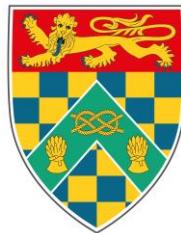


Meeting of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 2 October 2025, 2.00 pm



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee Members present

Councillor Lee Steptoe (Chairman)
Councillor Zoe Lane (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Emma Baker
Councillor Ben Green
Councillor Gloria Johnson
Councillor Bridget Ley
Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Tim Harrison

Cabinet Members

Councillor Virginia Moran, Cabinet Member Housing

Officers

Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing & Projects
Sarah McQueen, Head of Service (Housing)
Ayeisha Kirkham, Head of Service (Public Protection)
Andy Goldsborough, Lawyer (LSL)
Debbie Roberts, Head of Projects, Performance and Climate Change
Suniel Pillai, New Build Project Officer
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer

The Chairman informed the Committee that there had been a terrorist attack in Manchester that morning at a synagogue where at least two people had been killed and three had been seriously injured. The perpetrator had been shot dead by the Police. The Chairman stated that he had used the word terrorist deliberately as that was the word being used by BBC News. He asked the Committee to stand and hold a minutes silence for those who had died in the attack.

18. Public Speaking

None.

19. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Anna Kelly and Councillor Susan Sandall.
Councillor Anna Kelly was substituted by Councillor Tim Harrison.

20. Disclosure of Interest

None disclosed.

21. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2025

A question was asked about the number of apprentices referred to in the minutes at minute 12, was this three or four. The Democratic Officer indicated that she would check the numbers shown.

The minutes were proposed, seconded and agreed.

(On checking the previous minutes it was confirmed that there were four apprentices two in repairs and two in voids).

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

There were no announcements or updates.

23. Corporate Enforcement Policy

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing presented the report which concerned a new draft Corporate Enforcement Policy. The Policy was last revised in February 2017 and a review and update was required. The Cabinet Member thanked the Head of Service, Public Protection and her team for the work which had gone into compiling the new Policy together with the Legal colleagues at Legal Services Lincolnshire for their input in assisting and checking the document before the Committee today.

The Enforcement Policy covered a wide range of Regulatory Services including:

Public Protection which included Environment Health, Environmental Protection, Private Sector Housing, Community Safety (Neighbourhoods) and Licensing.
Development Management
Building Control
Finance
Tenancy Services

Each Manager of the regulatory service covered by the Policy would be responsible for its effective implementation through the enforcement activities of their team.

The Policy also incorporated three other South Kesteven District Council Enforcement Policies as specified in the appendices. The Policy would be going to three Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

Housing OSC
Environmental Health OSC
Rural and Communities OSC
Before going to Cabinet for adoption.

The Policy would ensure that the Council achieved and maintained consistency in its approach to enforcement.

A question was asked in relation to which Act was used in respect of overcrowding of residences, was it the Housing Act 1985 or the Housing Health and Safety Rating System as set out in the Housing Act 2004 and how did landlords know which was the relevant Act. Also what safeguards were in place in respect of vulnerable tenants who were at risk of eviction due to enforcement proceedings.

It was stated that it was a combination of both Acts with the Housing Act overarching the HHSRS Act. Safeguards were in place in respect of vulnerable tenants and each case was assessed and judged together with other housing colleagues. Enforcement officers were trained to assess each case and what was the best course of action required.

Further questions were raised about the enforcement of Council tenants and how this was balanced. It was stated that the Enforcement Policy would be followed so there was a consistency in respect of actions taken however, all relevant factors would be taken into account. More discussion followed on how landlords avoided confusion in respect of the Acts used in respect of overcrowding enforcement and how the Council's duty as a landlord was separated from their enforcement duty.

The Head of Service, Public Protection stated that she would take the issue away as an action to compile some useable guidance for Landlords and raise the issue at the forthcoming Landlord Forum on 7 November 2025 (TBC).

➤ **Action**

Head of Service, Public Protection to compile guidance for Landlords in respect of enforcement action for houses in multiple occupation.

The Vice-Chairman made reference to the Lincolnshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme for Private Sector Landlords and asked whether it was a compulsory scheme, if it wasn't, how many landlords had signed up to the scheme. She also asked a question in respect of the electrical safety standards and enforcement of non-compliance, as she was aware that this was not a statutory requirement and she wondered what the enforcement options were for private landlords in these instances.

The Head of Service, Public Protection indicated that she was not aware that it was compulsory for landlords to sign up to the Lincolnshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme but she would check and find out numbers.

➤ **Action**

The Head of Service, Public Protection to check if it was compulsory for Landlords to sign up to the Lincolnshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme and to check how many landlords were signed up to the scheme in South Kesteven and circulate the information to the Committee.

It was noted that the electrical standards enforcement was a new addition to the appendix of the Policy. Previously no enforcement action had been taken in the private rented sector as it had not been part of the Policy. When Officers inspected

properties, it would have been advisory before it got to that level of enforcement. It added an extra layer that protected the private rented tenants more.

The Head of Service, Housing then spoke in relation to tenants sustaining their tenancy which was the primary aim. There was a lot of support available for tenants with Officers working with tenants to maintain their tenancy. Enforcement was seen as a last resort and would only be taken if the need was there. Support for the tenant must be evidenced with each case being looked at individually, it was a difficult balancing act but the main aim was for a tenant to sustain their tenancy.

Further discussion following in respect of monitoring overcrowding in HMO's, vulnerable tenants and enforcement due to Anti-Social Behaviour disputes and fly tipping fines to which the Head of Service, Public Protection, the Head of Service, Housing and also the Lawyer from Legal Services Lincolnshire responded.

It was noted that the use of enforcement in relation to housing was used as a last resort which was why housing had its own section within the Policy document. Each case was looked at individually to try and solve problems before it got to an enforcement level. Legal Services Lincolnshire had looked over the document which went beyond housing. Currently the Policy was in draft format and could be subject to further amendments. It was stated that fly tipping was a major issue and the importance of partnership working between teams and Officer time to address the issue and find the culprits should not be underestimated and this was endorsed by the Chairman.

The draft policy was proposed, seconded and recommended for approval to Cabinet.

Recommendation

That the draft Corporate Enforcement Policy be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

24. New Build and Acquisition Update

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which provided the Committee on an update in respect of the new build and acquisition pipeline.

The Cabinet Member was pleased to announce that the new build of 20 apartments at Swinegate in Grantham had been handed over to the Council. The apartments were a mix of one and two bedrooms and had been shortlisted for the Best Housing Development for the Inside Housing Development Awards which would take place in November 2025.

Construction of the development at Larch Close, Grantham had started on site. Delays had been due to the original scheme being amended from two four bedroom properties to adapted bungalows due to the high demand for these type of properties. The development was due to be complete in December 2026.

Cabinet had approved the contract award to Lindum for the development at Wellington Way, Market Deeping at their September meeting. The scheme would

provide 11 affordable dwellings comprising of 5 x 2-bedroom houses, 4 x 2-bed flats and 2 x 1-bed flats which would be a mix of terrace, semi-detached houses as well as three apartment blocks.

The 12 empty houses at Lumbys Terrace, Stamford which required significant work to bring them up to decent homes standard had been placed on the market and two open house events had taken place. There had been 19 interested parties in the site with eight offers made from individuals that met or exceeded the Red Book Valuation. There were also two developers interested in two properties each.

One Member asked about the site at Kesteven Road, Stamford and the Head of Projects, Performance and Climate Change indicated that public consultation was due to take place in relation to the site towards the end of October with a possible 13 units developed on the old garage site plus a small part of green space.

Another Member congratulated the Officers and Cabinet Member for Housing for being shortlisted for the award and asked how many council houses had been lost through the RTB scheme and how many were programmed to replace them.

It was stated that since 1980 when the scheme was started South Kesteven had 10,000 council houses, they now had 5,800. It was a “drop in the ocean” building council properties as well as slow going. There was now little green space to develop and whenever the Council tried to develop any green space for social housing, residents protested vigorously about it, this type of development was also not the most cost effective way of using HRA funds.

The Cabinet Member for Housing stated that buying properties from developers was better as after six weeks of purchasing a property the Council had rent coming in from that property. The average loss of council properties under the RTB scheme had been 40 a year up until last year. Reference was made to the large number of applications that had been received before the rules around RTB had changed and some of these applications were still going through the legal system and it was expected that the numbers would increase for the year before they dropped. Rules around RTB had changed where people now had to wait 10 years rather than five and discounts had also changed. Reference was made to the prices of houses and why people wanted to own their own house if it was a council house. Developments were getting closer to like for like properties and the upside of losing a house under the RTB scheme that was between 60- 70 years old was that it was replaced with a modern brand new house.

A Member asked if there was a specific criteria that the Council used when buying existing properties and whether there were any in the pipeline. It was stated that there were 36 properties at Corby Glen for the next year. Specific properties were bought and reference was made to a recently bought five bedroom property in Stamford which had been close to decent home standard and had not required a lot of work to bring it up to the required standard as across the Council's stock there were very few five bedroom properties.

The Director of Housing and Projects stated that a financial assessment was carried out in respect of all properties by the Finance Team so that it met the financial criteria with payback within a certain period of time and met the Red Book

valuation undertaken by a local valuer and met the needs as required on the Housing Register.

A question was raised about assets being sold by Lincolnshire County Council and the Head of Projects, Performance and Climate Change stated that LCC worked through One Public Estate. Meetings discussed the type of properties that were being sold and South Kesteven District Council did attend the One Public Estate meetings and therefore would be aware of any potential buildings for sale. Each building would still need to be assessed using the criteria highlighted by the Director of Housing and Projects to see that it was Value for Money.

Questions were asked about the timeframe for the pipelines and when they would be available and also the situation with the sale of Lumby Terrace properties to which both the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Director of Housing and Projects replied.

Members noted the report.

25. Homelessness and Rough Sleeper update

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which updated that Committee in respect of status and recent activity in respect of Homelessness and Rough Sleeper services.

The Change4Lincs Team continued to deliver outreach and support across the four local authority areas. A new outreach worker was due to join the Team from 4 October 2025 which would enhance coverage in South Holland and South Kesteven.

There were four known rough sleepers as per mid-September and all were being actively supported. The Council's use of supported accommodation including a house in multiple occupation (HMO) was helping to transition individuals into more stable housing.

Members were referred to Table 2 of the report which showed the homelessness case figures. As of August 2025 there were 247 cases with 70 individuals in temporary accommodation.

Additional funding had been received from Government which had enabled the creation of new roles and expanded support including a Temporary Accommodation Officer and a Resettlement Officer

It was proposed that the night shelter would reopen for the winter months and the Council continued to work closely with partners to meet resettlement obligations. A proactive and compassionate approach was being taken to tackle housing need across South Kesteven.

The Chairman asked if the HMO in question was in respect of the Community Centre on Thames Road. It was confirmed that it was the flats above the Community Centre that were being used as temporary accommodation.

One Member asked about work being undertaken in respect of rough sleepers in extreme weather and conversations that had been held with the Ark and Passage. Also when a firm decision would be made in respect of the night shelter. A question was also asked about how the HMO's used for temporary accommodation would be kept safe and well managed and suitable for vulnerable residents.

The Head of Service, Housing stated that re-opening the night shelter had been challenging due to the location and the concern expressed by residents in the location. Conversations were taking place and as soon as a viable location was known this would be passed on. The Council was hopeful that a night shelter would be open but as yet the location had yet to be determined.

The HMO that had been referred to was part of the Council's own stock, was up to the Council's lettable and decent home standards. The people placed in the HMO had a support package in place and had regular visits and was managed effectively.

One Member made reference to the number of tents that had previously been within her ward and she was pleased that these had reduced due to the work of the Housing Section getting people in to accommodation. She asked for more information in respect of the partnership working that was being undertaken by the Council to provide "wrap around care" to people who found themselves homeless. The Member also asked about having the night shelter opened during the day rather than just at night to give support to those who slept during the day due to issues they had with drug use. A further comment was made about new tents that had appeared in Wyndham Park and the Paddock in recent days.

The Head of Service, Housing replied in respect of the Partnership working that was being undertaken with the Grief Advice Service and the Homelessness drop in service that was available on a Wednesday afternoon. The service had started in the summer as a "cool space" due to the hot weather this would now be a "warm space" on a Wednesday afternoon during the winter months. Although it was the National Grief Advice Service (NGAS), they used "grief" in the loosest term which could be the loss of a home, pet or job. Mention was made about the National Bereavement Advice Service which although came under the same umbrella was a different service. The NGAS dealt with "loss" of anything. It was noted that take up was currently low but if it increased, work would be done to see if more warm spaces sessions could be arranged over the winter months, Officers attended the drop-in session every Wednesday afternoon to provide support.

The Head of Service, Housing then spoke about having the night shelter opened during the day which would be ideal, but unfortunately came down to the lack of funds to have it opened during the day. The Council provided the provision at night and worked with partners to provide the staffing which unfortunately couldn't be on a 24/7 basis due to costs. Reference was made to the new tents that had appeared which the Head of Service was aware of and Outreach Workers had already visited to discuss housing options available to them. Monitoring or tracking was not undertaken as this was very difficult to carry out, all Officers could do was support those who were rough sleeping. It was noted that some were on and off the streets for a number of years and Officers were aware of these individuals with some having very complex issues. Each case was looked at individually and

accommodation was not always the answer it was having the wrap around support in place for that individual.

A question was asked about Government funding and more support for rough sleeping to which the Head of Service stated the funding for next year was not known but acknowledged that the increase in rough sleeping was not just in South Kesteven, the increase was also happening nationally. The Director of Housing and Projects stated that the Council received its draft financial settlement at the end of December which would be when any extra funding would be known.

One Member asked whether there were any veterans who were active rough sleeping or presented as homeless. It was noted that the Head of Service did not have the figures to hand but would come back to the Member with the exact figure in respect of active homeless cases that involved veterans.

➤ **Action**

That the Head of Service, Housing provided the Committee with the number of active homeless cases that involved veterans.

A question was asked in respect of the properties managed by SERCO.

It was noted that SERCO managed resettlement properties on behalf of the Home Office not for the Council. SERCO procured properties in South Kesteven and fully managed those properties. The Council were notified of properties that were proposed for procurement and could feedback about the properties in respect of "Do we think it is suitable for resettlement, were there any concerns". The Council did have the opportunity to feedback any concerns which the Head of Service had been undertaking.

A further question was asked in relation to the housing of migrants or homeless people within the district to which the Director of Housing and Projects replied.

Reference was made to veterans that were homeless and the Member hoped that they were receiving the tailored support as expected under a Council that had an Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award. It was noted that the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Manager would have the exact figures as they dealt with this on a daily basis and managed the service. In respect of the Housing Allocation Policy there was a specific criteria that related to veterans.

Further questions were raised in respect of Team resources, staffing structures, accommodation for families who presented homeless and single people to which the Head of Service, Housing and the Director of Housing and Projects responded. It was noted that a staffing structure would be provided at the next meeting of the Committee in respect of Homelessness and Rough Sleepers.

➤ **Action**

That a staffing structure chart be provided to the Committee at its next meeting in respect of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Team.

The Chairman thanked Officers for the report and the massive amount of work that they undertook in respect of homelessness and rough sleepers.

(An adjournment took place between 3:30 – 3:45)

26. Garage Sites Update Report

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which updated the Committee on the stock condition survey due to take place in respect of garage sites. Members attention was drawn to the Finance comments at paragraph 1.1 and 1.2 which were incorrect on the paper copies of the agenda but correct in the electronic version.

It was noted that an in-depth quote had been provided by Edge PS, a supplier on the Asset Management Framework for a full stock condition survey of all garage sites at a cost of £38k. The district contained a total of 830 individual garage units.

A bid had formally been submitted to Homes England for the Council Housebuilding Support Fund for funding to contribute toward the cost of the stock condition survey and feasibility work for sites identified as potential development opportunities. However, it was noted that if the funding bid was not successful there were still funds available within the budget.

A full update would be given to the Committee next year once the survey was completed.

Questions were raised about priority in respect of garages and the number of garages let. It was stated that a lot of garages were used for storage rather than vehicles but until the stock condition survey was completed numbers were a bit of a “moveable feast”, although it was confirmed that there were 435 currently tenanted. A question was asked about whether garages were included as part of Right to Buy (RTB) sales and the Director of Housing and Projects stated that they were not part of RTB sales.

Members noted the report.

27. Housing Performance Data

The Head of Service, Housing gave a presentation on behalf of the Head of Service, Technical.

Repairs Call Handling - well within target and at the end of August was 96%.

Reactive Repairs – All Repairs

Context was given in respect of figures for earlier in the year and also the previous year. Although the figures were still showing red the figures had improved significantly.

The Chairman made reference to staffing issues as mentioned in the report, the Head of Service, Housing indicated that she would discuss the subject later in the presentation.

The number of repairs 2,969 in WIP had gone down since August. To give some context the Committee were informed that in April 2024 this number had been 3,798, therefore Members could see the improvement in the figures even though they were still in red. The number of overdue repairs was moving downward and the current figure was 1,705. Again to give some context in April 2024 the figure was 2,965.

Reactive Repairs – In House

Emergency Repairs completed on time was 100% and showed green for August. The number of overdue repairs was decreasing and for August was down to 1405, in February that figure had been 2,118, so improvement could be seen.

Reactive Repairs - Sureserve

Systems were being focused on together with overdue jobs in this area which showed a large amount of green within the presentation matrix.

Reactive Repairs – Other Contractors

Again reference was made to the amount of red shown and it was noted that the number of overdues had increased in June, July and August. In order to tackle the increase, new contractors were being put in place and the Interim Repairs Manager had been replaced with a permanent new Repairs Manager.

Damp and Mould

Reference was made to the red line shown and to give context to the Committee it was noted that in May there had been 406 overdue repairs this had reduced to 241 which was a vast improvement.

Voids

It was noted that the Void slide shown in the presentation was mostly green which showed the massive improvements that had been made by the Voids Team over the last year. In August the Voids in WIP were down to 68. To put the figure in context it was noted that in January 2025 the number of Voids in WIP had been 119 and as at the end of September that figure stood at 61.

The Chairman made reference to the massive improvements that had been made with Voids and asked if the targets currently in place needed to be revisited.

The Director of Housing and Projects indicated that work would eventually plateau, currently there were 45 voids a month and the Team were turning over 52 a month to address the backlog in place. There would come a point when the number of voids received in the month would be turned around in the month. It was noted that if the figure started to increase then more resources would be aimed at voids, however, between 50 and 60 was the ideal number and that where possible the voids needed to be managed within the budget limits. It was also noted that some major voids came at a significant cost which would be recharged to capital where possible, however there was between £12,000 and £14,000 revenue costs, it was

being able to work within budget limits and turning voids round as efficiently as possible.

An internal audit had been undertaken in respect of voids and it was stated that the turnaround next year would reduce to 60 days. The audit had stated that top targets needed to be managed against the Housemark, the industry standard and this standard was operated by other Councils.

There were other pressures within the system in respect of the budget not just in respect of voids but also repairs and Awaab's law which came into force 27 October 2025 which had strict timelines which had to be adhered to.

The Government had recently consulted on a new Decent Homes Standard which could introduce new financial pressures on the Council, however no additional funding was expected to resource the funding pressures.

Customer Satisfaction

It was noted that once repairs had been undertaken, tenants satisfaction was high and although it had reduced to 88% this was still green and over the target.

Planned Works

Contracts were being mobilised between April to September with surveys being validated and work being undertaken between September and March next year. Work on Warm Homes had started with currently 17 homes being worked on.

Asset Management

It was highlighted to Members that the number of homes failing to meeting Decent Homes Standards had massively reduced. The programme of works in respect of the 173 properties continued to be carried out.

The Cabinet Member Housing commented on the number of refusals to have work carried out in respect of Decent Homes and the reasons behind a refusal.

The Director of Housing and Projects stated that currently there were 14 homes refusals that didn't meet the Decent Homes standards and taking them out it equated to 159 refusals. Reasons could be that residents were still happy with the bathroom or kitchen that they had, they may have complex vulnerabilities which meant that Officers needed to work with them to help manage people whilst work was done or elderly residents simply didn't want any disruption. An example was given to the Committee in respect of the terms of conditions in respect of the Warm Home grant and what needed to be installed in properties both air source heat pumps and solar panels and some tenants simply did not want the upheaval this ensued. Officers would continue to work with tenants but works would be undertaken at void as required.

Stock Condition

It was noted that the focus was to complete all stock conditions surveys by the end of the year. It was hoped that 1,100 would be completed by December 2025.

Allocations and Lettings Call Handling

The number of calls handled was increasing but all targets continued to be met and it was something that both Teams focused on. Reference was made to the abandoned calls and it was noted that the automated message did refer to online service that could be accessed so calls could be abandoned at this point. The 4% shown did not mean that the call had not been answered.

Housing Options

It was noted that information on the slide was reproduced in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper report. Numbers in temporary accommodation was between 60 and 70 during the summer months. The number of homelessness approaches had increased slightly through the summer. The number of homelessness cases was roughly 247. Number of rough sleepers in June was 15, this figure had reduced to four in September 2025.

Allocations

Reference was made to the number of Housing Register applications waiting for assessment which had increased. The Head of Service, Housing referred to the staffing issues during the summer months with long term sickness affecting the Team and long-term absences from work. It was noted that agency workers were now in position to help with the backlog of housing register applications. It was managing sickness and long-term absence that was effecting the workload. Housing register applications were being prioritised with some Officers undertaking overtime by agreement to help reduce the backlog.

The Chairman highlighted the staffing situation again to which the Head of Service Housing replied that the staffing picture was improving with staff returning from long-term sickness and agency staff in place in the interim together with Housing Option Officer and Housing Options Officer Assistant recruitment being undertaken. Reference was made to the drop from 1,100 to 1,000 and it was stated that people did get rehoused and also reviews took place and people did decide they no longer wished to be on the register. Number of offers remained consistent.

Tenancy Management

It was noted that the number of Anti-Social Behaviour cases was large in June, July and August and also ASB reports. An increase was a trend that was seen during the summer months.

A questions were asked about the increase in the number of tenancy terminations and the number of sign-ups that had taken place and the difference between the two. The Head of Service, Housing indicated that she would look into this and the reasons why people terminated their tenancy and carry out some analysis in this area. It was noted that people could also sign up to Housing Associations nominated by the Council and the Council wasn't involved in these.

A question was asked in relation to allocations and the banding shown. Was it possible for the type of property and the area to be shown. It was stated that the

banding could be broken down further to show the type of property that people were eligible for and it was agreed that this would be included next time.

➤Action

To include a slide showing the breakdown of property per banding within allocations.

The Director of Housing and Projects stated that the Housing Register was consulted when looking at acquisitions to see what types of properties were needed and the example of Larch Close and the changes to the development specification that was undertaken to address a complex housing need that was shown.

Compliance

The Director of Housing and Projects stated that the Legionella, Asbestos, Fire Risk Assessments, Lift safety and Smoke/CO detectors all remained at 100% compliant. Gas checks remained at 99.26% with currently 41 properties without a gas certificate, seven of these had been made safe and were not shown within the non-compliant properties which meant 34 were non-compliant. Officers continued to work with tenants whilst court warrants were applied for as only 30 warrants could be applied for at any one time. It was confirmed that these were failed attempts to access properties. Three attempts to access properties were made before application was made to the court for access. Electrical inspections had increased with the current figure for end of September at 220. Officers continued to work with Sureserve to access properties to carry out inspections as there wasn't the same process in place for electricity certification as for gas certification.

An annual meeting was held with the Regulator of Social Housing in July 2025 where it was stated that remedial actions should also be reported to the Committee. The slide before the Committee showed the number of outstanding actions in respect of Fire Risk Assessments undertaken. Outstanding actions were 923 of which 185 were advisory recommendations only. Work had been undertaken to clear the 30 high actions which should be completed within the next week. The Housing Repairs Manager and the Head of Service, Housing's Teams were focused on reducing the number of medium actions shown. A Fire Safety Group met monthly to discuss and work on the dates for completion of the actions, examples of actions were given.

The Chairman thanked the Director of Housing and Projects and her team for the comprehensive report.

A discussion then followed on the information before the Committee with the following questions being asked:

- How could the Damp and Mould performance be improved
- Was there a dedicated resource for Damp and Mould - yes
- The current HRA forecast overspend, what impact could this have on any housing investment plans (new builds) – new builds funded from RTB receipts.

- The time period for handing properties back and whether this included minor repairs being completed – only repairs outstanding would usually be in respect of gardens.
- How the Damp and Mould would be resourced in the winter months when it was more prevalent due to weather conditions – there was capacity within the system to deal with this, with two large repairs firms, the contract was for a five year period.
- Information on overall distribution of void properties and the number of days void and their location and financial impact of rent lost – inclusion of oldest major void, oldest minor void, also the Stat Map report showed all properties which Members were able to access. The finance implications were monitored by the Finance and Economic OSC as it came under the budget remit, however it could be included once it had gone to the Finance and Economic OSC.
- What mechanisms were in place for prioritising Damp and Mould issues – priorities would be as in respect of Awaab's Law and HHSRS.
- Reactive Repairs overdue - were repairs by other contractors not Sureserve being taken to do other projects, how were decisions made about what repairs were allocated to who. A 60 day completion date had been introduced following the introduction of the new Repairs and Maintenance Policy. Two formal contracts were in place so that there was capacity to carry out necessary repair work and it was expected that a reduction in the figures would follow.

The Chairman referred to the incredible “journey” that the Housing Section had been on and the positive work that had been done by the Teams and asked what was the current number one priority. The Director of Housing and Projects referred to the continued improvement with Reactive Repairs and also the key focus of the completion of the stock conditions surveys and HRS surveys as it was important as a landlord to be clear about the condition of its housing stock.

In respect of the question on the oldest void property it was stated that this had been included within the main void report that had been circulated to the Committee March 2024.

The Chairman thanked the Officers and their Teams for the report which was noted by the Committee.

28. Independent Review of Sheltered Housing - Service Charges update

The Director of Housing and Projects gave a brief update to the Committee in respect the independent review that was taking place in respect of service charges at Sheltered Housing complexes. The review was looking at issues such as community room charges, shared laundry charges, how gas and electricity were recharged, a complete report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee. Every sheltered housing complex was being visited with a comprehensive report being carried out on how the facilities were used and whether under used spaces could be utilised differently.

Any proposals would come before the Housing OSC and consultation would be carried out with tenants before any proposals in respect of fees and charges were

put before Cabinet or Council which would need to be part of the budget setting process for 2026/27.

The Officer was thanked by a Member who had asked for a review to take place and they looked forward to receiving the completed report. Another Member queried whether the Mobility Vehicle Policy was part of the review and it was stated that the Mobility Vehicle Policy was separate to the review taking place in respect of Sheltered Housing.

29. Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which gave the results from the first wave of Tenant Satisfaction Measures Surveys that had taken place.

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Survey was a mandatory requirement placed on Social Landlords by the Regulator of Social Housing to comply with the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard of the Social housing Regulation Act (2023). Results of the survey are submitted annually to the Regulator who published an annual report which analysed the results for social landlords with over 1,000 homes.

In previous years the Council had undertaken the survey annually, however for 2025/26 the Council had made the decision to conduct the surveys in two waves. It was hoped that by carrying out the survey in two waves improvements that were being implemented could be monitored for their impact.

The surveys had been undertaken on behalf of the Council by Acuity with methods of collecting data being via the telephone and online using a representative sample of tenants. 275 completed responses had been received plus a further 16 incomplete responses. Members were referred to Table 1 of the report which provided a comparison of the results received for 2024/25 and for the first tranche of surveys in 2025/26. The survey included twelve mandatory questions which ensured that the Regulator had consistent data from all landlords to undertake benchmarking. It was noted that there had been positive movement on all of the results except for TP07 (*Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps them informed about things that matter to them*) which had remained the same and TP12 (*Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with their landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour*) and TP09 (*Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaints handling*) where the scores had reduced. It was noted that as the surveys were being carried out in two tranches it made it difficult to compare results as satisfaction could fluctuate depending on the time of year. Reference was made to the reduction in satisfaction in respect of TP12 and TP09 and it was stated that more information would be asked of the company carrying out the surveys to see if the people completing the survey had experience of Anti-Social Behaviour or what their complaints experience was as a lot of work had gone in to the complaint process and the survey did not identify how many were genuine complaints following a failure or service or service requests which were yet to be actioned.

It was again reiterated that the time the surveys were completed could influence the responses given. A question was asked about comparison with peer groups and it

was confirmed that the Acuity who carried out the surveys on the Council's behalf did benchmark with other authorities once a complete survey was available.

The Committee noted the report.

30. Work Programme 2025/26

It was noted that the numbers of veterans was to be included within the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper report.

An update in respect of the Sheltered Housing Review would be given at the next scheduled meeting on 4 December 2025.

A question was asked about garage sites and their development and it was confirmed that an update would be given in the New Year after the survey had been completed.

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

None.

32. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 5:01pm.