

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Monday, 20 January 2025 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 14 November 2025** (Pages 3 - 18)
- 5. Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service**

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† 01476 406080

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

- 6. Housing Compliance Figures** (Pages 19 - 28)
This report seeks to update 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.
- 7. Earlesfield Project Overview** (Pages 29 - 34)
Update Committee on the Earlesfield Project.
- 8. New Build and Acquisitions**
The Committee to receive a verbal update on the current position.
- 9. Fire Compartmentation works update** (Pages 35 - 40)
To provide an update on the program of fire compartmentation work within housing stock
- 10. Homelessness and Rough Sleeper update** (Pages 41 - 47)
To update the Committee on the current status of our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper services
- 11. Damp and Mould Policy** (Pages 49 - 65)
To inform the Committee of the updated Damp and Mould Policy effective from April 2025.
- 12. Decant Policy** (Pages 67 - 84)
To notify the Committee of the intention to take the Decant Policy to Cabinet.
- 13. Repairs Service Update** (Pages 85 - 95)
To update the Committee on progress made following the internal repairs service audit report received in April 2024.
- 14. Riverside Heating Upgrade Works** (Pages 97 - 100)
To update the committee on the Riverside Heating upgrade.
- 15. Response times to Housing Enquiries**
The Committee to receive a verbal update on the current position.
- 16. Work Programme 2024/25** (Pages 101 - 103)
- 17. Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent**

Meeting of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 14 November 2024,
2.00 pm



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
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COUNCIL

Committee Members present

Councillor Lee Steptoe (Chairman)
Councillor Zoe Lane (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Matthew Bailey
Councillor Emma Baker
Councillor Anna Kelly
Councillor Bridget Ley
Councillor Habibur Rahman
Councillor Paul Wood

Other Members present

Councillor Pam Byrd
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Ian Selby
Councillor Virginia Moran

Cabinet Members

Councillor Virginia Moran, Cabinet Member for Housing
Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Planning

Officers

Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing and Projects
Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) , Monitoring Officer
Sarah McQueen, Head of Housing
Mark Rogers, Head of Technical Services (Housing)
Phil Swinton, Health and Safety Compliance Officer
Charles James, Policy Officer
Suniel Pillai, New Build Project Officer
Hannah Rowe, Performance Analyst
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer

36. Public Speaking

The Chairman informed the Committee that there were three public speakers for the meeting. Each public speaker was advised that they could ask one question plus one supplementary question.

Karen Oliver, Helping Hands was the first to speak and was reminded that although a number of questions had been submitted, only one question plus a supplementary question could be asked.

Karen Oliver stated that at the last meeting the Cabinet Member for Housing had stated that homeless people could charge their phones at MacDonaldis or Wetherspoons, she had approached these businesses and was told this was not correct, she also stated that the number of rough sleepers came from the Passage and Beehive, again this was not correct as this information was not asked for. Also, GDPR statements were not taken from Members of the public so this information could be given out. Karen Oliver asked where was the Council getting its data from and referred to the table at 3.7 of the report which gave figures on rough sleepers from 2017 to 2023 and did not include 2024, where were the figures from 2024 as her figures were treble of those from last year, where is the data coming from?

The Cabinet Member for Housing clarified which question she should answer and it was confirmed the one about where the data was coming from. The Cabinet Member asked the Head of Housing to respond. The data that was presented in the report is the Annual Rough Sleeper count which was a national account that all local authorities had to abide by. It was conducted in the winter of every year, the date set for this year was 21 November 2024 which had not taken place yet so the figure for 2024 was not yet available.

Karen Oliver stated that the Officer had still not stated where the data actually came from. On that particular day did people from the Council carry out the count or people from another agency, where was the Council getting the data from.

As part of the Annual Rough Sleeper Count, the Council were given guidance on how the data was gathered, and partner agencies were used. There are different approaches that each Council can take, there was a count based approach or an estimate based approach plus a rough sleeper count. The Council did an estimate based approach, so that people were not out counting on the street on 21 November, the reason the Council did this was because we have outreach services that were out all throughout the year, so the Council was confident in the fact that information could be gathered to enable the Council to predict who will be out on that particular evening. More information could be found on the website Homeless Link which provided guidance that the Council had to follow as a district authority.

The next public speaker was Jackie McCullion who asked:

'How do the Council support those who are street homeless but DO NOT meet priority needs. I'm thinking about those individuals who experience a significant and immediate decline in their personal well-being, for example there is a safeguarding concern or possible suicide situation and they find themselves on the street.

The Cabinet Member for Housing responded. If a client presented as street homeless, a homelessness application was completed which allows the Council to determine the duties it owes to that person. If someone was deemed to not fulfil the criteria of priority need, as defined in the homelessness legislation, this just means that we do not have a duty to provide short term accommodation, but we still work

with that person to help them with their housing situation and to hopefully source longer-term accommodation.

The Council provide advice and support and create a bespoke personal housing plan with the aim of supporting them to source accommodation or to explore short-term options such as lodging with family until a longer term option is available. The Council signpost clients to our support agencies such as the Change4Lincs team because they can provide intensive support such as benefit maximization and landlord incentive schemes to help people into private rental accommodation. The Council don't have any hostel accommodation available in South Kesteven unfortunately, but we do have an organisation called NACRO. NACRO provides supported accommodation, they have 25 units in Grantham and the Council holds full nomination rights into that scheme. The Council also explores partnership working arrangements with local organisations who provide shared accommodation for single people. The Council works closely with our partner Living Concepts who can often offer their vacancies to the Council before they go on the open market.

Homelessness is an incredibly complex issue and the fact that there is not enough social housing to meet the ever growing demand, is a national picture and is not unique to South Kesteven, which is why the Council must follow legislation to ensure that social housing is only allocated to those in most need and the Council simply cannot provide accommodation placements to everybody who comes to us regardless of where they come from.

The Council continues to explore new ways to increase our housing provision in South Kesteven in order to better meet the demand. Most recently a bid was put in on a property with the intention of converting it to four bedsits and a shared kitchen to use as emergency accommodation for homeless people but unfortunately the Council were not successful in their bid. The Cabinet Member for Housing indicated that if anyone became aware of large properties to send the information in.

There was no supplementary question.

The Chairman asked the third public speaker, Nicole Bavister for her question but it was stated that the Chairman had used his discretion and the question should be generic rather than personal as it was a public meeting. The original plan was to discuss mine and my father's current situation with being homeless, but now we have been housed with Concepts but the main aim of my question was to ask about what is being done about the mistreatment and misconduct regarding people with mental health issues trying to get housed. I personally suffer with schizophrenia, sorry if that's too much, but I don't mind talking about it, I am very open about it. I really feel like I was alienated by the Council going through the system and we weren't seen as high priority, so I was just wondering why that might be.

The Chairman stated that he was trying to balance letting Ms Bavister have a fair say with the fact that the question should not be personalized. On Ms Bavisters

behalf the Chairman asked “What is done by the Council to help vulnerable people who are homeless?”

The Cabinet Member for Housing thanked Nicole for attending the meeting. In order to not make the situation or anybody in a similar situation more public, because its personal information and this is a public meeting. The Cabinet Member for Housing asked if Ms Bavister could wait until the end of the meeting to talk about her particular situation. The Chairman asked if an appointment could be made with Councillor Moran and a senior officer at a time convenient to Nicole Bavister. However, it was noted that a Senior Homelessness Officer was in the chamber and it was indicated that a meeting could take place immediately outside the meeting.

The Head of Housing gave a response to the question “What does the Council do to support vulnerable people who were homeless”. As was alluded to in Councillor Moran’s answer to the previous question. When we have approaches from homeless people, we do have to abide by what is set in legislation in regards to assessing what we deem as someone being classed as priority need under that legislation. It is a strict legislation and the demand for social housing and the demand for the Council’s services was high so we have to apply that legislation. When we have a homelessness application, we make decisions during the process based on the evidence that’s provided. You are able when a decision has been made to request a review of any decision, if you feel that that decision is not correct. It was indicated that this would be discussed in more detail when Ms Bavister’s specific case was discussed outside the meeting.

Ms Bavister appreciated the facts that had been set out and thanked the Chairman for his summarising of the question.

A meeting with a Senior Homelessness Officer, Nicole Bavister and the Head of Housing then took place outside the meeting.

One Member raised a question in respect of Karen Oliver who had attended the last meeting of the Committee. He stated that he thought there seemed to be a problem with meeting with Helping Hands and he wanted assurance that meetings were taking place. The Cabinet Member for Housing stated that they had tried to interact with them but it was difficult, they had tried, emails were received regularly from them.

The Member wanted to continue but the Chairman stated that this was the Public Speaking element of the agenda and there would be an opportunity later in the meeting for the Member to make comment. The Director of Housing and Projects referred the Member to an email that Members had been sent on the issue.

37. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Penny Milnes.

38. Disclosure of Interest

The Chairman asked if any Member had any interest to declare.

One Member referred to the last two meetings where he had asked for a report on voids. The Chairman indicated that this was not the appropriate time to raise the issue, however the Member then raised a point of order and referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Rules, paragraph 4.2 where Members were entitled to give notice to have an item included on the agenda.

The Member stated that he had specifically asked at the last two meetings of the Committee for a report on voids which he had not got and he felt that this breached the Constitution. The Chairman stated that he had received advice from the Monitoring Officer that no breaches had occurred. The Member requested that a full report on voids came to the next meeting of the Committee. The report to include the type of voids, the reasons for the delays, the reasons that the Council was missing the targets, what is proposed and an action plan he asked for the item under 4.2 of the Constitution.

The Member indicated that he was not happy that the item had not been included after specifically asking for voids to be included on the work programme, which the Chairman had previously agreed too, he stated that he had no confidence in the Chairman and he left the meeting and did not return.

(14:20 Councillor Paul Wood left the meeting and did not return)

The Director of Housing and Projects stated that she had asked on two separate occasions what the Member would like to see in the void report but had not received a response. Now that the information had been received and a clear direction indicated a report could be produced. The Director of Housing and Projects reminded the Committee that a comprehensive report on voids had been before the Committee in March 2024. The report had detailed the voids process and the performance of the voids at the time. The only part missing was the current performance and that was detailed within the report on the KPI's later in the agenda.

The Chairman again asked if there were any interests to declare and reminded Members that interests could be declared at any time during the meeting.

39. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2024

The Chairman asked the Committee if they had any comments in respect of the accuracy of the minutes. One Member indicated that in reference to the Riverside item Members noted the findings of the feasibility study but they also supported the proposed enhancement and rectification works to improve the heating system at the Riverside Housing complex which he highlighted had not been included in the minutes. It was indicated that the minutes would be amended to reflect this.

The Director of Housing and Projects gave a brief update on the heating works at the Riverside Housing complex in Grantham. Work had commenced on Monday with a temporary boiler being installed to ensure all residents had heating throughout the duration of the works.

The primary system would be flushed at the same time as new heat exchanges and pipework was installed together with a new management system. The second part of the project would be to flush the secondary part of the system which would take a longer period of time due to the addition of additives.

The current cost of the works to replace the six boilers, the new management system, the flushing of the primary system, the replacement of pipe works and the heat exchanges was £100,000. At the last committee it had been estimated at £160,000. The Director of Housing and projects then referred to the emersion heaters and stated that there were six that needed to be wired, however, there were still three properties that the Council was struggling to gain access to but work would continue with tenants to gain access.

Quotes were also being sought for the secondary flushing of the system and the thermostats that needed to be placed in each property. Once the information was available it would be shared with the Committee.

The second update given was in respect of the FOB system which was used to access blocks of flats and the maintenance of that system and managing expiry dates.

If there was a problem with the FOB system during the working day these were reported to the repairs team. If it was out of hours, it went through to the CCTV team who reported it to the On-call Team. The On-call Team could not reactivate FOBs, but they did have their own FOBs which could be used to gain access to the block of flats 24/7. ID would be checked to make sure that the tenants did live in that location. Issues would be passed on to the Repairs Team who would arrange a repair if there was a fault with the system, otherwise it would be referred to the Tenancy Team who would investigate whether the FOB had expired. A report was available which details when FOBs were due to expire and this was reviewed regularly. The Director of Housing and Projects assured the Committee that there was a comprehensive process in place.

The Chairman gave the opportunity to the Ward Councillors for the area to ask questions on the Riverside Complex. The Ward Councillors welcomed the work to resolve the problems at the complex and as part of the scrutiny process, one of the Ward Councillors asked if the Committee could be party to the three quotes for the work at the Riverside Complex.

The Director of Housing and Projects stated that they already had a procured contractor, Arran Services, in place and the Council were able to use the contractor to procure the works. The Council did not have to use them but a lot of time and

effort had gone into procuring the contract. Officers did check the quotes received for reasonableness and it was noted that three quotes were only necessary if a contract was under £50,000.

If a contract was over £50,000 the Council would have to go out to formal tender which could take between three to six months and if this method had been used rather than Arran, it would not have allowed the work to be completed now, but after the winter period. When a contractor had been procured that contractor would be used for all works, the procurement officer would check that the awarded contract did not breach the threshold which for this contractor was £11m. If the value did go above the figure of £11m the contract could not be extended.

A further question was asked about compensation, as tenants had yet to receive anything. The Director of Housing and Projects stated that information was currently being collated and this would be shared with the Committee once it had been resolved, the wait had been due to the changes within the management of the Housing Team.

The other Ward Councillor for the area indicated that he had been in extensive conversations with the Director of Housing and Projects and the Cabinet Member for Housing and that there were plans in place and he had faith in the team that the issues at the complex would be addressed.

The Chairman then asked for a proposer and seconder for the minutes of the 19 September 2024 following this the minutes were **AGREED**.

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

The Cabinet Member for Housing informed the Committee that the keys for the first properties in the Corby Glen development that the Council had bought would be handed over the first week of December 2024.

41. Housing Compliance figures report

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the regular housing compliance report which gave the status of the compliance figures in relation to the Council's landlord function. Legionella, asbestos, fire risk assessments and lift inspections were all at 100%.

Gas safety inspections were at 99.24%.

Although the electrical inspections had increased to 93.51% there continued to be problems with gaining access to complete electrical certificate inspections. As with gas, the legal route would be a last resort but in situations where tenants failed to allow access, the Council needed to take all reasonable steps to inspect these properties and ensure that safety standards were maintained.

It was hoped that a proposed amendment to the Repairs Policy, whereby non-urgent repairs to properties would not be undertaken until a safety certificate was in place, would help with the situation. The Director of Housing and Projects stated that work would be undertaken with the Tenancy Team because as part of the Tenancy Agreement, tenants did have to give the council access to their property to carry out required works. Letters would be sent out to those tenants refusing access due to the importance of carrying out the safety compliance work.

A question was asked about the Damp and Mould compliance figures and what work was being carried out. The Cabinet Member for Housing stated that the Council had voluntarily added Damp and Mould to the compliance checks. Damp and mould issues had been looked at previously, but now the Council had a dedicated Team who were working through the damp and mould cases and were making progress even though more were coming in daily.

The Director of Housing and Projects stated that as well as the Damp and Mould Team there was also a Senior Team that looked at Damp and Mould cases fortnightly. All jobs were booked in by the Repairs Team or the Council's contractor and the Committee would be kept informed of progress. It was noted that the Council received around 15 reports of Damp and Mould cases a week. Surveys were carried out by the Damp and Mould team and remedial work booked in when contractors had capacity to carry out work to fit vents. Next year new legislation would come into effect which would give strict timelines for work to be carried out which was why processes were being put in place now.

Discussion on the compliance figures followed. Comments were made in respect of the graphs which currently were not useful in their context and it was stated that perhaps a 12 month period would be more helpful. A question was asked about the proposed changes to the Repairs Policy in respect of non-urgent repairs was this currently being done. The Director of Housing and Projects stated that this was not currently happening as there was nothing presently in any of the Council's policies. One Member asked about work to educate people in respect of Damp and Mould and how this is created. The Head of Technical Services, (Housing), indicated that work was currently being done on leaflets. The Member asked if these could be circulated once they were ready.

➤ **Action**

That the Committee be circulated with the leaflets in respect of Damp and Mould once they were available.

The Cabinet Member for Housing stated that information on damp and mould was reproduced regularly in the Skyline magazine which was circulated to tenants.

Members noted the current compliance figures.

42. Earlesfield Project Overview November 2024

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which detailed the current position of the Earlesfield Project. To date 45 properties had been completed, 28 properties under Phase 2 with a further 18 properties at various stages. There had been some slippage with the contractor but work was being done to avoid further slippage in the future.

The Director of Housing and Projects stated that the Council was working closely with the Contractor to enable the project to be completed by 31 March 2025. When the project was completed, it would release the 20 decant properties back onto the housing register, these properties had already gone through the project.

The Chairman once again stated that it was a massive upgrade for those living on the estate but he asked that the weekly reports be reinstated for himself and Councillor Cunnington as the Ward Councillors for the area.

One Member made reference to the visit by the Health and Safety Executive who were checking on how the asbestos in the properties was being dealt with. The Health and Safety Executive were pleased and satisfied with the work being carried out and she said that congratulations should be appreciated.

Members noted the report.

43. New Build and Acquisition Update

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which updated the Committee on the new build housing pipeline and purchases using the Local Authority Housing Fund.

The scheme at Swinegate, Grantham was progressing and was still on target for completion by July 2025, roofing work on the project was due to start at the end of the month.

The planning application for Wellington Way, Market Deeping was due to be submitted in November 2024 and the Cabinet Member for Housing referred to the significant amount of consultation that had been carried out in respect of the site.

Gorse Rise was a former garage site which had been demolished. Following pre-application advice, the plans had been amended, and a planning application was due in November 2024.

Site feasibility in respect of Kesteven Road, Stamford had been ongoing, the proposed scheme had been reduced to 11 units to enable more green space to be retained. Ward Councillors had been contacted in respect of the site, although no response had been received to date.

Bourne End Road, Colsterworth presented opportunities to demolish some of the existing stock and rebuild with biodiversity properties due to the size of the plots. It was hoped that a planning application would be submitted in November 2024 once a biodiversity net gain report had been received.

The Director of Housing and Projects stated that consultation in respect of the Right to Buy Scheme was being undertaken by the Government with a reduction in the discount offered. Currently the financial outcome of this proposal was unknown and the impact this would have on financing new build properties.

One Member commented on the Gorse Rise development and it was stated that this would be discussed outside of the meeting. Another comment was made about any significant risks with the developments to the Council. It was stated that each development had different risks associated with it. An example was given of the Swinegate site in Grantham. Going forward listed buildings would not be considered for development due to the risks involved.

The Director of Housing and Projects stated that each scheme was reviewed on an individual basis in respect to risk and a clear project plan was put in place with the contractor and monthly meetings took place to ensure strict budget management. Any issues would be reported to the Committee.

A further question was asked in respect of the Bourne End, Colsterworth development and whether it would work similar to the Earlesfield project to which the Cabinet Member for Housing responded.

Members noted the current position.

44. Corporate Plan 2024-27 Key Performance Indicators: 2024/25 Mid-Year (Q2) Report

The Policy Officer presented the report which covered those Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for quarter 2 of 2024/25 in respect of Housing. Appendix A to the report gave the overall performance against the nine actions that the Committee monitored. Six actions were green being on or above the target set. Three actions were on amber, these actions were currently less than 10% off target with resolutions in place to achieve the target within a reasonable timeframe. There were no red actions. An all Member briefing on a new KPI dashboard would take place in the new year.

The Director of Housing and Projects referred to page 46 of the report which covered the Void performance. The target for void properties had been set at 100 days by 31 March 2025. Currently the target was 126 days which had reduced from the previous quarter of 143 with positive progress being made to reduce the void time. A second void contractor was currently out to tender and this would be discussed at the Cabinet meeting in December 2024 which would support reducing the timeframe down to 100 days by March 2025.

A discussion on Voids followed and the Director of Housing and Projects was asked how confident she was that the target of 100 days would be met by March 2025. She stated that with the appointment of a second contractor to work on void properties and the commitment of the team she was confident that the target in March would be achieved.

The Chairman proposed that a full report on Voids be received at the meeting of the Housing OSC in March 2025, the proposal was seconded and on being put to the vote **AGREED**.

Decision

That a full report on Voids be submitted to the March meeting of the Housing OSC in 2025.

Further discussion on voids followed. A non-Committee Member referred to the practice of erecting boards and metal shutters on void properties and whether this is still the case.

The Head of Technical Services (Housing), stated that this practice was only followed if there was a security issue, however he could not confirm at the present time whether there were any properties with South Kesteven.

➤ Action

That an email be forwarded to Members of the Housing OSC confirming whether there were currently any void properties boarded up within South Kesteven.

More discussion followed and it was stated that previously void properties had been shown on Stat Maps however that was no longer the case. The Director of Housing and Projects stated that she would look at how the information could now be provided.

➤ Action

The Director of Housing and Projects to look at an alternative means of providing void information in map form.

One Member asked about those tenants who refused air source heat pumps and denied access to properties and how this affected the KPI's. The Director of Housing and Projects stated that this was a challenge as the Council wanted to replace failed systems. As part of Wave 3 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund it was hoped that a Tenancy Liaison Officer would be recruited to be able to liaise with tenants to understand their concerns and manage the scheme.

Members noted the report.

45. Update on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1

The Director of Housing and Projects presented the report which provided the Committee with an update on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund projects to upgrade South Kesteven District Council housing stock with energy efficient measures.

The Council were required to achieve an average of at least Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C across its housing stock by 2030 to mitigate fuel poverty for the Council's tenants. The average EPC for the Council's housing stock was EPC D. Members were referred to paragraph 2.6 of the report which detailed the measures identified for each property and the number of properties.

To date Phase 2 of the project had completed 45 Air Source Heat Pumps in properties. Phase 3 of the project was underway at Turnor Crescent, Grantham in respect of external wall insulation. The whole street had been targeted and several properties on the street had already benefitted from the fabric upgrade so the project would focus on the remaining Council owned properties.

The next bid for funding would close on 25 November 2024. The funding requirements would be similar to the current wave, but funding would be over a three year period and all Council dwellings with a EPC rating of less than C would be eligible for the scheme. The Committee would be notified when further information was known. It was proposed that a report on Wave 3 and an update in respect of Wave 2 funding be on the agenda for the January 2025 meeting of the committee with further updates in March 2025.

A discussion followed in respect of the external wall installation and wall cladding on Council buildings with questions being asked about cladding on Council buildings and their locations. The Health, Safety and Compliance Officer made reference to the work being done in respect of fire compartmentalisation which also covered fire retardant cladding. The Chairman asked if an update in respect of cladding on Council properties would be available for the January 2025 meeting if not could an update be given in March 2025.

One Member asked if those houses that had been sold had been advised if their property had/required fire retardant cladding. The Director of Housing and Project indicated that she would follow this up.

Members noted that current position.

An adjournment took place between 15:22 – 15:40)

46. Rough Sleeper Initiative update

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which provided an update on the arrangements of the Change 4 Lincs team who were hosted by the Council.

The Change 4 Lincs initiative had been set up to tackle rough sleeping across four local authority areas: The Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding was allocated by central Government and funding was secured until March 2025.

Following a successful bid South Kesteven District Council were awarded funding for three years from 2022 until March 2025. South Kesteven District Council hosted the Change 4 Lincs Team on behalf of, North Kesteven District Council, West Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council.

The large geographical area covered presented challenges to the Outreach Team and the delivery of an effective outreach service. The number of rough sleepers continued to rise for many reasons. The Cabinet Member for Housing referred to the presentation that they had received before the meeting and the information that had been given at the presentation that a lot of the increase in rough sleeping was due to non-fault evictions, although this had not been confirmed, but it was confirmed that rough sleeping nationally was on the rise.

Although the Council encouraged partnership working, the current stance was that the Council would move away from the current model at Change 4 Lincs and focus the Council services on a rough sleeper support provision specifically in South Kesteven. West Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council would also like to follow the individual Council model.

At the present time it was not known what the rough sleeper funding would look like after March 2025 but each of the four local authorities were making plans to dissolve the current model to have individual models. It was assumed that the spending breakdown between the authorities would follow the current pattern. Work was currently on going on what the Council's offer would look like in respect of rough sleepers and this would be reported back to the Committee once the information was available.

The Chairman made reference to the current negative publicity that was circulating on social media and he thanked the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Housing Team for all the work that they did in respect of rough sleeping in extremely difficult circumstances. This was echoed by the previous Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Dilks who praised the Head of Housing and the Homelessness Team for the tireless work that they did and he supported a bespoke model for South Kesteven going forward.

A discussion followed with the following comments/questions being raised/asked:

- The current geographical area covered was large and presented challenges.
- The increase in homelessness/rough sleeping and the need for accommodation had increased costs significantly.
- Lessons learnt with the current model would be built in to the new provision.

- Covid had impacted the initiative from when it was first set up which had affected the smooth running of the initiative from the start and had contributed to the huge overspends in the first few years.
- Due to the overspend focus had been more on support rather than accommodation with possibly more people being on the streets than the Council would have liked, this was caveated that some of the people in unsettled accommodation were reluctant to move on. People who were on the streets were more engaged to get off the streets than those who were already in some type of accommodation.
- Accommodation was not always the answer, it was stated that some of the rough sleepers had been offered accommodation but due to their own actions this accommodation had been lost.
- Many rough sleepers had complex issues and a holistic support package was required.
- Numbers of rough sleepers across the four districts were drastically different.
- When would the final arrangements be known, this was reliant on when central Government announced their plans for funding, as the funding finished in March 2025, which was a short timeframe from November the Government may roll the funding over to the next financial year.
- Funding maybe known by the end of November 2024 and the Government had indicated that they would be investing more in homelessness.
- A comprehensive spending review would be undertaken by the Government next year.
- The Government were keen to move away from “bidding” for funding to allocation.
- An example was given and it was stated that joined up support from key agencies was vital for getting people with complex needs off the streets.
- There was a Vulnerable Adults Panel which was part of a multi-agency partnership offering people bespoke support.
- How many rough sleepers were there in South Kesteven? The Head of Housing stated that she would have to come back with exact figures but she stated that a monthly return was completed and an annual count was taken every year. The annual counts had shown a clear increase and would be undertaken the following week.

Further discussion followed on how the other authorities undertook their annual counts, agreements between local authorities, that it was important that the public trust the professional officers to carry out their duties in line with legislation, that contact information was published widely with a national free phone line.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for all the work that they did.

47. Repairs and Maintenance Policy

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which updated the current Repairs and Maintenance Policy. The new Policy was more streamlined and user friendly. She highlighted where the Committee had previously agreed to include a section regarding non-urgent repairs and access to properties to carryout safety inspections for gas and electricity certification. Appendix A to the report reproduced a clear, easy to read guide on what was expected of tenants and what repairs and maintenance the Council would undertake. Appendix B gave the statutory timeframes for repairs.

Clarity was sought in respect of the timeframes and what that meant in “real” time and the Head of Technical Services (Housing) stated that the 24 hours started from when the report was made. A repair would be made safe within the 24hrs with any urgent repairs being undertaken within 4 hours.

Further discussion on access to properties and safety certificates and non-urgent repairs followed to which the Director of Housing and Projects replied. It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to recommend the updated Policy to Cabinet for approval.

Recommendation

That the Committee:

- 1. Notes the contents of the report and the updated Repairs and Maintenance Policy, and***
- 2. Recommends the approval of the updated Repairs and Maintenance Policy to Cabinet, effective from April 2025.***

48. Work Programme 2024/25

The following items to be included on the Work Programme:

20 January 2025

- Fire Compartmentalisation – report to include cladding.
- Update on Homelessness and Rough Sleepers – to be a standing item on the agenda going forward.
- Decant Policy
- Repairs update following audit and actions to be undertaken
- Riverside project update
- Verbal update on response times to housing inquiries via email

24 March 2025

- Void report
- Update on Homelessness and Rough Sleepers

- Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund wave 3 update

A Member asked if work could be done in respect of fobs, payments, expiry etc and also mobility scooters and where they were charged particularly in communal areas where health and safety could be an issue. The Director of Housing and Projects stated that there was a Mobility Scooter Working Group which was looking into this and the potential problems and risks. The Emergency Planning, Health and Safety Lead stated that the work did form part of the Fire Strategy because of the significant risks with scooters. An update could be given after the next meeting as a policy document was close to completion.

The Chairman concluded the meeting thanking the Housing Teams for all the work that they undertook.

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

None.

50. Close of meeting

The Chairman thanked the Housing Officers for the work that they did and closed the meeting at 16:25.



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 20 January 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Housing Compliance Figures

Report Author

Phil Swinton, Health, Safety, Emergency Planning 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. Note the latest compliance position for December 2024.**
- 2. 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 s151)

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 Manager.

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. Following the lifting of the Social Housing Regulatory notice it was agreed that the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee will continue to receive update reports on progress to ensure that the Members 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 December 2024 (3.4 - 3.11).
- 3.2. The process of capping external meters, which was approved at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September, has continued to support the Council's efforts to increase safety standards in the housing stock.
- 3.3. The implementation of capping external meters is not a decision that was taken lightly and this remain under review as we move into the winter period. Updates will continue to be provided as part of these reports.
- 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 – At the end of December this was 99.41% which is another welcome increase. A total of 27 properties were not compliant, 4 of these have an external meter are now in the capping process. A new court date has been requested to apply for warrants for entry to properties.

- 3.9. Electrical inspections are at 93.99% which is a small decrease compared with the previous month and is due to a small number of appointments missed. This is not unexpected given the Christmas period
- 3.10. Smoke and CO – 100%. 598 inspections were completed taking the total to 5,439 inspections
- 3.11. Damp and Mould – 922 damp and mould inspections have been undertaken with works completed at 592 of the properties. 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/re inspections have been programmed in and updates regarding the progress of the completion of works will continue to be provided to this committee.

Damp and Mould	December 2022 – December 2023	Outstanding	January – October 2024	Outstanding	November – December 2024	Outstanding
Number of reports	424	54 (86*)	424	212 (274*)	74	64

*comparison data from the report presented to committee on 14 November 2024

- 3.12. **Leadership Compliance Meetings:** Chaired by the Chief Executive / Director for Housing and Projects 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.
- 3.13. **Regular Reports to Committees and Cabinet:** The necessary reporting to appropriate committees will continue and will change as per the Committee’s 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.

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 October 2024 – December 2024
7.2 Appendix B – Gas and EICR January 2024 – December 2024

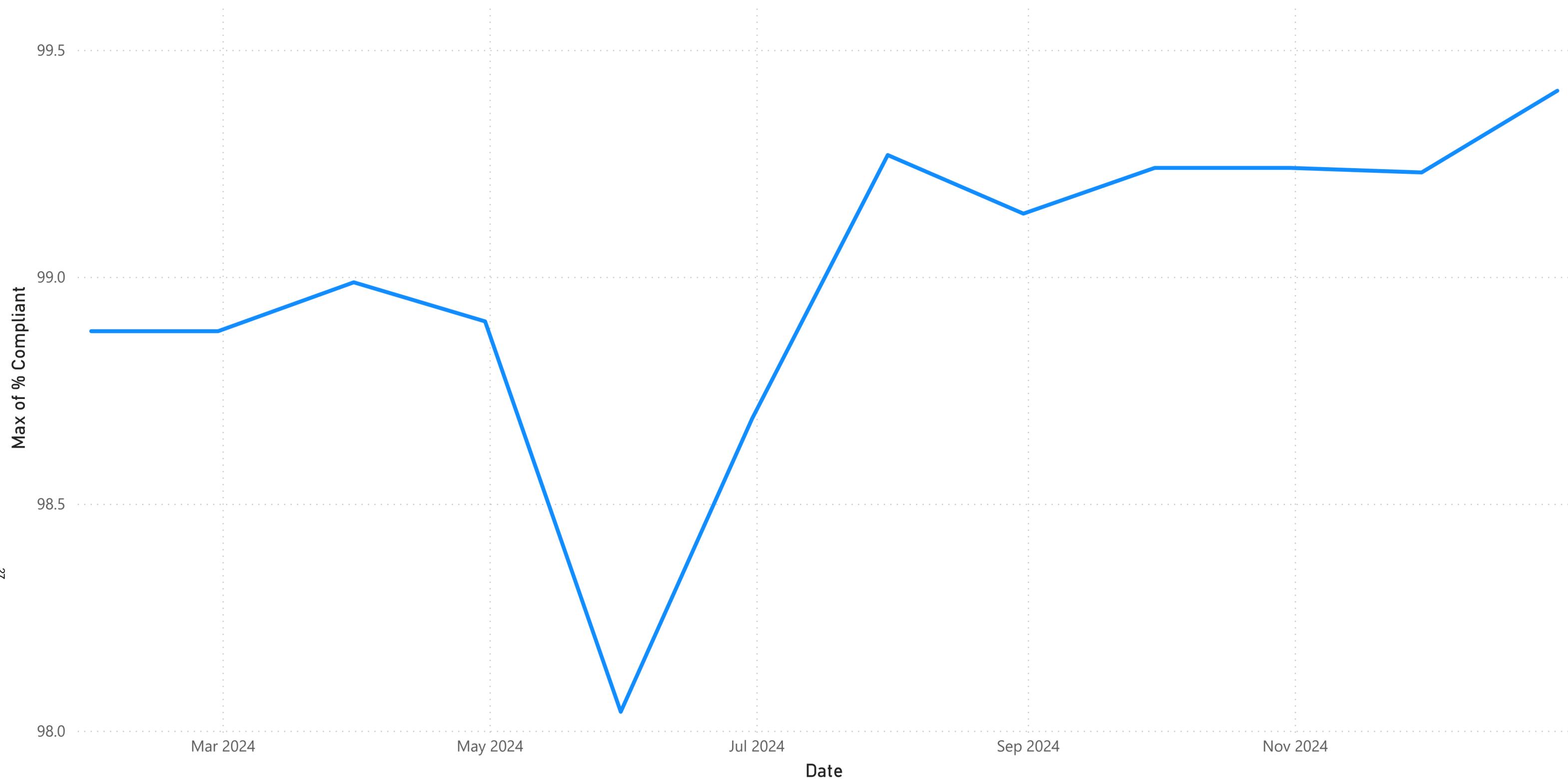
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31/10/2024				30/11/2024				31/12/2024				Comments
Baseline number	Compliant	Non Compliant	% Compliant	Baseline number	Compliant	Non Compliant	% Compliant	Baseline number	Compliant	Non Compliant	% Compliant	
Lifts 33	33	0	100.00%	33	33	0	100.00%	33	33	0	100.00%	
Gas 4647	4612	35	99.24%	4640	4604	36	99.23%	4640	4613	27	99.41%	At the end of December there were 27 non-compliant properties. This includes 4 newly non-compliant properties, 2 awaiting repair works, 2 Major void properties awaiting certification and 4 with external meters which are now in the capping process. A new court date has been requested to apply for additional warrants for entry
EICR5853	5473	380	93.51%	5845	5496	349	94.03%	5845	5494	351	93.99%	The EICR number for compliant properties has dropped just below the 94% achieved last month. It is not unusual to see a small drop in success rates over the Christmas period.
Asbestos Reg 4 -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 5853	5853	0	100.00%	5853	5853	0	100.00%	5853	5853	0	100.00%	598 inspections were completed in December on Smoke and CO alarms bringing the total inspections to 5,439
Damp 848	488	360	57.54%	887	548	339	61.78%	922	592	330	64.2%	Total property Inspections 922 - Total properties completed 592 - Total outstanding 330 , jobs with contractors 333 - jobs with repairs team 245. As a percentage this gives us 64.2% of all property reports completed. NB :Some properties have multiple tasks so property and task numbers will not tally exactly

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Gas

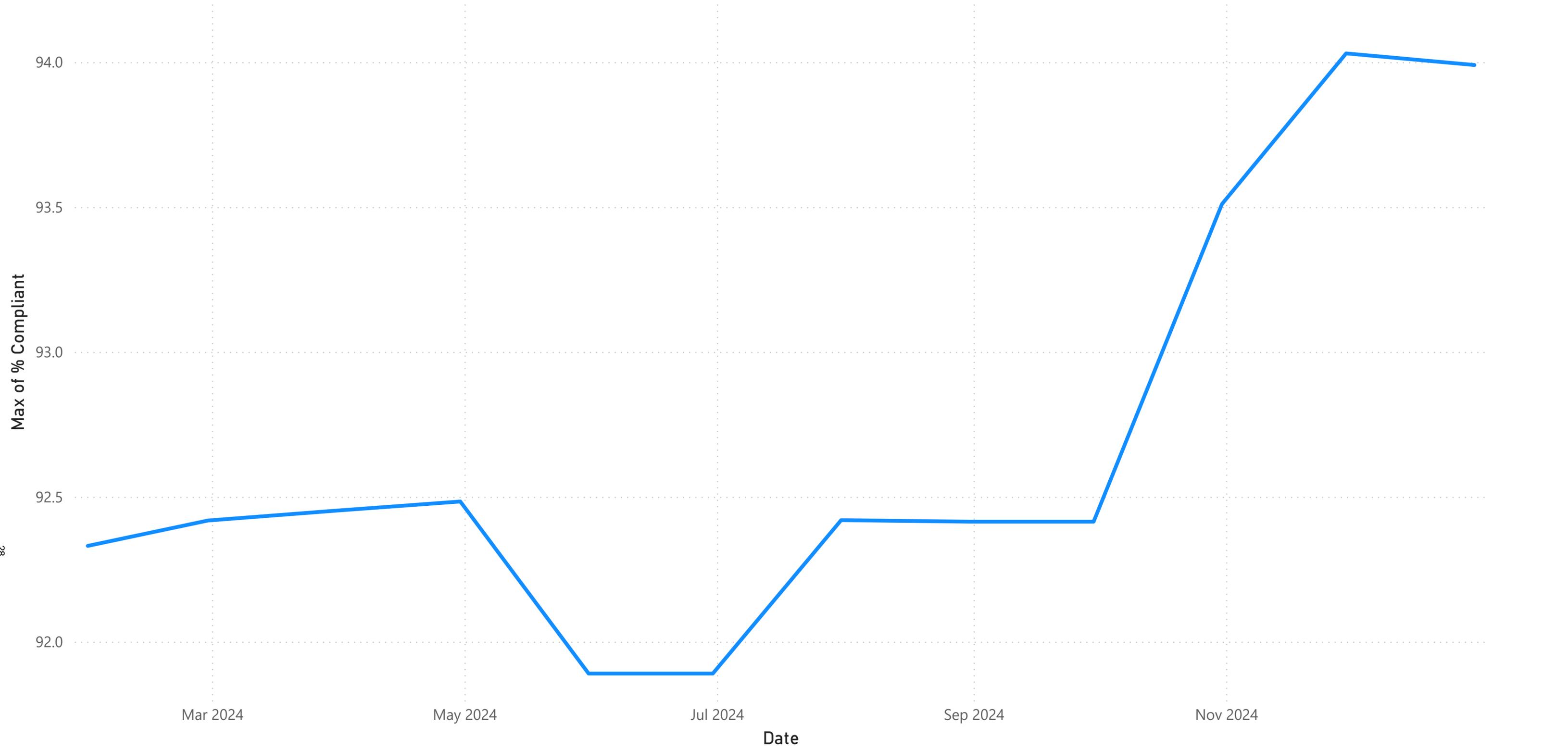
Max of % Compliant by Date



27

Electrical

Max of % Compliant by Date





**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 20 January 2025

Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Earlesfield Project Overview January 2025

Report Author

Andy Garner, Planned Works Manager - Technical Services

✉ andy.garner@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

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

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	N
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	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

- 1.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report, which is for noting.

Completed by: Paul Sutton Interim Head of Finance (Deputy s151)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 This work programme does not present any legal or governance issues and is a report to update Members on progress.

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 14 November 2024, 45 properties were completed under phase 1. Progress on the project under Phase 2 is continuing with 40 properties complete and handed back to tenants. A further 13 properties are currently in progress and are at various stages of work. This leaves a further 23 properties to be started.
- 2.3. A Core Group meeting was held on 26 November 2024 where the Council raised concerns in relation to the poor progress that was being made on the project. Following the meeting United Living provided a comprehensive action plan to address the delivery of the contract. A further site meeting was held on the 28 November 2024 where the site teams from both United Living and SKDC

discussed operational issues which included frequent programme updates, snagging/defects and tenant move dates.

- 2.4. A weekly meeting is now set in diaries to discuss any issues and to monitor handovers and any delays.
- 2.5. The next Core Group meeting was held on the 17 December 2024 to discuss progress. The number of defects has significantly decreased, and the number of completions has increased but SKDC raised concerns with United Living that the project will not be completed by the target date of 31 March 2025.
- 2.6. United Living agreed to provide a revised programme of works in conjunction with SKDC's site team to ensure property moves are in place and the decant properties are available for the contractor to commence works on. A meeting has been scheduled in January to agree the updated programme.
- 2.7. Monthly progress meetings take place with United Living, these will continue to monitor the on-site works and quality. At each meeting it is strongly reiterated to United Living that the project must be completed by the end of March 2025.
- 2.8. Prior to handover, a joint visit to inspect the works and note any defects takes place between United Living's Site Manager and SKDC Site Inspector. This joint approach has been taken to reduce the time to achieve final handover.
- 2.9. The quality of work on handover is good with only minor defects being reported. These minor defects do not hold up the process of moving the tenant back to their home.
- 2.10. The current progress is shown on Appendix 1.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. 45 Properties have been completed under phase 1. 40 properties have been completed under phase 2 so far with a further 13 properties at various stages of work. Additional properties will be started as the programme progresses.
- 3.2. Current Primary risks associated with this project are:
 - That adequate resources are allocated by United Living to enable project completion by the end of March 2025.
 - Decant properties are available and turned around in a timely manner to reduce delays.
 - Access to all properties on the programme to enable the licenced asbestos removal to take place safely.
 - Works are completed to a high standard with the aim of zero defects on handover.

- To ensure that the allocated budget is spent within the current 24/25 financial year.
- 3.3. Mitigation measures for the above key points are being monitored on a daily/weekly basis and through the regular monthly progress meetings by both SKDC staff and United Living.
- 3.4. The Core Group meetings also monitor the project risks from a strategic perspective. (Next Core Group meeting is scheduled for 28 January 2025)

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 4.1 Report is for information and noting.

5. Appendices

- 5.1. Appendix 1 – Earlesfield Project Overview

UPRN	House Number	Address	Area	Postcode	Kitchen replacement	Bathroom Replacement	DPI fitted	Full rewire	Partial Rewire	Boiler Replacement	Full heating replacement	Fire Stopping	Loft insulation	Replace Front door	Replace Rear door	Replace windows	Information	Asbestos survey complete	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	Actual Completion Date	Claimed		
																			Booked/ Completed	Delivery																			
1012379	21	Ivatt Court	Grantham	NG31 7RF	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	07/06/2024	☺		
1012357	2	Ivatt Court	Grantham	NG31 7RF	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	10/05/2024	☺	
1008237	2	Gannet Court	Grantham	NG31 7RR	N	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	17/05/2024	☺	
1012459	7	Ivatt Court	Grantham	NG31 7RF	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	10/05/2024	☺	
1007949	12	Falcon Court	Grantham	NG31 7RP	N	N	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	24/05/2024	☒	
1008204	10	Gannet Court	Grantham	NG31 7RR	Y	N	Y	Y		N	N	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	17/05/2024	☒	
1009309	15	Mallard Court	Grantham	NG31 7RW	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	07/06/2024	☒	
1012426	3	Ivatt Court	Grantham	NG31 7RF	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	24/05/2024	☺	
1009503	5	Mallard Court	Grantham	NG31 7RW	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	21/06/2024	☺	
1008077	7	Falcon Court	Grantham	NG31 7RP	N	N	Y	N		N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	21/06/2024	☺	
1007927	10	Falcon Court	Grantham	NG31 7RP	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	02/07/2024	☒	
1010668	143	Thames Road	Grantham	NG31 7SR	Y	Y	Y	Y		N	N	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	12/07/2024	☺	
1008099	9	Falcon Court	Grantham	NG31 7RP	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	05/07/2024	☺	
1010624	135	Thames Road	Grantham	NG31 7SR	N	Y		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	12/07/2024	☺	
1014364	3	Sturrock Court	Grantham	NG31 7RQ	Y	Y	N	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	22/08/2024	☒	
1009514	6	Mallard Court	Grantham	NG31 7RW	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	23/07/2024	☺	
1009490	4	Mallard Court	Grantham	NG31 7RW	Y	P	N	Y		N	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	26/07/2024	☺	
1009423	27	Mallard Court	Grantham	NG31 7RW	Y	Y	Y	Y		N	N	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	15/08/2024	☺
1014079	11	Stirling Court	Grantham	NG31 7RJ	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	24/09/2024	☺	
1009412	26	Mallard Court	Grantham	NG31 7RW	Y	P	Y	Y		N	N	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	13/09/2024	☒	
1012324	17	Ivatt Court	Grantham	NG31 7RF	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	24/09/2024	☺	
1012277	12	Ivatt Court	Grantham	NG31 7RF	Y	Y	N	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	19/09/2024	☺	
1011387	11	Gresley Court	Grantham	NG31 7RH	Y	Y	Y	Y		N	N	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	15/10/2024	☺
1009398	24	Mallard Court	Grantham	NG31 7RW	N	N	Y	N		N	N	N	N	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	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	21/06/2024	N/A	
1008919	22	Kestrel Court	Grantham	NG31 7RN	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	25/09/2024	☺	
1011398	12	Gresley Court	Grantham	NG31 7RH	Y	Y	Y	Y		N	N	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	08/11/2024	☺
1009014	9	Kestrel Court	Grantham	NG31 7RN	Y	Y	N	Y		Y	P	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	09/10/2024	☺	
1014262	1	Sturrock Court	Grantham	NG31 7RQ	N	P	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	16/10/2024	☺	
1009332	18	Mallard Court	Grantham	NG31 7RW	Y	Y	N	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	22/10/2024	☺	
1010599	129	Thames Road	Grantham	NG31 7SR	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	01/11/2024	☺	
1011569	8	Gresley Court	Grantham	NG31 7RH	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	01/11/2024	☺
1009343	19	Mallard Court	Grantham	NG31 7RW	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
1009445	29	Mallard Court	Grantham	NG31 7RW	Y	Y	Y	Y		N	N	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	29/11/2024	☺
1007961	14	Falcon Court	Grantham	NG31 7RP	Y	Y	N	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	02/12/2024		
1009525	7	Mallard Court	Grantham	NG31 7RW	Y	Y	N	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	04/12/2024	
1008839	15	Kestrel Court	Grantham	NG31 7RN	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	29/11/2024	
1014057	1	Stirling Court	Grantham	NG31 7RJ	Y	Y	N	Y		N	P	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	29/11/2024		
1011376	10	Gresley Court	Grantham	NG31 7RH	Y	N	Y	Y		N	N	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	18/12/2024	
1008953	3	Kestrel Court	Grantham	NG31 7RN	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	11/12/2024		
1014331	17	Sturrock Court	Grantham	NG31 7RQ	N	Y	Y	Y		N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			
1008873	19	Kestrel Court	Grantham	NG31 7RN	Y	Y	Y	N	Y		N	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	20/12/2024	
1014353	21	Sturrock Court	Grantham	NG31 7RQ	N	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	03/12/2024		
1009401	25	Mallard Court	Grantham	NG31 7RW	N	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	11/12/2024		
1009536	8	Mallard Court	Grantham	NG31 7RW	N	N	Y	N		Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	N/A	23/12/2024		
1014068	10	Stirling Court	Grantham	NG31 7RJ	Y	Y	Y	Y		N	N	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			
1012335	18	Ivatt Court	Grantham	NG31 7RF	Y	Y	N	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y</																									



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 20 January 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Fire Compartmentation works update

Report Author

Phil Swinton, Health, Safety, Compliance and Emergency Planning Manager

✉ phil.swinton@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the program of fire compartmentation work within Council's housing stock

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the information in the report**
- 2. Receive biannual progress updates**

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 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 included 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 s151)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 This compliance update provides Members with an opportunity to monitor progress in a significant compliance project. Legal implications for non-compliance are incorporated within the risk ratings.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer

Health and Safety

- 1.3 There are legal requirements under the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 and the Building Safety Act 2022 in relation to fire safety which the Council must meet. The project identified in this report will ensure the Council meets its legal obligations and also its moral obligations under Safety legislation.

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

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. This report provides the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update regarding the Fire Compartmentation works which the Compliance Team are in the process of completing.
- 2.2. In 2022 the Compliance Team were tasked with the review of Fire Safety provision and to implement the necessary actions to improve fire safety where gaps were identified. The initial step was to commission new fire risk assessments (FRA's) for every scheme and block which contained a communal area/shared communal space, as required by law. This required 147 new reports to be completed and reviewed, along with a review of all previous reports and fire related information.
- 2.3. Following this review the Compliance Team identified the need for more detailed investigations to be undertaken. Whilst legal compliance was present, the information and evidence provided by the previous FRA's did not identify all the fire safety improvement options available.
- 2.4. The second phase of this project was to commission the completion of both Fire Prioritisation Tool reports and a Fire Compartmentation survey for each of the blocks to identify the fire safety improvement options.
- 2.5. The Prioritisation Tool reports are designed to supplement the FRA process and provide more detailed information regarding risk which feeds into the Fire Strategy. These are not mandatory however are acknowledged as best practice by Central Government and the National Fire Chiefs Council.
- 2.6. Fire Compartmentation surveys provide information regarding the condition of compartments in buildings including walls, flooring and cavity barriers. There are no specific regulations concerning compartmentation but under the Building Safety Act 2022 there is a requirement for the maintenance and provision of fire compartmentation.
- 2.7. Compartmentation is the cornerstone of a successful passive Fire Protection Strategy. Dividing buildings into fire-resistant compartments helps suppress the spread of fire, should one occur. Compartmentation strategies are designed around safety of life requirements. They protect shared spaces, means of escape and delay/prevent the spread of fire throughout.
- 2.8. Following completion of the Compartmentation surveys, Global HSE were procured by the Council in September 2023 to undertake the identified fire safety improvement works.
- 2.9. The works are being completed on a risk-based approach and those buildings with residents which could be classified as more vulnerable/buildings requiring more

work have been prioritised and split into 3 phases. Phase 1 of the Fire Compartmentation project includes 15 schemes which are detailed in Appendix 1. Appendix 1 also provides details of the buildings included in phases 2 and 3 and information regarding the progress of the scheme.

- 2.10. The works being undertaken include: Replacement of fire doors, provision of fire breaks and fire curtains in roof voids, sealing gaps/ voids in communal spaces.
- 2.11. The compartmentation works completed to date within the roof voids have ensured sufficient flat separation and travel distances for fire have been achieved throughout. Storage cupboards and communal areas have also been sealed where improvement works were identified.
- 2.12. To date 471 fire doors have been replaced, 40 fire curtains have been fitted in ceiling breaks and individual flats across all 15 sites have also been surveyed to identify any required fire safety improvement works..
- 2.13. 11 of the first 15 sites have been completed, works are underway at the remaining 4 sites.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. This report is provided for information and Members are asked to note the progress made to date on the Fire Compartmentation works.
- 3.2. The Council meet Fire Safety compliance within every scheme and block which contains a communal area/shared communal space. The works being undertaken are to enhance fire safety.

4. Reason for the Recommendations

- 4.1 This report is provided for information to ensure that Members are kept updated regarding the Fire Compartmentation works the Council are completing.

5. Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix 1 - List of Schemes and status of works

	UPRN	BLOCK NO	STREET	POSTCODE	STATUS
Phase 1	1080542	BLOCK 24 - 42	RIVERSIDE	NG31 6QS	COMPLETE
	1087918	BLOCK 10-27	WOODS CLOSE	NG23 5ET	IN PROGRESS
	1087123	BLOCK 19-27	CHURCH VIEW	NG31 8ND	IN PROGRESS
	1086108	BLOCK 6 - 21	RECTORY CLOSE	NG32 1BU	COMPLETE
	1080304	BLOCK 52-84	MANNERS STREET	NG31 8AR	COMPLETE
	1081761	BLOCK 19-42	WITHAM PLACE	NG31 6JX	COMPLETE
	1090864	BLOCK 126-186	ESSEX ROAD	PE9 1LS	COMPLETE
	1090988	BLOCK 18-34	EMLYNS GARDENS	PE9 1DN	COMPLETE
	1091323	BLOCK 2-25	HILLARY CLOSE	PE9 1XG	COMPLETE
	1095449	BLOCK 1-22	MEADOW CLOSE	PE10 9EL	IN PROGRESS
	1096066	BLOCK 10-35	STANTON CLOSE	PE10 9HG	COMPLETE
	1085036	1-4	CENTRAL PLACE	NG31 9NX	COMPLETE
	1085047	10-13	CENTRAL PLACE	NG31 9NX	COMPLETE
	1085058	14-17	CENTRAL PLACE	NG31 9NX	COMPLETE
1085069	5-8	CENTRAL PLACE	NG31 9NX	COMPLETE	
1096839	BLOCK 1-6 (1-24)	MANOR COURT	PE10 9PP	IN PROGRESS	
Phase 2	1098619	BLOCK 23-27	ALMOND COURT	PE10 0HP	
	1079421	1-6	AGNES STREET	PE10 6QP	
	1079670	1-6	THE GRANGE	NG31 6PA	
	1079681	16-21	THE GRANGE	NG31 6PA	
	1079692	22-27	THE GRANGE	NG31 6PA	
	1079705	7-15	THE GRANGE	NG31 6PA	
	1094479	1	ST MARTINS CLOSE	PE9 2NF	
	1094480	10 - 13	ST MARTINS CLOSE	PE9 2NF	
	1094491	2 - 5	ST MARTINS CLOSE	PE9 2NF	
	1094504	6 - 9	ST MARTINS CLOSE	PE9 2NF	
	1094606	1-4	TENTER CRT	PE9 2EZ	
	1094628	7-12	TENTER CRT	PE9 2EZ	
	1095358	BLOCK 10-17	ST CLEMENTS	PE9 2LY	
	1095369	BLOCK 18-25	ST CLEMENTS	PE9 2LY	
	1095370	BLOCK 2-9	ST CLEMENTS	PE9 2LY	
	1095381	BLOCK 26-33	ST CLEMENTS	PE9 2LY	
	1095085	BLOCK 1-4	CLARE CLOSE	PE9 2QA	
	1095096	BLOCK 15-18	CLARE CLOSE	PE9 2QA	
	1095109	BLOCK 27-30	CLARE CLOSE	PE9 2QA	
2071490	BLOCK 5-8	CLARE CLOSE	PE9 2QA		
Phase 3	1085445	COMMUNITY CENTRE	SANDON CLOSE	NG31 9AX	
	1085854	BLOCK 10	ANGEL COURT	NG32 3PR	
	1085923	BLOCK 31A	ST NICHOLAS CLOS	NG32 2ND	
	1087510	BLOCK 2	ARCHERS WAY	NG33 5DS	
	1089458	COMMUNITY CENTRE	EDMONDS CLOSE	PE9 1XE	
	1094515	COMMUNITY CENTRE	ST MARTINS CLOSE	PE9 2NF	
	1095121	COMMUNITY CENTRE	CLARE CLOSE	PE6 2QA	
	1095392	COMMUNITY CENTRE	ST CLEMENTS	PE9 2LY	
1097321	COMMUNITY CENTRE	MILLFIELD ROAD (E)	PE6 8QY		

1097365	COMMUNITY CENTRE	BENEDICT COURT	PE6 8QT
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**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 20 January 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Homelessness and Rough Sleeper update

Report Author

Sarah McQueen, Head of Service (Housing)

✉ sarah.mcqueen@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To update the committee on the status and recent activity in our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper services

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the latest position of our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper services**

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 arising directly from the report, however the Council's funding allocation from Government for 2025/26 is set out at 3.24 & 3.25.

Completed by: Paul Sutton, Interim Head of Finance/Section 151 officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report, which is prepared for the purposes of updating Members.

Completed by: Mandy Braithwaite, Legal Services

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. At the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on 14 November 2024 it was agreed that there will now be a standing agenda item updating the committee on our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper services. This report will give an overview of the recent work and status of both teams as well as some key updates in specific areas of interest.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. Please see below an overview of key updates from across the service

3.2. Rough Sleeper Initiative

- 3.3. As previously reported, SKDC's Rough Sleeper initiative is delivered via the Change 4 Lincs (C4L) team which covers four local authority areas: South Kesteven District Council, North Kesteven District Council, West Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council

- 3.4. The team is hosted by South Kesteven District Council and was created by each district council contributing their Rough Sleeper Initiative funding.
- 3.5. The team consists of eight team members who provide an outreach service, support service and access into the private rented sector. The team is managed by the Councils Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Manager, managers from the other three districts also provide support to help shape the service.
- 3.6. Up until recently, the future funding for this initiative was looking uncertain as funding had only been confirmed to 31 March 2025.
- 3.7. However, on 18 December 2024, MHCLG announced the funding for 2025/26, confirming that the allocation will mirror that of 2024/25. This totals £646,348 which will be awarded to South Kesteven and must be used to continue to deliver this service for the four districts.
- 3.8. Work has commenced to finalise the plans to deliver this service across the four districts with the aim of moving away from the current model to a model where the team is dispersed across all districts. This would allow each district to have a dedicated team in place to complement their existing Housing Options service.
- 3.9. The following table details the C4L case numbers as at 3rd January 2025.

District	Number in temporary accommodation	Number of open support cases
South Kesteven	5	18
North Kesteven	0	12
West Lindsey	2	16
South Holland	2	19

- 3.10. The number of people in accommodation is low compared to the number of people being supported. This could be because the people we are supporting are already in accommodation and require support to maintain it, or they have refused the offer of temporary accommodation.
- 3.11. Seven people moved on from temporary accommodation in December 2024, as they were either moved to other longer-term accommodation or they were evicted from the placement provided due to their behaviour.

3.12. Annual Rough sleeper count

- 3.13. Since autumn 2010, all local authorities in England have been required to submit an annual snapshot figure to MHCLG to indicate the number of people sleeping rough in their area on a 'typical' night between 1st October and 30th November.
- 3.14. The chosen night in Lincolnshire was agreed as the 21 November 2024. There are three approaches councils can use to conduct this count which are as follows:
- 3.14.1. Count Based Estimate - This is a full physical count of the area, after midnight on the chosen 'typical' night.
 - 3.14.2. Evidence based estimate – an estimate meeting with partner agencies is held after the chosen night to agree an intelligence-led estimated total number of people who slept rough on that 'typical' night.
 - 3.14.3. Evidence-based estimate, including a spotlight count - after midnight on the chosen 'typical' night, a smaller physical count of only hotspot areas is completed. Following the 'typical' night, an estimate meeting is held (as described above) to discuss those not seen during the hotspot count.
- 3.15. South Kesteven chose option 2, evidence-based estimate to conduct our count. The reason for this is that the Council have outreach staff out throughout the year so therefore have good knowledge of who is rough sleeping at any one time.
- 3.16. From experience, to then also conduct a physical count on the night is a huge strain on resource when the information we have is just as accurate without this count
- 3.17. This process has now been completed, with a partnership meeting being conducted on the 26 November 2024.
- 3.18. The final count for SKDC was 8 rough sleepers. This is 1 less than our count in 2023.
- 3.19. MHCLG are yet to publish the full UK figures for 2024, however previous years results (from 2010) can be viewed here: [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2023 - GOV.UK](#).

3.20. Homelessness update

3.21. The Housing Options team provide the Council's statutory homeless function. The team consists of four Housing Options Assistants, six Housing Options officers, a Senior Housing Options Officer and a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper manager.

3.22. The following table provides details of the homelessness case figures for the last three months:

	October 24	November 24	December 24
Number of active homelessness cases	301	248	252
Number of new approaches	159	170	157
Number in temporary accommodation	49	57	58
Of which – nightly paid	3	8	11
Of which – our stock	46	51	47

3.23. It is important to note that not all homelessness cases require temporary accommodation. The team work with households who are threatened with homelessness to try to prevent their homelessness, therefore alleviating the need for any temporary accommodation.

3.24. To fund Local Council's homelessness services, Central government distribute a Homelessness Prevention Grant. On 18 December 2024 the funding allocation for 2025/26 was announced. Details of all allocations can be found here: [Homelessness Prevention Grant allocations: 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

3.25. The Council's funding allocation is £753,955 which is a 27% increase from last year's allocation of £592,433.

3.26. However, in addition to this increase in funding, MHCLG have introduced a new ringfence which states that 49% of the funding allocation must be spent on prevention, relief and staffing activity. The 49% within this ringfence may not be spent on temporary accommodation.

3.27. This will give the team the opportunity to develop new and innovative ways to prevent homelessness..

3.28. As shown in the above figures, the number of households in nightly paid accommodation is increasing which could create a budget pressure for the council if the demand continues to increase. This figure usually increases in the colder months when the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is activated as

the Council are required to provide temporary accommodation to all rough sleepers.

3.29. Night shelter

3.30. As detailed in the previous paragraph providing nightly paid hotel accommodation can create a budget pressure for the council. In addition, it is recognised that hotel accommodation is not always suitable, there are limited options to access food and often the hotels the Council can access are outside of the main towns and difficult for people to travel to.

3.31. So, in order to tackle this issue, SKDC working in partnership with Grantham Ark have launched a new night shelter in Grantham which opened on 19 December 2024.

3.32. At present, the Shelter consists of a 4 bed flat, with 2 beds in each room so the maximum capacity is 8 occupants. On 10 January 2025 the Council had 7 people placed in the shelter.

3.33. Individuals placed in the shelter have access to basic food provisions, and a bed in a shared room. In addition, there is a volunteer support worker on site each evening and first thing each morning to signpost individuals to further support and provisions they can access during the day.

3.34. SKDC are funding overnight staff to ensure the safety of all individuals throughout the night.

3.35. The team are currently reviewing the potential utilisation of a community hall to increase the capacity of the shelter. If this is successful, the team will explore the possibility of spreading this provision across the district. An update on the progress of this provision will be provided to the committee at the meeting on 17 March 2025.

3.36. To date this provision has worked well, especially during the most recent activation of SWEP as it has meant most individuals placed due to the cold weather have been placed in the night shelter rather than hotels.

3.37. SWEP update

3.38. Since November 2024, SWEP has been activated twice, firstly from 19 November 2024 to 24 November 2024 and then again from 31 December 2024 and is currently still running as at the time of writing this report (10 January 2025).

- 3.39. During the first activation 6 individuals were placed in hotels across South Kesteven (5 male, 1 female)
- 3.40. During the second activation, 11 individuals have been accommodated in total as at 10th January 2025 (4 females, 7 males). 10 were placed in the night shelter, but not all required the same night so maximum 8 bed spaces has been sufficient so far. 1 individual was not deemed suitable for the shelter and therefore was placed into hotel accommodation.
- 3.41. This report highlights the amazing work the team has been doing and continues to do on a daily basis to try and support some of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 4.1 This report is for noting only and ensures that the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are kept updated on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper services.

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**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 20 January 2025

Report of Cabinet Member for Housing,
Councillor Virginia Moran

Damp and Mould Policy

Report Author

Mark Rogers, Head of Service (Technical Services)

✉ mark.rogers@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To inform the Committee of the updated Damp and Mould Policy effective from April 2025.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. Notes the contents of the report and the updated Damp and Mould Policy.
2. Recommends the approval of the updated Damp and Mould Policy to Cabinet, effective from April 2025.

Decision Information

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

No

What are the relevant corporate priorities?

Connecting communities
Sustainable South Kesteven
Enabling economic opportunities
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 arising directly from this report.

Completed by: Paul Sutton Interim Head of Finance (Deputy s151)

Legal and Governance

1.2 The Council has statutory responsibilities as a social landlord regarding compliance associated with damp and mould. Having a damp and mould policy in place ensures that the Council is clear as to how it will meet these regulatory requirements.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer

Health and Safety

1.3 Failure to comply with established standards and legal requirements carries both financial and reputational risks for the authority. More importantly the Council has a moral obligation to ensure that time frames for repair are adhered to and no one's physical or mental health is unduly impacted by the presence of or response to Damp and Mould matters.

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

2. Background to the Report

2.1. Social landlords must adhere to several regulations relating to damp and mould and a lack of compliance can place a landlord at risk of prosecution or financial penalty. It is therefore essential that the Council has a damp and mould policy in place which meets regulatory requirements.

2.2. Everyone is vulnerable to the health impacts of damp and mould, but people with certain health conditions, children and older adults are at greater risk of more severe health impacts.

- 2.3. The respiratory effects of damp and mould can cause serious illness and in the most severe cases, death. The tragic death of Awaab Ishak was the result of a severe respiratory condition due to prolonged exposure to mould in a home with inadequate ventilation.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. When responding to reports of damp and mould landlords should:
- Respond sensitively and assess the issue with urgency to identify the severity of the damp and mould and potential risk to residents.
 - Always tackle the underlying issue promptly, and act with urgency when concerns have been raised about resident health.
 - Residents should be informed about the steps that will be taken to remove mould and the timeframes for the work.
 - Landlords should inspect homes at least 6 weeks after remedial work has been carried out to ensure that the issue has been fixed and damp and mould has not reappeared. If damp and mould has reappeared, further investigation and intervention should be pursued.
 - Landlords should take a proactive approach to reduce damp and mould including having a clear process in place to document, manage and act on reports of damp and mould, understand the condition of their homes and make necessary interventions to ventilation, energy efficiency and address any building deficiencies.
 - Landlords should support residents to understand what they can do to reduce damp and mould and build relationships with residents, ensuring that they feel encouraged to report cases of damp and mould.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 This policy replaces the current Damp and Mould Protocol document which forms part of the Council's previous Repairs and Maintenance Policy. This standalone Damp and Mould Policy is in line with good practice and other landlords.
- 4.2 The Committee could recommend that a new policy is not necessary.
- 4.3 The Committee could recommend amendments to the draft Policy appended to this report.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. To ensure an updated Damp and Mould Policy is in place which meets regulatory requirements and our internal auditors' expectations.
- 5.2. To ensure the most efficient and timely service for Council's residents.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – Damp and Mould Policy
- 6.2 Appendix 2 – Existing Damp and Mould Addendum

Front and back pages to be added and uploaded to SKDC website after Housing OSC and Cabinet approval.

1. Scope of Policy

This policy sets out the overall approach that South Kesteven District Council (the Council) will take in relation to managing damp, mould and condensation in housing properties it owns or manages.

This policy will cover the different types of damp including condensation, penetration, rising and traumatic and who is responsible for dealing with damp and mould in properties.

2. Policy Statement

The Council is committed to delivering a range of maintenance services to best meet resident, legal and regulatory needs and to ensure that homes and communal facilities are safe and well maintained.

Through this policy we will establish appropriate processes, guidance and knowledge to ensure that all properties are well maintained and free from damp and mould that could risk the health and safety of our residents.

3. Legislation Requirements

Social landlords must adhere to several regulations related to damp and mould and lack of compliance can place a landlord at risk of prosecution or financial penalties. The legislation and standards include:

- Housing Act 2004
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Decent Homes Standard
- Minimum Level of Energy Efficiency Standard
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act, including the proposed requirements set out in the Awaabs Law

4. Policy Principles

The Council will:

- Comply with statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements and good practice.

- Undertake property inspections to investigate and diagnose the cause of damp and mould.
- Inform the resident of the findings of the investigation including identifying the cause of the damp, recommending effective solutions and remedial works and the timeframes to complete works.
- Implement all reasonable repair solutions and improvements to eliminate damp, including managing and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that the fabric of properties are protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp, mould and condensation.
- Respond to all reports of damp and condensation and complete works in line with our repairs policy timeframes, this will be dependent on the severity and urgency of the problem and complexity of the solution.
- Make all reasonable attempts to access the property to inspect and carry out the works. All repairs must have three attempts to the contact the resident before following up with written communication to the resident asking them to contact us to organise new repair.
- We will follow up within 6 months of any damp and mould repair being completed.
- We will use competent staff and contractors.
- We will work in partnership with customers ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided, including providing advice and guidance literature to prevent mould and condensation in the home.
- Ensure that budgets are used effectively and efficiently to deal with damp, mould and condensation problems.
- If it is unsafe for residents to remain in the property while the works are carried out, alternative accommodation arrangements will be made. It may be necessary in some cases to re-house on a permanent basis, either on medical grounds or property suitability, subject to relevant supporting evidence. The council will support the resident to find alternative accommodation.
- We will proactively manage our properties by reviewing our data and prioritising and targeting those at highest risk. This will include identifying properties which are hard to heat or with EPC below C to include in energy efficiency improvement programmes.
- We will assess and monitor our homes through our annual programme of stock condition surveys which will include a HHSRS survey to identify all category 1 and 2 hazards.
- We will provide all residents advice on how to prevent condensation and safely deal with low levels of mould in their homes.

Timeframes for completing damp and mould surveys and repairs:

Service	Timeframe	Appointment offered
Damp and mould survey	When a damp and mould case is reported a survey will be booked in within 14 calendar days.	Yes
Damp and mould report	Following a damp and mould survey a report will be written up and issued to the resident within 2 working days.	NA
Works following a damp and mould inspection	If works are required following a damp and mould survey these will be booked in to start within 7 calendar days.	Yes
Post inspections	On completion of all repairs associated with damp and mould, a post inspection will be carried out and a follow up inspection will be made in a further 6 months.	Yes

5. The Council's Responsibilities:

- All resident facing colleagues and operatives are responsible for spotting damp and mould, reporting and recording information they gather.
- The Repairs Contact Centre is responsible for logging all damp and mould cases reported.
- Technical colleagues are responsible for inspection, remediation, diagnosis and offering solutions.
- Our trades teams and appointed contractors are responsible for safely and effectively completing works in our homes.
- Managers for the above teams are responsible for ensuring the policy is understood and followed for existing and new colleagues.
- Managers are responsible for reviewing and reporting on the effectiveness of the policy and ensuring compliance.

6. Resident Responsibilities:

- All residents are responsible for reporting damp and mould to the Council and allowing access to their homes to complete work in accordance with their tenancy agreement.

- All residents should seek advice and permission before carrying out any changes within their homes to ensure that any alterations do not contribute to damp and mould or condensation.

7. Definitions

- Damp – the build-up of moisture in a property which can lead to the growth of mould and other microorganisms.
- Condensation – when moisture generated in the home cools and condenses onto colder parts of the building (i.e. window frames, corners and low points on walls behind sofas or wardrobes). Normal occupant activities such as showering, drying laundry and cooking generate moisture. If this moisture is unable to escape from the property it can build up in the air and over time, can lead to mould growth.
- Penetrating damp – water that gets into the property from the outside due to defects in the walls, roof, windows or floors.
- Rising damp – moisture from the ground that rises through parts of the property in contact with the ground (i.e. walls and floors).
- Traumatic damp – can be caused by leaking water from waste and heating pipes, overflowing baths or sinks, burst pipes or defective water storage vessels inside the property. It can also originate from outside of the property, for example from another building or environmental flooding.

8. Further Information and Support

The conditions that may increase the risk of condensation are:

- Lack of ventilation within the property.
- Inadequate heating.
- Inadequate loft insulation.
- High humidity.
- Overcrowding.

Damp and mould pose a risk to everyone's health; however, the following groups are more at risk:

- People with pre-existing conditions are at risk of their conditions worsening and have a higher risk of developing fungal infection or additional allergies.
- People of all ages who have a weakened immune system, such as people who have cancer or are undergoing chemotherapy.
- People who have transplant or other people who are taking medication that suppress their immune system.
- People living with mental health conditions.
- Pregnant women, their unborn babies and women who have recently given birth, who have weakened immune systems.

- Children and young people whose organs are still developing and are therefore more likely to suffer from physical conditions such as respiratory problems.
- Older people.
- People who are bedbound, housebound or have mobility problems making it more difficult to get out of a home with damp and mould and into fresh air.

9. Equality and Diversity

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

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

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

10. Complaints

We aim to meet the needs of our residents by providing an excellent service. However, it is acknowledged that occasionally things go wrong, and residents may wish to complain. Should the need arise to make a complaint, we will refer to our complaints policy and procedures.

11. Monitoring and Review

Performance and resident satisfaction will be monitored using our suite of key performance indicators and reported through to respective committees, senior management teams and scrutiny panels to identify areas for review and improvement.

Members of the Council will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and recommend policy changes to improve service delivery and customer experience.

This policy is reviewed every 3 years or on the introduction of new legislation or best practice. This policy will remain valid for use until a new version is available.

12. Associated Documents

List of documents – associated policies, procedures and publications:

- Asset Management Strategy
- Customer Feedback Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Recharge Policy
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Total Housing Compliance Policy

13. Where this Policy can be Found

This policy will be made available on our website.

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1. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Relevant legislation and regulatory compliance

This protocol is written in the context of the current legal and regulatory requirements as set out in the Repairs and Maintenance Policy with particular focus on the Landlord and Tenant Act, 1985, the Housing Health and Safety Rating System within the Housing Act 2004, Home (Fitness for habitation) Act 2018 and Decent Homes Guidance

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

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Tenant Responsibilities

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

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

3.2 Landlord Responsibilities

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

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

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

4. Identifying Damp and Mould

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. The Impact of Damp & Mould

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

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

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

6. Investigation and Repair Process

6.1 Investigative Process

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

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

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

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

6.2 Initial Report Actions¹

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

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

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

6.3 Case Management

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

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

Case management decisions include the following:

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

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

7. Monitoring the effectiveness of the Protocol

7.1 Performance

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.2 Review

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

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**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 20 January 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Decant Policy

Report Author

Sarah McQueen, Head of Service (Housing)

✉ sarah.mcqueen@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

This report provides the committee with details of the Council's proposed Decant Policy which explains the approach that will be followed when requiring tenants to be decanted from their home.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the proposed Decant Policy which is in line with best practice and will provide clear operational guidance.**
- 2. Recommend the Decant Policy for submission and adoption at Cabinet**

Decision Information

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

No

What are the relevant corporate priorities?

Connecting communities
Sustainable South Kesteven
Enabling economic opportunities
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 associated with this report.

Completed by: Paul Sutton Interim Head of Finance (Deputy s151)

Legal and Governance

1.2 There are no legal or governance implications that are not already outlined within the body of the report.

Completed by: Mandy Braithwaite, Legal Executive

Health and Safety

1.3 Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires the Council to ensure that persons, not in their employment, are not exposed to health or safety risks. As outlined in the policy some works, for example those concerning substances, could create an additional risk and it is right that decant is considered where the existing mitigations may not be sufficient.

Completed by: Phil Swinton, Emergency Planning and Health & Safety Lead

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

1.4 A full equality impact assessment will need to be undertaken and any identified changes made to the policy prior to it being put forward for adoption.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Housing Ombudsman states that: *'landlords should have a clear and accessible policy for decant procedures, outlining the circumstances a decant may be considered'*
- 2.2. South Kesteven District Council, as a landlord, is obliged under the terms of its tenancy agreements to keep the structure and exterior of our properties (including communal areas) in good repair.
- 2.3. Improvement works and major repairs will normally be carried out whilst the tenant remains in their home. However, there will be certain situations, such as those when the health and safety of the tenant would be at risk or the works are extensive, when works cannot be carried out with the tenant in the property.
- 2.4. Where this is the case, the Council will arrange to move the tenant and their household. This will either be done on a temporary or permanent basis, depending on the nature of the works and the tenant will normally be given this option.
- 2.5. This policy shows the practical steps the Council will take to facilitate this process.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. Decanting tenants from their properties is something that the Council is already in the practice of doing as in some cases, this is the only practical way to ensure that works are completed safely and effectively.
- 3.2. However, we have no formal policy in place for this process. Adopting this policy will effectively manage tenants' expectations and provide clear guidance for officers when dealing with such cases.
- 3.3. During the creation of this policy, other existing policies were researched. As such, the policy presented is largely based on Ashfield District Council and Tendring District Council's Decant Policies which are examples of good practice. In addition, we have cross referenced against the Housing Ombudsman decant expectations detailed here: [Decant expectations - Housing Ombudsman](#).

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The other option considered is to not produce a decant policy. However this would mean that there is no policy in place and therefore no clear guidance in dealing with such cases.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. If this policy is adopted, we can ensure that we are compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's landlord expectations when dealing with decants.
- 5.2. Adopting this policy will ensure a consistent and transparent approach for dealing with such cases.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. There are no statutory requirements for a consultation on the proposed Decant Policy and therefore no consultation is proposed. The policy is intended to be a working reference document that pulls together the legislative requirements and states how the Council applies it practically.

7. Appendices

- 7.1. Appendix 1 - Decant Policy

Decant Policy

1. Introduction

South Kesteven District Council, as a landlord, is obliged under the terms of its tenancy agreements to keep the structure and exterior of your home (including communal areas) in good repair.

Improvement works and major repairs will normally be carried out whilst the tenant remains in their home. However, there will be certain situations, such as those when the health and safety of the tenant would be at risk or the works are extensive, when works cannot be carried out with the tenant in the property.

Where this is the case, the Council will arrange to move the tenant and their household. This will either be done on a temporary or permanent basis, depending on the nature of the works and the tenant will normally be given this option.

2. Purpose of policy

The purpose of this policy is to explain the approach that South Kesteven District Council will take when moving tenants from their property to enable work to be carried out and where it is not safe or possible for the tenant (s) and their household to remain. This process is referred to as decanting and this will be done on either be on a temporary or permanent basis.

Rehousing owner-occupiers will only be considered in very limited and exceptional circumstances where the Council acquires the property using compulsory purchase powers, for example the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 and the Land Compensation Act 1973.

3. Aims of policy

The aims of this policy are:

- To ensure decants operate in a fair, equitable and reasonable manner.
- To deliver simple but effective consultation and feedback with tenants that need to be decanted at the earliest opportunity and throughout the process.
- To enable decants to be carried out with the minimal disturbance to tenants.
- To outline the support, both financial and practical, provided to tenants who are required to decant.
- To minimise rent loss to the Council and to ensure that the best use is made of the Council's resources.

4. Scope of policy

In line with the legislation and existing best practice, assistance and rehousing, where appropriate, will be offered to tenants, their family members, partners, spouses and children.

The Council will not rehouse unauthorised occupants, sub-tenants, lodgers, licensees and other non-secure occupants.

Owner-occupiers and leaseholders may be given assistance to find alternative accommodation in exceptional circumstances and the options available to them will depend on their individual circumstances and the equity available to them.

5. Legal context

The key legislation that relates to decants is as follows:

- Housing Act 1985

If a decant is necessary, the Council has a legal obligation under Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 to consult with tenants when they are substantially affected. Consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at an early stage and the Council will consult with all affected persons.

The Council retains the legal right under Ground 10 or 10a of Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985 to commence possession proceedings as a last resort to obtain possession of a property in order to carry out major works or refurbishments. This action will only be taken once all other alternatives have been explored and reasonable offers of rehousing rejected. Possession would only be granted by a Court with the provision of suitable alternative accommodation.

- Housing Act 1988

Schedule 2, Part III of the Housing Act 1988 provides a definition of suitable alternative accommodation. This should provide the tenant with equivalent security of tenure and be similar in regards to rent, size and situation.

- Land Compensation Act 1973

Section 30 of the Land Compensation Act 1973 sets out the provisions for the statutory Home Loss Payments to be made to compensate tenants for having to permanently move out of their home, subject to certain eligibility criteria. This mandatory lump sum payment is reviewed annually and confirmed in the Home Loss Payments (Prescribed Amounts) England Regulations.

The Land Compensation Act 1973 Act also sets out guidance relating to the payment of Disturbance Allowances aimed at compensating tenants for the actual cost of moving from their home.

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990

If the Council decides to pursue compulsory purchase owner occupied property, then it will comply with current legislation covering the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

6. Establishing if a decant is necessary

In respect of all planned decants, the Technical Services surveyor will complete a Decant Form giving details of the works that are required, the reasons why a decant is considered necessary, together with the anticipated timescale for completing the works.

When considering whether a decant is necessary for major planned works, at least one of the following will be applicable:

- One or more of the following cannot be restored at the end of the normal working day – water supply, toilet facilities, electricity
- Works involve use of hazardous substances or those controlled by Control of substances Hazardous to Health (two or more rooms affected)
- Works will involve tenants losing significant proportion of habitable living space and works cannot be sequenced to avoid this
- Work needed means that the property is likely to be insecure during all or part of the works
- Work needed is likely to pose a health and safety risk to the tenants or members of their family
- Tenants or members of their household have medical needs or conditions which suggest that the works could have a detrimental impact on their wellbeing. This should be supported by medical evidence.
- Any request for a decant will need to be authorised by the Repairs Manager before the request is passed to the Tenancy Services Manager for progressing.

7. Types of decant

Decants will generally fall into one of the following categories:

- A. Emergency
- B. Planned (temporary)
- C. Planned (permanent)

A temporary decant is when a resident is moved out to enable work or redevelopment of the property to be carried out with the intention of returning them to it at the earliest opportunity.

A permanent decant is when a resident is moved out of their home and there is no intention to return them to it.

A. Emergency Decant

An emergency decant is usually required when an unexpected event has caused the property to be uninhabitable such as a fire or flood and arrangements need to be made quickly to provide alternative accommodation. In these situations, SKDC will assist the tenant in finding alternative accommodation. This may include but is not limited to:

- Encouraging them to stay with friends or family
- Sourcing Bed and breakfast / hotel type accommodation (board only)
- Sourcing alternative SKDC accommodation
- Sourcing private rental accommodation

In any emergency the priority will be to secure alternative accommodation for the tenant affected. Once this has been resolved, a full assessment of the work required at the property and the future housing requirements of the tenant will be conducted.

Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis, to ensure appropriate steps have been taken to address the tenant's needs and that suitable alternative accommodation has been found. Whilst SKDC will consider factors such as schools, place of employment etc, there cannot be a guarantee that the emergency accommodation provided will meet all requirements. Similarly, SKDC will do as much as possible to meet the needs of disabled tenants and those in need of an adapted home, but compromise may be required on the grounds of urgency.

Rent and service charges on the permanent tenanted home needs to continue to be paid as SKDC is still providing accommodation. If the tenant does not pay the rent and service charges, SKDC may take tenancy action on the grounds of non-payment of rent. Rent will not be due on the decant property whilst there is an intention for the tenant to return to their tenanted home.

Similarly, the tenant will continue to be liable for other charges, such as water, gas, electricity, broadband, etc, at their permanent tenanted home. SKDC will cover reasonable additional costs in the decant property.

In exceptional circumstances, such as when repairs are likely to take a longer time to complete than anticipated and the property is an appropriate accommodation match, consideration may be given to allowing the tenant to remain in the decant property on a permanent basis. This would be a voluntary arrangement, at the request of the tenant and with the approval of the Director of Housing and Projects.

B. Planned (Temporary) Decant

It may be necessary to move tenants temporarily whilst works are being carried out. An example of works include:

- Extensive works to multiple rooms
- Severe flood damage
- Repairs to structurally unsafe property or unable to live in the property safely whilst works are being carried out.

Where planned repair work is required that cannot be carried out with the tenant in situ, but does not require them to leave immediately, temporary alternative accommodation will be arranged prior to the work being undertaken. In determining the type of accommodation to be used, consideration will be given to the likely time to complete the repair, the availability of suitable accommodation and the relative cost of each option.

Consideration will be given to the tenant's needs and factors such as such as schools and places of employment etc. however, SKDC cannot guarantee that the accommodation provided will meet all requirements.

Options that will be considered for temporary accommodation will include:

- Encouraging tenants to stay with friends or family
- Sourcing Bed and breakfast / hotel type accommodation (board only)
- Sourcing alternative SKDC accommodation
- Sourcing private rental accommodation

The move will only last as long as it takes to complete the repair works to bring the property back to a habitable standard.

Where required, SKDC will assist in respect of the relocation, including helping to move essential items and making minor adaptations to make the decant property suitable, such as installing grab rails or a temporary ramp.

Rent and service charges on the permanent tenanted home needs to continue to be paid as SKDC is still providing accommodation. If the tenant does not pay the rent and service charges, SKDC may take tenancy action on the grounds of non-payment of rent. Rent will not be due on the decant property whilst there is an intention for the tenant to return to their permanent home.

Similarly, the tenant will continue to be liable for other charges, such as water, gas, electricity, broadband, etc, at their permanent tenanted home. SKDC will cover reasonable additional costs in the decant property.

In exceptional circumstances, such as when repairs are likely to take a longer time to complete than anticipated and the property is an appropriate accommodation match, consideration may be given to allowing the tenant to remain in the decant property on a permanent basis. This would be a voluntary arrangement, at the request of the tenant and with the approval of the Director of Housing and Projects.

C. Permanent Decant

A permanent decant may be necessary where it is planned to dispose of, demolish, remodel or redevelop the property. In these circumstances, SKDC will carry out consultation and work closely with affected tenants and residents at all stages to support them through the process and help find suitable alternative accommodation.

For these decants, the following principles apply:

- Tenants will be given urgent priority through the lettings process.
- Existing tenants will normally be offered a new tenancy on a like for like basis. If the tenant is under occupying their current home, consideration will be given offering them a property suitable for their needs. SKDC will match tenants to voids that become available and will make up to two offers of suitable alternative accommodation. See section 11 for further information
- If the decant is for the purpose of enabling new housing development on the site, SKDC will discuss with the tenant the option of being rehoused in the new scheme if the planned accommodation is suitable for their needs.

- SKDC will provide a package of support tailored to meet each household's needs.

Where SKDC has already started possession proceedings against a tenant, prior to the decant, legal action to end the tenancy will be considered.

The tenant will be responsible for maintaining rent and service charge payments on their permanent tenanted property until the move is finalised and the tenant formally terminates their tenancy, when they will become responsible for rent and service charge payments on their new home.

Where required, SKDC will assist in respect of the relocation, including helping to move essential items and making minor adaptations to make the decant property suitable, such as installing grab rails or a temporary ramp.

Other costs/assistance are as outlined in the Financial Support section.

8. The Council's responsibilities

If a decant is necessary, the Council has a legal obligation under Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 to consult with tenants when they are substantially affected. For planned decants, consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at an early stage and the Council will consult with all affected persons

Every tenant identified as requiring a decant will be visited by a Housing Officer at the start of the process to discuss:

- What the proposed project is and why it is being undertaken.
- When the work will be done.
- The decant policy and process.
- What choices there are and how these can be made.
- What we will do to help tenants prepare for any work and support whilst this work is being carried out.
- Whether there are any requirements for aids and adaptations to support the move.
- Any specific support that the tenant requires for the move.
- Named contact officer for the duration of the programme.
- Assessment of any support need

A property inspection will also be carried out at this time.

All communication and consultation will be carried out by the Housing Officer who will be the main point of contact for residents

The tenant will be given a copy of the surveyors report, and it will be agreed how often the Housing Officer will be in contact with the tenant or their representative. We will also discuss if the decant is to be on a permanent or temporary basis.

We will discuss the practicalities around moving and be clear on how the council can help with this process, such as the provision of a removal service.

We recognise that certain groups of tenants are likely to need extra support and reassurance including older tenants, lone parents, non English-speaking households and tenants with mental health issues or physical disabilities

We will take into account the extent of the tenant's vulnerability or other exceptional circumstances when we plan the decant process with the tenant. Our aim is to be entirely flexible in managing this process and ensuring all of the tenants needs are met.

Our priority is to keep our tenants safe so therefore during a temporary decant, we may feel it necessary to change the locks on the property. Tenants will be informed of this prior to them vacating. This does not mean that the tenant cannot access their property, just that they will need to arrange access with their housing officer so that they do not risk entering when it is not safe to do so.

We will ensure access for contractors to complete the works whilst the property is empty. Before the tenant returns to their main residence, a thorough inspection and health and safety check will be completed to ensure the property is fit for habitation. Any snagging issues will be communicated to the tenant along with a clear plan of action and timelines for resolution.

9. The tenant's responsibilities

Where a tenant is being decanted permanently, they will be expected to pack up their own belongings unless there is a valid reason they are unable to do so, in which case a packing service will be arranged. Tenants must ensure that they have taken steps to ensure that their fridges and freezers are cleaned, having been emptied and defrosted, if necessary, before the removal company is due to arrive.

If it is a permanent decant, they will be responsible for clearing all of their belongings from the property and for giving vacant possession of that property. Any items left behind will be cleared and there will not be any opportunity to reclaim them, or to claim compensation to the value of them. The cost of clearance and disposal of any such items will also be recharged to the tenant.

If a temporary decant is required, due to the risk of damage to personal effects, it is preferred that all belongings are removed from the property, this will be assessed on a case by case basis and will be dependent upon the works being undertaken.

The tenant is expected to make other members of their household aware of the decant arrangements and to move on the agreed date. In addition, they must make appropriate arrangements for any pets and ensure that they are not abandoned in the property after they have moved out.

If the household has home contents or other insurance, the tenant is advised to notify their insurance company/ies about the change of address.

To support the move, the Housing Officer will visit to help resolve any minor issues which may arise. Contact will also be maintained, at agreed intervals, whilst the tenant lives in the decant property.

10. Suitable Alternative Accommodation

Suitable alternative accommodation refers to accommodation which provides the tenant with equivalent security of tenure and is similar in regard to rent, size, situation etc. as required under Schedule 2, Part III of the Housing Act 1988 and meets the tenants' needs.

Where the tenant is currently under occupying, they will normally be offered a smaller property that meets their current needs. Where a tenant is overcrowded in their current property and requires a temporary decant, only a like for like property will be offered that is not larger than their current home. If the decant is permanent, a housing register application must be completed and a full assessment taken in order to establish the correct bedroom need.

We will also have regard to the tenants' stated preferences in terms of location and proximity to relatives or schools, but alternative accommodation will be deemed as suitable if it is of the appropriate size and the Council considers it a reasonable travel distance to the tenant and occupant's place of work.

Where the tenant has adult children permanently living with them who have expressed a wish to live independently and we are unable to find a large enough property, separate alternative accommodation may be offered to the adult child or children by agreement and subject to availability.

11. Refusal of offers of accommodation

SKDC will use their best endeavours to find alternative accommodation that is suitable for the tenant. In view of the limited number of SKDC properties, it may not be able to find a property that meets all the tenant's requirements.

Tenants have the right to refuse offers of accommodation. However, after two reasonable offers of accommodation have been made, SKDC will make a final offer, and this will be the first available property that meets the household's bedroom and disability needs and is as close to their areas of preference as possible.

Where a tenant refuses to move or has refused the offers of other suitable alternative accommodation and other options are not feasible, SKDC has the legal right to seek possession of the property for decanting purposes.

12. Disturbance costs

Disturbance costs will be considered in line with our Housing Compensation Policy.

To provide further clarity on this, below are examples of costs that will be covered where a tenant is decanted from their property on a permanent or temporary basis include:

Removal and storage costs

The Council will normally arrange the removal or storage with a company directly and will, where required, arrange for boxes to be provided to help with packing. Where the tenant wishes to make these arrangements themselves and a request is made to reimburse costs, the Council will require two quotes to be obtained.

Deposits

We will provide any necessary deposit if required for any temporary accommodation we have agreed to until permanent accommodation is available. However, the occupier will incur the cost if the deposit is not returned in full due to a fault of the occupier. This will be deducted from any other compensation payments due to the tenant.

Disconnection and reconnection of washing machines and other plumbing

Where applicable we will arrange for the disconnection and reconnection cost of a washing machine and other plumbing e.g. dishwasher.

Telephone, Satellite/Cable TV and internet connections

We will reimburse any costs for reconnections at the decant property.

Disconnection and reconnection of cooker

Where required, we will arrange for this to be done by our contractors or we will cover the cost of disconnection and reconnection work carried out by a registered Gas Safe fitter.

Where the decant is from a property with a gas supply to a property with an electric-only supply or vice versa, the Council will provide a new cooker up to an agreed maximum value.

Redirection of mail

If the tenant arranges re-direction of mail, we will reimburse the cost for all household members for up to 6 months.

New school uniforms

Where decanting results in the need for a child to change schools, we will assist with the cost of one new uniform per child where the school requires a uniform to be worn. We will require confirmation from the school on the uniform requirements.

Replacement of security locks and alarms:

We will remove and refit security locks and alarms or reimburse any costs incurred if the tenant has to employ a contractor. Installations must be by an approved locksmith and compliant with current building regulations.

Rehoming for pets:

In the event of a tenant being unable to take a pet to their new home due to restrictions placed on the property, we will reimburse reasonable rehoming costs. Only households that have requested permission to keep a pet as per the Council's tenancy agreement and are keeping the pet in line with the tenant obligations will be eligible.

Adaptations within the home:

We will cover the cost of the removal and refitting of adaptations approved by an Occupational Therapist (OT) and undertaken by an approved contractor.

Carpets and floor coverings:

Where possible, households are expected to reuse the floor covering in their homes. We will arrange for the uplift and refitting of carpets, underlay and/or laminate flooring. If this is not possible or partially not possible, the Council will arrange for a replacement floor covering to be fitted in the decant property.

Curtains and window covering:

Households are expected to re-use their current window covering and make any alterations to the length and width. We will arrange for curtain rails to be removed, altered and refitted. Where this is not possible, we will cover reasonable costs of replacement window coverings, up to a maximum value per window.

Light fittings:

Existing light fittings will be transferred and refitted. Where additional fittings are required in the new home we will only cover the cost of basic lampshades.

Compensation for Improvements:

Any improvements the tenant has made to the property, such as a new bathroom, will be compensated for if the tenant had received our prior written permission and the improvement will not be able to remain in situ for a temporary decant. This will be in line with the Right to Compensation for Tenants Improvements scheme and criteria.

Decorating costs:

Where there is evidence of disrepair e.g. damp, filling holes or covering uneven surfaces we will redecorate the affected area. If we are not able to redecorate we will cover any reasonable costs to do the work.

Loss of wages:

We will reimburse the tenant for loss of wages or income where time off is unavoidable due to displacement. We will require written confirmation from the tenant's employer/and or proof of any loss of wages/income where the tenant is self-employed.

Home contents insurance:

We will consider meeting any reasonable additional home insurance costs that the tenant is subject to and is associated with a decant.

The above list is not exhaustive and other items will be considered on their individual merits. Payment will not be made where items are covered by a tenant's own home contents insurance.

However, the Council may not make discretionary payments where the need for a 'decant' has arisen due to wilful or negligent actions of the tenant or a member of their household e.g. where they have caused a fire.

Home Loss Payments

Where the Council requires a tenant to move permanently due to demolition, improvement (which includes alteration or enlargement) or redevelopment (which includes a change of use), they may be entitled to claim a statutory Home Loss Payment, to compensate them for the personal upset and distress of losing their home. Home Loss Payments are not available for temporary decants.

Section 30 of the Land Compensation Act 1973 sets out the provisions for the statutory Home Loss Payments to be made to compensate tenants for having to permanently move out of their home, subject to certain eligibility criteria. This mandatory lump sum payment is reviewed annually and confirmed in the Home Loss Payments (Prescribed Amounts)

England Regulations ([The Home Loss Payments \(Prescribed Amounts\) \(England\) Regulations 2023](#))

To qualify for the Home Loss Payment the recipient must:

- be the tenant (but see below regarding spouses and civil partners);
- have occupied the property as their sole or main home for a minimum of 12 months at the date of displacement (irrespective of whether they were the tenant throughout e.g. where they are a successor); and
- be moving as a result of the proposed works.

A spouse or civil partner of a tenant may claim Home Loss Payment if it can be shown that there is a matrimonial home right. The spouse/civil partner who remains in occupation is treated as occupying by virtue of his or her spouse's interest under the tenancy. A spouse who has moved out of the property will not be able to claim as he or she will not be able to satisfy the occupation condition.

Tenants who have not occupied their property for 12 months will not be eligible for a Home Loss Payment.

Tenants who have been given formal notice of the need to be permanently decanted and take their own steps to find new accommodation, rather than waiting for the formal decant offer, will remain eligible for a Home Loss Payment. This includes those who transfer or move into the market rented, shared ownership or private sale sectors.

More than one person cannot be entitled to a Home Loss Payment. In these circumstances the payment is shared equally between those entitled, meaning that there will only be one Home Loss Payment per household.

If a household has to move to temporary accommodation before moving into new permanent accommodation, the household will still receive one Home Loss Payment unless all the conditions for the payment are again met.

Where a tenant is decanted temporarily but requests to remain permanently in the decant property, they are not entitled to the statutory Home Loss Payment, although disturbance costs will have been met as part of the decant process.

If tenants are evicted prior to being decanted, they will not receive a Home Loss Payment.

13. Support for tenants

As well as financial support, practical assistance will also be offered to tenants required to decant and this will include the following:

- General advice regarding the Council's services, including housing allocations and benefits
- General advice and assistance on how to move home;
- Assistance to view the property offered to them;
- Clearance of unwanted items;

- Additional support for vulnerable residents.

The above list is not exhaustive and during each decant there will be the flexibility to decide what practical support is offered to affected residents.

Not all circumstances can easily be covered in this policy and discretion will be applied in making any further offers of accommodation or assistance where exceptional circumstances warrant it.

14. Rent and Rent Arrears

While the tenant is decanted, they will pay the rent due for their permanent home. If the tenant receives benefits, this will be paid at their permanent home.

If a temporary decant occurs at the time of an annual rent review, the rent on the permanent home will still be reviewed and changed and the relevant rent change notices served.

Unless the decant is needed for health and safety reasons or a prolonged delay might result in a deterioration to the condition of the property, the tenant will be expected to clear any rent arrears on their rent account prior to being decanted.

If the decant cannot be delayed for health and safety reasons, an arrangement will be made for the tenant to repay the arrears as part of the decant process. If there is already a repayment arrangement in place, this will continue.

For permanent decants, the tenant will continue to pay rent until their tenancy ends at their permanent home.

15. Council Tax

Tenants are to continue to pay the council tax for their permanent home. Tenants are not liable for council tax in their temporary home.

16. Utilities and bills

Tenants will be expected to continue to pay all utilities and bills for their permanent home. Tenants not liable for any bills in their temporary decant accommodation.

17. Security of tenure

The tenant will retain security of tenure on their permanent home. In respect of the temporary decant property, the tenant may be asked to sign an agreement regarding their stay and will be afforded most of the same rights as they hold in their permanent home.

18. Returning once works are completed

When the Council makes the original home available on completion of the work, if the resident at that time wish to remain in the alternative accommodation and this of a suitable size this may be agreed. In other circumstances, the Council will take legal action to enforce a return to the original accommodation. This action will be taken under Ground 8 of Schedule 2 of the 1985 Housing Act which states that:

“The Dwelling-house was made available for occupation by the tenant (or a predecessor in title of his) while works were carried out on the dwelling-house which he occupied as his only or principle home and –

a) The tenant (or predecessor) was a secure tenant of the other dwelling-house at the time when he ceased to occupy it as his home,

b) The tenant (or predecessor) accepted the tenancy of the dwelling-house of which possession is sought on the understanding that he would give up occupation when, on completion of the work, the other dwelling-house was again available for occupation by him under a secure tenancy: and

c) The works have been completed and the other dwelling-house is so available.

19. Customer satisfaction

We will measure the satisfaction of tenants that have been decanted to ensure that improvements can be made to the way we manage the processes.

For tenants’ who have been decanted, satisfaction will be measured at the start of the decant process (after the initial officer’s visit) as well as after the works have been completed.

20. Complaints

Any customer who is aggrieved by any of the aspects covered by the policy (decision to decant / decision to agree / not agree to not go back / decision on the amount of payment) can request that the decision is reviewed by registering a formal complaint with the Council. This will be investigated with in accordance with the procedure and timescales set out in the Housing Customer Feedback Policy.

21. Equality and Diversity

This policy aims to show that all tenants’ and owners’ differing needs and preferences are taken into account. Central to this is the personal visit to carry out a needs assessment at the beginning of the process, which allows the Council to:-

- Identify those who may need more support
- Ensure tenants are kept informed in the way most appropriate to them.
- Make suitable rehousing offers, with full consideration made of adaptations required.

Where it is necessary to decant a resident, we will consider the needs of each individual and household – having particular regard to their protected characteristics – and where required, a Support Plan will be agreed for the decant process. This will include details of any additional assistance that the Council has agreed to provide.

If a disabled or vulnerable tenant is unable to move to temporary decant accommodation because we have been unable to find accommodation that meets their ability or other needs, we will work with them to assist them to vacate the rooms we need to work in while they remain in the property.

Where tenants with high care needs outside of that which the Council can provide and who require supported accommodation have to be decanted, the housing team will liaise with the commissioning body and the support provider to identify suitable alternative accommodation.

22. Measuring performance

Performance in relation to the implementation of this policy will be monitored through the following performance indicators:

- Number of customers decanted
- Customer satisfaction with decants
- Total spend on decants, broken down by disturbance payments and Home Loss Payments.
- Number of complaints received and upheld or partially upheld complaints

23. Review of this policy

The policy will be reviewed every three years in consultation with tenant representatives, staff and other stakeholders unless there are any reasons, such as legislative changes, requiring that it be reviewed earlier.



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 20 January 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Repairs Service Update

Report Author

Mark Rogers, Head of Service (Technical Services)

✉ mark.rogers@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To update the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress made following the internal repairs service audit report received in April 2024.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the progress made to improve the Council repairs service following the audit report received in April 2024.**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	N
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Housing
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 arising directly from this report, which is for noting.

Completed by: Paul Sutton Interim Head of Finance (Deputy s151)

Legal and Governance

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

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

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. On the 2 April 2024 the Council received its internal audit report for the Responsive Repairs service. The report stated that it could take partial assurance that the controls to manage this area are suitably designed, consistently applied or effective. The report identified that actions were required to strengthen the control framework to manage this important area of service.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. The internal audit identified that whilst several controls and processes are well designed, a large amount of work was required by the Council to address the backlog of jobs and then implement new controls which detect and action jobs which are open for long periods of time to reduce the risk of backlogs accumulating again.
- 3.2. The audit identified that performance for emergency and urgent jobs is relatively strong with most jobs being completed within target times, however oversight and management for repairs needs to be fully established to monitor the reduction of the current backlogs and scrutinise any jobs which are breaching agreed performance targets.

- 3.3. The report identifies 2 high, 7 medium, 4 low priority management actions and 2 advisory actions. Appendix 1 provides details of the progress against the audit actions which was also presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 27 November 2024 as part of the Internal Audit follow-up report.

4. Oversight and Management of Repairs

- 4.1. In response to the audit recommendations to improve the oversight and management of repairs the new Head of Technical Services has introduced a new interim staffing structure. This has included replacing the single Repairs and Voids Manager role with two managers, one for repairs and one for voids. This will allow both managers to develop more expertise in each area and provide greater resilience to the staffing structure. Introducing separate managers for each work stream has created capacity for the new Damp and Mould team, which has recently been added to the structure, to be included in the Repairs team.
- 4.2. A review of the permanent Technical Services team structure is currently underway with a view to bring greater stability to the team, together with proposals to further strengthen management resource in the repairs team.

5. Performance Reporting

- 5.1. Performance reporting has been significantly strengthened since the repairs audit and this is an important tool to measure performance and track progress. Following extensive work in the summer to establish new Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and creating reports in the new QL repairs system, weekly and monthly performance reporting has been launched.

5.2. *Monthly Reporting*

Reporting against a new suite of KPI's was launched in September 2024 with updates presented at the Technical Services team meeting each month. An extract of the KPI's is shown below:

Call Handling

Call Handling	Target	Sept	Oct	Nov
Total calls offered	NA	2009	2286	1867
Number of calls Handled and Interflowed	NA	1949	2205	1731

% of calls Handled and Interflowed	>80%	96%	91%	92%
% of abandoned calls	<10%	4%	9%	8%

Progress:

- Positive - the percentage of calls handled and interflowed has consistently been above our corporate targets.

In-house Repairs

In-House Repairs	Target	Sept	Oct	Nov
No of repairs in progress	NA	3316	3314	2595
Repairs not allocated	0	1161	1254	737
No of overdue repairs	NA	2076	2581	1792
24H repairs completed on time	100%	96%	96%	88%
5WD repairs completed on time	75%	NA	44%	42%
20WD repairs completed on time	75%	63%	47%	74%
12M repairs completed in time	75%	83%	85%	58%

Progress:

- Repairs work in progress down from 3316 to 2595 (reduction of 22%)
- Repairs jobs not allocated (appointed with residents) down from 1161 to 737 (reduction of 37%)
- Repairs overdue down from 2076 to 1792 (reduction of 14%)
- Completion on time performance is below target and fluctuates each month as the team continue to cleanse the data and complete older overdue jobs, this has a significant impact on completion on time performance. The team expect these figures to recover more gradually over time as they complete the backlog of overdue jobs.
- Performance figures for external contractors will be published from Q4 2024/25.

Damp and Mould Jobs

- Weekly reporting for damp and mould inspections and repairs was introduced in November 2024 together with more detailed monthly reporting. These KPIs are still being developed in line with the new Damp and Mould policy.

6. Repairs Service Improvement Plans

- 6.1. In November 2024 repairs service improvement plans were developed which cover reactive repairs and damp and mould jobs. It is recognised that a more focussed management approach is required to ensure that this important service for residents continues to improve.
- 6.2. Our recovery plans are well underway, and positive progress is being made. The following actions have been completed so far:
- Confirm numbers and status of jobs in progress with in-house team and contractors.
 - Introduce weekly reporting of jobs in progress.
 - Reconcile jobs in the QL system with the DRS job management system.
 - Contact all jobs over 12 months old and update the status in QL.
 - Procure a new ventilation contractor.
 - Update the DRS job management system to prevent on the day diary changes for operatives and improve productivity.
 - Mobilise new dedicated damp and mould team (including Surveyor, Builder and 2 Labourers) to carry out surveys and deliver works
- 6.3. The following actions are planned for Q4 2024/25
- Procure new repairs contractor to clear backlog of jobs in progress and provide additional resource for the service to deliver repairs within policy timeframes.
 - Batch up older jobs and issue to existing contractors used across Technical Services.
 - Allocate resources to improve contract management of jobs including daily and weekly routines of chasing overdue jobs.
 - Mobilise contractor portal in the QL system and train contractors to update job status.
 - Procure new materials contract by October 2025.

7. Weekly Reporting

- 7.1. A weekly report of repairs in progress was introduced in November 2024 to monitor the progress of our improvement plans.
- 7.2. A snapshot of the jobs is shown below, this shows positive reductions in the number of repairs in progress and overdue jobs. These figures include both in-house and contractor jobs.

Week Commencing	Responsive Repairs (Total)	Repairs - not allocated	Repairs Overdue
04/11/2024	4985	1187	2965
11/11/2024	4783	1165	2684
18/11/2024	4592	903	2443
25/11/2024	4677	773	2498
02/12/2024	4696	737	2542
09/12/2024	4253	553	2374
16/12/2024	4204	502	2410
23/12/2024	4240	285	2346
30/12/2024	4316	294	2532

Progress since November 2024:

- Repair jobs in progress - down from 4985 to 4316 (reduction of 13%)
- Repairs jobs not allocated (appointed with residents) - down from 1187 to 294 (reduction of 75%)
- Repairs overdue - down from 2965 to 2532 (reduction of 15%)

8. New Policies and Procedures

- 8.1. As part of the plans to improve the Councils Repairs service, new Repairs and Maintenance and Damp and Mould policies have been drafted. The draft Repairs and Maintenance Policy was presented to this committee on 14 November 2024 and the draft Damp and Mould Policy is included as an item on the agenda being presented to Members as part of this committee meeting. The draft policies will be presented to Cabinet for approval on 4 March 2025 and will be effective from April 2025.
- 8.2. New procedure documents will be written to support the teams to deliver against our updated policies.

9. Summary

- 9.1 This report provides an update to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the work that has been completed by the team following the Internal Responsive Repairs Audit report received in April 2024.
- 9.2 The Committee should note the improved performance monitoring and KPIs used to track performance and the plans in place to maintain sustained improvement to this important service.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 This report is provided for information to ensure that the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee is kept updated regarding the progress of the Repairs Service improvements that are currently being implemented.

11. Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1 – Progress against internal audit actions

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Progress against audit actions

Action	Details	Risk	Status
1	Management will ensure the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy is made available to staff and tenants via the Council Website.	Medium	Complete.
2	Call Handler Right to Repair Guidance, QL system priorities and the Repairs and Maintenance Policy will all be reviewed to ensure that they are consistent with regards to job priorities. Each job will have its associated priority reviewed in QL prior to system rollout.	Medium	Complete.
3	Management will ensure all guidance on raising repair requests is consistent for tenants and that no outdated contact details remain on the Council website.	Low	Due by 31 st March 2025.
4	The Council will remind all trade operatives to clearly document any works taken on initial visits, particularly in instances where follow on works are required. This will provide assurance that the property has been made safe as well as providing clarity to job planners regarding the follow-on works required. Guidance documents will be created to support this process.	Medium	Complete.
5	The implementation of a programme where 10% of jobs will be formally quality assessed will be implemented within QL. Clear oversight responsibility will be	Medium	A new post inspection process is being mobilised by the team and the results will be monitored by the Technical Services

	allocated, and there will be an established reporting process for sharing broader trends with the full trades team whilst also providing individual feedback to operatives.		management team and results will be fed back to trades teams in Q4 24/25.
6	The Council will remind operatives to obtain tenant sign off for completed works in all instances and to clearly add a note within First Touch recording any reason why the tenant was unable or unwilling to sign off on the job.	Low	Complete.
7	The Council will utilise the information from Rant and Rave in an agreed reporting structure, to monitor overall performance and provide specific feedback to operatives.	Low	Complete.
8	The Council will utilise the management information provided by the materials contract, as well as other available data from Northgate and DRS, to create management reports which allow for trend analysis regarding job, operative and trade type level spend. These data points will be monitored over time and exceptions will be reviewed (for example excessively expensive jobs).	Medium	Complete.
9	The Council will implement established KPIs for performance figures relating to repairs, such as the number of open jobs, the success rate with which jobs are being closed in line with the Council targets, and the average costs of repairs. These KPIs will be reported to Housing OSC.	Medium	Complete.

10	The Council will consider options such as closing all jobs over a particular age and will implement a solution to reduce the high number of open jobs within Northgate. The selected solution will be approved by an appropriate forum within the Council.	High	Complete.
11	Following the reduction of the open jobs backlog, the Council will implement monitoring controls to identify jobs which are breaching agreed turnaround times. Processes will be in place to actively clear these breaching jobs to reduce the risk of the backlog accumulating again.	Medium	Complete.
13	The Council will investigate the finding that jobs closed in Northgate as part of the large-scale closedown are still open in DRS and will seek to understand how this will affect the jobs data being moved into the QL system.	High	Complete.
Advisory 1	The Council will investigate the possibility of implementing a cancelled and re-raised job report to identify training need within call handling and planning staff.	Recommended	Info-Suite reporting in DRS has been requested as part of the IT upgrades project and is due by the end of March 2025.
Advisory 2	The Council will consider implementing formal monitoring to identify trends in instances where operatives are consistently taking too long on jobs including consideration regarding capturing other works undertaken at the same visit.	Recommended	Info-Suite reporting in DRS has been requested as part of the IT upgrade project and is due by the end of March 2025.

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 20 January 2025

Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Riverside communal heating upgrade works - Overview January 2025

Report Author

Andrew Garner, Planned Works Manager - Technical Services

✉ andy.garner@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To update the committee on the progress of the Riverside communal heating upgrade works. Providing an overview of the project position, completed work so far and projected timescales.

Recommendations

That Committee note the contents of the report and the progress being made to upgrade the communal heating system to resolve long standing issues with the system.

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?	Grantham St Wulframs;

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

- 1.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report, which is for noting.

Completed by: Paul Sutton Interim Head of Finance (Deputy s151)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 This work programme does not present any legal or governance issues and is a report to update Members on progress.

Consult with Graham Watts, Mandy Braithwaite or James Welbourn (Do not delete)

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. This project focuses on upgrading the existing communal heating system at Riverside Sheltered Housing Scheme which will contribute towards achieving this commitment.
- 2.2. This report provides the Committee with an update regarding the progress of the works identified for the communal heating system at the Riverside Sheltered Housing Scheme.
- 2.3. On 19 September 2024 the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee were provided with a summary of the recommended short-term rectification and enhancement works for the heating and hot water system at the Riverside Sheltered Housing Scheme. Table 1 provides details of the recommended works.

- 2.4. It was recommended that the works initially focused on items 1-8 as these directly relate to the heating and hot water provision and that the due to the age the boilers were also replaced.

Table 1 – Short-term rectification/enhancement works

No.	Item	Rectification/ Enhancement	Cost
1	Insulate existing pipework	Rectification	£28,000
2	Complete water quality testing and chemically dose the system	Rectification	£3,300
3	Rectify support for pumps within plantroom	Rectification	£4,800
4	Provide a control panel for the boilers and pumps	Enhancement	£20,000
5	Rectify issues with control valves	Enhancement	£28,000
6	Complete wiring of immersion heaters	Rectification	£9,000
7	Replace Thermostats with intelligent modern controllers	Enhancement	£27,000
8	Flush, clean and chemically dose the heating systems	Rectification	£20,000
9	Replace Laundry Hot Water Cylinder	Enhancement	£2,500
10	Replace common room fan convectors with new radiators	Rectification	£20,000
11	Remove hot water system in common room kitchenette subject to it no longer being used	Rectification	£1,000
	Total		£163,600

- 2.5. During the mobilisation phase, individual flats were checked to ensure all immersion heaters were fully operational and in good working order. All dwellings were checked except for three which the contractor could not gain access to. One resident has refused the work, the Council are actively pursuing access to the outstanding two dwellings to complete this element of works.
- 2.6. Initial works commenced in the boiler room on 11 November 2024 in preparation for the temporary boiler being installed. The temporary boiler was delivered to site and connected on 13 November 2024. This provided a reliable source of heating and hot water to all flats during the boiler replacement works.
- 2.7. Over the following 5 weeks the new boilers were installed along with all ancillaries and components, including the new Building Management System in the boiler room. The new boilers are operational and at the time of writing this report the Council has not received any reports from residents regarding issues with the heating system.
- 2.8. The boiler commissioning process has commenced which includes sign off by the Council's contractor, Aaron Services and the manufacturer, Worcester, this will be completed over the coming weeks and will ensure the Council has the 5-year manufacturer's warranty in place at final sign off.

- 2.9. Flushing of the existing pipework for the whole scheme is scheduled to commence on 13 January 2025 and is expected to be completed by 14 February 2025. Once this has been completed, chemicals will be added to the system to ensure the existing pipework and system is in the best possible condition to ensure efficient running.
- 2.10. The installation of new thermostatic controls in each flat will commence early January 2025. This will improve the temperature control within the flats and improve the efficiency of the system.
- 2.11. Throughout the works, SKDC has had a frequent presence on site from our Mechanical Contracts Manager to ensure the works have progressed on schedule and that any concerns or issues that residents have experienced have been addressed in a timely manner.
- 2.12. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the costs incurred to date on the project:

Description of works	Cost
Plant room works including new boilers, pipework, flushing of primary system and control system	£104,308
Temporary Boiler	£14,000
Flushing of the Secondary System	£24,000
Thermostats	£12,277
Total	£154,585

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. The works to the communal heating system at the Riverside scheme have been undertaken at the earliest opportunity and in a structured manner to avoid any disruption of heating and hot water for the residents during the winter.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 4.1. To ensure the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are kept updated regarding the works to the Riverside Communal Heating System.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 Riverside Grantham Sheltered Housing Scheme Heating System Update report presented to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 September 2024

[http://moderngovsvr/documents/s43576/Riverside.pdf?\\$LO\\$=1](http://moderngovsvr/documents/s43576/Riverside.pdf?LO=1)

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

No	Item	Meeting Date	Lead Officer	Requirements	Notes (including reporting timeframes)
Items – Monday 20 January 2025					
1.	Housing Compliance Monitoring update	20 Jan 25	Phil Swinton	Regular update	Regular update to Committee
2.	Earlesfield Project update	20 Jan 25	Alison Hall-Wright	Regular update	Regular update at each meeting
3.	New Build and Acquisitions update	20 Jan 25	Debbie Roberts/Suniel Pillai	Verbal update	Regular update at each meeting
4.	Fire Compartmentalisation	20 Jan 25	Phil Swinton	Update on work completed	Update to include cladding
5.	Homelessness and Rough Sleeper update	20 Jan 25	Sarah McQueen	Regular update	Item to be a regular update to Committee
6.	Damp and Mould Policy	20 Jan 25	Mark Rogers		Policy
7.	Decant Policy	20 Jan 25	Sarah McQueen		Policy
8.	Repairs update following audit and actions to be taken	20 Jan 25	Alison Hall-Wright		To be reported six monthly
9.	Riverside Project update	20 Jan 25	Alison Hall-Wright	Update on work being undertaken in respect of the heating/hot water system	Written report
10.	Response times to Housing enquires	20 Jan 25	Sarah McQueen	Verbal update	Update asked for at November 2024 meeting
11.	Mobility Scooter Policy	20 Jan TBC	Phil Swinton		Policy to be considered if ready for January meeting if not Policy to March meeting

17 March 2025

	Regular updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Compliance Monitoring • Earlesfield Project • New Build & Acquisitions • Homelessness and Rough Sleeper update 				
	Stock Condition	17 Mar 25	Mark Rogers	Update	Update report following verbal report given at 19 September 2024
	Garage Sites and their development update	17 Mar 25	Debbie Roberts/Suniel Pillai	Update	Update report following report submitted 19 September 2024
	Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund	17 Mar 25	Mark Rogers		Report on Wave 3 and update on Wave 2 projects
	Void Report	17 Mar 25	Mark Rogers		Report requested at meeting held in November 2024
	Public enquiries - Response Times	17 Mar 25 TBC	Sarah McQueen		
	Overview of Tenancy Services	17 Mar 25	Sarah McQueen		
	Mobility Scooter Policy	17 Mar 25	Phil Swinton		If Policy not considered at January meeting then it goes to March meeting

Future Items					
	Rent and Service Charge Policy	<i>TBC</i>		Policy document outlining how the Council will calculate and charge rent and service charges for the housing stock	
	Fabric First	<i>TBC</i>			
	Repairs Workshops	<i>TBC</i>			
	Homelessness Strategy/Budget Review	<i>TBC</i>			
	Sheltered Housing Allocations Review	<i>TBC</i>			
	Decent Homes	<i>From April 2025</i>	Mark Rogers	Report on decent homes – work carried out in respect of properties	To be a regular update report going forward from April 2025

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