

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Monday, 17 March 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 20 January 2025** (Pages 3 - 15)
- 5. Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service**

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www.southkesteven.gov.uk

- 6. Housing Compliance Figures** (Pages 17 - 26)
To update the Committee on the latest figures.
- 7. Earlesfield Project** (Pages 27 - 32)
Updating of progress on the Earlesfield Project.
- 8. New Build and Acquisitions update**
Committee to receive a verbal update report.
- 9. Homelessness and Rough Sleeper update** (Pages 33 - 38)
To update the committee on the status and recent activity in our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper services
- 10. Draft Mobility Vehicle Policy** (Pages 39 - 82)
To present the draft Mobility Vehicle Policy to the Housing OSC
- 11. Stock Condition Surveys** (Pages 83 - 86)
To update Cabinet on the progress of stock conditions surveys on our domestic housing stock.
- 12. Update on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1** (Pages 87 - 92)
This report provides an update on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund project to upgrade South Kesteven District Council housing stock with energy efficiency measures.
- 13. Empty Property Report** (Pages 93 - 100)
To update the committee on our empty property management and progress to reduce our relet times.
- 14. Tenancy Services Update** (Pages 101 - 107)
To update the committee on the status and recent activity in our Tenancy services
- 15. Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey** (Pages 109 - 125)
To update the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the results from the annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey
- 16. Work Programme 2024/25** (Pages 127 - 128)
- 17. Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent**

Meeting of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Monday, 20 January 2025, 2.00 pm

Committee Members present

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

Other Members present

Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Ian Selby

Cabinet Members

Councillor Virginia Moran, Cabinet Member for Housing

Officers

Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing & Projects
Sarah McQueen, Head of Service (Housing)
Mark Rogers, Head of Technical Services (Housing)
Phil Swinton, Health, Safety and Compliance Manager
Debbie Roberts, Head of Projects, Performance and Climate Change
Suniel Pillai, New Build Project Officer
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer

51. Public Speaking

The Committee were informed that there was one public speaker. The speaker was advised that they could ask one question plus one supplementary question.

Louise Horsfall asked the following question:

What protections are in place for dealing with vulnerable tenants while dealing with repairs, improvements and adaptations for their homes and what happens when things go wrong.

The Cabinet Member for Housing replied that in respect of the first part of the question, what protections are in place. When it was improvements, we (the Council) take time during the survey stages to understand the residents needs especially the ones that were vulnerable and any support that might be needed.

This may be in the form of decanting the tenant, decanting is moving the tenant to another property whilst the work is being done, or providing support through external resources to assist with things such as moving of possessions, furniture if it was a kitchen replacement or we might provide temporary facilities if it was an adaptation. Whatever the circumstances were sympathetic to the tenants needs and react accordingly.

When it comes to repairs, we have flags on our repairs IT system where we are aware of tenant vulnerabilities or where two person visits are required this information would be included in the repair order to ensure that operatives or contractors are aware of the customer's needs. When required, we work closely with housing management or the tenants support officer when booking in repairs and visiting properties. If we identify that tenants are vulnerable through our own work, we will make a referral to housing to get them involved and the systems updated.

Should anything go wrong either during or post works, we would investigate on a case-by-case basis and react accordingly. This could be a simple case of getting an operative or contractor back to rectify the issue, which is what happened in your case, more complex matters could involve the supervisor or a manager investigating and agreeing appropriate actions.

We have got robust complaints policies and procedures in place to ensure that formal complaints are investigated and matters resolved. The complaint policy involves a two-stage process with managers responding to stage one complaints and the head of service, responding to stage two's. If the customer was still not happy with our response so the complaint is not resolved, they can escalate the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman. Obviously, the Council would do everything it can to avoid an official complaint purely because of the amount of time that's involved in officers investigating every single bit of information we have on that and producing a report, so we do bend over backwards if something has gone wrong to try and put it right. I hope you feel that is what happened in your case although there are still a couple of appointments pending.

No supplementary question was asked as the Cabinet Member for Housing had answered the question.

The Chairman thanked Ms Horsfall for attending.

52. Apologies for absence

Apologies for late attendance were received from Councillor Matthew Bailey and Councillor Penny Milnes who both had prior engagements and would be late. Apologies were also received from Councillor Habib Rahman.

53. Disclosure of Interest

None disclosed.

54. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2024 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED**.

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

No announcements were made.

56. Housing Compliance Figures

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 assessment and lift inspections remained at 100%.

There had been a slight drop in electrical inspections over the Christmas period due to missed appointments by tenants. The gas servicing inspections were currently at the highest that they had been since August 2023 at 99.41%. A total of 27 properties were currently non-compliant and these included:

- 11 were new non-compliant
- 2 needed repairs
- 2 were void properties
- 4 were due to have the external meter capped

Smoke and CO₂ inspections were at 100%, to date 598 inspections had been completed taking the total to 5,439.

At the time of writing the report 922 damp and mould inspections had taken place with works completed on 592 properties. 333 were booked in with contractors and 245 with the repairs team.

Members thanked the Officers for the report. A question was asked in respect of the damp and mould inspections were these carried out by contractors. The Director of Housing and Projects stated that the Council had its own Damp and Mould Team which had been in place since September and consisted of a surveyor, builder and two labourers. Some of the necessary works could be carried out internally, however some works were required to be undertaken by external contractors. There was a backlog of works and good progress was being made in addressing the backlog as well as tackling new issues.

One Member asked a question in respect of external meter capping and the average timeframe for this. It was stated that currently that information was not available but the Officer stated that he would email the information to Members.

➤ **Action**

The Health, Safety and Compliance Manager to email the external meter capping timeframes to Members.

Members noted the current compliance figures position.

57. Earlesfield Project Overview

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which updated the Committee on progress in respect of the Earlesfield Project. To date under Phases 1 and 2 85 properties had been completed. A further 13 properties were in progress which left 23 properties to be started.

A Core Group meeting had been held on 26 November 2024 where concerns were raised by the Council in relation to the progress that was being made. Following the meeting a comprehensive action plan was provided by United Living to address the delivery of the contract. A site visit took place on 28 November where site teams from both United Living and the Council discussed operational issues which included frequent programme updates, snagging/defects and tenant move dates. Weekly meetings were now taking place to discuss any issues, handovers and delays. A further Core meeting had been held in December 2024 where the number of defects had decreased and the number of completions increased.

Monthly meetings continued to be held with United Living to monitor on-site works and quality. It was still proposed that all properties would be handed over by 31 March 2025, however, the Cabinet Member for Housing stated that it was possible that 10 properties may not make the deadline and these would be handed over in April or May at the very latest. A huge amount of work had gone into the project which had been a massive undertaking. Appendix 1 listed the works carried out.

Discussion on the project followed with one Member querying the “robust” meetings that had taken place and the reason for them to which the Director of Housing and Projects replied that it was a huge and complex project and slippages of even a week had a knock-on effect which impacted the project and could cause delays. References were made to the Christmas period and families not wishing to be decanted out of their properties at this time which was understandable but did cause delay to the project. Confirmation was given that the contractor, United Living had adequate resources on site to complete the project and that any costs due delays by the contractor would be picked up by the contractor.

Members noted the current position.

58. New Build and Acquisitions

The Head of Projects, Performance and Climate Change gave a verbal update to the Committee on the new build housing pipeline and purchases.

The 20-unit scheme at Swinegate, Grantham had reached the halfway point and was on track to be completed by July 2025.

The Larch Close scheme had been amended to change the four-bedroom properties to two adapted bungalows and that was currently with the Planning Authority for determination.

Mercer Building Solutions are building the Larch Close scheme on the Council's behalf and some of the planning conditions are being discharged and they hoped to be on site in March/April this year.

Pre-application advice had been provided on the 11-unit scheme at Wellington Way, Market Deeping and a biodiversity net gain report was being awaited. It was hoped that a full planning application could be submitted to the Planning Authority shortly.

The first phase of the 36 houses at the David Wilson Homes development in Corby Glen had been accepted and were now fully tenanted. Work was ongoing with them to try and bring forward the other phases sooner.

The last Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Phase 2 properties would be bought by the end of the week (24 January 2025). They were all new build properties and would be excepted on Friday.

The Council had been offered back a bungalow and a six-bedroom property which would also be taken through the acquisition process.

Members noted the current position.

59. Fire Compartmentation works update

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which provided the Committee with an update on the program of fire compartmentation work which was being undertaken within the Council's housing stock.

The report outlined the work carried out by the Compliance Team as part of the fire safety improvements programme to improve fire safety where gaps were identified. The initial step was to commission new fire risk assessments for every scheme and block which contained a communal area/shared communal space as required by law. A total of 147 new reports had to be completed and reviewed along with a review of all previous reports and fire related information.

Following the review the Compliance Team identified the need for more detailed investigations and although everything was legally compliant the information provided did not identify all the fire safety improvement options available.

Compartmentation was a key part of the fire strategy as it puts break areas in to compartments which help to delay or prevent a fire spreading through shared areas and means of escape.

The works were being completed on a risk-based approach with those buildings with residents which could be classed as more vulnerable being prioritised and split into three phases.

Appendix 1 to the report detailed the three phases. The works being undertaken included the replacement of fire doors, the provision of fire breaks and fire curtains in roof voids, sealing gaps/voids in communal spaces. To date 471 fire doors had been replaced, 40 fire curtains had been fitted in ceiling breaks and individual flats across all 15 sites. The areas had also been surveyed to identify any required fire safety improvement works.

Eleven of the 15 sites had been completed with works underway at the remaining four sites.

A question was asked in relation to fire curtains to which the Health, Safety and Compliance Manager replied.

Members noted the report and the work done to date.

60. Homelessness and Rough Sleeper update

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which detailed the status and recent activity of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper services. The report showed the current position in respect of Change4Lincs, the Council's homelessness service and the outcome of the annual rough sleeper which was conducted in November 2024.

The report also detailed the emergency protocol in respect of severe weather which had been triggered twice in recent weeks. Members attention was drawn to the details in the report in respect of the new night provision shelter.

Working in partnership with Grantham Ark a new night shelter had been opened in Grantham on 19 December 2024. It was stated that 117 bed nights had been provided up to (17 January 2025) to 17 different people. Two of the people who had used the facilities were now in permanent accommodation, three others had found alternative accommodation. Visits were made when people checked in and in the morning with staff offering help and advice. People were still in the shelter and work was still being carried out with them and providing overnight accommodation.

(14:33 Councillor Bailey arrived at the meeting)

Members were very supportive of the initiative and asked whether it was purely for people within the district. It was stated that people had to have a local connection and the shelter was running at capacity.

A question was asked in respect of temporary accommodation and it was stated that outside of the SWEP there was no duty to house these people however, officers did work over and above what was required to help.

A question was asked in respect of the extra £300k budget for homelessness to which the Cabinet Member for Housing replied. Further discussion on the homelessness grants and the Change4Lincs initiative. It was confirmed that funding for 2025/26 had been allocated to mirror that of 2024/25. The funding totalled £646,348 and would be used to continue to deliver the service for the four district councils.

Work had started to finalise plans to deliver the 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.

Further discussion in respect of the night shelter followed with one Member, not on the Committee stating that people in the shelter really appreciated it. It was suggested that a visit be arranged with Members of the Committee to visit the shelter when it was convenient to Officers.

The Chairman congratulated the Housing Team on the fantastic work that had been done.

61. Damp and Mould Policy

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced the report which updated the Committee in respect of the Damp and Mould Policy which would be effective from April 2025.

All social landlords must adhere to several regulations relating to damp and mould and a lack of compliance could place a landlord at risk of prosecution or financial penalty. It was essential that the Council had a damp and mould policy in place that meets all regulatory requirements.

The standalone policy was attached at Appendix 2 to the report and was in line with good practice and replaced the current damp and mould protocol.

Key considerations were highlighted within the report and included:

- Responding sensitively and assess the issue with urgency to identify the severity of the damp and mould and potential risk to residents.
- Landlords should inspect homes at least six weeks after remedial work had been carried out to ensure that the issue had been fixed and damp

and mould had not reappeared. If damp and mould had 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.

Members welcomed the Policy and felt that it was essential that the Council kept on top any instance of damp and mould. Questions were asked about the types of damp and mould and whether living conditions played a role. It was stated that once more data was available, this could be shared with the Committee. It was noted that there were a new suite of KPI's being developed which would be brought before the Committee on a regular basis.

Further discussion followed with comments being made in respect of private landlords and have adequate loft insulation.

One Member stated that it would have been helpful to see where the policy had been amended but it was stated that the policy had been totally rewritten which was why track changes had not been included. A further comment was made in respect of return visits due to a reoccurrence of damp and mould and the Head of Service (Technical) stated that more support would be offered to tenants in these cases. It was stated that a balance was required to allow for ventilation but keep homes warm. The recommendation within the report was proposed, seconded and **AGREED**.

Recommendation

That the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the content of the updated Damp and Mould Policy and recommends the updated Policy to Cabinet for adoption, effective from April 2025.

62. Decant Policy

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced the report which provided the Committee with details of the Council's proposed new Decant Policy which explained the approach that would be followed when requiring tenants to be decanted from their home to a different property. It was stated that tenants usually remained within their homes whilst works were being carried out such as improvement or major repairs.

However, in certain circumstances the health and safety of the tenant would be at risk, or the works to be carried out were extensive and the tenants were unable to remain in the property whilst the work was completed and therefore would be required to decant to another property temporarily or permanently.

The new Policy showed the practical steps that would be taken to facilitate this process. The report recommended that the policy be recommended to Cabinet for adoption.

Discussion on the new Policy followed with various parts of the policy being highlighted and concern being expressed by Members and these included the rehoming of pets, children changing schools, the costs of school uniforms and home contents insurance.

It was stated that the policy had tried to cover every eventuality, wherever possible these issues would not come into effect but if they did the policy covered that area. The requirement to decant tenants would be looked at as a last option and it did not happen frequently. Further discussion followed on school uniforms and it was stated that each case would be looked at individually and they were not set in stone. A query was made in reference to home contents insurance and whether a timeframe needed to be included within the policy so it was clear what period any payment would take place for. The recommendation as outlined within the report was proposed and seconded and on being put to the vote it was **AGREED**.

Recommendation

The Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the proposed Decant Policy which is in line with best practice and will provide clear operational guidance and recommends the submission and adoption of the policy to Cabinet.

(A short adjournment took place between 15:12 – 15:27)

63. Repairs Service Update

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which concerned the progress made following the internal repairs service audit report that had been received in April 2024. The report stated that the Council could take partial assurance that the controls to manage this area were suitably designed, consistently applied or effective. The report identified actions that were required to strengthen the control framework.

Members were referred to Appendix 1 of the report which outlined the progress made against the audit actions. This appendix was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee at the meeting on 27 November 2024.

There was a total of 13 actions with two advisory actions. Ten of the actions were complete with one action due to be completed by 31 March 2025. The other actions concerned a new post and upgrades to IT systems which were due to be completed by 31 March 2025.

It was stated that significant progress had been made with the introduction of a new interim staffing structure as detailed at Section 4 of the report. The new structure

included replacing the single Repairs and Voids Manager role with two managers, one to look after voids and one to look after repairs to allow the development of expertise in each area and provide greater resilience within the staffing structure. The introduction of separate managers had created capacity for the new Damp and Mould team which would be included within the Repairs team.

Performance reporting had been significantly strengthened since the audit and new Key Performance Indicators had been created together with reports within the new QL repairs system which allowed weekly and monthly performance reporting. Extracts from the reporting system were shown within the report at Section 5. Section 6 of the report detailed the Repairs Service Improvement Plans and the actions that had been completed to date and those actions planned for Q4 2024/25. Section 7 covered the weekly reporting of repairs which had been introduced in November 2024 to monitor the progress of the improvement plans. A snapshot of jobs was included in the report. It was proposed that the item become a regular item on the agenda and the Committee was asked for a timeframe of either three or six months.

A discussion on the report followed with Members noting the progress made to date. The Cabinet Member for Housing stated that going forward it was proposed that local contractors within the four main towns would be approached to see if they could undertake small local repairs. A question was asked in respect of new and old repairs to which the Head of Service (Technical Services) responded. A further question was asked about who made the call in respect of simple or complex repairs and it was stated that this was done in the Repairs centre with an example given of a complex repair which required different contractors to attend. More discussion followed in respect of Damp and Mould to which the Head of Service (Technical Services) replied. It was proposed that a report would come before the Committee every three months going forward.

➤ **Action**

That the Committee received an update report on the Repairs Service every three months.

64. Riverside Heating Upgrade Works

The Cabinet Member for Housing updated the Committee on the progress of the Riverside communal heating upgrade works.

Members attention was drawn to Table 1 of the report which detailed the short-term rectification/enhancement works which had been presented to the Committee in September 2024. At the meeting it was confirmed that items numbered 1 – 8 would be the focus of the work including the replacement of boilers. The Cabinet Member for Housing confirmed that the new boilers had been installed and had been operational since December 2024. A temporary boiler had been installed whilst the works were being undertaken to ensure that residents had access to heating and hot water.

The Building Management System had been installed and was expected to go live during January 2025. There were still three immersion heaters to install, these had not been done due to gaining access to properties. The flushing of the secondary system and the installation of new thermostatic controls commenced the previous week. Chemicals would be added to the system to ensure the existing pipes were in working order and to ensure that the system worked efficiently.

The Council's Mechanical Contractor had regularly attended Riverside whilst the works were being carried out to monitor progress and address any concerns or issues which residents had experienced.

The Cabinet Member for Housing referred the Committee to Table 2 of the report which provided a breakdown of the costs that had been incurred to date in respect of the project. It was noted that complaints had been received from residents, the most prolific complaint was due to residents' flats being too hot. The Council's Mechanical Contractor had shown residents how to lower the temperature which would be easier once the new thermostatic controls had been installed and so far, the project had been successful.

The Ward Member for the area welcomed the news in respect of the project for the residents at Riverside and also thanked the emergency services and those officers that had attended a small fire which had happened at the weekend. The Member made reference to compensation which had been discussed at a meeting of the Committee and what the current position was in respect of the budget, what was the final figure likely to be acknowledging what had been spent to date as shown in Table 2.

The Director of Housing and Projects confirmed that all compensation had been paid, it had gone against residents rent accounts and had been paid in line with the Council's compensation policy. The only works that were missing from the Table within the report were the replacement heaters for the communal room which were in the region of £3,000 and also it was proposed to replace the flooring in this area which would cost in the region of £10,000. It was noted that these works would bring the total cost in, under that which had been originally budgeted.

The Ward Member thanked the Officers and the Cabinet Member for Housing for the work done in respect of the heating project which had hopefully resolved the issues at Riverside.

The Committee noted the current position.

65. Response times to Housing Enquiries

The Head of Service (Housing) gave a verbal update to the Committee in respect of Member enquiries to the Housing Service. Members were encouraged to send emails to the generate housing inbox housingenquiry@southkesteven.gov.uk to enable any response times to be tracked.

Since April 2024, 25 council enquiries had been received per month which was an average figure, although it was stated that this could vary and the complexities of the enquiry could take time to address. Up until November 2024 there had been a response time of 15 working days, however it was felt that this was not in line with any other response times such as complaint response times so this was reduced to 10 working days in November 2024. It was stated that if the enquiry was urgent this would be responded to within one to two working days or even the same day.

In April 2024 of the 25 enquiries received, there was a late response, over 15 working days on 10 of the enquiries. Since then, response times had improved and in November 2024 there were no late responses. Following the reduction in response times from 15 working days to 10 working days in November, December's figures showed that there were three late response times.

Members were reminded that although Officers were approachable any enquiry that they had, should go through the generic email inbox as this was manned all the time, whereas Officers were often out on site or in meetings. It also enabled statistics to be compiled that enabled clear improvement to response times to be seen from a central location. The Head of Service (Housing) encouraged good communication between Officers and Members and she hoped that Members had seen that improvement over the last year.

The Chairman stated that he had seen a massive improvement and he thanked the Head of Service (Housing) and all those in the Housing Team.

Discussion on response times followed with one Member asking whether the responses were an acknowledgement of the email or a full response. The Head of Service (Housing) stated that where possible this would be a full response, unless due to the complexities of the enquiry more work was required.

The Cabinet Member for Housing also gave an example of a response time to an enquiry that had been made. She also referred to the number of people cc'd into an email and the response to all that "clogged up" inboxes unnecessarily. If she was one of the recipients to an email with a complex problem this would be addressed and responded to.

66. Work Programme 2024/25

A discussion on topics for the Work Programme took place. A question was asked about an update on Repairs at the March meeting however, it was felt that this item should come to a later meeting possibly May/June to enable more information to be available. An update in respect of the Night Shelter was asked for, however the Director of Housing and Projects stated that there was a standing item on the agenda for Homelessness and Rough Sleeping which would include the night shelter as well as the position in respect of Change4Lincs.

One Member referred to the discussion on cladding at the last meeting and the Health, Safety and Compliance Manager stated that an email had been sent out to

Members on this issue. The Chairman asked that if Members had not received the email to get in touch with him.

A further question was asked about response times to calls from members of the public in respect of housing. It was noted that only performance and complaints were logged and these were considered by the Governance and Audit Committee, however the Director of Housing and Property stated that she would look to see what information was available and this would be reported to a later meeting of the Committee.

➤ **Action**

The Director of Housing and Property to see what information was available in respect of housing calls and response times and report any information available to a later meeting of the Committee.

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

None.

68. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 4:00pm.

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**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 17 March 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Housing Compliance Figures

Report Author

Phil Swinton, Health, Safety and Compliance Manager.

✉ phil.swinton@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

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

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the latest compliance position for February 2025.**
- 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: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance (deputy s151 officer)

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 referenced in the report. .

Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer

Risk and Mitigation

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

Completed by: Tracey Elliott Risk Governance and Risk Officer

Health and Safety

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

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

Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion

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

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

Climate Change

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

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

2. Background to the Report

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

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. The Committee is asked to note the current compliance figures to the end of February 2025 (3.4 - 3.12).
- 3.2. The approved capping and increased focus on compliance have seen figures for Gas and EICR stabilise and the Council is now seeing a consistently high compliance completion rate maintaining 99%+ since approval.
- 3.3. The FRA baseline number has been increased to 148 to reflect the acquisition of St Peters House.
- 3.4. Legionella – 100% compliant with required inspections
- 3.5. Asbestos – 100% compliant with required inspections.
- 3.6. In addition to the Asbestos Regulation 4 inspections, it should be noted that over the last 12 months the Compliance team has undertaken an audit of all the asbestos information held for the Councils Housing stock. This information will be

transferred to the Council's upgraded asset data system, Apex, ensuring that all asbestos data is held in one location.

- 3.7. Fire Risk Assessments – 100% compliant with required inspections.
- 3.8. Lift inspections (LOLER) – 100% compliant with required inspections.
- 3.9. Gas safety inspections – 99.22%, there has been an increase in the access refusal rate during February which has impacted the compliance rate. There were 36 non-compliant properties at the end of February, 6 of these properties have been capped. Two properties require a new boiler, the Council has currently not been able to arrange an appointment with the tenants for these works to be completed. The Council has been allocated a provisional court date of 7 April 2025 to apply for 20 warrants for entry to properties.
- 3.10. Electrical inspections – has increased to 94.62%.
- 3.11. Smoke and CO – 100%. A further 246 inspections were completed in February. Bringing the total inspections to 6,100. Inspections are completed during any visit undertaken by the contractor, meaning some properties are inspected more than once during the year, this increases the assurance that devices are fitted and working.
- 3.12. Damp and Mould – 1082 damp and mould inspections have been undertaken with works completed at 674 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 – December 2024 | Outstanding | January – February 2025 | Outstanding |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Number of reports | 424 | 37 (54*) | 509 | 226 (276*) | 149 | 145 |

*comparison data from the report presented to committee on 20 January 2025

- 3.13. **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.

- 3.14. **Regular Reports to Committees and Cabinet:** The necessary reporting to appropriate committees will continue and will change as per respective requirements. Members are invited to comment on the content of this report and confirm their views and observations on the Council's performance.

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 respect of housing services, including the identification of appropriate resources, funds, and service improvements in a timely manner.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. The necessary consultation with 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 1 - Compliance Figures December 2024 to February 2025
7.2. Appendix 2 - Gas and EICR January 2024 – December 2024

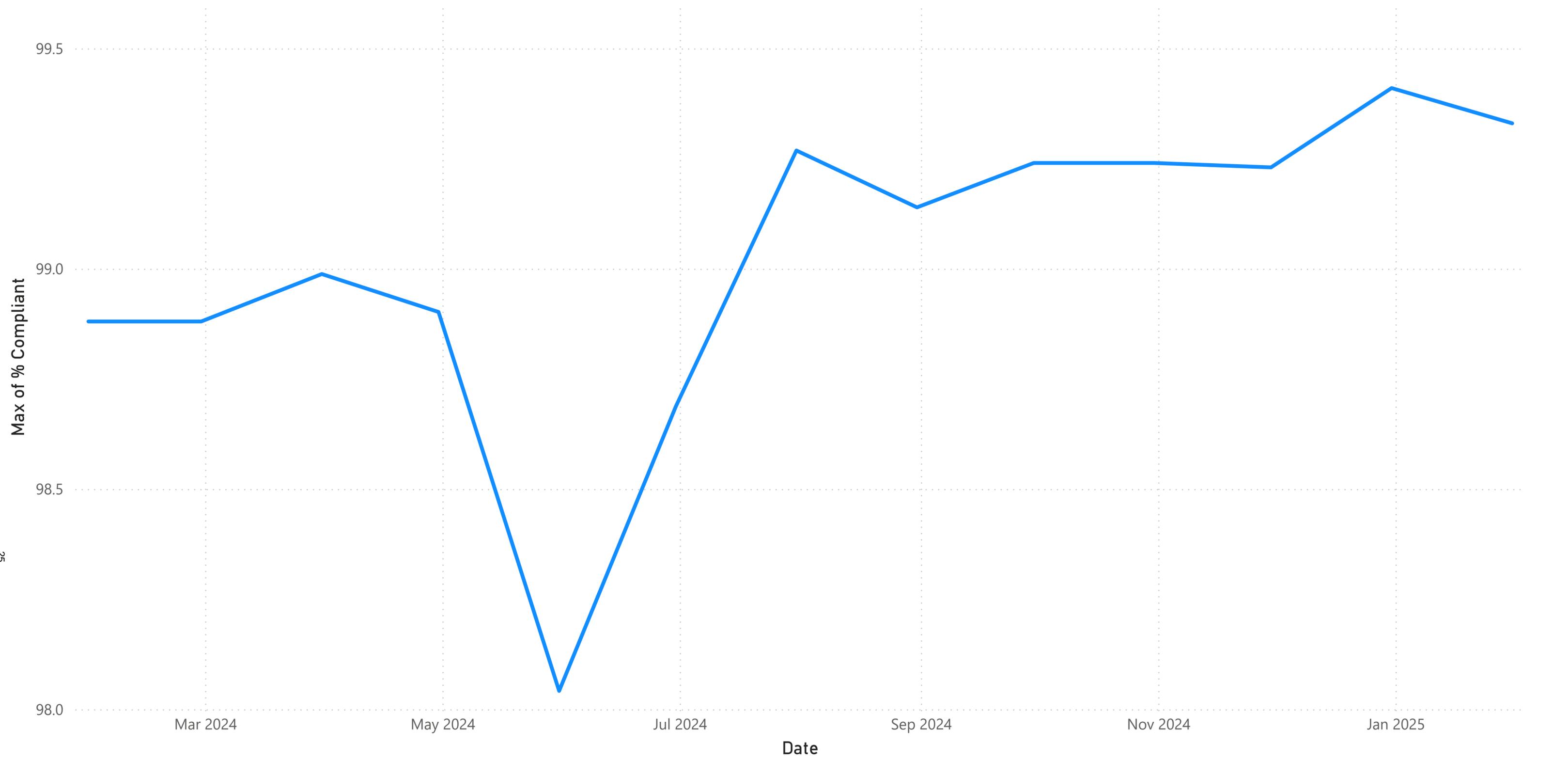
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| 31/12/2024 | | | | 31/01/2025 | | | | 28/02/2025 | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------------|---------|-----------------|-----------|---------------|---------|-----------------|-----------|---------------|---------|
| Baseline number | Compliant | Non Compliant | % | Baseline number | Compliant | Non Compliant | % | Baseline number | Compliant | Non Compliant | % |
| Legionella 33 | 33 | 0 | 100.00% | 33 | 33 | 0 | 100.00% | 33 | 33 | 0 | 100.00% |
| Gas 4640 | 4613 | 27 | 99.41% | 4640 | 4609 | 31 | 99.33% | 4640 | 4604 | 36 | 99.22% |
| EICR 5845 | 5494 | 351 | 93.99% | 5845 | 5494 | 324 | 94.44% | 5853 | 5538 | 315 | 94.62% |
| Asbestos 259 | 259 | 0 | 100.00% | 259 | 259 | 0 | 100.00% | 259 | 259 | 0 | 100.00% |
| FRA 147 | 147 | 0 | 100.00% | 147 | 147 | 0 | 100.00% | 148 | 148 | 0 | 100.00% |
| Lifts 13 | 13 | 0 | 100.00% | 13 | 13 | 0 | 100.00% | 13 | 13 | 0 | 100.00% |
| Smoke 5853 | 5853 | 0 | 100.00% | 5853 | 5853 | 0 | 100.00% | 5853 | 5853 | 0 | 100.00% |
| Damp and Mould 922 | 592 | 330 | 64.20% | 979 | 625 | 354 | 56.64% | 1082 | 674 | 408 | 60.53% |

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Gas

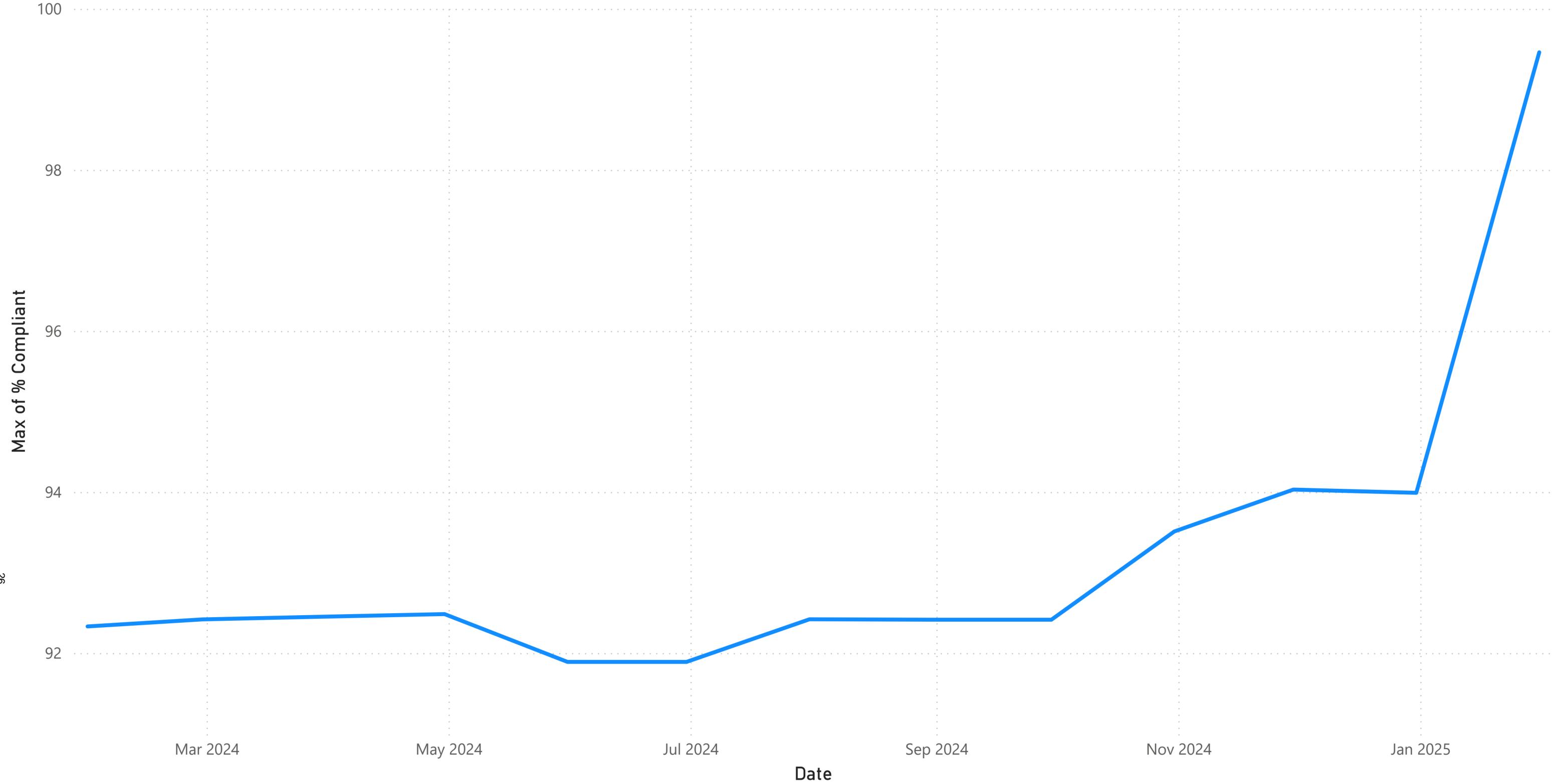
Max of % Compliant by Date



25

Electrical

Max of % Compliant by Date





SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 17 March 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran,
Cabinet Member for Housing

Earlesfield Project Overview March 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 the housing stock.

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 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 direct financial implications associated with this report but there is budget in place to deliver the Earlsfield Estate project.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance (deputy s151 officer)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 Regular updates to Committee members are part of good governance.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

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 Earlsfield Estate in Grantham, will contribute towards achieving this commitment.
- 2.2. There have been site visits undertaken to completed properties by Cabinet Members and the Ward Members.
- 2.3. As noted in the reports previously presented to the Committee, 45 properties were completed under phase 1 of this project. Progress on the project under Phase 2 is continuing with 51 properties complete and handed back to tenants. A further 12 properties are currently in progress and are at various stages of work. As of 11 February this leaves a further 13 properties to be started/completed.
- 2.4. As previously noted, the Council has raised concerns during Core Group meetings in relation to the poor progress that was being made on the project. Since these meetings, United Living have continued with their action plan to fulfil their requirements for the delivery of the contract.

- 2.5. All properties that make up Phase 2 will be started by mid-March 2025, but their completion will not be achieved as originally anticipated by the end of March 2025. Meetings have taken place between SKDC site staff and United Living, and a detailed programme has been jointly formulated to show when the remaining properties will be completed. The completion date of the last property has been set as the 30 May 2025.
- 2.6. United Livings Tenant Liaison Officer is dealing with all tenant issues on handover to ensure they are familiar with the new fitments following the improvement works that have been carried out in their home
- 2.7. Weekly meetings take place to discuss the forthcoming weeks property handovers and completions. Monthly progress meetings also take place to monitor overall programme progress, and any issues associated with the project.
- 2.8. All works are checked for defects by both SKDC and United Living site staff prior to handover. Any defects are then completed by the contractor within 2 days of notification.
- 2.9. The Committee should note that an unannounced visit from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) took place at one of the properties where asbestos removal works were taking place on the 31 January 2025. During their visit they examined, documentation, site procedures and the HSE Inspector left site satisfied that the removal works were being completed in a safe and correct manner with no follow up action noted.
- 2.10. The current progress chart is shown on Appendix 1.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. 45 Properties have been completed under Phase 1. 51 properties have been completed under Phase 2 so far with a further 12 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:
 - Adequate resources are allocated by United Living to enable project completion to be achieved by the revised project completion, 30 May 2025.
 - 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.
- 3.3. Mitigation measures for the above key points are being monitored on a day to day basis and through regular weekly and 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 11th March 2025.)

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 4.1. Report is for information and noting.

5. Appendices

- 5.1. Appendix 1 – Housing Progress Chart



**SOUTH
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DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 17 March 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 note the latest position of the 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 Costs associated with the delivery of the homelessness function have fluctuated during the year due to the pressure on the emergency accommodation but with the change in use of the night shelter and further grant funding received in year it is expected that costs can be managed within the existing budget. In total the council has been awarded £592k in Flexible Homelessness Support grant to support specific posts and emergency accommodation.

The Rough Sleeper Initiative is delivered through the pooling of the specific grant funding which for 2024/25 has a budget of £755k made up of a carry forward of £109k from 2023/24 and the grant funding of £646k. Currently an underspend of circa £300k has been forecast which will be ringfenced for future use. It has recently been confirmed we have been allocated another £646k for 2025/26 to enable the programme to continue for at least another year.

All the costs associated with the resettlement schemes are funding through specific grant funding.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of finance (deputy s151 officer)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 This report is for noting only and serves as an update for Committee members.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

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 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

Rough Sleeper Initiative

- 3.1. 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
- 3.2. The team is hosted by South Kesteven District Council and was created by each district council contributing their Rough Sleeper Initiative funding.
- 3.3. 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 Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Manager; managers from the other three districts also provide support to help shape the service.

Up until recently, the future funding for this initiative was looking uncertain as funding had only been confirmed to 31 March 2025. However, it was reported at the last Housing OSC meeting on 20 January 2025 that MHCLG have now 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.

- 3.4. Work has continued to finalise the plans to deliver this service across the four districts. As the funding model has remained the same, it has been decided that all existing staff will be retained by SKDC but tasked to work in other local authority areas where appropriate. This would allow each district to have a dedicated team in place to complement their existing Housing Options service.
- 3.5. The following table details the C4L case numbers as at 25 February 2025.

| District | Number in temporary accommodation | Number of open support cases |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| South Kesteven | 3 | 18 |
| North Kesteven | 0 | 5 |
| West Lindsey | 1 | 10 |
| South Holland | 1 | 19 |

- 3.6. The number of people in accommodation is low compared to the number of people being supported. This could be because the people being supported are already in accommodation and require support to maintain it, or they have refused the offer of temporary accommodation.
- 3.7. Those who are placed in temporary accommodation must engage with the intensive support that is available to them, or their placement will come to an end.

- 3.8. In January and February 2025, seven people moved on from temporary accommodation and into more settled, longer-term accommodation.
- 3.9. Four people moved on from temporary accommodation due to disengaging with the service.

Homelessness update

- 3.10. 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.
- 3.11. The following table provides details of the homelessness case figures for the last three months:

| | November 24 | December 24 | January 25 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Number of active homelessness cases | 248 | 252 | 294 |
| Number of new approaches | 170 | 157 | 214 |
| Number in temporary accommodation | 57 | 58 | 59 |
| Of which – nightly paid | 6 | 11 | 13 |
| Of which – our stock | 51 | 47 | 46 |

- 3.12. 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.
- 3.13. As shown in the above figures, the number of new homelessness approaches and active homelessness cases is steadily increasing, alongside the number of people in nightly paid accommodation.
- 3.14. However, with the launch of the night shelter, it is hoped that an improvement on these numbers will be seen in the coming months.
- 3.15. The Council has also secured direct access to a House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) in Grantham via a partner agency. This property will be used as temporary accommodation to further alleviate the need for nightly paid accommodation and will be used by people where the night shelter is not a suitable option.

Night shelter

- 3.16. As reported to the committee on 20 January 2025, SKDC, working in partnership with Grantham Ark launched a new night shelter in Grantham which opened on 19 December 2024.

- 3.17. 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 early each morning to signpost individuals to further support and provisions they can access during the day.
- 3.18. SKDC are funding overnight staff to ensure the safety of all individuals throughout the night.
- 3.19. As the demand for this service increased the decision was made to utilise the community hall to provide additional crash beds. This meant that people using the shelter on a longer-term basis could be moved to the flats for additional support to be provided to source longer term accommodation.
- 3.20. The night shelter has operated for 71 nights from 19 December 2024 up to and including 28 February 2025 at a cost of £14,400. The shelter has been closed on 6 occasions during this period due to a lack of uptake.
- 3.21. 402 bed spaces have been used across this time, accommodating 20 individuals.
- If nightly paid accommodation had been used over this period, it would have cost £30,150 based on an average of £75 per night. Therefore, a saving of £15,750 has been achieved.
- 3.22. Long term accommodation for 8 people has been secured and SKDC are still working with others to source suitable permanent accommodation.
- 3.23. This provision ended on 28 February 2025 as the demand for the service reduced significantly over recent weeks meaning it was no longer cost effective to continue with the service when compared to the cost of nightly paid accommodation.
- 3.24. Although the night shelter has closed SKDC has granted a 30-day extension to 3 individuals who are engaging well. There is confidence that during this period longer term housing will be secured for them.
- 3.25. Discussions are ongoing with partners to explore more cost-effective options to relaunch the service and run it throughout the year. Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be kept up to date with this.

Resettlement pressures

- 3.26. Officers have been working closely with partners from the Strategic Migration Partnership and East Midlands Council to deliver our resettlement duties as part of the national resettlement scheme.

- 3.27. Currently there are properties utilised in South Kesteven for the purposes of housing Asylum seekers. When those people are granted asylum, the duty is then on the Local Authority to help rehouse as part of their statutory homelessness duties.
- 3.28. The properties are managed by Serco and are mainly HMO's. Currently Serco manage 94 bedspaces in SKDC with 34 of these occupied.
- 3.29. Funding opportunities are being explored to better equip the Homelessness team to be able to deal with the potential pressure of this scheme.

+



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 17 March 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Draft Mobility Vehicle Policy

Report Author

Celia Bown, Senior Housing Policy and Strategy Officer

 Celia.Bown@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To present the draft Mobility Vehicle Policy to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the contents of the report and the draft Mobility Vehicle Policy**
- 2. Recommend the approval of the draft Mobility Vehicle Policy to Cabinet**

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 If the policy is agreed, any fees and charges as a consequence will need to be calculated and approved.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance (deputy s151 officer)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report which are not already referenced elsewhere in the report, particularly in relation to health and safety and equalities, diversity and inclusion.

Completed by: Graham Watts (Monitoring Officer)

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.3 The Council must ensure appropriate measures are in place to reduce the risk of mobility vehicle fires which may have a significant impact on life and buildings. The Council would need to evidence these measures should an incident occur. The implementation of a Mobility Vehicle Policy is essential to reduce the risk of fire and it is essential that the owners of mobility vehicles have the appropriate insurance in place should a fire occur.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance & Risk Officer

Health and Safety

- 1.4 The Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 places a number of duties on the authority including, General fire safety precautions, implementing necessary preventative and protective measures and monitoring for effectiveness. In order to comply with this and reduce the risk of fire, the Council must have an effective strategy to manage and control the use of, and charging of Mobility vehicles. There has been a rise in the number of e vehicle and scooter fires and without control they pose a risk to building fire safety.

Completed by: Philip Swinton Health ,Safety and Compliance Manager

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.5 Mobility Scooters are a life-line amongst people with limited ambulatory ability. They should, therefore, be seen as a necessary tool to independent living for people of all ages who live their life with disability. The provision of storage and charging space for these vehicles needs, wherever practicably possible, to be provided for the Council's tenants and any alterations to housing stock to accommodate the needs of users of mobility scooters must be considered as reasonable adjustments (again where practicably possible) as part of the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

Safeguarding

- 1.6 South Kesteven District Council is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and/or young people and adults with care and support needs within the activities we undertake. Section 6 of this policy clearly references our Safeguarding Policy to highlight our role and responsibilities.

Completed by: Sarah McQueen, Head of Housing and Safeguarding Lead for SKDC.

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires that fire risks in communal areas are assessed and actions taken to reduce these risks. In residential buildings, mobility scooters and other battery operated vehicles, pose a fire risk when stored in communal areas and fire escape routes, to residents, Council employees, contractors, visitors and firefighters.
- 2.2. A review of the mobility scooter storage facilities at the Council's Sheltered Housing Schemes has established:
- That scooters are being stored and charged inside schemes or externally and adjacent to buildings, potentially causing unacceptable fire and health and safety risks.
 - Residents are using the Council's electricity supply, which is being consumed at no additional cost to the owner of the scooter.
 - Scooters are being stored in locations which are obstructing fire escape routes.
 - Scooters are being charged outside via an extension lead through the window of resident accommodation, which is also a recognised fire risk.

2.3. The Council has produced a draft Mobility Vehicle Policy attached at Appendix 1 which clearly sets for Council tenants and Leaseholders of both Sheltered and General Needs Housing:

- The process to seek permission for a scooter.
- Storage and charging of scooters within Council Premises
- The use of scooters within Council Premises
- The ongoing responsibilities of scooter owners.
- Scenarios where permission for a scooter will be refused.
- The impact of failing to comply with the policy.

2.4 Due to the constraints with space and charging points there is a maximum capacity for the storage of scooters at Sheltered Housing Schemes. The Council's Mobility Scooter Group which is attended by relevant Council Officers including the Fire Compliance Officer have reviewed the National Fire Chief Council guidelines and have concluded that, based on 30-minute fire doors, a maximum of 3 mobility scooters should be allowed in a sheltered housing scheme at any one time. The mobility vehicles can only be stored and charged in designated facilities and on the ground floor only.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 Allocation of spaces will be made based upon residents' individual needs. Where adequate storage facilities do not exist, a tenant/leaseholder may seek permission to make alterations to the property. For example, for the provision of storage facilities, ramp, access path or hard standing. The Council will not unreasonably withhold permission for alterations.

3.2 A review of the number of mobility scooters at the Council's Sheltered Housing Schemes was undertaken during October 2024 and it is projected that the number of scooters and other battery-operated vehicles such as electric wheelchairs will increase due to age demographic of tenants.

3.3 The Council is reviewing future storage options to establish how this increased demand could be met going forwards. For example, the use of storage 'pods' or underutilised garages sites.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 The Council could choose to not implement the Mobility Vehicle Policy but the implication of this is continued fire, safeguarding and health and safety risks.

4.2 The Council could choose to implement the policy but not review alternative storage and charging facility options. The implication of this would be reliance upon indoor designated storage and charging facilities at the sheltered housing

schemes, which are insufficient for the number of mobility scooters at some schemes.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. The recommended approach ensures that the Council complies with legislation regarding fire, health and safety risks and provides a clear policy framework.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. A draft Mobility Scooter Policy was first developed in 2021, and widespread consultation was undertaken. The report dated November 2021 can be found at Appendix 2. Although the findings and conclusions of this consultation are still relevant as the main issues remain the Council will repeat this consultation to ensure that the views of current tenants are taken into consideration.
- 6.2. Tenants in both sheltered housing schemes and general needs housing were asked for their views.
- 6.3. The main concern raised by tenants was that without adequate storage and charging facilities tenants would lose their independence and become housebound.

7. Appendices

- 7.1. Appendix 1 – Draft Mobility Vehicle Policy
- 7.2. Appendix 2 – Consultation Report
- 7.3. Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

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Mobility Vehicle Policy 2025



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1. Introduction

1.1 South Kesteven District Council (the Council) is committed to supporting the quality of life of its residents. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, residents are permitted to make use of the most appropriate equipment available to enable them to live independently. This includes the leasing or buying of mobility scooters and battery powered wheelchairs. This policy also applies to electric bikes and electric scooters.

1.2 The Council has a duty to ensure mobility scooters and other battery powered vehicles used by our residents are being used legally and safely, with full responsibility being taken by the owner/user.

1.3 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires that fire risks in common areas are assessed, and actions taken to reduce these risks. In residential buildings, mobility scooter and other battery powered vehicle fires can pose a life safety risk to tenants, leaseholders, employees, firefighters, and others, when stored in communal areas and/or fire escape routes.

1.4 The Council has identified the maximum capacity for the storage of mobility scooters (which is limited in sheltered accommodation). The Council will advise the residents of Sheltered Housing as to

the number of storage spaces available and whether these are external or internal arrangements for each scheme.

1.5 This policy introduces a Mobility Scooter Registration Scheme; sets out how the Council will consider requests from tenants/leaseholders to store mobility scooters; and the factors it will consider when granting or refusing storage permission. If permission is granted, this will be in writing. Permission is given only to the tenant/leaseholder and not to any visitors. Instead, they would have to park any mobility scooter outside.

1.6 The policy will be fully reviewed every two years but will be updated as required subject to regulatory or statutory needs.

1.7 Failure to comply with the terms of the permission will result in the mobility scooter being removed immediately from the accommodation.

2. Definition of mobility scooter

2.1 A mobility scooter is defined for the purpose of this policy as an electric or petrol scooter or 'invalid carriage' under the use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988. The regulations divide these machines into three classes:



- Class 1 covers manual wheelchairs
- Class 2 applies to machines designed for use on the pavement. They may also be used on the road to cross from one pavement to another or where no pavement is available
- Class 3 applies to machines (either electric or petrol) that can be used both on the pavement and on the road. Class 3 vehicles are required by law to be registered with DVLA for road use. These vehicles will be licensed in the disabled taxation class and display a nil duty tax disc.

3. Purpose of the policy

3.1 The purpose of the policy is to:

- Ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations
- Ensure that mobility scooters and other battery powered vehicles do not cause an obstruction or fire risk
- Ensure tenants/leaseholders seek written permission for a scooter – either before obtaining a new one or for any scooter already owned
- Ensure the Council takes a consistent approach to granting permission to tenants leaseholders to keep and store a scooter
- Accommodate requests for permission to keep and store scooters where practicable and not to refuse permission unreasonably
- Carry out a full assessment prior to a decision on whether or not to grant permission
- Ensure that the tenant/leaseholder has adequate insurance; understands it and commits to the terms and conditions of it
- Ensure that the tenant/leaseholder has adequate confirmation of servicing and maintaining the mobility scooter
- Provide clear information on the terms and conditions permission is granted on
- Provide a clear, written explanation of the reasons for refusing permission
- Manage the number of scooters on any one site, so as not to compromise the safety of residents or anyone else on the site

- Ensure that tenants/leaseholders are aware of their responsibilities to others

4. Residents affected by this policy

- 4.1 This policy affects anyone with a mobility scooter and other battery powered vehicles, especially people living in sheltered housing schemes and in flats with communal areas.

5. Fire safety

- 5.1 The Council has a duty to comply with the law relating to fire safety. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies and covers general fire precautions and fire safety duties which are required to protect people in case of a fire in and around premises.
- 5.2 The Order requires that where necessary, fire precautions should be put in place to an extent that is reasonable and practicable.
- 5.3 One of the requirements under the Order is that fire risk assessments, focusing on the safety of occupants and visitors to the building, need to be carried out. Risk assessments have identified mobility scooters and other battery powered vehicles as a possible fire hazard when stored within communal areas, particularly near to escape routes.

6. Safeguarding

- 6.1 South Kesteven District Council is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and/or young people and adults with care and support needs within the activities we undertake. Safeguarding encompasses a range of legal duties and responsibilities designed to protect people's health, wellbeing and human

rights. Safeguarding exists so we can support people and help prevent problems from escalating, enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. Our role and responsibilities are clearly defined in our Safeguarding Policy (2024 – 2027).

7. Ownership of mobility scooters

- 7.1 If a resident is considering obtaining a mobility scooter, they must seek permission in writing from the Council first, to agree storage of the scooter.
- 7.2 Whilst permission will not be unreasonably withheld, the Council's responsibility for the health and safety of all residents within a scheme or a block of accommodation must be paramount.
- 7.3 Permission will only be granted if the tenant/leaseholder is able to store the mobility scooter in suitable storage facilities, if they are available where they live, or within their home if they live in general needs housing. This will be assessed and deemed suitable or not by the Council.
- 7.4 In accordance with this policy, the Council will issue residents with clear guidelines on the ownership of mobility scooters if permission is given.
- 7.5 The Council will maintain a register of all scooter ownership and this will be reviewed on an annual basis.

8. Requesting permission

- 8.1 Whether you are considering moving into a Council rented or leased property, or you are an existing tenant/leaseholder and already have a mobility scooter, you must seek permission from the Council to keep and store a mobility scooter.

- 8.2 To request permission, tenants/leaseholders must apply in writing, using the appropriate form, see appendix 1. The decision will be made after an assessment of the property has been undertaken. This can be carried out prior to the tenant/leaseholder obtaining a mobility scooter provided the tenant/leaseholder can provide the details of the model they are planning to get.
- 8.3 Tenants/leaseholders who apply for permission will be expected to produce their insurance certificate for inspection and ensure the mobility scooter is properly maintained, in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements, including an annual portable appliance (PAT) test and annual servicing. Failure to do this will result in permission being refused or permission granted being withdrawn and the tenant/leaseholder will be responsible for the removal of the mobility scooter.
- 8.4 In considering whether permission should be granted, account will be taken of the potential impact on other people and permission will only be granted where the needs and wellbeing of other tenants/leaseholders and other users of the building are not put at risk.
- 8.5 Permission will be refused where:
- There is no safe storage in the tenant/leaseholder's home and no alternative safe storage and charging space can be provided
 - A major physical alteration to the premises is required, which the Council believes to be unreasonable in terms of cost and or disruption to other service users
 - A tenant/leaseholder fails to take out the necessary insurance cover and fails to adequately maintain the scooter, including ensuring it has an annual portable appliance test (PAT) and annual servicing
 - The scooter is deemed unsuitable by the Council following an inspection and

assessment of the property and type and model of scooter proposed

- The tenant/leaseholder wishes to keep more than one scooter

Examples of safe storage and charging spaces may include:

- A designated room within the property
- A designated external space

8.6 Where permission is given, this is on the basis that the terms and conditions (set out in section 11) are adhered to.

9. Allocation of spaces

9.1 Where there are designated storage facilities for mobility scooters, allocation of spaces will be made in line with individual needs. Storage spaces will be allocated as and when they become available and applications will be considered in date order of request.

10. Right to review a decision

10.1 Where permission is refused, the council will explain the reasons and give details of the review process. The applicant has the right to review within 21 days of when the decision is made. A senior officer, not

involved in the original decision, will make the decision.

11. Terms and conditions of the permission

11.1 Permission may be withdrawn if the terms and conditions of the permission are not adhered to; if the tenant/leaseholder purchases an additional or larger scooter; or if the policy is updated to meet new regulatory requirements.

11.2 Storage and charging

11.2.1 Mobility scooters and other battery powered vehicles must not be stored or charged in a communal hallway, communal room or stairwell (unless designated storage and charging facilities have been provided and you have been given permission to use them) at any time; because they could increase the risk of fire or obstruct a fire escape route.

11.2.2 If a mobility scooter is stored within a tenant/leaseholder's property, they must ensure that there is enough space within the home to store the scooter safely. An inspection may be arranged to assess for additional fire safety requirements. Mobility scooters are not permitted above ground floor level in sheltered accommodation or in lifts.



11.2.3 Tenants/leaseholders will need to gain permission for any alterations, for example the provision of storage facilities, ramp, access path or hardstanding. The Council will not unreasonably withhold permission for alterations. However, there may be instances where it is not feasible to grant permission or to provide adequate facilities due to the layout of the property or insufficient budget for alterations. All mobility scooters and e-vehicles stored outside must be at least 6 metres away from your Council home to reduce the risk of fire spreading.

11.2.4 Service charges may apply for the use of the scooter store provided. These charges would cover the use of the provision of an electricity supply for charging the scooter.

11.2.5 Mobility scooter owners must only charge their mobility scooter (whether it is stored in a property or in a mobility scooter store) between 8am and 8pm to reduce the potential risk of fire overnight. Charging cables must not cause a trip hazard or fire risk.

11.2.6 The cost of electricity for charging the scooters will be included within the service charges where appropriate.

11.3 Portable Appliance Test (PAT)

11.3.1 Tenants/leaseholders are responsible for ensuring their scooter is serviced and maintained regularly and for having an annual Portable Appliance Test (PAT). This must be carried out by a competent person. If any charging equipment fails the PAT, it is the tenant/leaseholder's responsibility to arrange the repair of it or replace it before using it.

11.3.2 A certificate to confirm that the mobility scooter has passed the Portable Appliance Test (PAT) needs to be provided to the Tenancy Services Team each year.

11.4 Servicing/maintenance

11.4.1 It is important that the scooter is properly maintained and serviced regularly to the manufacturers requirements. This will prolong its life and reduce the risk of fire and mechanical breakdown. The manufacturer's handbook will detail how often the scooter should be serviced.

11.5 Health and safety to others

11.5.1 Where designated internal areas have been provided and permission granted to store within a communal area, residents must comply with any fire safety and health and safety procedures that have been put in place.

11.5.2 If a mobility scooter is driven within communal areas, this must be at a slow pace and not damage Council property. Any damage must be reported immediately to the Council and any costs to repair the damage may be recharged. Scooter use above ground floor and in lifts is not permitted.

11.6 Lifts

11.6.1 The use of mobility scooters in lifts is not permitted.

11.7 Insurance

11.7.1 Tenants and leaseholders must ensure they have appropriate public liability insurance cover against accidents or other injury to third parties or themselves, as well as any damage to the internal or external parts of the building.

11.7.2 A copy of the current insurance certificate must be provided and subsequently a yearly renewal certificate.

12. Purchasing a mobility scooter

12.1 Before choosing a mobility scooter, it is important that the tenant/leaseholder considers their needs and is confident that they are able to use one, especially if they will be using it on the road and/or pavements, amongst many other people and vehicles.

12.2 Before buying a mobility scooter it is important that the tenant/leaseholder takes time to consider their options as this may save time, effort and resources later. There are many different types of mobility scooter and tenants/leaseholders need to find one that is suitable for their needs taking in to account, for example, size, height, weight and restricted movement. Tenants/leaseholders should consider:

- Setting their budget, including the cost of the scooter, insurance and breakdown cover, maintenance, servicing and repairs and any adaptations required. Use of existing benefits and funding from charities may be available - some benefits and charity funding allow for the benefit or funding to be put towards the cost of leasing or buying a scooter
- Choosing a dealer experienced in assessing customer needs and avoid buying from an untrained salesperson. Some vehicle suppliers are members of the British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA)
- Checking whether the dealer can offer appropriate training
- Asking if scooters/vehicles can be hired to gain experience before making the purchase
- Their budget limit and whether they wish to buy new or second-hand
- Making sure they are familiar with all the

controls on the scooter/vehicle before buying and taking it home

- Checking whether there are instructions as second-hand scooters may not have them
 - Asking if there is a warranty, what it covers and how long it lasts
- 12.3 This policy recommends that all new mobility scooters purchased have been manufactured in accordance with BS EN 12184:2022. Residents are advised to discuss this with their commercial retailer, prior to purchase to ensure that this is the case.
- 12.4 Tenants/leaseholders who purchase a second-hand mobility scooter through local newspaper or social media advertising do not have this safeguard so must be wary. The mechanical state of the scooter and the state of the batteries, which are expensive to replace, will require checking.
- 12.5 For details of the British Healthcare Trades Association visit: www.BHTA.net
For information on mobility schemes visit: www.motability.co.uk
For details of charities that may assist with funding visit: www.charitychoice.co.uk

13. Safe driving – training/ instruction and speed limits

13.1 Mobility scooter owners should ensure any manufacturer guidelines or instructions on the safe use of their mobility scooter are followed.

13.2 Mobility scooters must be set at their

lowest speed whilst being used in communal areas to avoid injury to the tenant/leaseholder, other tenants or leaseholders, Council staff, visitors, and contractors.

- 13.3 No more than one person at any one time is allowed on a mobility scooter in communal areas. This must be the mobility scooter owner(s).
- 13.4 The Council advises all mobility scooter owners to attend a certified mobility scooter training course to ensure they can ride safely, confidently and competently.
- 13.5 Mobility scooter owners should be able to read a car's registration number from 12.3 metres (40 feet) and must take responsibility for ensuring that this can be achieved. Mobility scooter owners may have to pay compensation if they have an accident, and poor eyesight was part of the cause.

14. Charges for mobility scooter storage

- 14.1 Residents who use a mobility scooter store, or whose household member uses

a store, are required to pay an annual charge. The annual charge includes, but is not limited to, covering the costs of electricity, use of the mobility scooter store, administration, ongoing maintenance and future improvements.

- 14.2 The Council, as the landlord, may alter the annual charge at any time by giving four weeks' notice in writing. The notice will give the date that the change will come into force.

15. Monitoring

- 15.1 The Council will keep up to date records for all registered mobility scooter users and this will include:
- A copy of the resident's mobility scooter insurance policy
 - A copy of the electrical test certificate for the mobility scooter
 - A completed risk assessment
 - Storage location
 - The make and model of the scooter
- 15.2 The register will be monitored on a regular basis and an annual review will be carried out with the registered mobility scooter users.



16. Enforcement

- 16.1 Mobility scooter owners cannot store mobility scooters anywhere in Council property or on Council land without written consent from the Council, and as per this policy.
- 16.2 The Council reserves the right to withdraw permission to store a mobility scooter at any time if any tenant does not adhere to this policy. The resident will be asked to remove the mobility scooter immediately, and potentially, permanently.
- 16.3 Failure to comply with this policy is also a breach of tenancy and enforcement action will be taken to remove the mobility scooter.

17. Communal storage facilities

- 17.1 The Council is under no obligation to provide storage facilities where no existing provision exists.
- 17.2 The Council can refuse a tenant/leaseholder the right to store a mobility scooter if no suitable storage facilities can reasonably be provided.

18. Reasonable adjustments

- 18.1 The Council recognises that promoting equality is a fundamental part of enhancing life chances and is aware of the obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person or older person is placed at a substantial disadvantage in the enjoyment of their homes.
- 18.2 With regards to the storage and use of mobility scooters, the Council will consider adjustments where the tenant/leaseholder requests them, and this may include providing designated scooter

storage and charging facilities within external communal areas.

- 18.3 In certain exceptional circumstances where the tenant/leaseholder has severe mobility issues, is registered disabled and wholly dependent on the mobility scooter to go about their daily activities, the Council will consider the following:
- A foldaway ramp to allow access in and out of the tenants/leaseholder's home
 - Rehousing the tenant/leaseholder into a more suitable property

19. Equality and Diversity

- 19.1 The very nature of this policy will impact on people with disabilities or older people. It is important that all requests to own a mobility scooter are considered on an individual basis and the tenant/leaseholder is supported as much as possible. These requests will be considered alongside the overall health and safety principles of all residents.

20. Breach of Mobility Scooter Policy

- 20.1 The Council understands the positive differences to quality of life a scooter can make. However, where there is a breach of this policy, the Council will take the appropriate action.
- 20.2 Where a scooter is stored or charged on Council premises without permission or outside the terms of permission granted, the Council reserves the right to remove the scooter to ensure health and safety is adhered to and may recharge the tenant/leaseholder for any removal costs.

A photograph of an elderly man with white hair, wearing a light-colored patterned shirt and shorts, riding a red and black mobility scooter on a grassy path. The background is a dense line of green trees. The image is semi-transparent, allowing text to be overlaid.

If you require this information about Mobility Scooters in large print or in another format please contact us on:

☎ 01476 40 60 80 or email us at
✉ communications@southkesteven.gov.uk

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Mobility Scooter Policy Consultation – Sheltered & General Needs Housing 2021



Deborah Wyles – Consultation Officer
South Kesteven District Council
November 2021

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Executive Summary

1. Tenants in both sheltered housing schemes and general needs housing were asked for their views on a proposal to introduce a policy governing all aspects of mobility scooter ownership in council properties during a four-week consultation which took place earlier this year.
2. Opening on 26 August 2021 and closing a month later on 26 September 2021, 404 responses were received from tenants in SKDC's sheltered housing schemes and 79 from those in general needs housing.
3. The surveys were completed by those who owned/leased mobility scooters and those who didn't and revealed the majority of scooter owners (in both sheltered and general needs housing) tended to store and charge their scooter either outside or in a garden shed.
4. When asked if they supported a proposal to introduce a requirement for tenants to register their scooter with the Council, just over a third of tenants in general needs housing (28 or 36.8%) agreed. This compared to three fifths of tenants in sheltered housing (235 or 59.8%). Slightly less than half (36 or 48.6%) of tenants in general needs housing agreed with the proposal that mobility scooters should only be charged during the day – between the hours of 8am and 8pm. The proportion of tenants in sheltered housing that agreed with this proposal was higher (240 or 62.5%).
5. In the majority of instances, the proportion of tenants in sheltered housing agreeing with each of the proposals was higher than the proportion of tenants in general needs housing. This is perhaps not surprising; given that over 90% of those responding who lived in general needs housing already owned or leased a scooter or were thinking of getting one soon; compared to around a third of those who lived in sheltered housing who had responded to the consultation. In general terms, those who already own a scooter or are thinking about getting one, tended to have stronger opinions about the proposals, than those who didn't.
6. Many tenants took the opportunity to comment on the various proposals contained in the Council's Mobility Scooter Policy and quotes illustrating the main themes of their observations have been included in this report.

Purpose of report

7. The purpose of this report is to update South Kesteven District Council (SKDC), Cabinet and Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the results of the consultation that took place with various stakeholders during August and September 2021.



Background

8. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005¹ requires the Council to assess the risk created by the use of mobility scooters when used in their residential properties, particularly in relation to how they are stored and charged. The Mobility Scooter Policy has been drafted to address these issues, doing this by placing conditions on the use of scooters in council properties. Adopting the Mobility Scooter Policy would include the introduction of a registration scheme where residents must ask for permission to have a mobility scooter and for this to be dependent on the availability of safe storage and charging facilities. Tenants would also be required to insure and maintain their scooter.

Purpose

9. The purpose of this consultation is to inform the decision due to be taken by SKDC in respect of a proposal to introduce a Mobility Scooter Policy. Covering the use, storage and charging of mobility scooters within the Council's housing stock- both general needs and sheltered housing, the policy would, if adopted, also require tenants who own or lease a mobility scooter to register it with the Council, and to fulfil certain conditions. This would meet the statutory requirement, as set out in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which requires SKDC to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire in any premises they have responsibility for.

Scope

10. The scope of this consultation was focused on ensuring that the views of those who will be affected by the proposed changes, or, if their circumstances alter, are likely to be affected by the proposed changes, were reflected in the responses. This included the following stakeholders:
 - Tenants living in sheltered housing "corridor" schemes.
 - Tenants living in sheltered housing "non- corridor" schemes.
 - Tenants and leaseholders living in general needs housing. Specifically, those tenants who have informed the Council that they have a mobility-related disability and/or are eligible for the assisted garden maintenance scheme and /or the assisted refuse and recycling collection scheme.

¹ The Regulatory Reform Fire Safety order requires any person who has some level of control in respect of premises, must take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from **fire** in those premises and make sure people can safely escape from those premises if there is a **fire**.

- Key stakeholders who work with/ support those who may be affected by the introduction of the policy e.g., carers

Objectives

11. The principle objectives of this consultation were to:

- Ensure that various stakeholders were consulted on the proposal to manage the use and storage of mobility scooters in sheltered housing and general needs housing properties in the district.
- Ensure that various stakeholders were consulted on the proposal which will require those owning or leasing a scooter to register the appliance with SKDC.
- Fulfil the statutory requirement for the Council, as set out in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which is to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire in any premises they own.

The secondary objectives of this consultation were to:

- Explain the new approach to the management, storage and charging of mobility scooters, and why it is necessary.
- Explain why tenants would be required to register their mobility scooter and what the conditions of registration would be.
- Measure the degree of support or otherwise for the proposals.
- Understand and be aware of the impact this may have on specific groups of stakeholders.

Methodology

12. The responses to these consultations were collected over a four-week period (26 August through to 26 September 2021) and 483 responses were received in total. The majority of these were from tenants in sheltered housing (404) with the remainder coming from tenants in general needs housing (79). The data was gathered via a web link to on-line surveys – one for tenants in general needs housing, one for tenants in sheltered housing. Tenants were also sent printed copies of the surveys, along with a pre-paid envelope so had a choice about how they would like to respond.

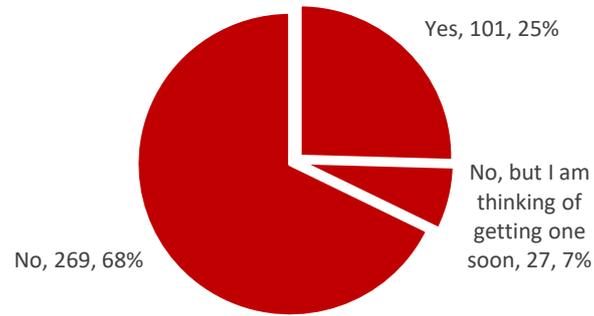
13. The surveys were designed to communicate the reasons for the introduction of the Mobility Scooter Policy, and to ascertain support (or not) for the proposals it contains, particularly in respect of registration, storage, insurance, and charging. They included sections on:

- Mobility Scooter ownership - if they currently own/lease a mobility scooter and if they do, what type
- Sections on each of the various proposals. Tenants in sheltered housing schemes and general needs housing were asked if they support the proposals or not. They were also given the opportunity to detail any negative impacts adopting the proposals may have.
- Tenants were also asked for their opinion on proposals specific to their type of housing. For example, those in sheltered housing schemes were asked if they would be prepared to contribute towards the costs of charging mobility scooters if these are in dedicated areas within the schemes, or not. They were also asked about how places to store and charge mobility scooters in sheltered housing schemes would be determined.
- An option for them to ask questions or make further observations about the proposals
- An opportunity for them to supply their details so that they can be contacted in relation to their query
- A statement on how any personal data they supply will be treated
- A question to identify their gender, age, disability status and postcode- down to sector level. For those in sheltered housing schemes –identification of scheme.
- A question to identify what type of stakeholder they are
- A thank you and closing date

The results

14. The first section on each of the surveys asked respondents if they owned or leased a mobility scooter, and if they did, what type it was and where they stored and charged it. Just under a third of respondents living in sheltered housing said that they either owned or leased a mobility scooter or were thinking of getting one soon. This is illustrated in the pie chart overleaf:

Q1. Do you own or lease a mobility scooter at the moment?

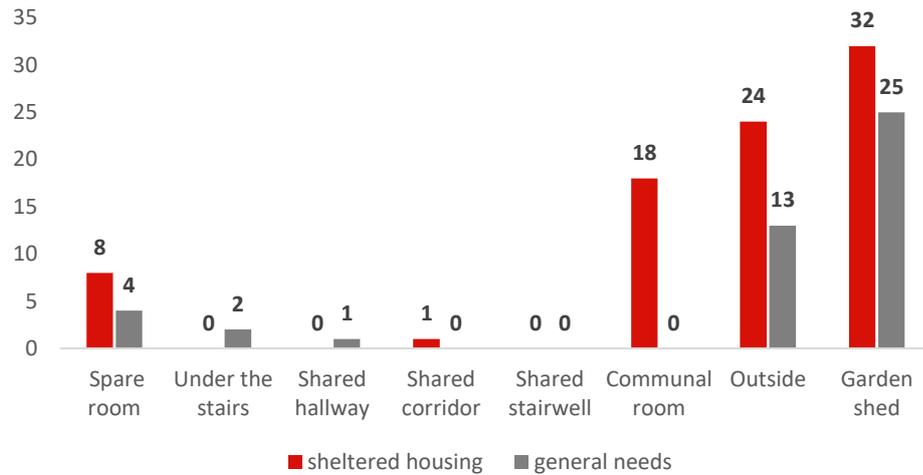


The proportion of respondents living in general needs housing who owned or leased a mobility scooter, or were thinking of getting one soon, was much higher. 92.2 % of respondents (71) were either current or potential scooter owners/leasers.

Given that the proportion of scooter owners living in sheltered housing is lower than those living in general needs housing, the difference in the distribution of responses between “users” and “non-users” should be kept in mind when considering the responses from each of the different groups of tenants.

15. Most mobility scooter owners (living in either sheltered housing schemes or general needs housing) owned a class 3 type of scooter – a machine that can be used either on the pavement or on the road – with a top speed of 8 miles per hour. 88 sheltered housing tenants (82.2%) and 44 general needs housing tenants (71.0%) chose this option.
16. When asked where they stored their mobility scooter, most respondents stored their scooter either outside or in a garden shed. 38 tenants in general needs housing (84.4%) and 56 sheltered housing tenants (67.4%) chose these options. Around a fifth of sheltered housing tenants (18 or 21.7%) said that they stored their scooter in a communal room. Storage locations for both categories of tenant are illustrated in the graph overleaf:

Q3. Where do you store your mobility scooter?



17. The proportions of respondents choosing each of these options when asked where they charge their scooter were similar. 57 respondents (69.5%) living in sheltered housing said that they charged their mobility scooter outside or in a garden shed. 36 tenants (83.7%) living in general needs housing chose these options. Just under a fifth (16 or 19.5%) of sheltered housing tenants stated that they charged their scooter in a communal facility.

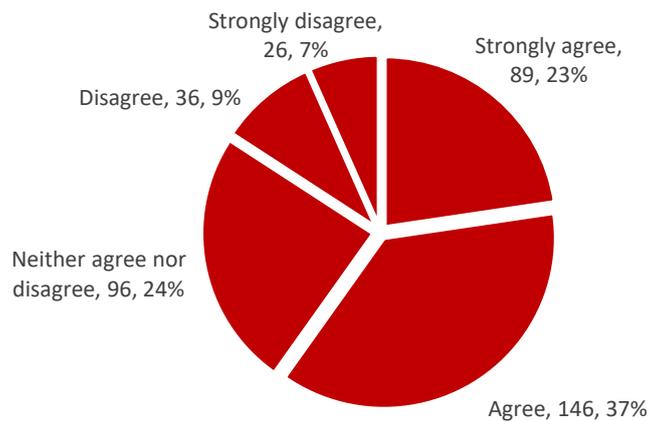
These similarities are perhaps not surprising. Respondents tend to store and charge their scooter in the same location. Around a fifth of sheltered housing respondents store/charge their scooter in a communal facility.

18. The final question in the first section of the survey asked respondents when they tended to charge their scooter. Just over a third of tenants living in sheltered housing (37 or 36.3%) said that they charged it during the day, with a fifth (20 or 19.6%) saying that they charged it overnight. Just under half (45 or 44.1%) said that it varied as they tended to charge it before they need to use it, rather than at a specific time. The proportions of tenants in general needs housing charging their scooter during the day, or overnight, or when they needed to, were similar. Just over a third (22 or 36.1%) charged their scooter during the day, with a fifth (13 or 21.3%) choosing to charge their scooter overnight. 26 respondents (42.6%) charged it when they needed it.



19. Respondents were then asked for their views of one of the main constructs of the Council's new Mobility Scooter Policy – the proposal to introduce a registration scheme for mobility scooters. Tenants were told that if this proposal is adopted they will not be able to have a mobility scooter whilst living in sheltered housing without receiving permission from the Council first and that they would also be required to register their scooter with the Council and abide by the rules on its use. Around three fifths of respondents living in sheltered housing agreed with this proposal as illustrated in the pie chart below:

Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?



20. The proportion of tenants living in general needs housing who agreed with this proposal was lower. Just over a third (28 or 36.8%) supported the idea. Just under half (36 or 47.4%) disagreed. When asked if they would like to see the proposal amended in any way, respondents used this space to make various points about the scheme. These included:

- The impact the scheme will have on peoples' ability to live an independent life-particularly if they have limited mobility or a disability.

"This discriminates against people with walking/health issues"

- The requirement to obtain permission

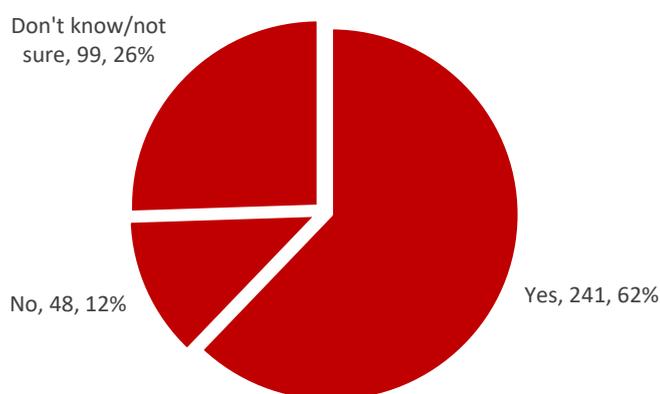
"Why should we need the councils permission for this?"

- Others could see why it might be necessary to advise tenants on how best to store and charge their scooters but disagreed with the need to register their appliance.

"While I agree in principle that the council may need a policy on advice for how to store them and charge them to avoid hazards, I feel that a registration scheme is over the top and is discriminatory for those of us who need them."

21. Tenants in sheltered housing were then asked for their opinion on a proposal to determine the order in which people should be given permission to have a scooter, as space to store and charge mobility scooters is limited. It is proposed that permission to have a scooter would be given to those who have a blue badge first, followed by those who already have a scooter. Those wishing to purchase or lease a scooter would be next in line. Just over three fifths of respondents (241 or 62.1%) agreed with this proposal. This is illustrated below:

Q8. Do you agree with this approach?



22. Sheltered housing tenants were then given the opportunity to state why they didn't agree with this approach. They were forthright in their opinions. Their opinions ranged from giving priority to current scooter owners; to objecting to having to ask for permission for something that they believe is a right. Some respondents mentioned that they don't have a blue badge because they have never driven; but do have significant mobility issues. These are illustrated below:

"Those with scooters should be given permission first"

"People should be able to have a scooter if they need one, they shouldn't have to ask for permission"

"I don't support this at all. It is discriminating against sick people who need a mobility scooter because of ill health who may never have driven or applied for a blue badge."

A number of respondents commented on the proposal to grant permission to Blue Badge holders first. Some have never driven so are not eligible or have never applied for a Blue Badge but have significant mobility issues.

23. Tenants in sheltered housing were then asked if they agreed or disagreed with the proposal that mobility scooters should only be stored and charged in a dedicated area. Two thirds of respondents (259 or 66.9%) agreed with this proposal with just under a quarter (87 or 22.5%) choosing to neither agree nor disagree. When asked why they didn't agree, the main reason was because they would be unable to walk to a storage/charging facility. This is illustrated below:

"My partner can just walk the length of our flat aided, how would you expect her to go further?"

It is important to acknowledge that the proposal to store and charge mobility scooters in dedicated areas in sheltered housing schemes could potentially cause problems for those with very limited mobility.

24. All respondents were then asked if they supported a proposal to allow a mobility scooter to be stored either inside or outside of a property if this can be done safely. The majority of tenants in sheltered housing schemes (281 or 73.0%) agreed with this proposal. A similar proportion of tenants in general needs housing were also in agreement (58 or 79.5%).

25. To ensure that it is safe to store the scooter/and or charge the battery inside the home, tenants were also asked if they agreed to be visited by a housing officer, who will undertake a risk assessment. 275 (71.6%) of sheltered housing tenants agreed with this proposal. 48 tenants (67.6%) in general needs housing agreed with this proposal. A few took the opportunity to comment on the proposal and weren't happy about it.

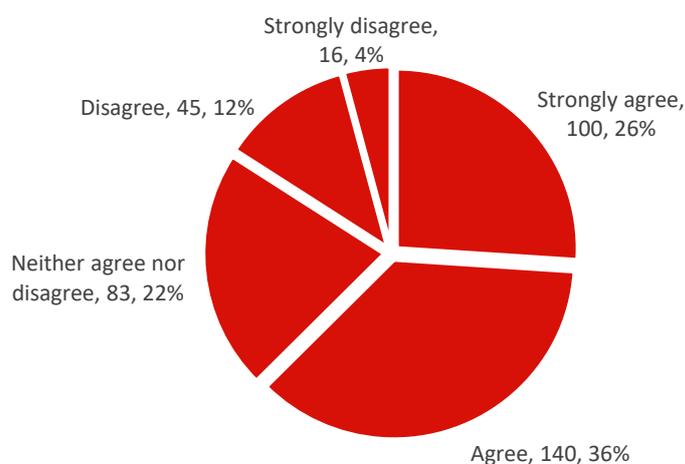
"I may be disabled but I am not stupid, and I feel very strongly that I would not like a visit from the housing officer to do a risk assessment."

"Your policy is singling a protected group out and telling us we need permission to leave our house and you don't trust us enough to keep ourselves and the property

safe. It may be your house, but this is my home and I look after it as I am sure most others in my situation do."

26. Another of the proposals contained in the Council's Mobility Scooter Policy related to the charging of mobility scooters. When asked what they thought of the proposal that mobility scooters should only be put on charge during the day (between 8am and 8pm), around three fifths of tenants in sheltered housing agreed, as illustrated below.

Q14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal that mobility scooters should only be put on charge during the day (between 8am and 8pm)?



27. The main reason people disagreed with this proposal was because they are likely to be using their scooter during the day. They also mentioned that it is much cheaper to charge an appliance overnight rather than using premium rate electricity. Some mentioned that modern scooters are charged on a trickle feed continuously and switch off automatically when fully charged. These are illustrated in the quotes below:

"If the scooter is used during the day charging at night is the only option"

"It's a lower economy tariff overnight"

"According to my scooter manual, the batteries in scooters are charged on a continuous trickle feed with automatic cut off mode for safety when the battery is fully charged."

28. These were also the themes of the comments made by tenants in general needs housing, where around 3 in 10 respondents (22 or 29.7%) were not in favour. Just under half (36 or 48.6%) supported the proposal.
29. Sheltered housing tenants were then asked for their opinion on the charges that are incurred when scooters are charged in communal areas, and if they thought the user should pay or the costs should be spread across all those living in that scheme. Most thought that the individual tenant using the facilities, should be asked to contribute towards the costs. 233 tenants (82.3%) chose this option.
30. The majority of comments made about this proposal were not in favour. This might be because they thought these services were already included in their service charge
"We already pay towards the costs"
or because they thought the council should provide these services free of charge
"I think the council should provide this facility free of charge"
others because they thought the user should pay.
"Grossly unfair to charge people who do not have scooters."

The majority of tenants in sheltered housing thought that the individual tenant should pay to store and charge their mobility scooter, rather than the costs be spread across all those living in that scheme.

31. To minimise the risk of fire, the Mobility Scooter Policy also states that scooters should only be charged directly from a power socket, and not via an extension lead. This also applies when the battery has been removed from the scooter to allow for charging inside the home. When asked about this proposal, just over three fifths of tenants in general needs housing (46 or 62.2%) supported it.
32. When asked why they didn't agree with the proposal, the comments all related to the availability and location of sockets in their properties, and who is going to pay for additional ones. This is illustrated in the quotes overleaf:

"Council properties hardly have any sockets!"

"It is not always possible to access a plug socket without the use of an extension lead."

"Who is going to pay for outside electrical sockets?"

33. Tenants living in sheltered housing and those living in general needs housing were then asked about another of the proposals outlined in the Council's Mobility Scooter Policy relating to insurance. The Council is proposing that any tenant using a mobility scooter must have suitable insurance to cover for injury to individuals or damage to property. This would be a condition of registration, and a tenant would not be given permission to own/lease a mobility scooter without it. They were also told that the policy would also require tenants to ensure that their scooter is tested once a year by a qualified person and certified as meeting the safety requirements for electrical equipment. This is known as Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) and would be carried out at the tenant's expense.

34. When asked for their opinion on either of these proposals, some used the opportunity to say that they agreed with them.

"I agree the scooter should be checked over once a year; I agree the scooter should be insured."

Others stated that they already have insurance or that they thought they would be covered by their home insurance

"Both my scooters are insured and checked regularly by the firm I bought them from."

"Most people will have home insurance that covers fire damage"

Some agreed with asking tenants to insure their scooter, but not the requirement for an annual PAT test

"Agree with insurance but surely a PAT if having to pay for it every 2 years is not on."

Others disagreed with both proposals. Some because they didn't think it was affordable, others because they thought it was discriminatory.

"Not everyone can afford this."

"I completely disagree as a lot of mobility scooter users do not have the money to pay extra for an insurance that is very often, never used or needed!"

All electrical equipment carries an element of risk be it a cooker, fridge, freezer, washer, dryer, computer/music equipment, electric beds, etc. So why are you solely discriminating against the disabled?

There were some interesting responses to these questions. Some tenants, in both sheltered and general needs housing recognised the need to ensure those using, storing, and charging mobility scooters keep themselves and their neighbours safe. Others thought the proposals were discriminatory.

35. The next question asked tenants if they had any questions or would like to comment on anything in the survey. The comments made by tenants in sheltered housing were wide-ranging. Some comments related to peoples individual circumstances. Others were more generic. Some tenants agreed with some of the proposals, others used the opportunity to reiterate their opinion that only the user should pay. A handful of tenants were vehemently opposed and stated that they would not participate on the grounds that they thought the policy was discriminatory.

"I cannot walk to a designated area."

"I believe third party insurance should be mandatory"

"I don't think it's fair to ask all tenants to contribute towards costs for charging scooters when you don't have one."

"This is a disgusting move/proposal, designed to get even more money from disabled tenants. I will not comply."

36. Tenants in general needs housing used the opportunity to comment on the policy as a whole. Comments were made about the policy being intrusive, discriminatory, and unfair. There were concerns about affordability and the impact adopting the policy will have on disabled tenants' independence. These are illustrated in the word cloud overleaf:



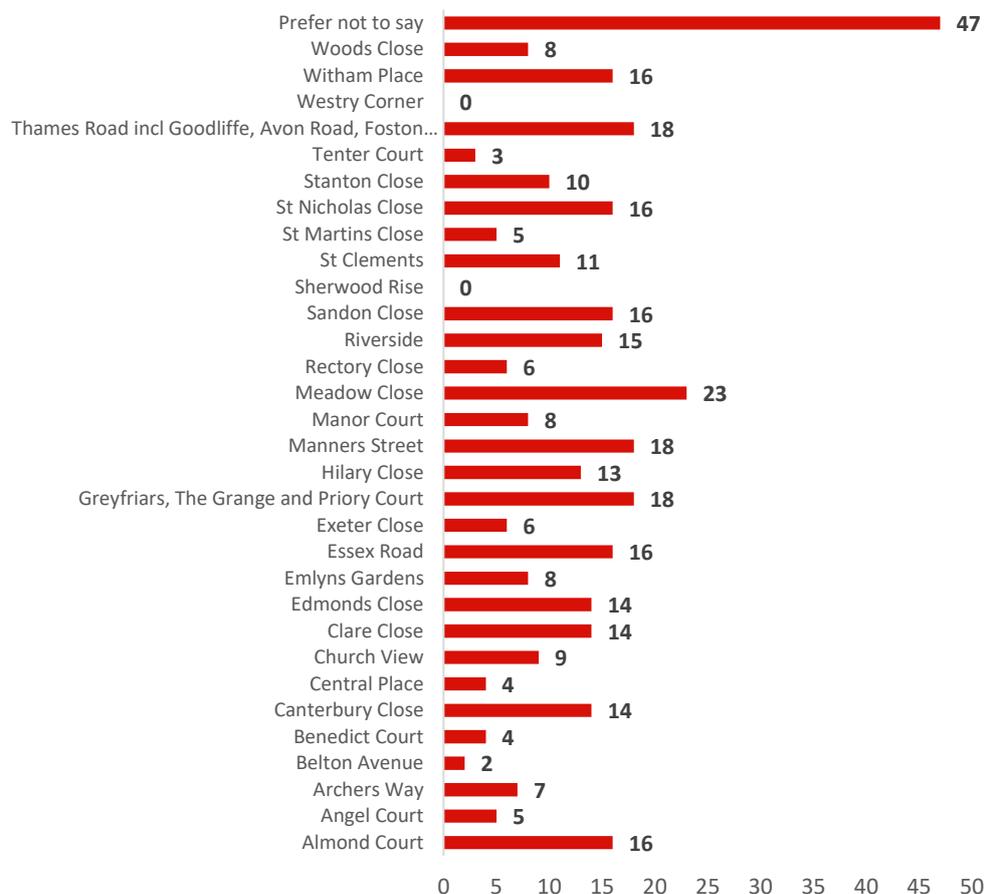


Demographic Information

37. The majority of respondents responding to the sheltered housing survey were tenants living in sheltered housing (358 or 97.8%). Only a small proportion of responses were received from carers (8 or 2.2%). This was also the case for tenants living in general needs housing where only one response was from someone caring for a tenant.

38. Responses were received from all but two sheltered housing schemes as shown overleaf:

No of responses received from each sheltered housing scheme



39. Just over a third of sheltered housing tenants were male (137 or 35.8%). Just over half (212 or 55.4%) were female, with the remainder choosing “prefer not to say”. The proportions of male and female respondents living in general needs housing responding to this consultation were quite similar. 25 (36.2%) of those responding to this consultation were male, 43 (62.3%) were female.

40. Perhaps not surprisingly, the majority of responses received from tenants in sheltered housing were from those aged 65 or over. Just over three quarters of them (298 or 77.6%) were older than 65. In contrast, three fifths of responses from tenants in general needs housing were from those aged between 25 and 64 (41 or 59.4%).

41. Just over half of sheltered housing tenants (204 or 55.0%) described themselves as having a disability. Three in ten respondents in this type of housing (113 or 30.5%) did not consider themselves disabled. Almost all of those responding to the survey who live in general needs housing (65 or 94.2%) described themselves as having a disability.

This distinction is important as there is likely to be a direct correlation between someone's disability status and mobility scooter ownership – although it will depend on the nature of their disability. This in turn may have an impact on what respondents think of the proposals included in the Council's Mobility Scooter Policy, and how they choose to answer questions about it. Nearly all general needs housing tenants described themselves as having a disability, compared to just over half of those in sheltered housing.

42. Most responses received were from sheltered housing tenants who described their ethnic group or background as white (359 or 94.7%). A small number (5 or 1.3%) described themselves as being from a black or minority ethnic background. This was also the situation for tenants in general needs housing.

43. When asked to specify their postcode, responses were received from across the district from tenants in general needs housing, as illustrated in the table below:

| | No | % |
|-------------------|----|-------|
| NG23 | 1 | 1.5 |
| NG31 | 19 | 27.9 |
| NG32 | 5 | 7.4 |
| NG33 | 13 | 19.1 |
| NG34 | 2 | 2.9 |
| PE6 | 4 | 5.9 |
| PE9 | 8 | 11.8 |
| PE10 | 16 | 23.5 |
| Prefer not to say | 0 | - |
| Total | 68 | 100.0 |

Conclusion

44. Undertaking this consultation has been very useful. It has provided lots of feedback on the proposals outlined in the Council's Mobility Scooter Policy, and at the same time provided tenants with an opportunity to communicate and illustrate the important role mobility scooters play in maintaining their independence, both in sheltered housing schemes and general needs housing.

45. Responses were received from tenants who currently own or lease a mobility scooter, those who are thinking about getting one, and those who don't use one. The difference in the distribution of responses between those who are "users" or potential users and those who aren't should be borne in mind, as it is likely to have affected how people have responded to the proposals. It would probably be worth undertaking some further analysis at some point to establish if rates of support differ between these two groups of stakeholders. This is particularly pertinent when considering support for the proposals from those living on sheltered housing schemes, where only a third of respondents either owned or were considering getting a scooter.

46. Most tenants who stated that they own or lease a scooter, own or lease a class 3 scooter. This means they have a machine which can be used on either the pavement or the road, with a top speed of 8 miles per hour. This applied to tenants living in both general needs and sheltered housing schemes. Whilst some appreciated the need to insure their vehicle to cover for injury to individuals or damage to property, and have their scooter checked annually to ensure it was safe, others didn't. Affordability was a big concern. Others thought that it was discriminatory for the Council to focus on one appliance predominantly used by those with mobility issues - particularly one viewed by many as being pivotal to maintaining their independence.

47. It should be noted that the proposal to introduce designated areas on sheltered housing schemes where mobility scooters can be stored and charged could cause issues for those tenants with very limited mobility as they might not be able to get to the designated areas very easily. This was a real concern for some, and it might be beneficial to consider what mitigations could be put in place, if this proposal was to be implemented.



48. Another factor which is likely to have a significant effect on how respondents viewed the proposals is their disability status – particularly if their disability relates to mobility. The impact of approving these proposals on those who have a mobility-related disability should not be under-estimated and will need to be addressed in the equality impact assessment.
49. In general terms, those who already own a scooter or are thinking about getting one, tended to have stronger opinions about the proposals, than those who didn't. The proportion of general needs tenants in this position was much higher than the proportion of respondents living in sheltered housing schemes. This should be kept in mind when looking at the results of this consultation.
50. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

Prepared by Deb Wyles

Communication and Consultation

November 2021





Equality Impact Assessment

| Question | Response |
|--|---|
| 1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed | Mobility Scooter Policy |
| 2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event | This will include information on the health and safety implications of mobility scooters, the safe storage and charging of them and introduces a Mobility Scooter Registration Scheme, which requires tenants and leaseholders (both new and existing) to request permission to keep a mobility scooter at a council-owned property. |
| 3. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event? | South Kesteven District Council tenants and leaseholders. |
| 4. Has there been any consultation with, or input from, customers/service users or other stakeholders? If so, with whom, how were they consulted and what did they say? If you haven't consulted yet and are intending to do so, please complete the consultation table below. | Yes - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants living in sheltered housing "corridor" schemes. • Tenants living in sheltered housing "non- corridor" schemes. • Tenants and leaseholders living in general needs housing. Specifically, those tenants who have informed the Council that they have a mobility-related disability and/or are eligible for the assisted garden maintenance scheme and /or the assisted refuse and recycling collection scheme. |
| 5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event? | The policy will be reviewed in 6 months time from the date of approval. This will be led by the Housing Strategy team with input from relevant officers on progress of implementation and any changes needed to the policy. |

| Protected Characteristic | Is there a potential for positive or negative impact? | Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used | Action to address negative impact e.g. adjustment to the policy <i>(The Action Log below should be completed to provide further detail)</i> |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| Age | Yes | The implications of the policy potentially could impact negatively on an older person because an older person is more likely to need a mobility scooter. If there are not safe storage and charging provisions for a mobility scooter where they live. | Additional scooter storage is being provided at some of the sheltered housing schemes and where this is not available or all spaces have been allocated, consideration for a move to an alternative property will be given. For general needs housing (all housing that's not sheltered housing), the Council will not unreasonably withhold permission for alterations to a |



| | | | |
|--|-----|--|---|
| | | | property to allow the provision of storage facilities, ramp, access path or hard standing to facilitate a mobility scooter. |
| Disability | Yes | <p>The implications of the policy potentially could impact negatively on someone with a disability.</p> <p>If there are not safe storage and charging provisions for a mobility scooter where they live.</p> | <p>Additional scooter storage is being provided at some of the sheltered housing schemes and where this is not available or all spaces have been allocated, consideration for a move to an alternative property will be given.</p> <p>For general needs housing, the Council will not unreasonably withhold permission for alterations to a property to allow the provision of storage facilities, ramp, access path or hard standing to facilitate a mobility scooter.</p> |
| Gender Reassignment | No | This protected characteristic is not relevant to the implementation of this policy. | |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | No | This protected characteristic is not relevant to the implementation of this policy. | |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | No | This protected characteristic is not relevant to the implementation of this policy. | |
| Race | No | This protected characteristic is not relevant to the implementation of this policy. | |
| Religion or Belief | No | This protected characteristic is not relevant to the implementation of this policy. | |
| Sex | No | This protected characteristic is not relevant to the implementation of this policy. | |
| Sexual Orientation | No | This protected characteristic is not relevant to the implementation of this policy. | |
| Other Factors requiring consideration | | | |
| Socio-Economic Impacts | Yes | The implications of the policy potentially could impact negatively on a person if the tenant is in general needs housing and | For general needs housing, the Council will not unreasonably withhold permission for alterations to a property to allow the provision of storage |



| | | | |
|--|-----|---|--|
| | | on a lower income. This could be if they need provision of storage facilities, ramp, access path or hard standing to facilitate a mobility scooter. | facilities, ramp, access path or hard standing to facilitate a mobility scooter. The Council will consider rehousing into a different property, where possible and if the tenant wishes to. |
| Carers (those who provide unpaid care to a family member, friend or partner) | Yes | The implications of the policy potentially could impact negatively on someone who is carer. This is because they may need to spend more time caring for someone if the person who relies on their mobility scooter cannot use it and are less independent to do things for themselves. | The Council will facilitate someone having a mobility scooter, where possible or rehousing into a different property, where possible and if the tenant wishes to. |

Consultation

| Negative impacts identified will require the responsible officer to consult with the affected group/s to determine all practicable and proportionate mitigations. Add more rows as required. | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Group/Organisation | Date | Response |
| A full consultation was undertaken with tenants and leaseholders most likely affected by this policy – see consultation report attached. | Consultation report – Autumn 2021 | The people who will be most affected by the policy are tenants living in our sheltered housing corridor schemes. It is within these schemes where the fire risk is most prevalent. The majority were supportive of the principles of the policy. |

Proposed Mitigation: Action Log

| To be completed when barriers, negative impact or discrimination are found as part of this process – to show actions taken to remove or mitigate. Any mitigations identified throughout the EIA process should be meaningful and timely. Add more rows as required. | | | | |
|---|---|---|----------------|---------------|
| Negative Impact | Action | Timeline | Outcome | Status |
| The implications of the policy potentially could impact negatively on an older person because an older person is more likely to need a mobility scooter. If there are not safe storage and charging | Additional scooter storage is being provided at some of the sheltered housing schemes and where this is not available or all spaces have been allocated, consideration for a move to an alternative property will be given. | The implications of the policy will be reviewed in 6 months time from the date of approval. | | |



| | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| <p>provisions for a mobility scooter where they live.</p> | <p>For general needs housing (all housing that's not sheltered housing), the Council will not unreasonably withhold permission for alterations to a property to allow the provision of storage facilities, ramp, access path or hard standing to facilitate a mobility scooter.</p> | | | |
| <p>The implications of the policy potentially could impact negatively on someone with a disability.</p> <p>If there are not safe storage and charging provisions for a mobility scooter where they live.</p> | <p>Additional scooter storage is being provided at some of the sheltered housing schemes and where this is not available or all spaces have been allocated, consideration for a move to an alternative property will be given.</p> <p>For general needs housing, the Council will not unreasonably withhold permission for alterations to a property to allow the provision of storage facilities, ramp, access path or hard standing to facilitate a mobility scooter.</p> | <p>The implications of the policy will be reviewed in 6 months time from the date of approval.</p> | | |
| <p>The implications of the policy potentially could impact negatively on a person if the tenant is in general needs housing and on a lower income. This could be if they need provision of storage facilities, ramp, access path or hard standing to</p> | <p>For general needs housing, the Council will not unreasonably withhold permission for alterations to a property to allow the provision of storage facilities, ramp, access path or hard standing to facilitate a mobility scooter.</p> <p>The Council will consider rehousing into a different</p> | <p>The implications of the policy will be reviewed in 6 months time from the date of approval.</p> | | |



| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| facilitate a mobility scooter. | property, where possible and if the tenant wishes to. | | | |
| <p>The implications of the policy potentially could impact negatively on someone who is carer.</p> <p>This is because they may need to spend more time caring for someone if the person who relies on their mobility scooter cannot use it and are less independent to do things for themselves.</p> | <p>The Council will facilitate someone having a mobility scooter, where possible or rehousing into a different property, where possible and if the tenant wishes to.</p> | <p>The implications of the policy will be reviewed in 6 months time from the date of approval.</p> | | |

Evaluation Decision

| <p>Once consultation and practicable and proportionate mitigation has been put in place, the responsible officer should evaluate whether any negative impact remains and, if so, provide justification for any decision to proceed.</p> | | |
|--|---|--|
| Question | Explanation / justification | |
| <p>Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?</p> | <p>Yes there is a possibility but mitigations are being put into place and each person's situation will be considered on a case by case basis.</p> <p>The implications of the policy will be reviewed in 6 months time from the date of approval.</p> | |
| Final Decision | Tick | Include any explanation/justification required |
| <p>1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed</p> | | |
| <p>2. Stop the policy or practice because the data shows bias towards one or more groups</p> | | |
| <p>3. Adapt or change the policy in a way that will eliminate the bias</p> | | |
| <p>4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to proceed with caution with this policy or practice</p> | ✓ | <p>On the balance of the fire risk to residents and the equality impact, it is proposed that the policy is implemented with a planned review in 6 months time to evaluate.</p> |



| | | |
|--|--|--|
| knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision | | |
|--|--|--|

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

Sign off

| | |
|---|---|
| Name and job title of person completing this EIA | Celia Bown – Senior Housing Policy and Strategy Officer |
| Officer Responsible for implementing the policy/function etc | Alison Hall-Wright – Director of Housing |
| Date Completed | 20/01/2025 |
| Line Manager | Emma-Jayne Abbott |
| Date Agreed <i>(by line manager)</i> | |
| Date of Review <i>(if required)</i> | 6 months after policy Cabinet approval |

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

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



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 17 March 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran,
Cabinet Member for Housing

Stock Condition Surveys

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 Council's stock condition survey programme.

Recommendations

That Committee note the contents of the report and the progress being made to deliver stock condition surveys and improve the quality of data held for the Council's housing stock.

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

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report but there is budget in place as part of the HRA Capital Programme to deliver decent homes standard.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance (deputy s151 officer)

Legal and Governance

- 1.1 The report is for noting and aims to ensure that the Committee are informed of progress on the Council's stock condition survey programme.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

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 the timely delivery of improvements to its social housing stock will support the Council with achieving this.
- 2.2. To ensure the Council has accurate information in relation to its housing stock which is used to inform our future investment programmes, the Technical Services Team undertake stock condition surveys of its housing stock on a cyclical basis.
- 2.3. The last update on stock condition surveys was provided to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee in August 2024 where it noted that the Council were due to commence stock condition surveys with the newly procured surveying contractor Impart Links which commenced in September 2024. From 1 April to 31 August 2025 stock condition surveys had been completed on an interim basis by another contractor.
- 2.4. The aim of the stock condition surveys is to ascertain the condition of the Council's housing stock including assessing individual components, providing a new Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) and carrying out a Housing Health & Safety Rating

System risk assessment (HHSRS) to assess any health and safety risks within a property.

- 2.5. A target of 1,759 stock condition surveys has been set for the current 2024/25 financial year. As of February 2025 1,617 surveys have been completed. Further surveys are being completed on a weekly basis to work towards the target number.
- 2.6. As a result of the surveys, a total of 67 HHSRS failures have been reported, 33 of them being in the Cat 1 category. All identified hazards have been booked in with our repairs team for remedial works. The Cat 1 hazards are dealt with as emergency jobs as they pose a significant risk to the occupants.
- 2.7. All data collected from the stock condition surveys is uploaded into the Council's asset management system, Apex, on an ongoing basis. The current contractor has access to the system via an app to reduce double handling and ensure data is uploaded in real time.
- 2.8. Considerable work has been carried out since the last report in August 2024 to upload the data collected by the previous surveying contractors which has now been completed.
- 2.9. All new survey data will give clear indications to the areas where future investment planning and budgetary focus is required to maintain and improve the Council's housing stock.
- 2.10. Looking forward to the 2025/2026 financial year, the surveying of the Council's housing stock will continue during 2025/26 where the aim is to complete an additional 850 stock condition, EPC and HHSRS surveys.
- 2.11. As a result of the continued stock condition survey work that is being undertaken, the Council's Decent Homes figure stands at 97.90% decent.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. As part of the work to improve asset data for housing properties a 5-year programme of surveys will be implemented which will form part of the new asset management strategy to ensure that data is kept up to date. In addition, officers will review reporting within the updated asset management database to ensure it is up to date and in accordance with reporting requirements.
- 3.2. Current primary risks associated with this project are:
 - Adequate resources are allocated by the surveying company to enable survey completion to be achieved by the end of the current financial year.

- Access to all properties on the stock condition programme to enable the data to be collected accurately.
- Ensuring that the Council's asset management database holds accurate information.

3.3. Mitigation measures for the above key points are being monitored on a day-to-day and monthly basis and through regular progress meetings by both SKDC staff and the contractor.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

4.1. Report is for information and noting.



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 17 March 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran,
Cabinet Member for Housing

Update on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1

Report Author

Suniel Pillai, New Build Project Officer

✉ suniel.pillai@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

This report provides an update on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund project to upgrade South Kesteven District Council housing stock with energy efficiency measures.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the update on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund project and upgrades to council properties made through the current programme.**
- 2. Note the update for the Wave 3 round of funding.**

Decision Information

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

No

What are the relevant corporate priorities?

Sustainable South Kesteven
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 scheme is matched funded by the Council as part of the grant funding requirements and in accordance with the grant funding conditions all spend must be completed by 31st March 2025 or will need to be repaid back. At the end of Q3 spend to date was £2.7m so good progress is being made to ensure the grant is fully spent by the end of the financial.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance (deputy s151 officer)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 This report is for noting and is the sharing of information with Councillors.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Climate Change

- 1.3 The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund is a significant project for the Council to directly reduce energy use and therefore carbon emissions associated with its housing stock. Investment in these properties via grant funding and allocated HRA funding will also help to reduce running costs for tenants, address risk of fuel poverty and promote warm and efficient homes.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

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 which this project will contribute towards achieving.
- 2.2. The Council is responsible for around 6,000 properties which are let to tenants. The average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) for the Council's housing stock is an EPC D. There is a requirement for the Council to achieve an average of at least EPC C across the portfolio by 2030 to mitigate fuel poverty for our tenants, as well

as to contribute to wider decarbonisation of the district of South Kesteven. This will require a significant programme of targeted energy efficiency upgrades.

2.3. Wave 2.1 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund was announced in 2022 by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) as an £800m fund designed to support local authorities and registered social housing providers to deliver warm, energy-efficient homes, reduce carbon emissions and fuel bills, tackle fuel poverty, and support green jobs.

2.4. The key objectives of SHDF Wave 2.1 are to:

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

Overview:

| Phase | Primary Measure | Number of Properties | Completed (January 2025) | Remaining | Notes |
|--------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|---|
| 1 | Solar PV Panels | 245 | 167 | 48 | |
| 2 | Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) | 100 | 82 | 18 | |
| 3 | External Wall Insulation (EWI) | 75 (60)* | 35 | 25 | <i>*15 properties need to be removed via a project change request</i> |
| Total | | 367 | 284 | 91 | |

**above figures taken from February DCA meeting of January reporting*

2.5. Since project delivery commenced in November 2023, the Council achieved a year one grant allocation spend of £1.192m from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). The balance of funding to be utilised in 2024/25 was £2.226m. The total grant amount for Wave 2 is £3.418m.

2.6. The project is being delivered in three distinct phases across 367 properties across the district, in line with the relevant primary energy measures identified for each property.

- 2.7. As of January 2025, 167 properties have received Solar PV arrays, Additional visits have been made to properties to install boarding and mains lighting in loft spaces to ensure compliance for serviceable items in the roof space.



Croakehill, Grantham – Solar PV Installation

- 2.8. Phase 2 of the project, where the primary measure focus is ASHP's is progressing; the Council has completed 82 ASHP installations and these are currently progressing through the sign off process. The team have worked hard to allay the concerns raised by residents about fitting heat pumps and prior to fitting and installation a full design and retrofit assessment is completed. This evidences whether any additional insulation and ventilation is required prior to installation to ensure that the property is suitable for a ASHP and in addition, solar panels are installed to eligible properties to reduce energy costs.



Croakehill, Grantham – ASHP Installation

- 2.9. Phase 3 of the project has been completed at Turnor Crescent (35 properties), Grantham as a targeted whole street approach, for EWI and is continuing at Belton

Avenue, Grantham. Several properties at Turnor Crescent already benefitted from the fabric upgrade so this phase focused on EWI for the remaining Council owned properties. A new site compound near Belton Avenue has been established on the grassed area to mitigate the impact of the scheme on traffic and the available parking on the street.



Shakespeare Avenue, Grantham – EWI Installation

- 2.10. E.ON delivered hampers to residents in the Turnor Crescent area of Grantham as part of the energy firm's Social Value commitment with South Kesteven District Council. Further Social Value contributions are being discussed that will be implemented by E.ON in the coming months.



- 2.9. Due to the high number of tenant refusals for ASHP's the project team submitted a project change request to increase the number of EWI and solar PV installations which ensured both the grant funding and number of energy efficiency measures achieved is maximised. The request was submitted in Q3 2024 and approved by DESNZ. The request was subject to approval from the Change Request Panel.
- 2.10. The Secretary of State for Energy, Security and Net Zero announced the next phase of funding for Social Housing Decarbonisation, the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (WH: SHF). The bid window opened on 30 September 2024 and SKDC submitted a formal bid for works to 492 properties, equating to a grant request of £6 million. The funding requirements will be like the current wave of funding; however, funding will be over a 3-year period and all Council dwellings with an EPC rating of less than C will be eligible for the scheme.
- 2.11. The Council published a Request for Information (RFI) to potential delivery partners, which closed on 30 August. The Council received 27 RFI's from potential delivery partners for the next round of funding. The RFI's were reviewed and scored with 4 potential delivery partners shortlisted, interviews were held with each of them during w/c 14 October 2024. The delivery partner, Equans, Services was selected who helped support the Council with producing the bid, and, if successful, will; deliver the next phase of work. Equans have extensive experience of working with housing providers to deliver decarbonisation programmes and this puts SKDC in a strong position in submitting the bid and will enable a swift mobilisation on the next phase of work if we are successful.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. This report is provided for information, and Members are asked to note the progress to date to improve the energy efficiency of the Councils housing stock through the Wave 2.1 delivery programme together with the bid for the next wave of funding through WH: SHF.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. There is a vision to achieve an average of at least EPC C across the Council's housing portfolio by 2030. The use of funding through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund was identified as the best way forward to deliver these upgrades.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. The report is provided for information to track progress of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund project.



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 17 March 2025

Report of Cabinet Member for Housing,
Councillor Virginia Moran

Void Property Report

Report Author

Mark Rogers, Head of Service (Technical Services)

 mark.rogers@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To update the Committee on the Council's void property management and progress to reduce relet times.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Notes the progress made to reduce the time taken to relet properties to reduce financial loss and provide affordable housing to individuals and families in need.**

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 Minimising voids is key to maximising rental income and with the backlog of voids building up in previous years this has impacted on rent collection figures. Therefore, it is positive to see the reduction in rent loss from over £2,000 per property in April 2024 to around £1,500 in January 2025. It is important this improvement continues to maximise rent income and achieve budget targets.)

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance (Deputy s151 officer)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report, which is for noting.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer

2 Background to the Report

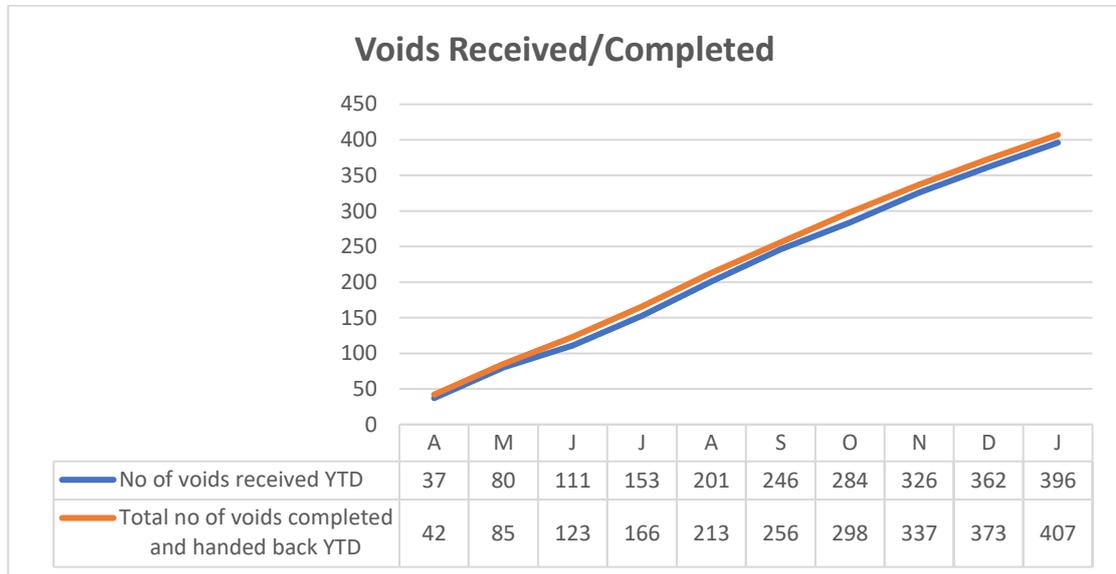
- 2.1 A void property in housing terms is when a property is unoccupied for period of time. For Housing Authorities, the aim is to keep voids to a minimum thus maximising the income generated and to ensure that the Council is maximising the supply of housing to meet resident needs.
- 2.2 A backlog of voids has built up over several years and reducing this is a key priority for the Council. The backlog has built for number of reasons including the increase in volume of works in voids which is caused by a combination of tenant neglect and the lack of planned maintenance investment over the years. This has been compounded by staff shortages, changes in management and limited use of external contractors.

3. Void Property Numbers

Voids Received/Completed

3.1 The chart below shows the number of voids received by the Voids Repair team this year. The Council has received 397 voids year to date and handed 407 back to Housing Management for reletting.

Chart 1: Voids Received and Completed



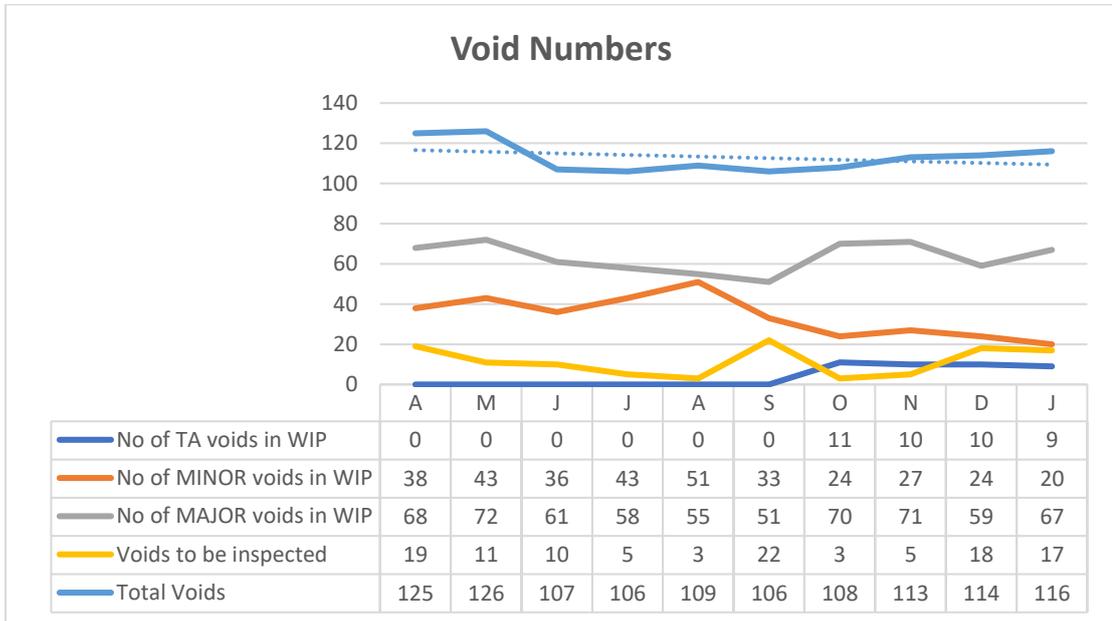
3.2 Voids are categorised as follows:

- Temporary accommodation (TA properties)
- Standard voids (under 200 hours of works)
- Major voids (over 200 hours of work)

Void Numbers in Progress

3.3 Chart 1 shows the number of voids in work in progress each month including voids to be inspected. The Council has seen an increase in voids to be inspected to 18 in December 2024 this was due to the Voids Inspector leaving the Council in November 2024. The replacement for this role started in February 2025 so the Council expects to see the number of properties waiting for inspections to reduce significantly and return to business as usual levels throughout February 2025 and March 2025.

Chart 2: Void Numbers

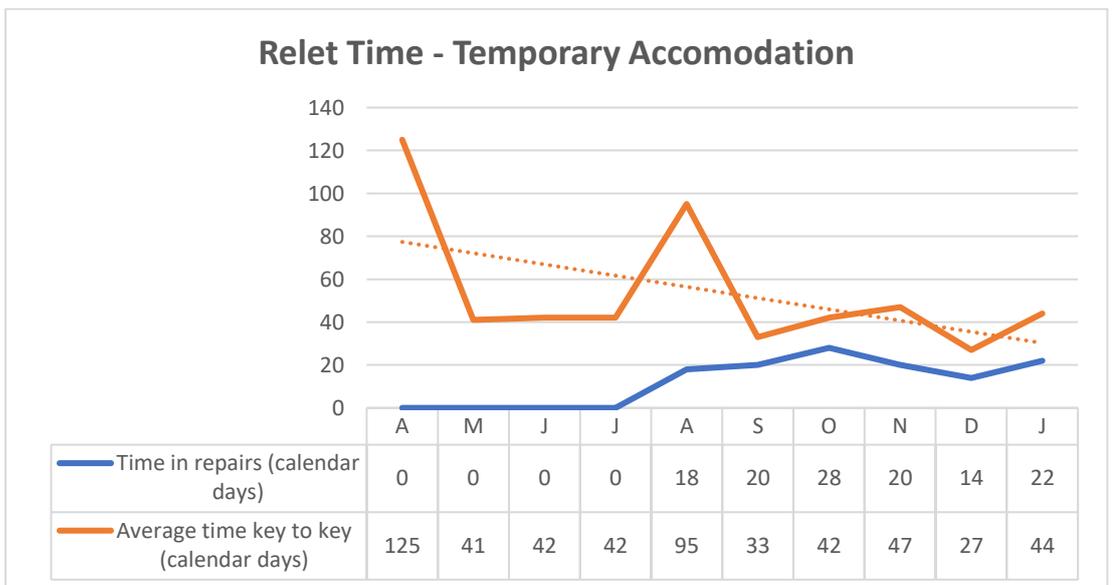


4. Relet Times

Temporary Accommodation

4.1 Chart 2 shows the relet time for Temporary Accommodation (TA's), repair time in TA's was not measured before August 2024. The chart shows a general reduction in relet times for TA's.

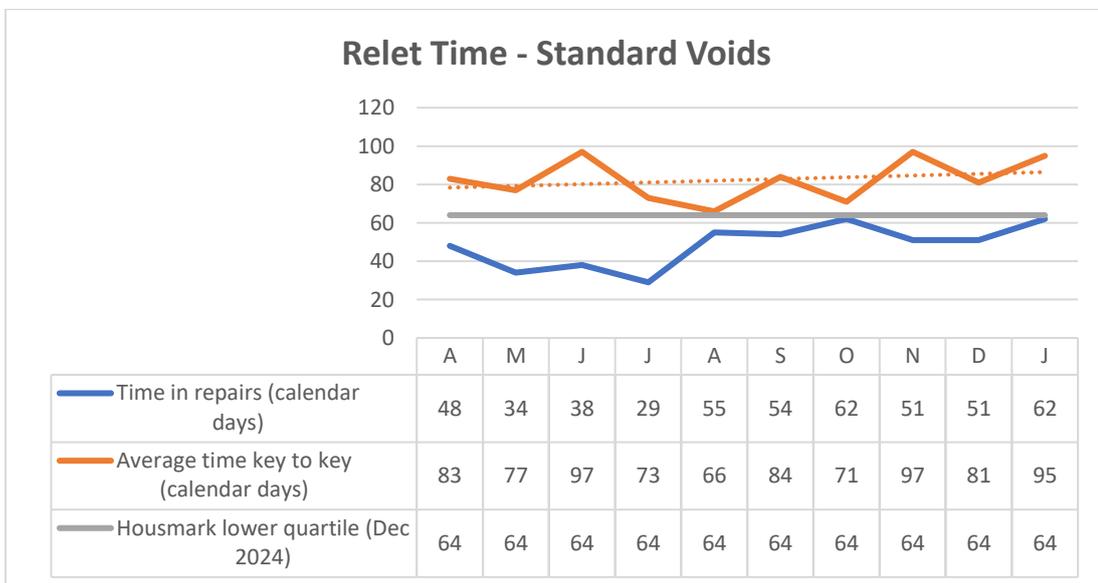
Chart 3: Relet Time – Temporary Accommodation



Standard Voids

- 4.2 Chart 3 shows the relet time for Standard Voids, the majority of work in Standard voids are carried out by the Council’s in-house team. Typically, a Standard void requires less than 200 hours work to bring it up to the lettable standard. The relet time for standard voids has fluctuated slightly although it should be noted that prior to August 2024 the relet times for Temporary Accommodation was included in these times which did reduce average time reported prior to August 2024.
- 4.3 The chart includes the Housemark benchmarking figures from the recent Pulse survey in December 2024 which provides an indication of how the Council compares to lower quartile performance. As part of the Council’s service improvement plans its aim is to focus on achieving lower quartile performance in the year ahead and then improving to median quartile the following year.

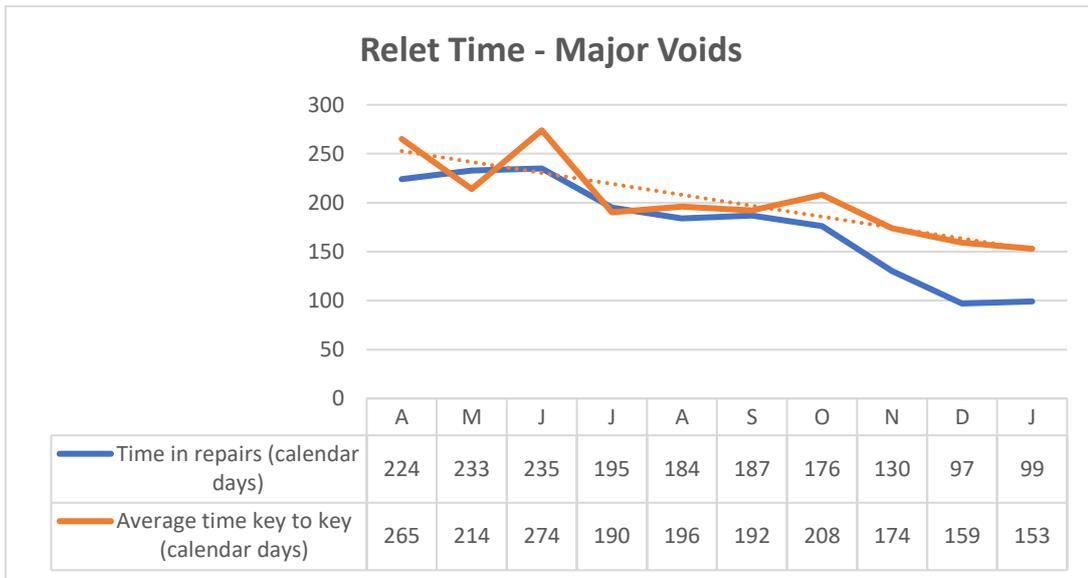
Chart 4: Relet Time – Standard Voids



Major Voids

- 4.4 Chart 4 shows the relet time for Major Voids, the majority of work in Major voids are carried out by external contractors. Typically, a Standard void requires more than 200 hours work to bring it up to the lettable standard and will include the replacement major components such as kitchens and bathrooms.
- 4.5 The Council has made significant progress to reduce to Major void relet times during 2024/25 as a result of increased capacity of external contractors, close supervision by the Void Repairs team and increased performance monitoring by management.
- 4.6 The Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee will recall the recent procurement work to appoint Grattan Constructions and Fosters as the new voids contractors. Both contractors are currently mobilising their new teams to full capacity which will allow the Council to further improve performance.

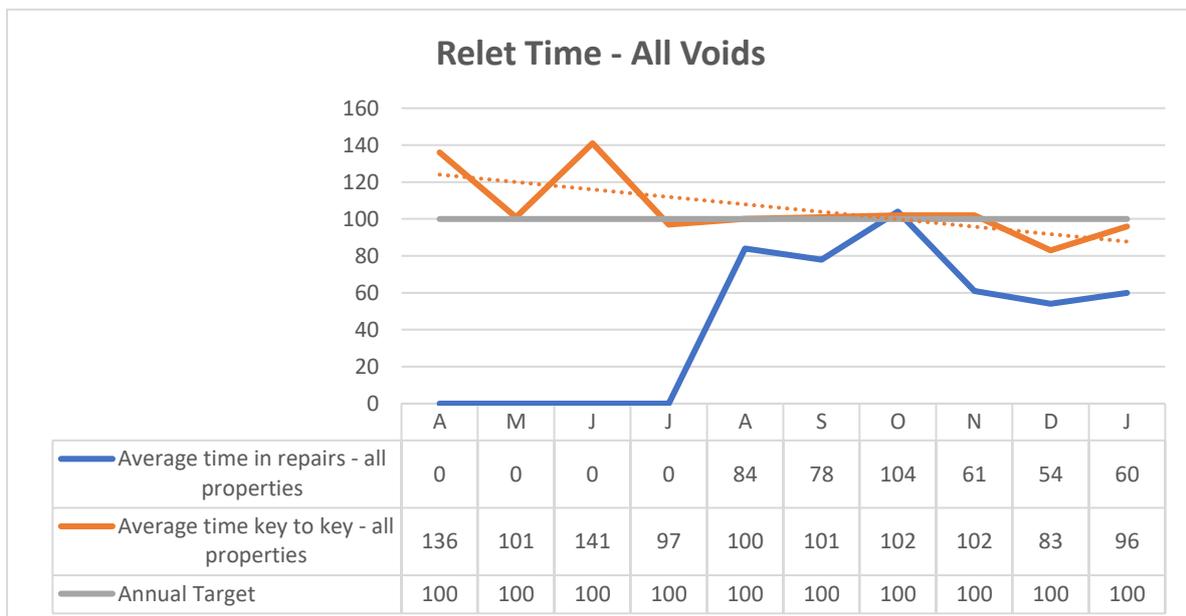
Chart 5: Relet Time – Major Voids



All Voids

4.7 Chart 5 shows the relet time for All Voids. Please note that a full set of repairs data is not available from April 2024 to July 2024. The Council’s target relet time for 2024/25 as set in the Councils Corporate Plan is 100 days and this was achieved in December 2024 and January 2025.

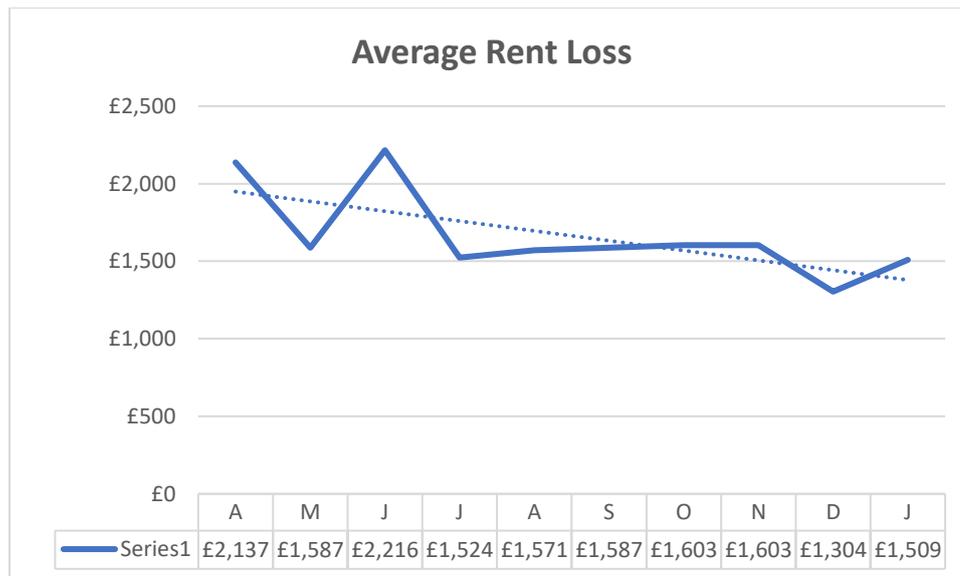
Chart 6: Relet Time – All Voids



5. Impact on Rent Loss

- 5.1 Chart 6 shows the average rent loss per property for all void properties based on a typical rent of £110 per property (excluding voids which are out of management, i.e. decant properties, and newly purchased properties which require repairs before relet). There have been 18 newly purchased properties so far, this financial year, which have been let.
- 5.2 The chart shows a reduction in rent loss from over £2,000 per property in April 2024 to around £1,500 in January 2025.

Chart 7: Average Rent Loss



6. Voids Property Improvement Plans

- 6.1 Considerable work has been completed by the Voids team during 2024/25 to improve performance including:
- Introduced weekly and monthly performance reporting.
 - Procured two new external contractors (started in February 2025) to deliver Major voids works.
 - Implemented a new interim team structure including a dedicated manager to oversee the voids team and report directly into the Head of Service.
 - Replaced the Voids Inspector role with an additional Supervisor (started in February 2025) to carry out inspections and provide more support to the in-house trades team.
 - Replaced the Northgate Housing System with QL.
 - The Council is on track to mobilise its new Project Planner IT software by the end of March 2025 which will replace the paper-based system used to schedule jobs.

- When the newly appointed void contractors have mobilised their new teams to full capacity and the major voids WIP has started to reduce, minor void's over 140 hours will be allocated to the contractors to help reduce turnaround times.
- 6.2 Whilst it is positive to report that during 2024/25 relet times have improved and rent loss has reduced, it is recognised that there is considerable work still to do to improve voids performance.
- 6.3 In 2025/26 an internal audit will be carried out on voids management to review the Council's processes and controls in place. This is welcomed and officers will work closely with the auditors to help the Council identify areas for improvement.
- 6.4 The Council will use the recommendations of the audit to inform its future service improvement plans to build on the progress made to date.

7. Summary

- 7.1 This report provides an update to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Council's work to improve void performance, including the positive progress made so far and its plans to continue to improve the repairs service.



**SOUTH
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COUNCIL**

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 17 March 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran,
Cabinet Member for Housing

Tenancy Services Update

Report Author

Sarah McQueen, Head of Service (Housing)

✉ sarah.mcqueen@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of the current workings of South Kesteven District Council's Tenancy Services Team. It details the key tasks undertaken by the team and highlights their continued hard work and dedication to ensure effective tenancy sustainment, compliance, and tenant and resident support.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report

Decision Information

| | |
|---|---|
| Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? | No |
| What are the relevant corporate priorities? | 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 direct financial implications arising from this report but there is a budget in place within the HRA to delivery tenancy Services and costs are being contained within this budget.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance (deputy s151 officer)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 This report is for information only.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Tenancy Services Team plays a crucial role in ensuring compliance with tenancy agreements and housing policies whilst ensuring that tenants receive the necessary support to sustain their tenancies. The team's work includes direct tenant engagement, enforcement of tenancy conditions, and collaboration with internal and external partners to provide a holistic approach to housing management.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. The Tenancy Services team consists of the Tenancy Services Manager, Tenancy Services Team Leader, 6 Housing Officers and 3 Housing Assistants. The Council also has 2 Tenancy Support Officers who provide additional one to one support to tenants who are identified as requiring this level of service.
- 3.2. In addition to this team, the Council also has a Sheltered Housing Team which consists of a Sheltered Housing Manager, the Sheltered Housing Team Leader, 2 Sheltered housing Officers and 3 Caretakers.
- 3.3. The following paragraphs provide an overview of the areas of works the team are responsible for delivering.

Tenancy and Estate Management

- 3.4. SKDC has a housing stock of just below 6,000 properties, so each Housing Officer is responsible for providing tenancy services to approximately 1,000 properties.
- 3.5. The team are responsible for conducting tenancy sign-ups for applicants who have been successful with securing a property through our choice-based lettings system. During the sign-up process officers will ensure tenants understand their tenancy agreement, rights, and responsibilities.
- 3.6. The team receive succession requests, where a tenant has passed away and a family member applies to take over the tenancy. The approval process for this function is set out in Government legislation and detailed in the Tenancy Management Policy so the team are responsible for ensuring the Council are legally compliant.
- 3.7. The team process mutual exchange requests, where tenants have applied to swap properties. The team visit each property and using their knowledge of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, identify if the properties are in satisfactory condition so that the mutual can go ahead in accordance with Appendix 2 of the Tenancy Management Policy.
- 3.8. The team conduct tenancy fraud investigations such as subletting and abandonment to ensure any tenancy breaches are dealt with efficiently and effectively.
- 3.9. Table 1 shows the quantity of work undertaken in these areas by the team between November 2024 and January 2025.

Table 1: Work Undertaken by Tenancy Services

| | Of which | Nov | Dec | Jan |
|-----------------------------------|----------|-----|-----|-----|
| Number of sign ups | | 26 | 27 | 25 |
| Number of terminations | | 25 | 28 | 19 |
| Number of Right to buys | | 40 | 24 | 3 |
| Number of successions | | 6 | 12 | 4 |
| Number of Mutual exchanges | | 6 | 2 | 3 |
| Number of tenancy checks (visits) | | 24 | 18 | 13 |
| | 6 weeks | 16 | 8 | 3 |

| | | | | |
|--|----------|---|----|----|
| | 9 months | 8 | 10 | 10 |
|--|----------|---|----|----|

Rent Arrears and Financial Inclusion

- 3.10. The Housing Officers work closely with the Council's Income Recovery team to monitor rent accounts and assist with providing early intervention for arrears.
- 3.11. Tenancy Support Officers assist tenants with budgeting, benefits applications, and accessing discretionary housing payments. Officers also provide a signposting service to the Council's Cost of Living Team, external partners and support agencies to ensure that tenants are able to access all of the support which is available which will assist them with sustaining their tenancy.
- 3.12. The Council's Rent team initiate legal proceedings in relation to rent arrears where necessary, and the Housing Officers assist with this process. The Council's aim is to ensure that tenants are able to sustain their tenancies by ensuring all the relevant support is in place. However, if this is not successful, and rent arrears are not addressed by the tenant this can lead to possession proceedings and eviction enforcement.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

- 3.13. A large proportion of Housing Officer time is spent on ASB Case Management. This involves investigating complaints of anti-social behaviour and taking appropriate enforcement action. Table 2 provides information regarding the ASB cases the team are managing.

Table 2: Number of ASB Cases

| | Nov | Dec | Jan |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Number of ASB cases | 9 | 9 | 15 |
| Number of new ASB reports | 4 | 3 | 7 |

- 3.14. Although the number of cases is low in comparison to the Council's total housing stock, the complexity of the cases mean that each case requires a significant amount of work, including working closely in partnership with police colleagues.
- 3.15. There are several powers and tools available to the Council as a social landlord which can help with tackling issues of ASB. These are detailed in our Landlord Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy which can be found at the following link: [Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.indd](#). Paragraph 3.20 of this report provides details of two of the tools which are available to the Council when responding to issues of ASB.

3.16. If enforcement action is taken on the grounds of ASB, a substantial amount of evidence needs to be collated to present to the courts to demonstrate a breach of tenancy. It is therefore essential that residents and tenants report all incidents of ASB to the Council.

Enforcement of Tenancy Conditions

3.17. The team are responsible for investigating and taking action for breaches of tenancy. This includes unauthorised alterations, property misuse, and overcrowding, as well as ASB as detailed above.

3.18. Managing the legal process to secure evictions due to tenancy breaches is another significant part of the Tenancy Services role. As previously detailed, the legal process requires a substantial amount of evidence be gathered to demonstrate breaches. The Council are a partner of Legal Services Lincolnshire who provide the required legal support to the team.

3.19. Table 3 details the number of legal cases the team have been processing between November 2024 and January 2025.

Table 3: Legal Cases

| | Of which | Nov | Dec | Jan |
|------------------------------|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Number of active Legal cases | | 10 | 10 | 4 |
| Number of evictions | | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Number of notices issued | | 16 | 2 | 1 |
| | NTQ | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| | CPNw | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | CPN | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | NOSP | 11 | 0 | 0 |

3.20. A description of the abbreviations included in table 3 is as follows:

- NTQ = Notice to quit. This is a notice served to an individual residing in a council property who has no legal rights to remain there (for example someone who has been unable to succeed a tenancy following the passing of the tenant)
- CPNw = This is a Community Protection Notice Warning and can be issued to an individual who may persistently be demonstrating examples of anti-social behaviour, as a warning than an official Community Protection Notice (CPN) could follow.

- CPN = This is the Community Protection Notice that follows the warning. Breaching this notice is a criminal offence.
- NOSP = Notice of Seeking Possession. This is a notice served to a tenant to advise that the Council are commencing legal proceedings to gain possession of the property. This is used where we can demonstrate a breach of the tenancy conditions.

Tenancy Sustainment and Support

- 3.21. As detailed earlier the Council has 2 Tenancy Support Officers whose main responsibility is to provide help and support to tenants to sustain their tenancies.
- 3.22. This service is crucial to help tenants remain in their home. There could be a range of very complex reasons why a tenant might be struggling to sustain their tenancy, such as a sudden change in income, mental health issues, drug or alcohol issues or trauma.
- 3.23. Examples of support the team provide include:
- Assist with managing financial affairs and income maximisation, ensuring customers are receiving the correct benefits, setting up claims and general budget management.
 - Support customers with challenging physical or mental health issues and/or learning difficulties regarding managing a tenancy or property
 - Assist with hoarding cases and provide action plans for tenants to reduce clutter and mitigate health and safety risks
 - Assist people with addiction or substance misuse issues who are in arrears or having problems managing their property due to these issues.
 - Help with transition of former homeless/temporary accommodation customers moving into general needs stock for the first time
 - Liaise with third party agencies, for example, social services, mental health teams, addiction support services and charities to ensure that wraparound support is provided to help and assist vulnerable tenants.
 - Work closely with the Cost of Living team to ensure that any tenants impacted by the cost of living crisis are fully supported to address this. Options of income maximisation are also explored to ensure tenants are receiving all income they may be entitled to.
 - Report and respond to safeguarding issues arising as part of their work.
- 3.24. Currently the team have 33 active support cases and there continues to be a significant demand for this service. It is for this reason that a budget bid for an additional Tenancy Support officer was submitted and approved at Full Council on 27 February 2025. This post will be recruited to in the new financial year.

Sheltered Housing Team

- 3.25. The Council's Sheltered Housing team are responsible for providing support to tenants in the 30 sheltered housing schemes across the district.
- 3.26. Properties in the scheme are fitted with a lifeline pull cord system. The Council has a contract in place with Tunstall, who provide the equipment and will contact tenants if the alarm is activated, they will assess the situation and transfer emergencies to the Sheltered Housing team and emergency services if required.
- 3.27. The team are responsible for completing Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan forms (PEEP) for all tenants as its likely that some in our sheltered scheme many struggle to evacuate themselves in an emergency.
- 3.28. The team also maintain the communal rooms in the schemes, ensuring tenants have access to them events that are booked in the rooms or that they are able to access the space should they need to use it.
- 3.29. The team are responsible for conducting regular fire alarm tests to ensure all systems are in full working order.
- 3.30. The team visit schemes on a weekly basis to ensure tenants are safe and supported and know who to contact if they have any issues. Regular tenant meetings are held which gives residents the opportunity to raise any concerns they may have.

Summary

- 3.31. The Tenancy Services Team plays a critical role in supporting tenants and maintaining sustainable communities. Despite challenges, the team continues to deliver essential services to ensure tenancy compliance and tenant and resident well-being. The teams hard work and dedication ensure that the Council has a compliant housing management function at South Kesteven District Council.

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**SOUTH
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COUNCIL**

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 17 March 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey

Report Author

Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing and Projects

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Purpose of Report

To update the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the results from the annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the contents of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey results and the actions that are being taking to address the recommendations provided by Acuity.**

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 associated with this report.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance (deputy s151 officer)

Legal and Governance

1.2 There are no significant legal or governance implications associated with this report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Survey is a mandatory requirement placed on Social Landlords by the Regulator of Social Housing (the Regulator) to comply with the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard of the Social Housing Regulation Act (2023). The results of the survey are submitted to the Regulator who publish an annual report which analyses the results for social landlords with 1,000 or more homes.
- 2.2. The TSM survey allows tenants to scrutinise the Council's performance, provides information on where services could be improved and provides information to the Regulator regarding how far the Council is meeting the outcomes of the new consumer standards.
- 2.3. The survey was undertaken by Acuity on behalf of the Council, the survey includes 12 mandatory questions which ensures that the Regulator has consistent data from all landlords to undertake benchmarking. The methods used for collecting data was via online and telephone surveys which were undertaken with a representative sample of tenants.
- 2.4. The online survey commenced on 28 October 2024 for a period of 2 weeks, this was followed by the telephone survey which commenced on 11 November 2024 for a period of 3 weeks. The survey closed on 30 November at which point 549

completed responses, and 32 incomplete responses had been received which meets the Regulator’s requirements.

- 2.5. The results from the survey are presented in Appendix 1 and Table 1 provides a comparison of the results received for 2023/24 and 2024/25. Appendix 1 will be sent to all tenants following presentation of the results to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The 12 mandatory questions are labelled TP01 to TP012 in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of TSM results received between 2023/24 and 2024/25

| Measure | 2024/25 | 2023/24 | Difference |
|---|----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Overall Service | | | |
| Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the service provided by their landlord (TP01) | 61% | 62% | -1% |
| The Home and Communal Areas | | | |
| Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord provides a home that is well maintained (TP04) | 59% | 59% | 0 |
| Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord provides a home that is safe (TP05) | 69% | 67% | +2% |
| Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained (TP10) | 65% | 66% | -1% |
| Repairs and Maintenance | | | |
| Proportion of tenants who are satisfied with the way the landlord deals with repairs and maintenance generally | 50% | 55% | -5% |
| Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the overall repairs service from their landlord over the last 12 months (TP02) | 66% | 66% | 0% |
| Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair after they reported it (TP03) | 52% | 52% | 0% |
| The Neighbourhood | | | |
| Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood (TP11) | 59% | 52% | +7% |
| Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with their landlord’s approach to handling anti-social behaviour (TP12) | 58% | 50% | +8% |

| Communications and Resident Engagement | | | |
|--|-----|-----|------|
| Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord listens to their views and acts upon them (TP06) | 49% | 48% | +1% |
| Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps them informed about things that matter to them (TP07) | 59% | 59% | 0% |
| Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord treats them fairly and with respect (TP08) | 68% | 67% | +1% |
| Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord is easy to deal with | 61% | -* | - |
| Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaints handling (TP09) | 36% | 22% | +14% |
| Recommending South Kesteven District Council | | | |
| Proportion of respondents who would recommend the landlords Housing Service to other people | 34% | 33% | +1% |

*question not asked in 2023/24

- 2.6 Table 1 shows that most of the results have remained consistent between 2023/24 and 2024/24 but there has been positive improvements in the results for TP09, TP11 and TP12.
- 2.7 The Housing Team are committed to ensuring that improvements are delivered across service area and Acuity have recommended areas which should be focused on. These are detailed in Table 2 along with the action the Council is already taking.

Table 2: Acuity recommendations and actions which are being taken

| Recommendation | Action |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Review how complaints are dealt with | The Housing Team has a group which meets monthly to review complaints and actions that can be taken to address the issues raised in the complaint. |
| Property Maintenance | A Repairs Service Improvement Plan is in place, this was presented to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 January 2025. |

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Customer Service and Communication | The Council is working with TPAS, who are tenant engagement experts, to development a Tenant Engagement Improvement Plan which will be presented to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a future meeting. |
|------------------------------------|--|

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. That the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews the results of the TSM survey included at Appendix 1 and the actions the Housing team are taking to address the recommendations provided by Acuity as detailed in Table 2.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 4.1 This report is provided to ensure that the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee is updated with the results of the TSM survey and the actions the Housing team are taking to address the recommendations provided by Acuity as detailed in Table 2.

5. Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results

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Your Views



SOUTH
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Resident Satisfaction Survey 2024

About the Survey

In October and November 2024, many of you took part in an important survey.

The survey was carried out by telephone and online questionnaires, by an independent market research company – Acuity Research and Practice. It focused on how happy you are with the way South Kesteven District Council maintains your homes and delivers key services, as well as how you are coping financially. The survey also collected the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) as required by the Regulator of Social Housing

The findings will provide a view of the main drivers behind satisfaction levels and the issues residents are most concerned about, informing the Council's future strategic and operational planning.

This report contains key survey results regarding residents' opinions about their homes and the services they receive.

581
residents
took part out
of a total of
5,619*

*A representative sample of residents were contacted to ensure the results represent the whole resident base.

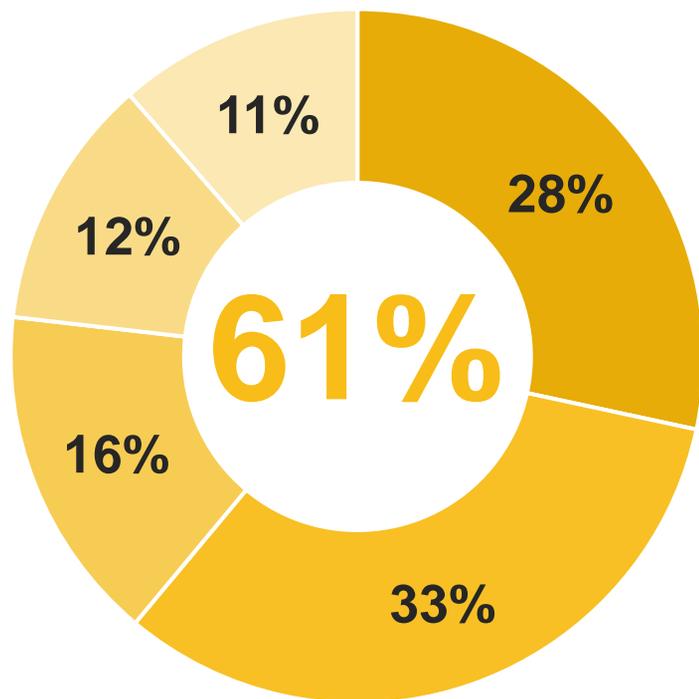
A big thank you to everyone who took part!

Overall Service



Six out of ten residents are satisfied with the overall service provided by South Kesteven District Council (**61%**).

116



- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied



The Home and Communal Areas



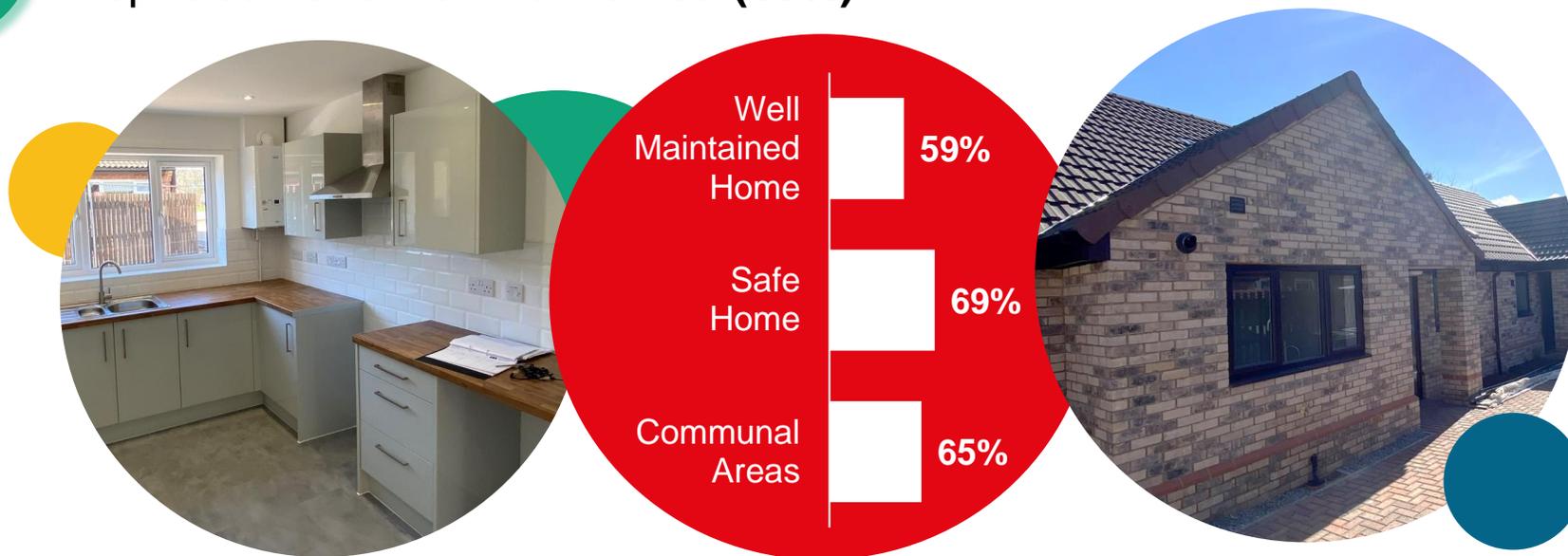
Six out of ten residents are satisfied that their homes are well maintained **(59%)**.



Seven out of ten residents are satisfied that South Kesteven District Council provides them with a home that is safe **(69%)**.



Around two out of three residents are satisfied that their communal areas are kept clean and well maintained **(65%)**.



Repairs and Maintenance



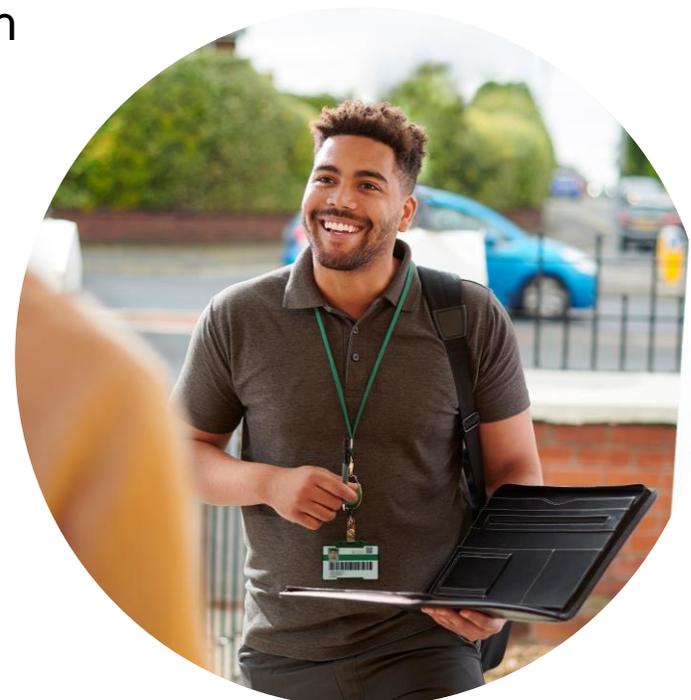
Half of residents are satisfied with the way South Kesteven District Council deals with repairs and maintenance generally **(50%)**.



More residents are satisfied with the overall repairs service over the last 12 months **(66%)**.



Around five out of ten residents are satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair after they reported it **(52%)**.



118



62%
of residents had a repair carried out in the last 12 months

The Neighbourhood



Six out of ten residents are satisfied that South Kesteven District Council makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood **(59%)**.



A similar number of residents are satisfied with South Kesteven District Council's approach to handling anti-social behaviour **(58%)**.



Communications and Resident Engagement



Half of residents are satisfied with how South Kesteven District Council listens to their views and acts upon them (**49%**).



Six out of ten residents are satisfied that they are kept informed about things that matter to them (**59%**).



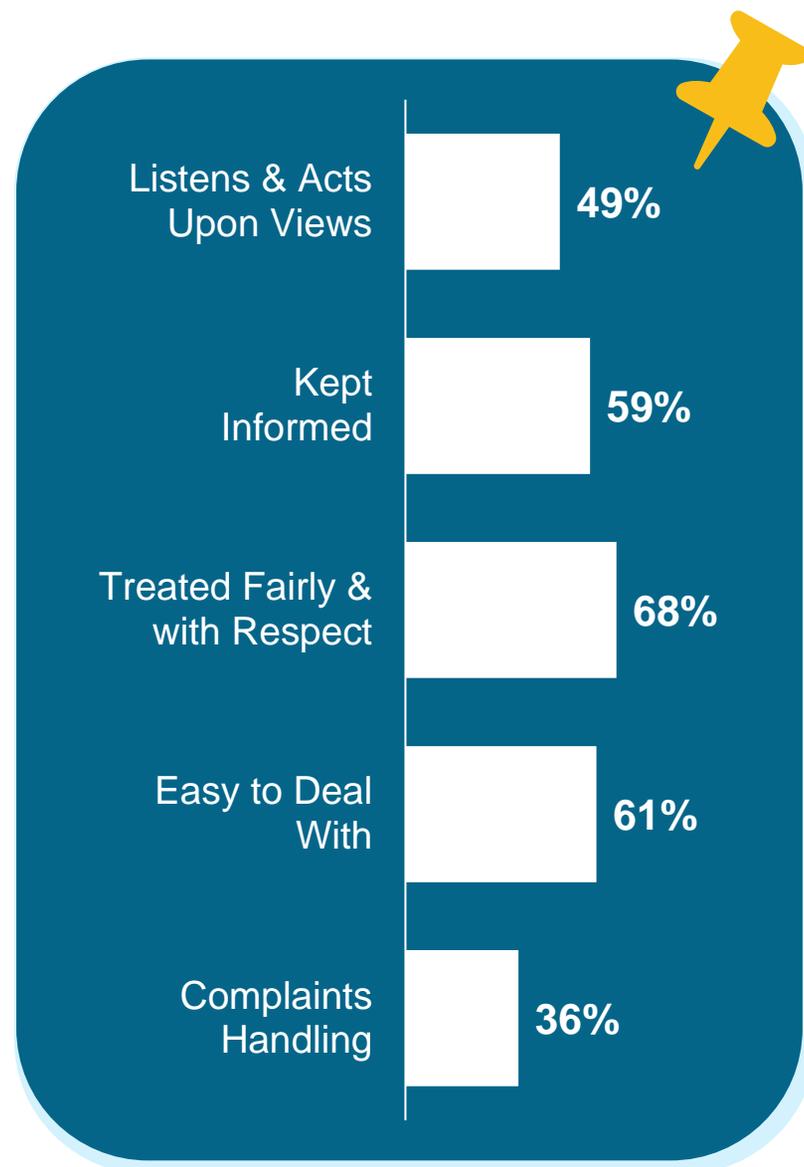
Around two-thirds of residents agree South Kesteven District Council treats them fairly and with respect (**68%**).



Six out of ten residents are satisfied that South Kesteven District Council is easy to deal with (**61%**).



Around one-third of residents who made a complaint in the last 12 months are satisfied with complaints handling (**36%**).



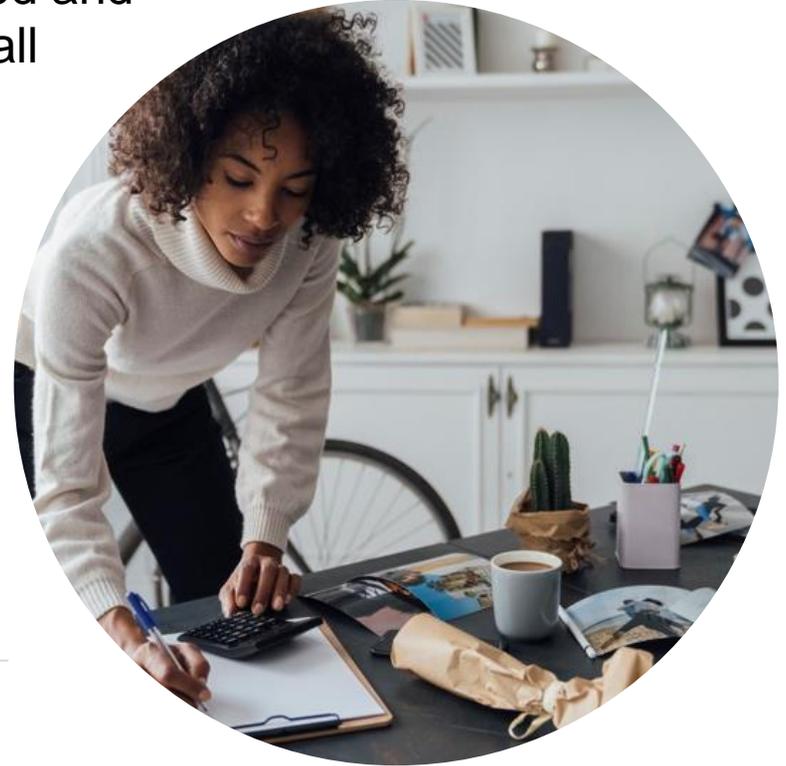
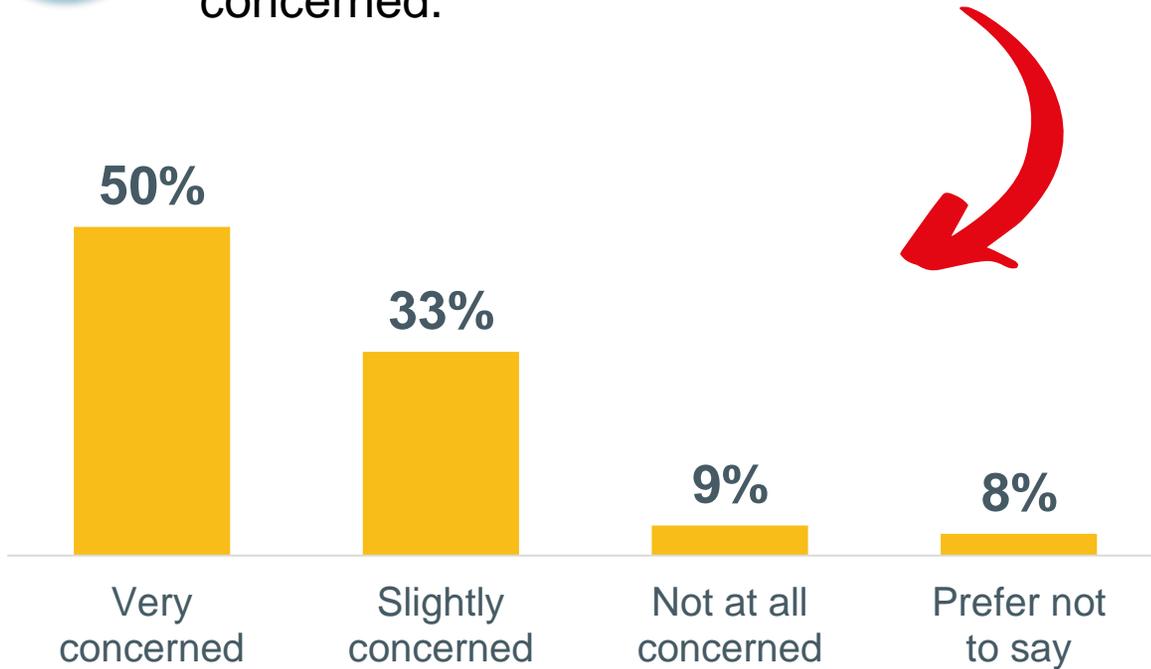
120

Wellbeing



Around eight out of ten residents are concerned about the cost of living (**83%**), with **50%** very concerned and **33%** slightly concerned. Just **9%** are not at all concerned.

121



Over four out of ten residents currently have damp or mould issues in their homes (**44%**). Of these residents, **75%** have reported the problem to South Kesteven District Council.

Recommending South Kesteven District Council



Residents were also asked how likely they would be to recommend South Kesteven Council's Housing Service to other people. This is a 0-10 point rating. Those who would recommend the service to others score 9 or 10, those that are unsure score 7 or 8 and those who would not recommend them score 6 or below.

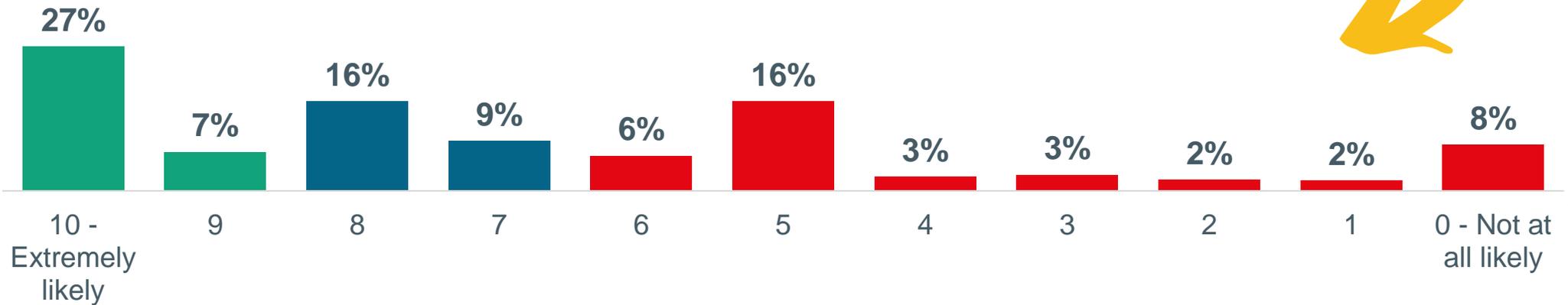


One third of residents are very loyal and happy to recommend South Kesteven District Council to other people (**34%**). However, **26%** of residents are unsure and **41%** would not recommend the Council, feeling rather more negative about the Housing Service.



The 'Net Promoter Score' for South Kesteven District Council (the percentage of those who would recommend the Housing Service minus the percentage of those who would not) is **-7**.

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Residents' Comments

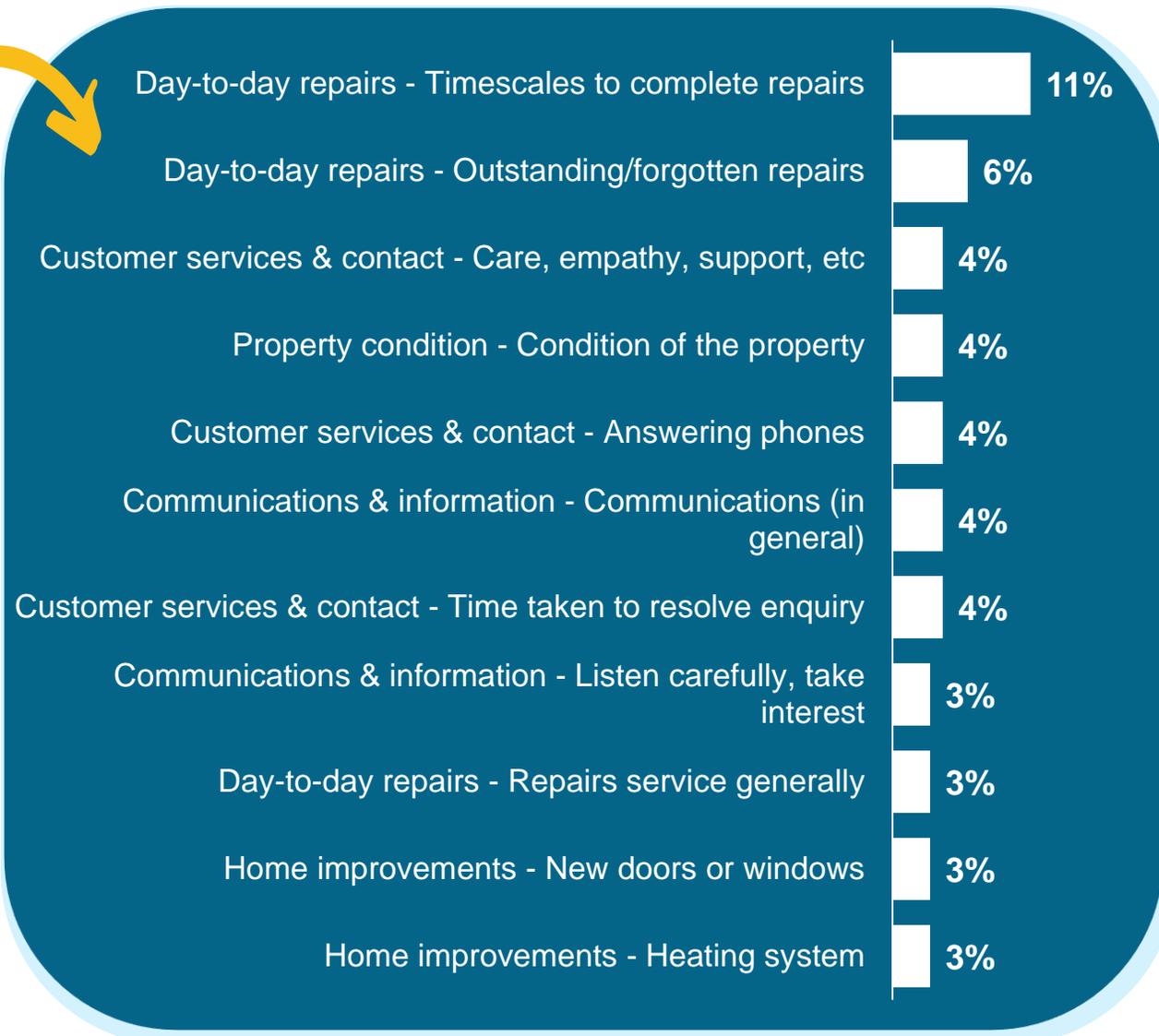
Residents were asked what one thing South Kesteven District Council Housing Service could improve, and 500 residents gave comments.

Residents most frequently referred to the repairs service, in particular, the time taken to complete repairs and outstanding repairs that have not been dealt with.

123 Other residents mentioned communications and customer service, including the care and support provided by staff, the answering of phones and time taken to resolve enquiries.

Some residents mentioned home improvements they would like and the condition of their property.

Top comments



Your Views



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

South Kesteven District Council appreciates the time everyone took to complete the survey for us. It is important that through your feedback, we understand the services that work well and those we know can and should be, improved. Where you have said that you are happy for us to, we might contact you to discuss an issue you have raised or ask for more information.

Carrying out this survey is just part of the work South Kesteven District Council does to involve you in developing services. As well as publishing the results of the survey, South Kesteven District Council plans to put the findings to good use by working with residents to further improve the services they provide. Residents can help South Kesteven District Council with this by getting in touch via HousingFB@southkesteven.gov.uk



Thank you
once again to
everyone who
took part.



Publish findings to
residents



Use findings to plan
and improve services,
e.g., repairs, property
condition and
customer service



Involve residents in
shaping service
improvements



TSM Summary of Approach

Summary of the survey approach used to generate the published tenant perception measures.

| | |
|---|--|
| Sample size | 581 |
| Timing of survey | 31/10/2024 to 29/11/2024 |
| Collection method(s) | Telephone and online surveys |
| Sample method | Random sample, with quotas set |
| Representativeness of the sample | Quotas were set on tenure type, area and age group to ensure the results are representative of the whole tenant base |
| Details of any weighting applied to the results | No weighting has been applied |
| Role of any external contractor(s) in collecting, generating, or validating the reported measures | Acuity Research & Practice Ltd, collecting, generating and validating perception measures |
| Number of tenant households in the relevant population that have not been included due to exceptional circumstances | None |
| Reasons for any failure to meet the required sample size | Required sample size has been met |
| Type and amount of any incentives offered to tenants to encourage survey completion | No incentives offered |
| Any other methodological issues likely to have an impact on the reported tenant perception measures | None |

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

| No | Item | Meeting Date | Lead Officer | Requirements | Notes (including reporting timeframes) |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------------|------------------------------|------------------|---|
| Items – Monday 17 March 2025 | | | | | |
| 1. | Housing Compliance Monitoring update | 17 Mar 25 | Phil Swinton | Regular update | Regular update to Committee |
| 2. | Earlesfield Project update | 17 Mar 25 | Alison Hall-Wright | Regular update | Regular update at each meeting |
| 3. | New Build and Acquisitions update | 17 Mar 25 | Debbie Roberts/Suniel Pillai | Regular update | |
| 4. | Homelessness and Rough Sleeper update | 17 Mar 25 | Sarah McQueen | Regular update | |
| 5. | Mobility Scooter Policy | 17 Mar 25 | Phil Swinton | Policy | Policy to be considered if ready for January meeting if not Policy to March meeting |
| 6. | Stock Condition | 17 Mar 25 | Mark Rogers | Update | |
| 7. | Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund | 17 Mar 25 | Mark Rogers | Update | Report on Wave 3 and update on Wave 2 projects |
| 8. | Void Report | 17 Mar 25 | Mark Rogers | Report | Report requested at meeting held in November 2024 |
| 9. | Overview of Tenancy Services | 17 Mar 25 | Sarah McQueen | Report | |
| 10. | Amendment to Housing Allocation Policy | 17 Mar 25 | Sarah McQueen | Policy amendment | |

| Future Items | | | | | |
|--------------|---|------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| | Repairs Service | <i>May/June</i> | | Update | Committee to receive a report on the Repairs Service every three months |
| | KPI's | <i>June</i> | Debbie Roberts/Charles James | Q4 end of year 2024/25 | |
| | Garage Sites and their development | <i>May/June 25</i> | Debbie Roberts/Suniel Pillai | Update | Update report following report submitted 19 September 2024 |
| | 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 | |
| | 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 |
| | Sheltered Housing Allocations Review | <i>TBC</i> | | | |