Nine properties were currently being purchased, eight of which were funded from the second tranche of Local Authority Housing Fund. New build schemes were starting at Swinegate, Grantham and Elizabeth Road, Stamford which would deliver 24 more properties. Planning Permission had been granted for a development scheme at Larch Close, Grantham for 20 properties. Recent approval had been granted to purchase 36 units over the next three years at Corby Glen. The total number of properties came to 112, in the previous five years only 47 new units had been purchased or built.

The Cabinet Member for Housing then spoke about the Regulatory Compliance and listed figures for:

- Asbestos Inspections – 259 – legal requirement
- Fire Risk Assessments – 147 on blocks and schemes within communal areas – legal requirement
- Fire Prioritisation tool reports – 147 on the same blocks and schemes within communal areas
- Compartmentalisation Fire Service – 147 this was in addition to what was required under compliance regulations

The results were informing the Compartmentalisation Programme which was currently being undertaken with 50 schemes programmed for completion later in the year.

The Gas reporting position would be discussed in the Regulatory Compliance agenda item.

Twenty-six lift inspection had been carried out, two inspections per lift, Legionella inspections were on a two year cycle and this was not a reporting year. Thirty-three locations would be tested for Legionella next year.

Clarification was sought in respect of Compartmentalisation to which the Heath, Safety and Compliance Manager responded that it was connected to fire safety and looked at lofts, gaps in doors etc that could be sectioned off to prevent fire spreading and was done in addition to the legal requirements for fire risk assessments.

A question was asked about the number of properties sold under the Right to Buy (RTB) scheme during the past year to which the Director of Housing stated that 25 properties had been sold under the scheme. A further question was asked about the total number of properties sold under the RTB scheme to which the Director of Housing stated that she would have to look at what figures were held by the Council and report back to the Committee at the next meeting.

One Member asked the Cabinet Member for Housing whether or not she thought that housing was in a good position as he felt that was not the case and made reference to voids, housing repairs and projects currently being undertaken.

The Cabinet Member for Housing stated that the Housing Section was in a better position than it had been and although it was not perfect it was improving to the position that it had been in. If the Member had a specific query, then he should email her directly.

Another Member made reference to the challenges that had faced the Housing Department due to staff shortages and the lack of a director for a period of time and was encouraged that the department was in a better position than it had been.

The Chairman echoed the comments made and thanked the Officers for the work that they had done on the ground over the last 12 months.

7. Mutual Exchange Procedure

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced the report which detailed the Mutual Exchange decision making process and outlined the circumstances in which Mutual Exchange could be refused.

It was essential that the Council had a robust procedure in place to administer Mutual Exchange applications and that staff were fully trained on the process and that a comprehensive inspection process was in place. This would ensure that the approved policy was effectively implemented and that the potential for any issues with the exchange process were mitigated.

A Tenants' rights relating to mutual exchange were listed within the Tenants' Handbook which was given to all tenants and was available on line via the Council's website. A review of the inspection checklist was completed with Technical Services to ensure that specific items were not missed. Any repairs that did not meet the standard required when inspections were carried out were the responsibility of each tenant.

The Mutual Exchange Policy and Procedure were appended to the report.

One Member sought clarity in relation to the Mutual Exchange Policy which had come to a previous meeting of the Committee and had been deferred, why had it not come back to this meeting. It was stated that the Mutual Exchange Policy had become part of the larger Tenancy Management Policy that had been approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 6 February 2024.

Members asked questions in relation to the procedure, defects to the property and tenants' responsibilities and disclaimers to which the Director of Housing responded.

Members were supportive of the document and noted the Mutual Exchange Procedure.

8. Change4Lincs (C4L) update

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which gave the Committee an update on the Change4Lincs Partnership Initiative.

The Change4Lincs Partnership was an initiative set up to tackle rough sleeping across Lincolnshire for South Kesteven, North Kesteven, West Lindsey and South Holland. The initiative was launched in October 2020 and funding had been secured until March 2025, South Kesteven hosted the Initiative.

The Cabinet Member for Housing informed that the Committee that rough sleeping was increasing but this was not due to the failure of the service but due to the increase in volume of rough sleepers and this was a national trend. Going forward it was being considered whether South Kesteven remained within the Change4Lincs Partnership or separated. Currently the area covered by the Partnership was massive and it was whether having its own budget, South Kesteven could target specific areas, however, any change would come back before the Committee for consideration.

One Member asked if there was any reason that rough sleepers came to the Lincolnshire area to which the Housing Options Manager responded that there was no evidence to suggest a specific reason for the increase in rough sleepers coming to Lincolnshire, other than those issues affecting everyone nationally, such as the cost of living crisis and the decrease in rental options.

Further questions were asked in relation to the location of rough sleepers were they in more urban areas than rural, it tended to be urban areas due to the location of shops and provisions and also who managed the fund, which South Kesteven did as the host authority. There was an outreach team which covered all four districts but this was a large area and the teams went out at night and also during the day.

Another question was asked in relation to the budget and it was confirmed that the current budget would last until March 2025. There had been an overspend in respect of temporary accommodation in the past but this had now been addressed.

A further question was asked about rough sleepers and begging. It was important to note the difference between genuine rough sleepers and those giving the impression of rough sleeping, it was a challenge but work was being done with colleagues and the Neighbourhoods Team to tackle the issue and liaison did take place with local law enforcement teams.

Members thanked the Officers involved and the work that they undertook.

9. Update on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund wave 2.1

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced the report which updated the Committee on the ongoing Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. The project sought to upgrade South Kesteven District Council Housing Revenue Account dwellings with energy efficiency measures.

The Council was responsible for around 6,000 properties which had an average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of D. There was a requirement that Council properties were required to achieve an EPC rating of C by 2030. Wave 2.1 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund was announced in 2022 by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The fund was designed with the objectives listed below to support local authorities and registered social housing providers.

The key objectives of SHDF Wave 2.1 were to:

- deliver warm, energy efficient homes
- reduce carbon emissions
- tackle fuel poverty
- support green jobs
- develop the retrofit sector
- improve the comfort, health and wellbeing of social housing tenants

To date 154 measures had been completed on Phase 1 of the project which comprised the installation of 122 Solar PV arrays, 10 cavity wall extractions and re-fills, 3 loft insulation upgrades and 12 ventilation measures.

Phases 2 of the project was detailed at paragraph 2.8 of the report and Phase 3 of the project was being targeted at Turnor Crescent in Grantham as a whole street approach.

It was noted that 10 residents had refused heating upgrades to the properties and it was proposed that three engagement days would take place to which tenants would be invited to attend to discuss any concerns they had and answer any questions they may have.

Members welcomed the scheme and questions were asked in respect of the type of works carried out in respect of cavity wall insulations and the breathability of materials used to which the Interim Head of Technical Services responded that all the work had to meet the decent homes standards for the properties and ventilation of properties was always reassessed for each individual property.

Members noted the work done to date.

10. Housing Compliance Figures Report

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report and stated that the areas for Fire Risk Assessment, Legionella, Asbestos re-inspection and Lift Inspections remained at 100%. These focused on areas such as communal areas and areas where the tenant did not require to grant access to. Figures for May had been provided for gas and electricity and reference was made to the contractor related issues in respect of these.

Electrical figures which had stood at 92.48% had a slight drop to 91.89% in May. It was noted that the out going contractor had failed to engage with the Council and there was a number of properties which had not been visited which had contributed

to a backlog which the new contractor was working to reduce as quickly as possible.

The figures shown in the report appendix for Gas showed 98.9% in April, May's figure was 98% and the June figures showed 98.21%, a slight improvement. The report indicated that 91 properties were non-compliant, however, that figure now stood at 83, of which 65 were newly non-compliant. 48 of the properties had not had 3 access attempts and were therefore not eligible for capping or warrants. 18 had gone to court for warrant approval with 20 eligible to cap in the next two weeks subject to a vulnerability assessment being carried out to see if capping would be permitted.

The report made reference to the outgoing contractor, Liberty Gas and the lack of engagement which had resulted in appointments not being kept and although a number were rescheduled more than once these had not been adhered to. The new contractor was working to clear the backlog and it was hoped that the backlog would be cleared and the figures would be up to 99% in July.

Members noted the current position. One Member asked if it would be possible to have the information within a graph so that trends could be seen clearly within the data given. It was confirmed that this would be done for the September meeting.

➤ **Action Note**

That information be shown in a graph format to enable trends to be easily seen within the data provided.

The Director of Housing reassured the Committee that work in respect of gas compliance was being closely monitored and stated that 15 warrants had been obtained on Monday at court in respect of non-compliant tenants.

11. Earlesfield Grantham Project Update

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced a regular report that the Committee received in respect of the Earlesfield Project in Grantham. To date 49 properties had been completed under Phases 1 and 2 and currently work was being carried out in respect of a further 15 properties. Appendix 1 to the report detailed the work that had been completed and the works yet to be undertaken. A new contract had been agreed with United Living from 1 April 2024 with a revised schedule of works which were clearly defined.

A dedicated Tenant Liaison Officer had been placed on site to answer tenant queries and to administer the day to day work of the project. Monthly meetings were held with the contractor to monitor the on-site work and that the project was being delivered within the timescale agreed.

A revised set of KPI's were being agreed with United Living to ensure the contractor performed satisfactorily for the remainder of the project.

The Chairman, who was one of the Ward Councillors for the area commended the project for the fantastic work that was being carried out and stated that any issues were dealt with quickly.

One Member expressed concerns about the project and made reference to problems that had been encountered early on in the project with the contractor and that the project was over budget.

The Chairman stated that with any major project there would be “bumps on the road” however he was really pleased with how the project was going and any concerns were sorted out promptly.

The Chief Executive echoed these comments and stated that things hadn’t gone wrong but the quality of the sub-contracting work had been below that which had been expected which was why a meeting had been arranged with the contractor in December 2023 to clarify what was expected and that the new contract was more comprehensive in what was expected also monthly meetings were held to ensure that the quality of work was up to standard and the project was on target.

One Member on behalf of the other Ward Councillor for the area, stated that the work being undertaken was phenomenal and that the project was travelling in the right direction.

12. Build and Acquisitions Update

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced the report which updated the Committee on the Housing Revenue Account New Build Programme and housing acquisitions made.

- **Swinegate, Grantham**
The demolition works had been completed and ground works were being undertaken. The additional works required in respect of the façade had meant that the project would not be completed until July 2025 and an additional £60,000 had been agreed with the contractor. Costs would be reviewed throughout the development to see if any savings could be made.
- **Elizabeth Road, Stamford**
Work was on target to be completed for handover in August 2024 of four one bed apartments. The Council was also in the process of purchasing a one bed house and a two-bedroom flat in Stamford to add to the housing stock.
- **Larch Close, Grantham**
A 21 unit development had been procured and the contract for the development would be coming to Cabinet within the next two months.
- **Wellington Way, Market Deeping**

Meetings were continuing to take place in respect of the proposed development area to ensure that the Scout Hut situated within the development site could continue to operate during development of the site. Once plans were agreed the procurement and planning process could be twin tracked with a possible award of a contract in October 2024.

Work was continuing to take place in respect of sites at Gorse Rise, Grantham, Bourne End Road Estate, Colsterworth and Kesteven Road, Stamford.

The Cabinet Member for Housing then made reference to the 36 units that had been purchased in Corby Glen which she spoke about during the review earlier in the agenda. It was a £6.5m investment by the Council on a variety of different sized units. It was her intention as Cabinet Member for Housing that when any new development came into the pipeline then she would speak to the Ward Councillors for the area and bring them in at the beginning of the process.

Discussion followed with comments being made in relation to unforeseen costs and the lessons that could be learnt from this, the delay in the building works at the Swinegate site and the impact on parking and loss of revenue to the Council and attractiveness of new build properties and the Right to Buy scheme after three years of tenancy. It was stated that although properties were eligible for RTB after three years there was a cost floor associated with new build properties which could be recovered up to ten years from when the property was built to enable the Council to recover costs.

The Chief Executive suggested that as there appeared to be a lot of interest with the RTB scheme and what this meant to the Council then a report should come before the September meeting of the Committee.

➤ **Action Note**

Right to Buy report to be added to the agenda for the September meeting of the Housing OSC.

13. Integrated Housing Management System Implementation Update

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which updated the Committee on the implementation of the Integrated Housing Management System.

The implementation had taken place in two phases. Phase 1 of the project had also been carried out in two stages. Phase 1, stage 1 had occurred on 22 January 2024 and stage 2 had taken place on 26 February 2024. The Cabinet Member for Housing referred the Committee to paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 of the report which detailed the modules that had been implemented and tasks completed.

Due to the level of knowledge required to design and create reports from the system some issues had been experienced. Urgent reports had been prioritised to

ensure that these had been produced first. Regular meetings were being held to identify any issues with reports and how these could be resolved.

Members were then referred to paragraph 2.9 of the report which gave details in respect of Phase 2 of the project.

A question was asked in respect of the new system and the Director of Housing stated that the implementation of the system was to streamline processes to ensure everything was on-line to reduce the need to generate paper. An example was given of a tenancy pack which had to be printed off and handed out for signing. With the new system this could be done electronically via tablets to enable tenants to be signed up on-line without the need to generate a paper copy.

Members noted the progress to date.

14. Corporate Plan 2020-23 Key Performance Indicators End-of-Plan and 2023/24 End-Year (Q4) Report

The Head of Corporate Projects, Performance and Climate Change introduced the report on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing who had sent his apologies. The report outlined the Council's performance against the previous Corporate Plan for 2020-23 and the KPI's for Quarter 4 and presented an overall summary of performance over the lifecycle of the previous Corporate Plan.

The report was split into two parts. The first part was a retrospective look at the last four years.

The Corporate Plan listed 10 actions under the priority "Housing that meets the need of all Residents". This had set the Council's agenda for the life of the Corporate Plan 2020-23. The first round of reporting in 2020/21 had set out criteria of what successful delivery would look like and this had been used to measure and judge the Council's performance. Of the 10 actions listed, five were outside of the Council's control, of the five actions within the Council's control four had been achieved and good progress had been made in respect of the fifth action which was the New HRA Pipeline for Housing.

Seven actions had been presented for the new Quarter 4 data, three had been rated green which were on or above target, four were at amber, below the planned target. None of the actions were at red.

The new Corporate Plan had been approved in March 2024 and the reporting of the new suite of KPI's would be presented in Quarter 3.

Members noted the report.

15. Empty Homes Strategy

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which concerned the updated Empty Homes Strategy. The Strategy had been initially published in 2022, in February 2024 the Strategy had been reviewed and updated by a multi service working group to reflect changes in the national and local context which provided a framework for the Council's approach to reducing the number of Empty Homes within the district.

There was no statutory requirement to have an Empty Homes Strategy, however it was regarded as good practice to have a Strategy in place which aimed to provide transparency and consistency in the Council's approach to Empty Homes.

Long term empty homes were defined as those properties that had been vacant for over two years. The Strategy covered residential empty homes only. The majority of empty homes were privately owned but there was a small number owned by South Kesteven District Council. Recent figures as at May 2024 indicated that there were 154 long term empty homes with South Kesteven. Fifteen of these properties were owned by South Kesteven District Council and were the responsibility of the Voids Team and were not within the scope of the Strategy. The tools available within the Strategy were not applicable to Council owned housing.

The number of empty homes within South Kesteven was below the national average which stood at 1.02% of properties empty over six months. In South Kesteven .99 of a percent of homes had been empty over six months. The focus of the Strategy was on those houses that had been empty for two years or more. Those properties would be RAG rated (red, amber, green) and reviewed against service interactions to create a priority list to see which properties had the most impact on communities.

The use of the Strategy was for an approach to offer advice and guidance, however there were enforcement tools available if required.

Although the Strategy had been revised, the priorities listed had not changed since the original Strategy was published in 2022. The document had been streamlined and information added about the benefit of bringing empty homes back into circulation and the concerns that long term empty properties presented. Figures had been updated to present both the national and local picture. Appendix 2 of the Strategy detailed updated enforcement options.

The Cabinet Member then made reference to the 15 properties owned by the Council. The properties all had legitimate reasons for being empty. Some were part of wider redevelopment schemes whilst the majority of the properties were used as decamp properties whilst repairs were carried out.

Members discussed the document and the following comments were made:

- What was the membership of the Working Group referenced, it would have been helpful if this had been included within the report – the working group

had been made up of operational Officers from service areas that had dealings with empty homes, it was felt that perhaps the terminology used had been misleading as it was not a Member Working Group.

- The Strategy appeared to be a “new” document as it had been reduced from 15 to 10 pages – the document had been streamlined and unnecessary information taken out.

Members were supportive of the proposed Empty Homes Strategy and it was proposed, seconded and unanimously **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet for adoption.

Recommendation

That the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend the updated Empty Homes Strategy to Cabinet for adoption.

16. Work Programme 2024/2025

The following items to be added to the Work Programme for September:

- Update on Riverside Flats, Grantham
- Report on Right to Buys

A Member asked for an item on Voids to be added to the Work Programme. It was noted that a Voids workshop had been held previously.

Comments were made in respect of older properties and their repair with reference being made to Lumby's Terrace in Stamford. It was stated that this was a sensitive issue and meetings were being held every six weeks in respect of that particular area and work was being done with the tenants involved.

A question was asked about the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy and it was noted that this was now part of a larger overarching Enforcement Policy that was currently being compiled.

The Director of Housing asked for the following items to be included on the Work Programme:

- Review of Change4Lincs
- Complaints Policy/Ombudsman Code

A question was asked about having an update in respect of Garage Sites. It was noted that the Committee had received a report in respect of sites for possible development but it was requested that a further update be given as to what is happening with the other garage sites in respect of repair or demolition.

- Garage sites update

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

None.

18. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 15:45.



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 19 September 2024

Cllr Virginia Moran, Cabinet Member
for Housing

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Update

Report Author

Sarah McQueen, Head of Service (Housing)

 sarah.mcqueen@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a comprehensive update on the status of homelessness and rough sleeping within South Kesteven. This report presents the latest picture, what our homelessness duties entail and provides details of existing interventions to address homelessness and rough sleeping.

Recommendations

That the Committee notes the latest update on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping within the South Kesteven area.

Decision Information

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

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Connecting communities
Housing
Effective council

Which wards are impacted? (All Wards);

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 directly arising from this report, which is to note.

Completed by: Paul Sutton Interim Head of Finance (Deputy 151)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report, which is for noting. The necessary legislative framework relating to homelessness and rough sleeping is referenced in the body of the report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 Homelessness and rough sleeping remain a significant priority for South Kesteven District Council. While various strategies have been implemented to address these issues, recent data both locally and nationally indicates a persistent need for targeted interventions.
- 2.2 This report details the current situation, explores the challenges faced by the Council, and details the innovations being explored to tackle this ongoing issue.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 Homelessness

From January 2024 to August 2024 the Council has experienced a 4% increase in the number of homelessness presentations compared with the same period in 2023 and a 17% increase compared with the same period in 2022. The total number of households presenting as homeless, at risk of homelessness or in need of housing advice was 1,362 from January 2024 to August 2024, with 369 being accepted as statutorily homeless.

- 3.2 The Council currently has 299 active homeless cases with 62 households in temporary accommodation. This is a slight increase from the same period last year where the Council had 57 cases in temporary accommodation.

3.3 In 2023/24 the expenditure incurred on temporary accommodation was £501k against a budget of £467k. For 2024/25 Full Council approved an increase of the base budget from £50k to £200k for Temporary Accommodation recognising the pressure being placed on the Council to fulfil its statutory homelessness duty. Additional Homeless Prevention Government Grant funding of £268k has been received in 2024/25 which has increased the total budget for Temporary Accommodation to £468k.

Rough sleeping

3.4 The Council's most recent Rough Sleeper Data Return identified 5 individuals sleeping rough within the district across the month of July 2024. Of which there were 4 males, 1 female and all were aged between 29 and 46. This represents a 50% decrease in rough sleepers when compared with July 2023 where the Council reported 10 people.

National picture

3.5 The gradual increase which the Council is experiencing in homeless cases, reflects the national picture. In December 2023, Shelter reported that nationally the number of homeless households had risen by 14% when compared to the previous year (https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_release/at_least_309000_people_homeless_in_england_today) This rise is considered to be due to a combination of underinvestment in social homes and the rise in cost of private rented accommodation

3.6 The report also states that the East Midlands saw the biggest annual increase of 33% in homeless cases.

Homeless Legislation and the Council's duties

3.7 The Homeless Code of Guidance for Local Authorities sets out the rules and regulations that must be followed by the Council when dealing with homelessness cases, this guidance ensures that the Homelessness legislation is adhered to.

3.8 A key part of the legislation is the definition of a 'Priority need' case which can be found at Chapter 8. This sets out the guidance that the Council must follow when determining if there is a duty to accommodate a client whilst we are assisting with their homelessness case.

3.9 If an individual does not meet the priority need criteria, this does not mean the Council will not continue with their homelessness case, or continue to seek long term accommodation, it just means that we do not have a duty to accommodate them during this process. This is national guidance, not just local to South Kesteven District Council.

3.10 This situation can sometimes result in people rough sleeping which is why the Council created our Change4Lincs Initiative. This is a discretionary service for

Rough Sleepers that was set up and designed to help support those who are still seeking long term accommodation but have no short-term accommodation options as they fall outside of the Council's statutory duties. This service provides help, advice and support to rough sleepers to transition them back into settled accommodation.

- 3.11 However, there are huge challenges faced when trying to support Rough Sleepers. Some have already exhausted all accommodation options available to them and have not been able to sustain accommodation. Some have severe drug or alcohol abuse issues, and some have mental health issues. This creates a huge challenge to source accommodation with providers who are willing to accept such challenging behaviour as staff in nightly paid establishments are not equipped to be dealing with these issues.
- 3.12 It is therefore essential that the Council work in partnership with recognised support agencies who have the expertise to support these individuals.

3.13 Initiatives being explored.

3.14 Investment in New Housing

- 3.15 As detailed in the New Build and Acquisition report the Council is investing in a number of new affordable housing units across the district which will increase the number of properties available to rent on the Housing Register.

3.16 Supported accommodation options

- 3.17 Supported accommodation is an initiative that provides tenants with low level tenancy related support with the aim of enabling individuals to move through the service and become ready to live independently.
- 3.18 There is a service established to provide this, however the demand far outweighs the supply of this type of accommodation. As a Council we are seeking to work in partnership with a local established support organisation to part-fund another supported accommodation scheme. At present the Council are exploring the funding options for this scheme.

3.19 Prevention and early intervention

- 3.20 As part of our homelessness case management process, the Council will focus on any possible prevention options. This includes mediation with family members if someone is being asked to leave accommodation, negotiations with landlords and consideration of incentives to allow households to remain in existing accommodation. The Homelessness team also ensure that income options are explored with individuals, for example, benefit maximisation.
- 3.21 The Council will signpost to advice agencies, including debt advice to ensure that if there are issues with rent arrears all options are explored to overcome this.

- 3.22 Internally, the Council has a Cost of Living team who can explore whether households are entitled to any financial assistance in relation to paying bills or the provision of food.
- 3.23 If people require support in managing their finances to sustain their existing tenancy, the Council will refer to agencies who can assist with tenancy support.
- 3.24 If homelessness can be prevented at the earliest opportunity, it prevents the need for crisis management.

3.25 Partnership working.

- 3.26 There are established partnership meetings in place, such as the Vulnerable Adults Panel and Homelessness Forum meetings. These meetings are designed to explore all possibilities when trying to support a homelessness client and include representatives from Local Support Organisations, Mental Health services, Social Care, the Police and Local Voluntary Organisations
- 3.27 Accommodation alone is not always the solution when a person is not able to sustain accommodation or perhaps even live independently, it is therefore essential to ensure that wrap around support is available.

3.28 The future of Change4Lincs

- 3.29 The Change4Lincs Initiative is funded by Government Grant until 31 March 2025, so the future of this initiative is unknown until the 2025/26 Finance Settlement is received from Central Government.
- 3.20 Given this uncertainty it was agreed at the Strategic Partnership Meeting in August 2024 that each of the four Council's will develop a Rough Sleeping Service Plan to determine whether future service delivery can be aligned across the partnership or whether each Council would be best placed to deliver their own service.
- 3.21 The Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be kept informed regarding future funding and the Change4Lincs at future meetings.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 There are no other options available as this report is for noting only.

5 Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 This report is for noting only.

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Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 19 September 2024

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Right to Buy Scheme

Report Author

Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing

 Alison.Hall-Wright@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To provide members with information regarding the current Right to Buy Scheme and details regarding the number of properties that have been sold

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the information contained in the report

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? **N (If yes please specify the relevant exemption paragraph)**

What are the relevant corporate priorities? **Housing (delete as appropriate)**

Which wards are impacted? **(All Wards);**

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 financial implications associated with the sale of properties through the Right to Buy scheme and the details of these implications are referenced in the report.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no legal implications identified in this report.

Completed by: Mandy Braithwaite, Legal Executive

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 6 June 2024 requested a report detailing the Right to Buy Scheme and the number of properties sold.
- 2.2 The Right to Buy Scheme enables tenants to apply to purchase their Council House at a discounted price if the following criteria are met:
 - It is their only or main home
 - It is self-contained
 - They are a secure tenant
 - They have had a public sector landlord for 3 years
- 2.3 If a tenant qualifies for the Right to Buy Scheme they will be entitled to discount on the market value of their home. The maximum discount is £102,400 across England with the exception of London Boroughs where it is £136,400. The maximum discount increases each year by the Consumer Price Index. The discount is based on:
 - How long the tenant has been with a public sector landlord
 - Whether the property is a flat or a house

- The value of the property

2.4. The applicable discount rate depends on whether the tenant is purchasing a flat or a house:

- A 35% discount is applied to the market value of houses if a tenant has been with a public sector landlord for between 3 and 5 years.
- After 5 years the discount increases by 1% for each additional year of tenancy up to a maximum of 70% or £102,400 (£136,400 in London), whichever is lower.
- A 50% discount is applied to the market value of flats if a tenant has been with a public sector landlord for between 3 and 5 years.
- After 5 years the discount increases by 2% for each additional year of tenancy up to a maximum of 70% or £102,400 (£136,400 in London), whichever is lower.

2.5. If the Council has incurred expenditure in building or maintaining a property, the cost floor rule is applied which ensures the purchase price is not lower than the investment in the property. The period which eligible expenditure is considered will depend on when the Council built or acquired the property:

- For properties built or acquired prior to 2 April 2012 the total expenditure incurred over the last 10 years is calculated.
- For properties built or acquired after 2 April 2012 the total expenditure incurred over the last 15 years is calculated.

2.6. If a property acquired through Right to Buy is sold within 5 years of purchasing it, then a percentage of the discount applied to the market value will need to be repaid to the Council. The percentage of discount required to be repaid is:

- Year 1 – 100%
- Year 2 – 80%
- Year 3 – 60%
- Year 4 – 40%
- Year 5 – 20%

2.7. If a Right to Buy property is sold within 10 years of it being purchased, then it must be offered back to the Council to purchase. If the Council opts to purchase the property, the price will be full market value.

2.8. Appendix 1 provides details regarding the history of the Right to Buy Scheme and data regarding disposals and replacement properties between 1980/81 to 2023/24.

Capital Receipts from Right to Buy Sales

- 2.9. The Council is currently able to retain 100% of the capital receipts received from the sale of Council Houses on the condition they are invested in replacement housing.
- 2.10. In July 2024 the Government introduced increased flexibility for the use of Right to Buy receipts for the period 2024-25 and 2025-26 which allow the Council:
 - To fund 100% (previously 50%) of the cost of replacement affordable housing from Right to Buy receipts.
 - Right to Buy receipts can be used with S106 contributions to fund the cost of affordable housing.
 - The cap on the number of replacement properties that can be acquired has been removed.

The Future of Right to Buy

- 2.11. On 30 July 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister & Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government wrote to all local authorities confirming that:
 - The Right to Buy discounts introduced in 2012 will be reviewed and secondary legislation to implement changes will be brought forward in Autumn 2024.
 - A wider review into Right to Buy will take place, including looking at eligibility criteria and protections for new homes, bringing forward a consultation in the Autumn 2024.
- 2.12. In the Autumn Statement the Chancellor is expected to set out plans to give councils and housing associations the rent stability to be able to borrow and invest in both new and existing homes, whilst also ensuring that there are appropriate protections for both existing and future social housing tenants.
- 2.13. Appendix 1 provides details regarding the history of the Right to Buy Scheme and data regarding disposals and replacement properties

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. These are included throughout the report.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 4.1. This report is for information only.

5. Appendices

5.1 Appendix 1 – Right to Buy Data

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Right to Buy Data

- 2.1 The Housing Act 1980 gave local authority tenants the statutory right to purchase their properties at heavily subsided prices. The right to buy was conditional on the length of the tenancy and was available after three years tenancy. The minimum discount was 33%, increasing by 1% for every further year of tenancy to a maximum of 50%. The maximum discount could not exceed £50,000. The discounts had to be repaid, if the property was sold within five years of purchase. Tenants also gained the right to a mortgage from their local authorities, which was later removed by the Leasehold Reform, Housing & Urban Development Act 1993. Local authorities did not have an obligation to use the receipts to construct new social housing.
- 2.2 The Housing & Building Control Act 1984 extended the scheme to tenants on long leases and reduced the tenure requirement to two years. It also increased the discount to a maximum of 60% after 30 years tenancy.
- 2.3 The 1980 act led to a surge in sales, nationally over 100,000 properties were sold in each of the following three financial years, peaking at 167,123 sales in 1982/83. The initial sales were due to pent up demand from long term tenants who qualified for high discounts.¹ Annual sales averaged at 107,000 during the 1980s. The early 1990s recession and the meeting of initial demand caused sales to decline in the 1990s. Over the period 1991 to 2005, annual sales fluctuated between 30,000 and 70,000, averaging 49,000.²
- 2.4 By 1999, over 2.2 million properties had been sold, with an estimated 30% of tenants exercising their Right to Buy. The volume of sales and raised capital receipts had exceeded expectations. Home ownership rates had risen from 55% in 1979 to over 70% by 2001.
- 2.5 The scheme had a particular impact on rural areas, where the original stock of council houses was small and high house prices make owner occupation inaccessible for low-paid rural workers. In 1990, the Rural Development Commission noted that in some cases the re-sale of former council homes had placed them beyond the means of local buyers. The Housing Act 1996 exempted properties in communities smaller than 3,000 residents from the scheme, due to difficulties in providing replacements.³
- 2.6 In 1999, the Labour Government reduced the maximum discounts to between £22,000 and £38,000 depending on geography. The discounts were reduced again to £16,000 except in London and the southeast in 2003. The Housing Act

¹ Eardley, F., (2022), Right to Buy: Past, Present and Future, House of Lords Library, [Right to buy: Past, present and future - House of Lords Library \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/Research-Papers/Right-to-Buy-Past-Present-and-Future-House-of-Lords-Library/)

² Ibid.

³ Wilson, W. (1999), The Right to Buy, Research Paper 99/36, House of Commons Library, page 14, [Right to Buy \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/Research-Papers/The-Right-to-Buy-House-of-Commons-Library/)

2004 increased the qualifying period from two to five years. Annual sales fell to an average of 2,600 in the late 2000s.

- 2.7 The Coalition Government sought to reinvigorate the scheme. In 2012, the maximum discount was raised to £75,000 (£100,000 for London), and the maximum percentage discount raised to 70% in 2014. The qualifying tenancy period was reduced to three years in 2015.
- 2.8 The result was annual sales averaging 11,000 over the decade 2013/14 to 2022/23, up from 5,941 in 2012/13. Sales have not returned to the levels seen prior to 2007/08.⁴
- 2.9 The Coalition Government also committed to a 1:1 replacement policy. Local authorities had three years to replace sold properties. In 2021 this was raised to five. Between April 2012 and March 2024, 96,145 properties were sold, and 47,864 replacements provided - a net loss of 48,281.⁵

Sources

- 2.10 The key dataset for Right to Buy sales is the Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS).⁶ The LAHS provides a record of annual right to buy sales from the start of the scheme in 1980/81 to 2023/24.⁷ It also provides a record of the annual size of the Council's social housing portfolio from 1980/81 to 2022/23.⁸
- 2.11 Disposal data is available only from 1997/98⁹, replacement data from 1999/00¹⁰, and detailed disposal and replacement data from 2012/13.¹¹
- 2.12 At the time of writing (August 2024), the full LAHS 2023/24 dataset is yet to be released so the detailed analysis on sales and replacements will focus on the period 2012/13 to 2022/23.

⁴ Eardley, F., (2022), Right to Buy: Past, Present and Future, House of Lords Library, [Right to buy: Past, present and future - House of Lords Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)

⁵ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Right to Buy sales and replacements England: April 2023 to March 2024, Section 5, July 2024, [Right to Buy sales and replacements, England: April 2023 to March 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁶ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), Local Authority Housing Statistics open data 1978-79 to 2022/23, [Local Authority Housing Statistics open data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#), interpreted with reference to the MHCLG Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) Guidance 2022-23, [Title \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

⁷ Social Housing Sales Open Data, Live tables on social housing sales, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), [Live tables on social housing sales - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁸ Table 116: Local authority dwelling stock by district, Live tables on dwelling stock (including vacants), Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), [Live tables on dwelling stock \(including vacants\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁹ Social Housing Sales Open Data, Live tables on social housing sales, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), [Live tables on social housing sales - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁰ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), Local Authority Housing Statistics open data 1978-79 to 2022/23, [Local Authority Housing Statistics open data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#), interpreted with reference to the MHCLG Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) Guidance 2022-23, [Title \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

¹¹ Table 693 annual: Replacements of Right to Buy sales by local authority (Sheets LT_693a_1_L – starts & LT_693a_2_L - acquisitions), Live tables on social housing sales, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), [Live tables on social housing sales - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Right to Buy Sales in South Kesteven since 1980/81

2.13 Since 1980/81, 4,297 properties have been sold in South Kesteven via Right to Buy (Table 1). 44.10% of sales occurred during the first decade of the policy. An average of 172 sales per annum were completed.

2.14 A further 40.59% of total sales took place in the fourteen years from 1991/92 to 2004/05. The rate of sales slowed to an average of 124 per annum. In total 3,639 properties or 84.69% of total sales were completed in the first twenty-four years of the scheme.

2.15 From 2012/13 to 2022/23, 471 properties have been sold. 10.96% of total sales and an average of 42 per year.

Table 1: Right to Buy Sales 1980-2023, South Kesteven vs Comparators							
Period ¹²	Average Annual Sales	Sales	Share of Total Sales	Average Sales per 1000 Stock			
				SKDC	Lincolnshire	East Midlands	England
1980/81-1990/91	172	1895	44.10%	19.26	18.95	26.04	21.84
1991/92-2004/05	124	1744	40.59%	17.11	14.93	15.51	16.14
2005/06-2011/12	26	187	4.35%	4.23	3.36	4.97	4.90
2012/13-2022/23	42	471	10.96%	7.07	6.07	8.63	6.71
Total Sales		4,297					

Table 1 - Right to Buy Sales 1980-2023, South Kesteven vs Comparators, Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

2.16 The portfolio in 1980/81 totalled an estimated **9,728** properties.¹³ Between 1980/81 and 2022/23 there have been at least **4,641** total disposals (4297 Right to Buy sales, minimum 166 demolitions¹⁴, 128 Low-Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) sales since 2011/12 and a minimum of 50 other sales.¹⁵ The Council must therefore have delivered **761** replacement properties since 1980/81 as the portfolio at 31 March 2023 was **5,848**.

2.17 Of those replacements **168** are confirmed to have been delivered since 1999/00, with **133** of those delivered between 2012/13 and 2022/23. SKDC must therefore have delivered **593** replacements in the period 1980/81 to 1998/99.

¹² The periodisation has been selected to reflect the evolving policy of various Governments. 1980/81-1990/91 covers the 'high' right to buy period of the Thatcher premiership. 1991/92-2004/25 covers the ministries of Major and Blair up to the Housing Act 2004. 2005/06-2011/12 and 2012/13-2022/23 covers the nadir of right to buy post Housing Act and the 2008 Financial Crisis, and the attempted reinvigoration pursued by the Coalition and successive Conservative governments since 2012.

¹³ Note up to 2000, this could theoretically include properties owned by other local authorities. Whether that is the case and how many is unknown. This reporting practice ceased in 2000. The Dwelling Stock also includes properties that have been sold via Right to Buy, but where the authority has retained the freehold. It is also unknown how many properties are in that category.

¹⁴ Data available from 1997/98. Unknown amount prior.

¹⁵ Data available from 2001/02. Unknown amount prior.

2.18 In 2023/24 the Council sold 25 properties through Right to Buy of which 22 were replaced.

2.19 Table 2 provides details of the Right to Buy Sales by Ward for the period 2018/19 to 2023/24.

Table 2: Ward Distribution of Right to Buy Sales, South Kesteven, 2018/19-2023/24

Ward	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total Sales
Aveland	2	2	3	3	1	0	11
Belmont	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Belvoir	1	4	0	0	0	0	5
Bourne Austerby	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bourne East	1	3	1	0	0	0	5
Bourne West	2	1	0	1	0	0	4
Casewick	2	1	0	2	1	1	7
Castle	3	0	0	1	1	1	6
Deeping St James	1	2	1	0	1	1	6
Dole Wood	1	0	0	0	1	1	3
Glen	0	1	0	3	1	1	6
Grantham Arnoldfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grantham Barrowby Gate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grantham Earlesfield	11	10	8	6	12	7	54
Grantham Harrowby	9	7	5	8	3	6	38
Grantham Springfield	2	1	0	0	1	0	4
Grantham St Vincent's	4	1	1	2	1	1	10
Grantham St Wulfram's	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Isaac Newton	0	4	1	3	4	2	14
Lincrest	3	0	0	2	0	0	5
Loveden Heath	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Market & West Deeping	1	2	0	3	2	0	8
Morton	2	3	0	0	0	0	5
Peascliffe & Ridgeway	5	4	1	1	0	1	12
Stamford All Saints	1	1	0	1	3	0	6
Stamford St George's	7	2	1	0	5	1	16
Stamford St John's	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Stamford St Mary's	0	3	4	1	0	0	8
Toller	3	0	0	0	1	0	4
Viking	0	0	1	0	0	0	1



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 19 September 2024

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Housing Compliance Figures

Report Author

Phil Swinton, Health, Safety and Compliance Manager.

phil.swinton@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

This report seeks to update the Committee on the status and progress of the compliance figures in relation to the Council's landlord function and proposed actions in relation to Gas compliance.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Support the continued capping of external Gas meters at the point of expiration of the safety certificate.
2. Note the latest compliance position for August 2024 and approve the revised way of reporting Damp and Mould works to this Committee.
3. Receive further updates at its next scheduled meeting.

Decision Information

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

What are the relevant corporate priorities? **Housing
Effective council**

Which wards are impacted? **(All Wards);**

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The financial considerations arising from compliance requirements have been incorporated in the HRA budgets. Failure to maintain high standards of compliance could lead to an increased risk of safety and financial implications.

Completed by: Paul Sutton Interim Head of Finance (Deputy 151)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 This compliance update provides Members with an opportunity to monitor 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, Monitoring Officer

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.3 Risks will be identified via the work plans with any actions agreed. Dealing with significant compliance matters requires a comprehensive approach to risk management, particularly in respect of assessing priorities and critical actions.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott Risk, Governance and Risk Officer

Health and Safety

- 1.4 The key focus in meeting the regulatory standard is to ensure that 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: Philip Swinton, Health, Safety and Compliance Manager

Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion

1.5 All equality issues are identified with the necessary compliance and improvement activities taking place on a case-by-case basis. Each equality impact is carefully considered when actioning a compliance or regulatory change. This is reflected in the key compliance areas that are monitored and reported to Committee.

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

Climate Change

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

Completed by: Serena Brown: Sustainability and Climate change Officer.

2. Background to the Report

2.1. Following the lifting of the Social Housing Regulatory notice it was agreed that Members will continue to receive update reports on progress to ensure that they have oversight of broad progress around the key areas of activity and can scrutinise work where required.

3. Key Considerations

3.1. The Committee is asked to note the current compliance figures to the end of August 2024 (3.4 – 3.13). Following the review and reconciliation of Damp and Mould data the reporting format will be amended to show the total number of properties with identified works and the status.

3.2. The Committee is asked to support the continued capping of external gas meters at the point of the certificate expiring to enable the Council to reduce the risk to those tenants not permitting access and to neighbouring properties and Housing stock. This process will remain under review and updates provided to the Committee as part of these reports.

3.3. Any property with an external meter that is reviewed for capping will have received a minimum of three attempts to gain access to the property, attempts to gain access will have commenced two months prior to the expiration of the gas certificate. The contractor, Aaron Services, has provided assurance that they will respond within 24 hours to test capped properties where tenants make contact to allow access. To minimise the impact Capping will not take place on a Friday which will remove the risk of greater delays related to weekend and call out works.

- 3.4. Legionella – 100% compliant with required inspections
- 3.5. Asbestos – 100% compliant with required inspections
- 3.6. Fire Risk Assessments – 100% compliant with required inspections.
- 3.7. Lift inspections (LOLER) - 100% compliant with required inspections
- 3.8. Gas safety inspections – 99.14% compliant with required inspections. Although it has not been without its challenges the Gas safety inspection compliance rate has returned to a 99%+ position. The team and our new service provider, Aaron Services, have worked incredibly hard to reduce the back log created by tenant refusals and the outgoing contractor.
- 3.9. The ability to cap properties who fail to allow access has also played a significant part in achieving this position. Capping is a last resort but where there is repeated failure to allow access this ability permits the Council to make the appliance safe until an inspection can be carried out and a new gas safety certificate can be provided. The Council has also been provided with a new Court date in September so the team will apply for 20 warrants, the maximum allowed per court date, to gain access to properties which have an internal meter.
- 3.10. Electrical inspections are 92.41% compliant with required inspections. The Council are currently waiting for a number of the certificates to be finalised through a quality assurance process but numbers remain consistent. Legal advice has been sought to identify whether the Council has any additional powers to support increased access where tenants have failed to provide access in order to reduce the number of non-compliant properties for EICR certification.
- 3.11. Smoke and CO – 100%. During August 500 inspections were completed bringing the total number of inspections completed by Aaron Services from 1 April 2024 to 2,970.
- 3.12. Damp and Mould – The format for reporting has been amended to provide greater detail for reported damp and mould works. The move from categorised works to all reported works will allow for greater scrutiny. The following table provides details regarding the number of damp and mould reports the Council has received since December 2022, all of the remaining works/reinspection's have been programmed in and updates regarding the progress for completion will be provided to Members at the next meeting of this Committee.

	December 2022 – December 2023	Outstanding	January - August 2024	Outstanding
Number of reports	424	112	329	253

- 3.13. In preparation for the implementation of Awaab's Law, which is expected to introduce legislative timelines for social landlords to investigate and respond to reports of damp and mould, the Council has created a Damp and Mould Team. This Team will ensure that a responsive service is provided and support the Council in providing an effective damp and mould repairs service.
- 3.14. **Leadership Compliance Meetings:** Chaired by the Chief Executive / Director for Housing and attended by the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Housing these meetings have been a continued feature of the more detailed compliance review process being undertaken. 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 will change 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 figures are provided by the Compliance team and the process used has been verified through external audit and the Housing Regulator. There are currently no other options which require consideration in relation to the provision of figures. The report is for noting.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. To secure and maintain a strong position of compliance in respects of housing services, including the identification of appropriate resources, funds, and service improvements in a timely manner.
- 5.2. Whilst the capping of gas meters is a last resort, the Council must use every option available in the interests of reducing the risk to life and property. The ability to cap the gas supply until access to properties is gained ensures the risk is removed until a new gas safety certificate can be provided. This approach also

allows the Council to focus Court applications for entry to properties with internal meters and assists in further increasing compliance numbers.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. The necessary consultation with tenants and Members of the Council continues to be undertaken as required through timely reporting, dispatch of letters, skyline publications, dedicated customer telephone enquiry line and an updated website. This process will continue and the engagement with tenants particularly will be amended as needed to reflect the needs and requirements.

7. Appendices

- 7.1. Appendix A - Compliance figures June to August 2024
- 7.2. Appendix B - Chart of figures from August 2023 – August 2024

Legionella

Max of % Compliant by Date

120

Max of % Compliant

100

80

Sep 2023

Nov 2023

Jan 2024

Mar 2024

May 2024

Jul 2024

Date



Gas

Max of % Compliant by Date

99.4

99.2

99.0

98.8

98.6

98.4

98.2

98.0

Sep 2023

Nov 2023

Jan 2024

Mar 2024

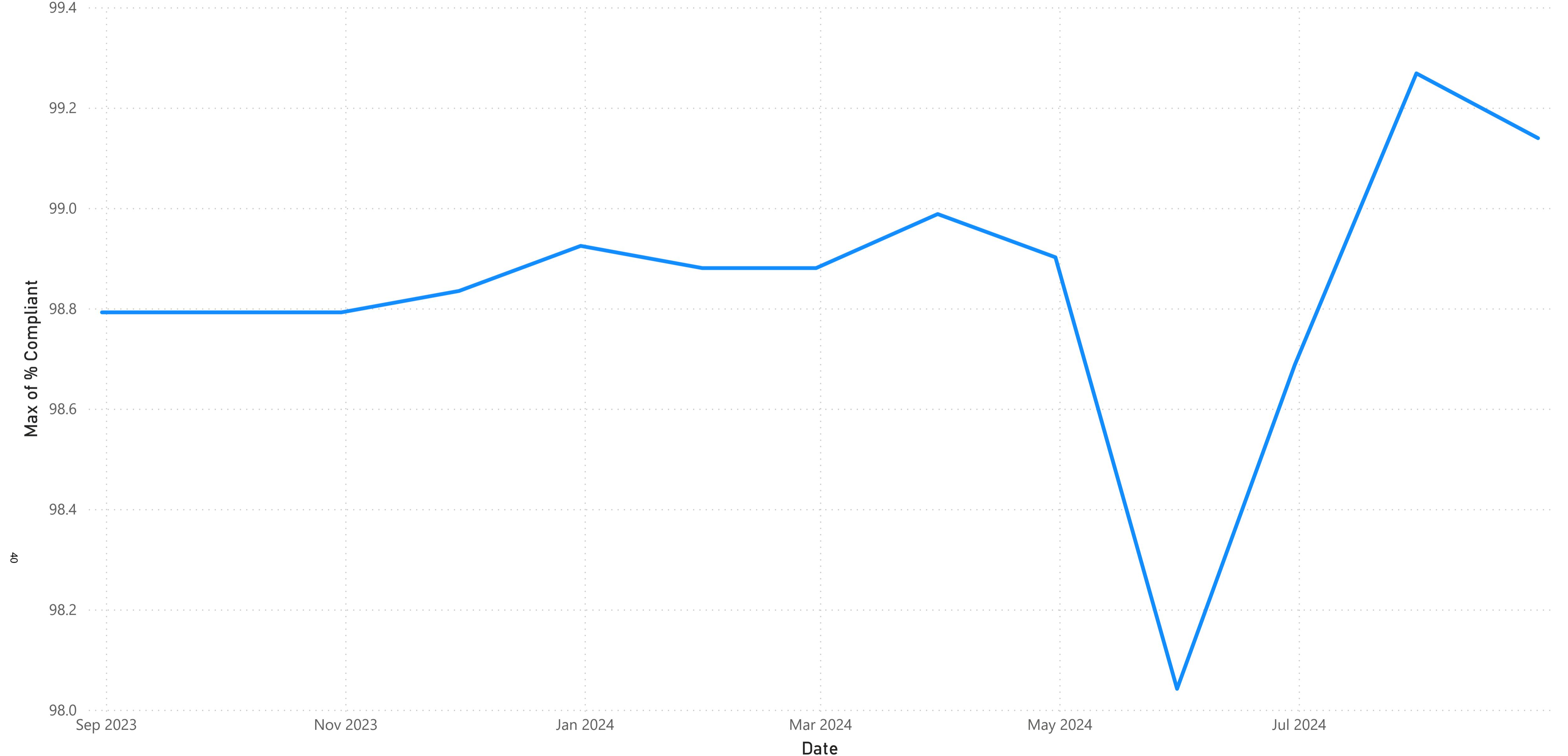
May 2024

Jul 2024

Date

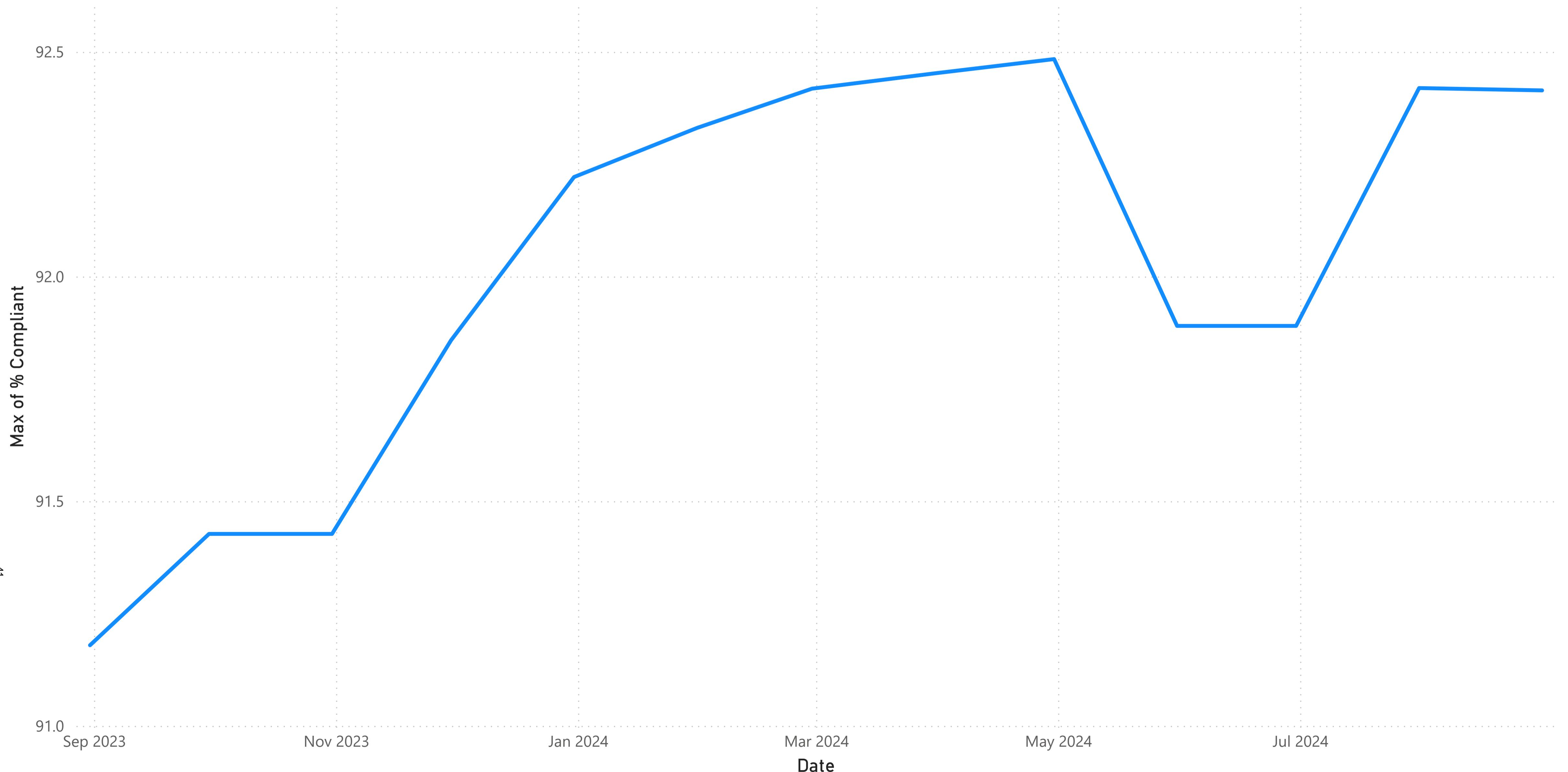
Max of % Compliant

40



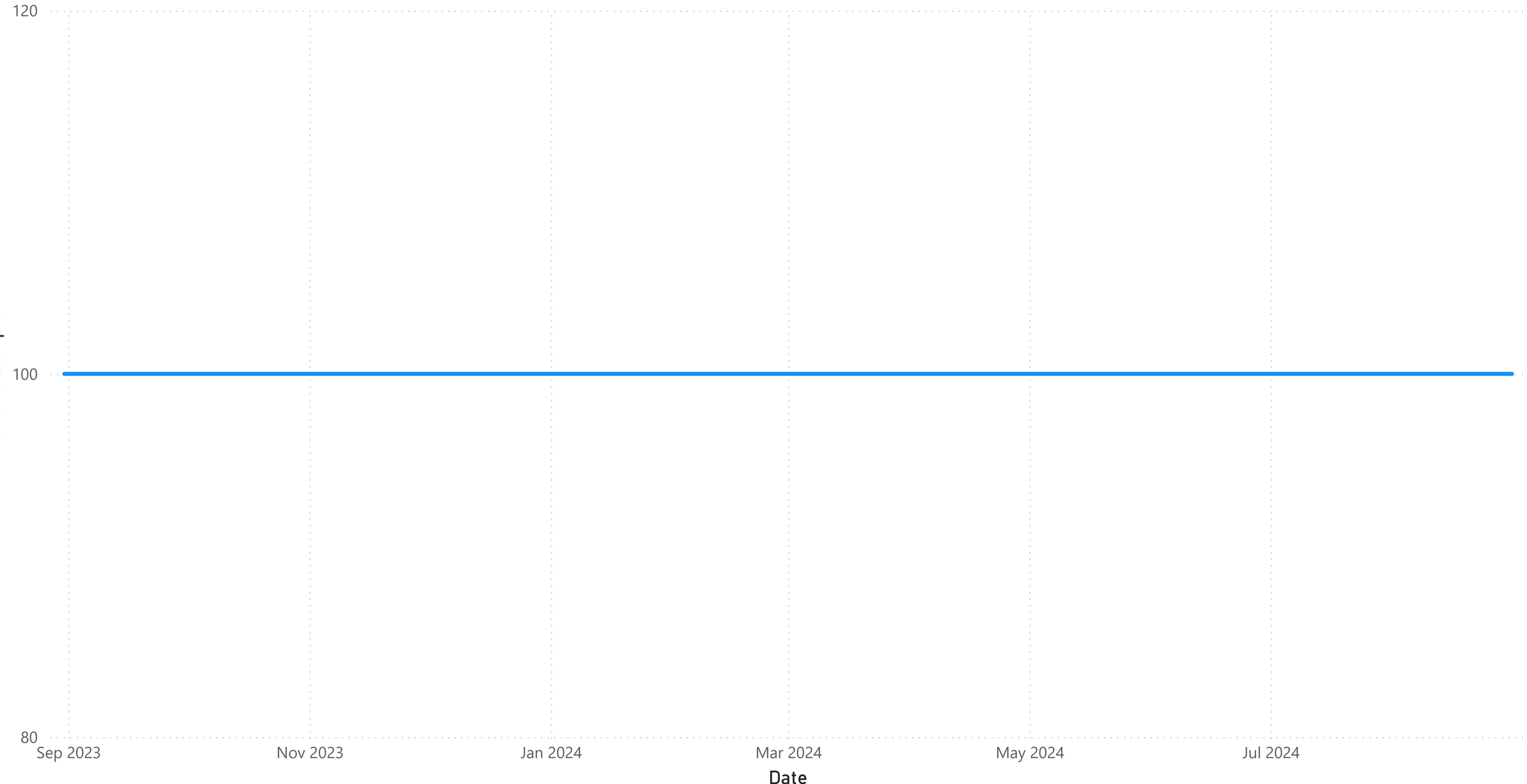
Electrical

Max of % Compliant by Date



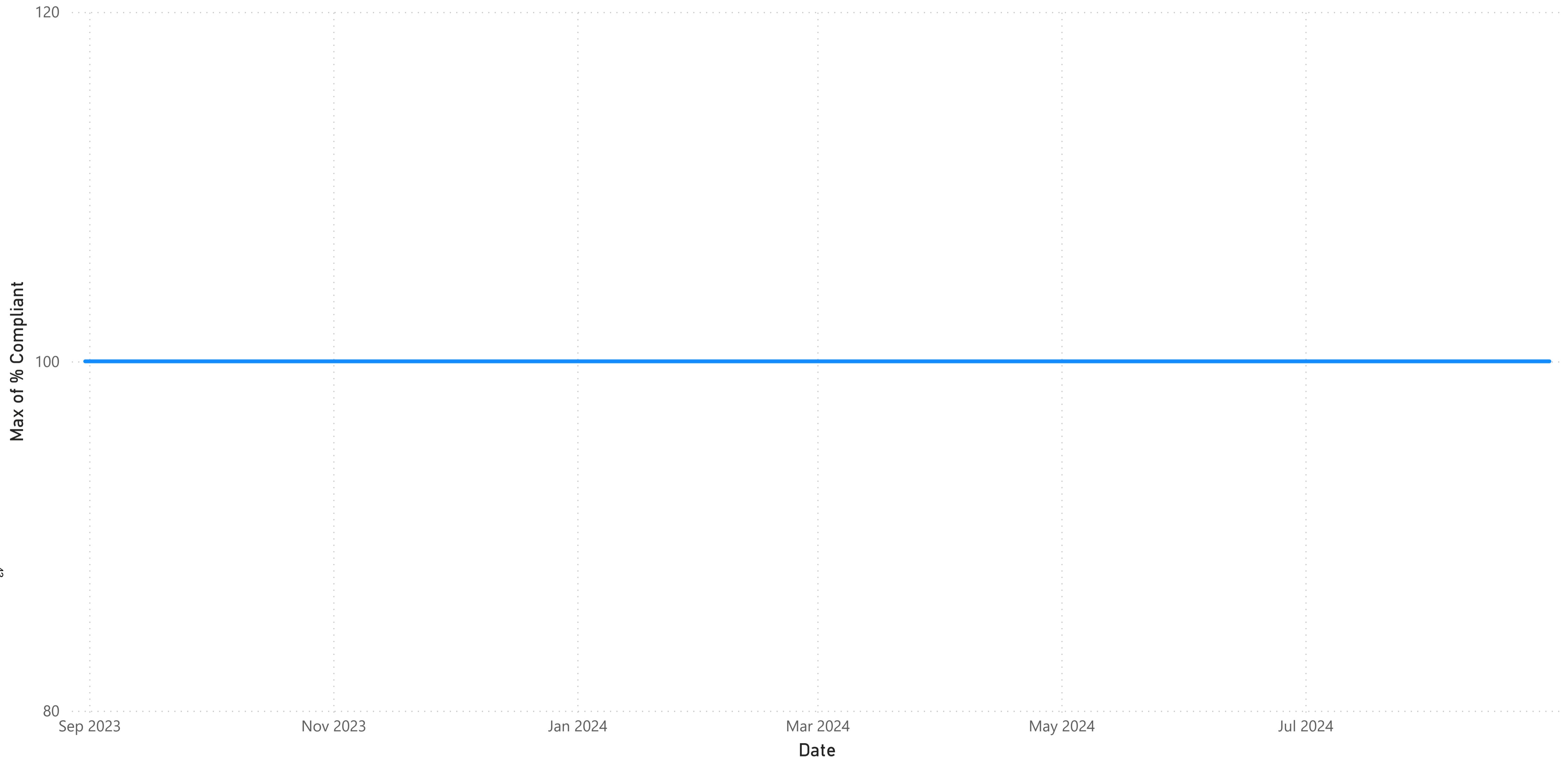
Asbestos

Max of % Compliant by Date



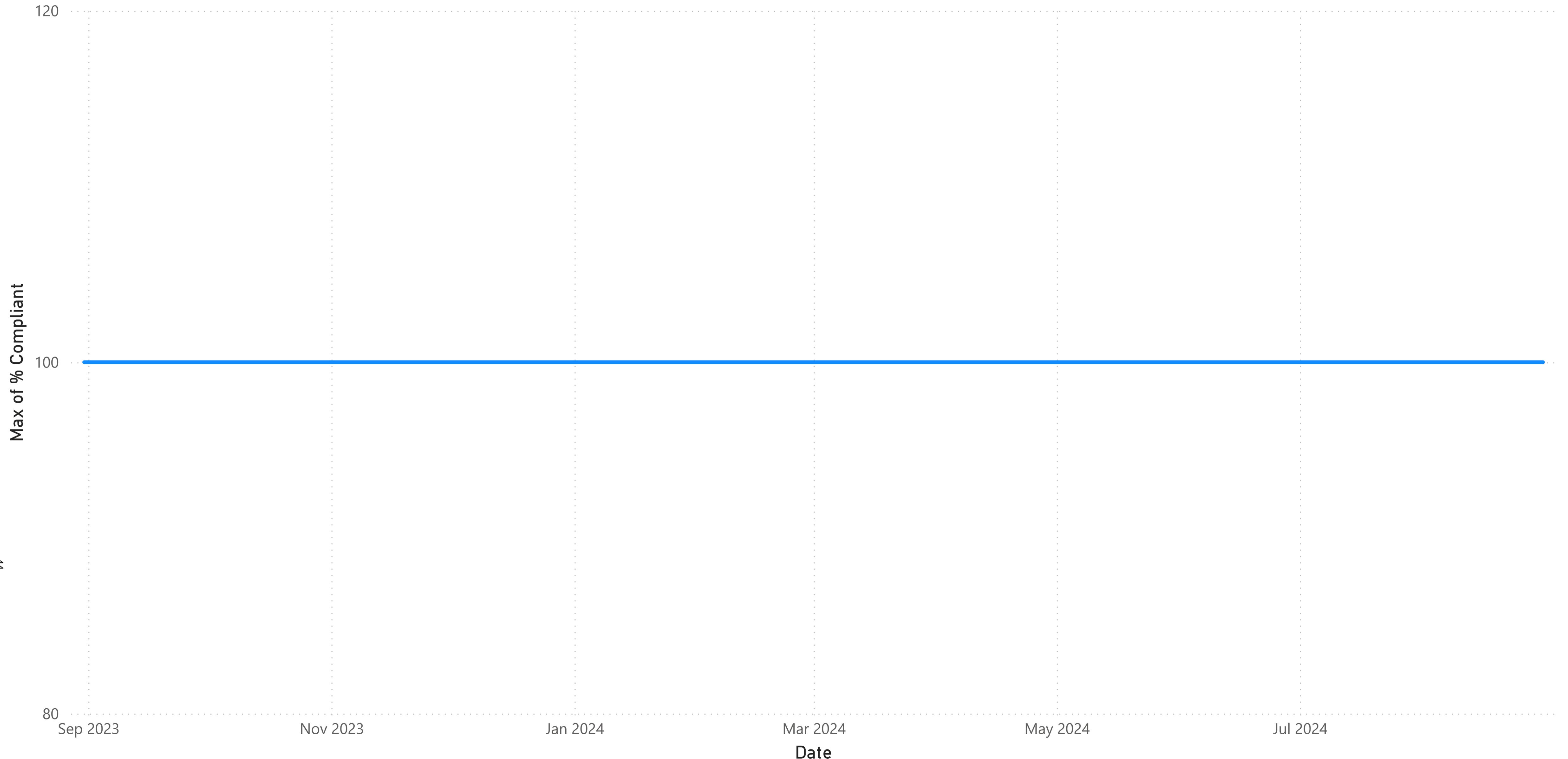
Fire Risk Assessments

Max of % Compliant by Date



Life Inspections

Max of % Compliant by Date



Smoke & Co2

Max of % Compliant by Date

120

100

Max of % Compliant

80

Sep 2023

Nov 2023

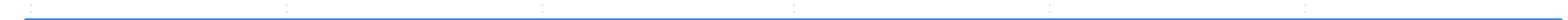
Jan 2024

Mar 2024

May 2024

Jul 2024

Date



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30/06/2024				31/07/2024				31/08/2024			
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%
Gas- 4647	4586	61	98.70%	4647	4613	34	99.26%	4647	4607	40	99.14%
Electric-5857	5382	475	91.89%	5857	5413	444	92.42%	5853	5409	444	92.41%
Asbestos-259	259	0	100.00%	259	259	0	100.00%	259	259	0	100.00%
FRA -147	147	0	100.00%	147	147	0	100.00%	147	147	0	100.00%
Lifts-13	13	0	100.00%	13	13	0	100.00%	13	13	0	100.00%
Smoke /CO-5854	5854	0	100.00%	5854	5854	0	100.00%	5853	5853	0	100.00%
Damp and Mould - 5854	5848	6	99.90%	5854	5853	6	99.90%				Details within the report regarding change of reporting format

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Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 19 September 2024

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Earlesfield Project Overview August 2024

Report Author

Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing

 Alison.Hall-Wright@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of 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

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the contents of the report and the progress being made to deliver on the Earlesfield Project to resolve long standing issues within the Council's housing stock.**

Decision Information

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

N (*If yes please specify the relevant exemption paragraph*)

What are the relevant corporate priorities?
(delete as appropriate)

Housing

Which wards are impacted?

Grantham Earlesfield;

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 costs associated with the Earlesfield project are monitored on a monthly basis against the approved budget, if additional budget is required to complete project then virements from other capital schemes will be undertaken.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The report provides the Committee with an update on the Earlesfield Project and is for noting. There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from the report.

Completed by: Mandy Braithwaite, Legal Executive

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2024 – 2027 to ensure that all residents can access housing which is safe, good quality, sustainable and suitable for their needs and future generations and this project which focuses on improving houses on the Earlesfield Estate in Grantham, will contribute towards achieving this commitment.
- 2.2. As noted in the report presented to the committee on 6 June 2024, 45 properties were completed in phase 1 of the project. Phase 2 of the project includes 76 properties, works have been completed on 19 properties and works are currently being undertaken on 19 properties.
- 2.3. Discussions are ongoing with the contractor, United Living to bring in additional resources to increase the number of dwellings that are being completed.
- 2.4. A meeting was held on 13 August 2024 where the Council's Director of Housing and Contracts Manager met with United Living's Contract Manager, Director and Tenant Liaison Officer to discuss the administration, documentation and project

delivery of the new contract. Despite previous assurances by United Living that the project was on track and adequate resources were in place, the recent performance figures and the number of property completions do not evidence this.

- 2.5. During the meeting the Council reiterated the project completion date of 31 March 2025 and United Living have now provided a project plan which provides assurance that all properties should be returned to the Council by 28 March 2025. This plan will be monitored by the team and any further issues will be reported to the committee in future update reports.
- 2.6. There have been a number of complaints from tenants regarding the quality of the works on properties which United Living have been responsive in remedying. The dedicated Tenant Liaison Officer from United Living is now present at all property handovers to respond to any issues that are highlighted by tenants.
- 2.7. Monthly progress meetings take place with United Living, these will continue to monitor the on-site works, quality and ensure the project is delivered within the agreed timescale.
- 2.8. As part of the Social Value element of the contract United Living will be installing a new kitchen at the Grantham West Community Centre in October 2024 which will benefit all users of the centre, the value of this work is estimated to be £5k. Discussions regarding further Social Value works are underway and an update will be provided to the committee at its next meeting.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. 45 Properties were completed under phase 1. 19 properties have been completed under phase 2 with a further 19 properties at various stages of work.
- 3.2. An update copy of the programme is attached at Appendix 1.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 4.1 Report is for information and noting.

5. Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – Earlesfield Project Progress Report

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Kitchen Design		Strip Out	Asbestos removal	Electrical	Heating	Fire Stopping	Plaster Boarding	Plaster Kitchen /bathroom	Plumb Bathroom	Fit Kitchen	Wall tiling / Floor screed	Windows & Doors	Decoration	3rd fix all trades	Finishing	Final clean	Target Completion	Actual Completion Date	Claimed
Booked/Completed	Delivery	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	60%	65%	70%	80%	90%	100%			
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	07/06/24	
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	10/05/24	
N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	17/05/24	
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	10/05/24	
N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	24/05/24	
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	17/05/24	
N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	07/06/24	
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	24/05/24	
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	21/06/24	
N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	21/06/24	
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	02/07/24	
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	12/07/24	
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	05/07/24	
N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	12/07/24	
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22/08/24	
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	23/07/24	
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	26/07/24	
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	15/08/24	
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	21/06/24	
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		

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Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 19 September 2024

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran,
Cabinet Member for Housing

New Build and Acquisition Update

Report Author

Debbie Roberts, Head of Corporate Projects, Performance and Climate Change

 Debbie.Roberts@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To provide the Committee with an update on the new build and acquisition pipeline.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee note this report and the ongoing work programme relating to new builds and acquisitions.

Decision Information

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

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Housing

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 2024/25 HRA Capital Programme includes a budget allocation for Housing Development investment, this budget will also be utilised to fund strategic acquisitions. It is important that the HRA has a continual housing growth strategy that incorporates a range of interventions including acquiring properties directly from developers, new build and acquiring former Right to Buy properties that specifically meet the housing needs.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

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

Completed by: Mandy Braithwaite, Legal Executive

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.3 No significant risks have been identified.

Climate Change

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

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update regarding the new build housing pipeline and purchases using the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF2).

2.2 The approved Corporate Plan 2024-2027 clearly sets out how South Kesteven District Council intends to meet the mission “to ensure that all residents can access housing which is safe, good quality, sustainable and suitable for their needs and future generations.”

2.3 The Corporate Plan, Priority 4 identifies ‘Housing’ as a key priority with high quality housing essential for all, and the council is committed to working with partners to provide this by:

- Facilitating a range of appropriate and sustainable housing and community facilities for future generations and the emerging needs of all our communities.
- Delivering exemplary and high-quality services for housing and homelessness.
- Increasing the supply of sustainable and high-quality Council-provided housing.
- Working with developers and private landlords to ensure sustainable, affordable, and high-quality housing is facilitated.

2.4 There are many schemes within the district that are at various stages of the pipeline, an update on each one is as follows: -

Swinegate, Grantham

2.5 The scheme is progressing well and is on target for completion by July 2025.

2.6 Monthly contract meetings are held with Lindums and the wider project team and updates will continue be provided to the committee regarding the progress of the scheme.

2.7 The progress photographs below show that scaffolding has been erected to allow the brick and blockwork to progress. The exterior brickwork along Swinegate Road consists of classic weathered orange handmade facing bricks, to match the original shopfront. Openings have been created for a door and window, which will feature timber prestige hardwood to match the existing frontage. A wind post has been installed in the foundation to support the brick and blockwork, with one-way wind post ties. Openings for dry risers have also been created.



Figure 1- General View of site



Figure 2- Scaffolding to allow brick and blockwork



Figure 3 - exterior brickwork to Swinegate

Elizabeth Rd, Stamford

- 2.8 Cabinet approved the award for the £665,000 scheme to D Brown Construction Ltd with work commencing in January 2024 and the site was completed and handed over to the Council on the 23 August 2024.
- 2.9 The two downstairs units are fully adapted with wet rooms and level access throughout and the two upstairs units have already been let.



Figure 4- Elizabeth Road arial shot

Larch Close, Grantham

- 2.10 The 21-unit scheme was granted permission at the Planning Committee meeting on 8 November 2023.
- 2.11 On 9 July 2024 Cabinet approved the contract award to Mercer Building Solutions to build 19 units at Larch Close. The original scheme also included 2 x 4 bedroom houses but due to the higher build costs and rental income associated with these properties the decision was made to submit a new planning application to replace these houses with 4 x 2 bedroom properties.
- 2.12 Mercer Building Solutions are currently working on discharging the planning conditions and will be submitting a new planning application in November for the change of properties.
- 2.13 Work on site is planned to commence in November 24.

Wellington Way, Market Deeping

- 2.14 Following feedback from the public consultation the proposed scheme has been reduced from 14 units to 11 units.
- 2.15 The planning application is due to be submitted in September 2024 and it is hoped that a contractor can commence in spring 2025.

Gorse Rise, Grantham

- 2.16 This is a former garage site that was demolished in February 2020.

- 2.17 A pre-application has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and comments received for 6 units on the parcel of land. Some design amendments have been made following comments from the Planning Authority.
- 2.18 Once the designs have been finalised the scheme will be submitted for planning (October 2024).

Kesteven Road, Stamford

- 2.19 The site consists of an irregular parcel of land of approximately 1.3 acres in size and includes a combination of a garage block, car parking area and open space.
- 2.20 Feasibility has been ongoing for some time but has now identified the best option and layout for the site with an approximate 11 unit scheme being explored due to the biodiversity net gain requirements. This has been reduced from 18 units to enable more green space to be retained.
- 2.21 Early engagement will commence before a pre-planning application is submitted.

Bourne End Road Estate, Colsterworth

- 2.22 Due to structural issues within the timber frame and thermally poor performance there are opportunities on this estate to demolish some of the existing stock and rebuild with more units due to large plot sizes.
- 2.26 Pre-Application feedback has been received from the Local Planning Authority with alterations being explored on the 9-unit scheme prior to submitting the full planning application in October 2024.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 In order to achieve the numbers of houses that the Council has a requirement to deliver each year there will be a hybrid approach to new builds to work closely with developers on planning schemes which need to include a number of affordable units, the Council will discuss purchasing these (similar to a Registered Provider) and also purchasing properties offered back to the Council via the Right to Buy scheme. The first phase of the affordable housing units acquired in Corby Glen is progressing well and visits to the site to check progress have been undertaken.
- 3.2 The Council is seeking to acquire 12 one-bedroom apartments in Grantham subject to searches, surveys and legal enquiries. Information regarding this acquisition will be made available once completed.
- 3.3 Local Authority Housing Fund 2 – the Council has accepted the second stage of the funding which is to deliver a further eight properties, seven ‘main element’ 2/3 bed properties and one ‘bridging element’ 4 bed+ property.
- 3.4 The Council has met this 8-unit need with all houses being on various new build schemes in and around the Bourne area. These were all offered by the deadline of the funding and are progressing with legal services currently.

3.5 The Council has purchased a bungalow in the Market Deeping area which will be fully adapted using S106 money. There are a number of people requiring specific types of properties (particularly fully adapted) and the team are looking at acquiring properties using this funding stream to meet the needs as a matter of urgency.

Right To Buy

3.6 The Council is approached regularly to purchase back properties that have been acquired through the Right to Buy process as the covenants are in place for a number of years. These properties are independently valued and visited by a member of the repairs team to access any works required to ensure that they meet the void standard prior to assessing if they should be acquired. A two bedroom flat in Stamford was purchased in August where the Council own the rest of the block.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

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

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 19 September 2024

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Garage Site Update Report

This report provides an update to the Committee on South Kesteven District Council's garage sites and seeks support for the development of a Garage Site Action Plan.

Report Author

Suniel Pillai, New Build Project Officer

Suniel.Pillai@southkesteven.gov.uk

Recommendations

That the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee note this report and support the next steps proposed.

Decision Information

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

No

What are the relevant corporate
priorities?

High Performing Council

Which wards are impacted?

All

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The financial implications arising from the development of the Garage Strategy will require careful consideration. The financial implications will need to consider the rental loss from the removal of garages that are available to let and will need to be offset against the costs of maintaining the garages. Any proposal to develop surplus sites will need to be undertaken taking into consideration the development costs, ongoing management and maintenance costs alongside the projected rental income in order to ensure a positive return.

Completed by: Paul Sutton Interim Head of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The Council does have a HRA Acquisition and Disposal Policy but there would need to be consultation with the tenants where sites have garages that have been licensed, leased or sold to ensure that the legalities are resolved.

Completed by: Mandy Braithwaite, Legal Executive

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.3 No significant risks have been identified.

Climate Change

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

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update regarding the ongoing review of garage sites.
- 2.2 The approved Corporate Plan 2024-27 clearly sets out how South Kesteven District Council intends to meet the mission *“to ensure that all residents can access housing which is safe, good quality, sustainable and suitable for their needs and future generations.”*
- 2.3 The Corporate Plan, Priority 4 identifies *‘Housing’* as a key priority with high quality housing essential for all, and the council is committed to working with partners to provide this by:
 - Facilitating a range of appropriate and sustainable housing and community facilities for future generations and the emerging needs of all our communities.
 - Delivering exemplary and high-quality services for housing and homelessness.
 - Increasing the supply of sustainable and high-quality Council-provided housing.
 - Working with developers and private landlords to ensure sustainable, affordable, and high-quality housing is facilitated.
- 2.4 The variety of garage buildings present a number of challenges and opportunities to the Council in terms of repair, maintenance and management through to possible site redevelopment or land sale.
- 2.5 A number of interventions have been actioned by the Council since March 2024 to better utilise the garage stock, including conducting high level feasibility and developing option appraisals on the garage sites identified for potential development in the report presented to the committee in March.

2.6 Garage Stock Overview

The district contains a total of 830 individual garage units, of which 455 have been assessed with regard to their suitability for development.

2.7 Outstanding Repairs

Currently, there are 71 garage units across the district that have been reported by residents as needing repairs which will be completed by the Repairs team to ensure safety and usability.

2.8 Impact on Council Priorities

The Council’s garage stock plays a crucial role in achieving broader community goals. Underutilised garage sites represent potential opportunities for new housing developments, addressing the need for affordable housing in the district. Conversely, sites in poor condition can attract anti-social behavior, and negatively

impact the surrounding areas. Effective management of these sites is essential to maintain community standards and support the Council's housing strategy.

2.9 Garage Site Action Plan

A Garage Site Action Plan is necessary to ensure that the management of garages and surrounding land is both effective and efficient. This plan will aim to maximise rental income for the Council and identify development opportunities for affordable housing on land where garages are no longer needed.

The Council's garage stock was constructed more than 35 years ago. Changes in construction methods mean that materials like precast concrete panels and asbestos sheets, which were once common, are no longer in use. The garages were built to accommodate smaller vehicles and the need for storage has shifted. Most garages are now used for storing items other than vehicles, and the current provision does not always address modern parking needs, including the increased number of vehicles per household.

2.10 How Will the Action Plan Be Developed?

If supported by the Committee the development of the Action Plan will begin with an internal stock condition survey conducted over the coming months. A working group comprising representatives from Repairs, Technical Services, Housing & Economic Development will be established to evaluate all garage sites. This group will consider a range of factors to ensure that all perspectives on the future use of these sites are considered.

Each site will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Initial assessment of suitability for development
- Repairs expenditure required
- Income generated from garages
- Current void levels
- Waiting list demand

2.11 How Will the Action Plan Be Delivered?

If supported by the Committee the Action Plan will be implemented over a four-year period, with annual reviews to ensure alignment with the Council's priorities. The plan will focus on four key considerations:

- Deliver Sites for Development

The Corporate Plan identifies the need to "Build more houses, on derelict land." The Council will assess whether garage site land can be repurposed for housing development. Initial assessments have already identified certain sites as potential development opportunities, while others have been discounted.

- Improve Sites Where Demand Is High

Some garage sites within the district are fully occupied and in high demand. These sites will be prioritised for investment. However, the working group must carefully evaluate these investments alongside potential development opportunities to avoid unnecessary expenditures on sites that may later be repurposed.

- Consider Alternatives Where Development Is Not Viable and Demand Is Low
For sites that are neither suitable for development nor have sufficient demand to justify investment, the working group will explore alternative uses. Options may include demolishing garages to create parking spaces.

2.12 If supported the Action Plan will be added to the work programme of the Committee with an update included on the forward plan for March 2025.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 It is recommended that Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive this report for information and support the development of the Garage Site Action plan and the formation of the working group to keep the momentum of the project.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

4.1 The garage stock requires improvements therefore a strategy for redevelopment, refurbishment or demolition is required to reduce the Councils ongoing liability.

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Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Updated Work Programme 2024/25

No	Item	Meeting Date	Lead Officer	Requirements	Notes (including reporting timeframes)
Items - Thursday 19 September					
1.	Regulatory Compliance Monitoring update	19 Sept 24	Phil Swinton	Regular update	Regular Update at each meeting
2.	Earlesfield Programme update	19 Sept 24	Nick Thacker	Regular update	Regular Update at each meeting
3.	Build and Acquisitions update	19 Sept 24	Debbie Roberts/Suniel Pillai	Regular update	Regular Update at each meeting
4.	Garage Sites and their development update	19 Sept 24	Debbie Roberts/Suniel Pillai	Six month update requested in March 24	
5.	Stock Condition	19 Sept 24	Mark Rogers	Verbal update	
6.	Update on Riverside Flats	19 Sept 24	Alison Hall-Wright	Report	Update requested at 6 June 2024 meeting
7.	Right to Buy	19 Sept 24	Alison Hall-Wright	Report on RTB process	Report on RTB scheme requested at 6 June 2024 meeting
8.	Rough Sleeper and Homelessness Update <i>(previously titled Review of Change4Lincs)</i>	19 Sept 24	Alison Hall-Wright/Sarah McQueen	Report	
9.	Complaints Policy/ Ombudsman Code	19 Sept 24	Alison Hall-Wright	Verbal update	

14 November 2024					
	Regular updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regulatory Compliance• Earlesfield Programme• Build & Acquisitions	14 Nov 24			
	KPI's 2024/25: Mid-year (Q2) Report	14 Nov 24	Debbie Roberts		
Future Items					
	Rent and Service Charge Policy	TBC	Celia Bowen	Policy document outlining how the Council will calculate and charge rent and service charges for the housing stock	
	Fabric First	TBC	Nick Thacker		
	Repairs Workshops	TBC	Nick Thacker	New dates to be confirmed summer 2024	
	Homelessness Strategy/Budget Review				
	Sheltered Housing Allocations Review				

Items considered during 2024/25				
1.	Regulatory Compliance Update	06/06/24	Regular update to Committee	
2.	Earlesfield Project Update	06/06/24	Regular update to Committee	
3.	Build and Acquisitions Update	06/06/24	Regular update to Committee	
4.	Mutual Exchange Procedure	06/06/24		
5.	Empty Homes Strategy	06/06/24	<i>Consideration of a draft Empty Homes Strategy</i>	<i>Recommendation to Cabinet</i>
6.	IHMS update	06/06/24		
7.	C4L Update	06/06/24		
8.	SHDF Update	06/06/24		
9.	End of Year KPIs 2023/2024	06/06/24		

Items considered by the Committee during 2023/24				
1.	Regulatory Compliance update	21/09/23 16/11/23 22/01/24 21/03/24		Regular update
2.	HRA Capital Programme – Progress Monitoring	21/09/23		September 2023

3.	Earlesfield Programme update	21/09/23 16/11/23 22/01/24 21/03/24	Regular Update
4.	Update following Void Workshop (Future workshops)	21/09/23	September 2023
5.	Fee Policy Licensing of Mobile Homes	21/09/23	September 2023
6.	HRA Disposal & Acquisitions Policy	21/09/23	September 2023 Cabinet adopted policy 10.10.23
7.	Total Housing Compliance Policies	16/11/23 22/01/24	Deferred to January 2024
8.	Update following Homelessness workshop	16/11/23	16 November 2023
9.	Build and Acquisition update including Review of Housing Purchases in Langtoft (Nov 23)	16/11/23 22/01/24 21/03/24	Regular Update
10.	Choice-based lettings plus demonstration Update on Choice Based lettings	16/11/23 21/03/24	16 November 2023 21 March 2024
11.	Decarbonisation Programme and Funding update	22/01/24	22 January 2024
12.	Midyear KPI's reporting Draft KPI's	22/01/24 21/04/24	22 January 2024
13.	Housing ASB Policy	22/01/24	22 January 2024
14.	Estate and Tenancy Management Policies	22/01/24	22 January 2024
15.	Private Sector Housing - Houses of Multiple Occupation Licensing Policy	22/01/24	22 January 2024
16.	Mutual Exchange Policy deferred to next meeting	21/03/24	6 June 2024
17.	Garage Sites and their suitability for development	21/03/24	21 March 2024
18.	Voids Update	21/04/24	21 March 2024
20.	Sheltered Housing Workshop update	21/04/24	21 March 2024