

# Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee

10 March 2026



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
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<b>Title</b>	RBC Landlord Services – April to December 2025 Performance Report
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To note the report for information
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Report author</b>	Natalie Waters - Interim Director for Housing Landlord Services
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Cllr Matt Yeo, Lead Councillor for Housing
<b>Corporate priority</b>	Thriving Communities
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee note the Housing Landlord Service Performance and key achievements delivered year to date, up to and including December 2025</li><li>2. That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee endorse the themes and programmes of the service improvement plan against the consumer standards.</li></ol>

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the performance of Reading Borough Council's Housing Landlord Service delivered year to date, up to and including December 2025 following the inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). The inspection, concluded in April 2025, resulting in a C3 grading for three of the four Consumer Standards. In response, the service has taken decisive action to address the findings and drive service improvement.
- 1.2. At the time of the inspection the service met expectations under the Tenancy Standard, demonstrating strong performance and delivering positive outcomes for tenants. This reflects the Council's ongoing commitment to providing high-quality housing management and tenancy support.
- 1.3. The Housing Landlord service continues to work with the RSH under Provider Improvement, and it is anticipated that regular meetings with the RSH will continue for a minimum of 12 months, after which the Regulator may consider reinspection or regrading. The service needs to demonstrate sustained change that is embedded across the service achieving positive outcomes for tenants.
- 1.4. The Service has received positive feedback via monthly meetings with the RSH regarding the progress made to date on our Service Improvement Plan. The Regulator is confident in the improvements delivered so far and is assured by the actions we have taken to address the root causes of the issues identified. Based on our evidence submissions, the Regulator has confirmed that we are moving closer to

achieving sustainable, long-term change and they are considering reducing the frequency of our meetings.

- 1.5. The Housing Landlord Service remains committed to continuous improvement and regulatory compliance, ensuring that tenants receive safe, secure, and high-quality housing services.

## 2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The report is presented to provide assurance to Members that the service is delivering against the strategic objectives of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, with a clear focus on improving outcomes for current and future tenants of social housing.

- 2.2. Landlord performance is monitored against the four Consumer Standards:

- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard (including Tenant Satisfaction Measures)
- Tenancy Standard
- Safety and Quality Standard
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard

- 2.3 As part of these standards, housing providers are required to ensure that performance is reported transparently and subject to robust oversight through their established governance structures. Robust governance structures exist within the Directorate which are further complimented by a cross party working group which provides further opportunities to share progress and encourage scrutiny of performance and key issues. This report is also regularly presented to the HNL Committee to provide transparent insight into performance, delivery against the service improvement plan alongside scrutiny and challenge.

- 2.4 A comprehensive Service Improvement Plan has been developed to address the root causes identified during the inspection alongside wider service improvements. The Plan is being actively monitored and delivered through cross-service collaboration, with a focus on ensuring that all actions are delivered, achieve the desired outcomes, embed sustainable change and are aligned to the Consumer Standards.

## 3. The Proposal

### **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard – Tenant Information**

- 3.1 The working group established to compile and carry out a tenant census are currently in the final steps of ensuring that NEC can hold all required information from the survey against a tenant's record. This will assist us in better understanding our tenants. Where possible we will direct and support tenants to register for a Housing Online account to respond to the census directly into NEC, for those who are unable to access this online a paper form will be sent.

- 3.2 The aim of the tenant census is to ensure that we have up to date information on our tenants including protected characteristics to ensure that any additional needs or reasonable adjustments are recorded and utilised to inform service delivery and achieve equitable outcomes. An outcome of this would be to conduct a targeted recruitment campaign for engaged tenants from underrepresented groups to ensure fair presentation of our tenant demographic.
- 3.3 Our aim is to launch the tenant census in April 2026. The census will initially be available online through the Housing Online Portal. Currently, only around a third of tenants are registered for this service, so we are also exploring the option of making the census accessible via the corporate Go Vocal platform to increase digital participation.
- 3.4 In addition, officers across the service will support data collection through door-knocking, completing the census digitally with tenants. This approach will allow information to be captured directly into the NEC system, removing the need for separate data entry and improving data quality. As a final alternative, paper forms will be issued where required.
- 3.5 The census is expected to remain open for up to six months to maximise engagement and encourage the widest possible participation. Monthly progress reports will be submitted to LCB and to the next available HNL Committee.
- 3.6 The information we capture will help us to shape the services we deliver to tenants, and especially where tenants have specific needs, we can ensure that our services are still accessible to those tenants. This information will also help us to plan how we improve or change our services to suit emerging needs.

### **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard – Tenant Engagement & Scrutiny**

- 3.7 The Tenant Engagement Team is currently working with a group of engaged tenants to scrutinise two priority areas of the Housing Service identified by the Tenant Voice Panel, the Repairs Service and the handling of Housing Complaints. Ten tenants are taking part in this scrutiny project with six sessions, running through to April 2026, tenants will review specific aspects of these services and produce written recommendations for service improvement. These findings will be shared with the Regulator of Social Housing and via this Committee.
- 3.8 The tenants will be focusing their scrutiny of the Repairs Service on how we communicate with tenants throughout the repairs process, as well as reviewing the full tenant journey from the point a repair is first reported to the Council. For Housing Complaints, the group is examining whether there are further opportunities to reduce complaint volumes and to strengthen the way we manage and resolve complaints.
- 3.9 Beyond these targeted areas of work planning for our wider Tenant Engagement programme is also underway. The project plan is currently being developed and will be finalised in May 2026 having been agreed by the Tenant Voice Panel, with the intention of launching new engagement activities from that point.

- 3.10 The Tenant Engagement programme will include an action to undertake a benchmarking exercise in the Spring with tenants, using early TSM submission data from Housemark to help build their understanding of what good performance looks like across these measures. Additionally, obtaining the Tenant Quality Mark on all Housing Landlord webpages is also included in the work plan.
- 3.11 Part of our new Tenant Engagement Programme for 2026 to 2027 will also include facilitated focus groups to scrutinise key areas within Tenancy Management and Antisocial Behaviour. These themes have been selected in direct response to feedback from tenants who attended the Housing Information Day and expressed a desire to be more involved in shaping these particular service areas.
- 3.12 Following the success of the Housing information Day the Sounding Board has grown and now consists of approximately 50 registered tenants. Our hope is that as these tenants become more involved, they will be considering joining either the Tenant Voice Panel or the Tenant and Council Together Group (TACT).

### Transparency Influence & Accountability – Complaints & Housing Ombudsman

- 3.13 The Housing Ombudsman’s Complaints Handling Code (CHC) for all Social Landlords requires the Landlord to report its performance in relation to complaints to a ‘Governing Body’ on an annual basis. In Reading the Complaints performance is reported to the Housing Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee 3 times per year in order to adhere to this requirement.
- 3.14 There have been 382 complaints received between April 2025 to December 2025, all of which have been responded to.

**Table 1. Outcome of complaint in year 2025-26:**

Stage 1	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Upheld	35 (68.7%)	32 (69.6%)	25 (50%)	34 (55.74%)	16 (59.3%)	28 (59.6%)	24 (54.5%)	30 (60%)	19 (50%)	243 (63.6%)
Partially Upheld	5 (9.8%)	1 (2.2%)	5 (10%)	7 (11.48%)	4 (14.8%)	9 (19.1%)	6 (13.6%)	5 (10%)	9 (23.6%)	51 (13.3%)
Not upheld	3 (5.9%)	8 (17.4%)	12 (24%)	10 (16.39%)	3 (11.1%)	6 (12.8%)	9 (20.5%)	12 (24%)	5 (13.2%)	68 (9.4%)
No Outcome <sup>1</sup>	1 (2%)	1 (2.2%)	2 (4%)	1 (1.64%)	1 (3.7%)	1 (2.1%)	2 (4.6%)	1 (2%)	0	10 (2.7%)
Multiple Outcomes	7 (13.6%)	4 (8.6%)	6 (12%)	9 (14.75%)	3 (11.1%)	3 (6.4%)	3 (6.8%)	2 (4%)	5 (13.2%)	42 (11%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>382</b>

- 3.15 The number of upheld complaints has decreased from 68.7% in April to 50% in December 2025. A substantial proportion of these upheld complaints relate to the Repairs Service, however historically and commonly with most social housing landlords, repairs complaints received are always at a higher volume compared to our other landlord services.

<sup>1</sup> Not enough evidence to make decision

3.16 The most common themes for the complaints are listed in Table 2 below, in decreasing order of quantities received:

**Table 2. April - Dec complaint themes across Housing & Communities.**

<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2024-25</b>
Quality of Service Failure to resolve issue Staff training or conduct issue Communication	Quality of service Failure to resolve issue Time taken to resolve issue Communication

3.17 The top themes for complaints mirror those from same period in 2024-25 in the 3 of the 4, the only difference being Staff related issues replacing the Time Taken to Resolve issues from last year’s top themes. When looking at the staff related issues, many of those complaints were in relation to a particular contractor carrying out repairs works on our behalf. This contract has subsequently ended. As part of the Service Improvement Plan, and our focus on learning from complaints, a full review of all upheld / partially upheld complaints is completed quarterly, to identify specific themes where there has been service failures and dissatisfaction. This data is shared with teams to build any required actions into their service plans.

3.18 The timeliness of managing Stage 1 complaints has improved significantly, rising from just 24% completed on time in April 2025 to 89% in December 2025, as shown in Table 3. However, the timeliness of Stage 2 complaint handling still requires improvement, as performance has remained inconsistent throughout the year to date.

**Table 3. Complaints responded to on time.**

<b>Complaints</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sept</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
Percentage of Stage One Complaints responded to on time	100%	24%	17.4%	50%	75%	74%	91%	68%	73%	89%
Percentage of Stage Two Complaints responded to on time	100%	33%	0%	100%	86%	0%	0%	50%	25%	31%

3.19 The improvements below have been implemented to ensure we maintain the improvements made in responding to Stage 1 complaints whilst now focussing our attention on improving our handling of Stage 2 complaints:

- The Housing Policy Team continue to support Customer Relations and Housing colleagues in the management of complaint cases, including quality checking responses, plugging gaps, chasing updates and responses from the service to ensure timescales are met.

- Service managers continue to review and sign off all stage 1 responses to ensure their quality and reduce the risk of unnecessary stage 2 escalations.
- We closely monitor our complaints commitment tracker that is reviewed weekly by the Housing and Communities Management Team (HCMT) to ensure visibility and monitor completion of agreed actions arising from complaints.
- Training was delivered through September and December 2025 to officers responsible for investigating and completing stage 2 responses to improve their quality and completeness to encourage a right first-time approach.
- The daily stand ups held across the service together with Customer Relations have been successful in the day-to-day resource management ensuring responses are quality checked and sent out in time.
- Complaints continue to be a standard agenda item on HCMT weekly meetings to guarantee that complaints remain a priority across the service, that deadlines are met and that any issues are flagged at the earliest opportunity.
- A weekly dashboard of all complaints in the service is sent to service managers on a Monday for oversight and action.
- We continue to review quarterly learning from complaints report, which are reviewed by HCMT and recommendations for improvement are discussed and agreed
- We have tightened timescales for officers investigating stage two complaints so that more time is provided to Directors to review the content of investigations, and ensure they are of a high standard.

3.20 In response to the Regulator for Social Housing’s (RSH) recommendations work is progressing with Affinity (Reading) Ltd who manage 1248 units as part of the PFI arrangement to align the services tenants receive specially in relation to complaints.

3.21 This has included Affinity updating the information on their website, and in the information tenants receive regarding their rights to complain. This work also focusses on ensuring the correct time scales are used for formal acknowledgement, and in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaints Handling Code. This is being progressed under the Service Improvement Plan.

3.22 During Quarter 3, Affinity (Reading) reported receiving seven Stage 1 complaints, all of which were responded to within the required timescales, with one case escalated to the Housing Ombudsman. This demonstrates the positive impact of the improvement measures outlined above, particularly as Affinity reported no complaints during the same period last year.

### **Housing Ombudsman**

3.23 The Housing Ombudsmen (HO) makes findings against housing providers following an investigation of a case brought to them by a tenant or following a referral from the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH). Case information is shared retrospectively and there is currently a 6–8 month delay with the HO responding to cases and therefore impacting the production of their end of year report. Once this is received it will be reported at the next available HNL Committee.

3.24 Year to date (April to December), the Housing and Communities service has been notified of 22 cases that have been referred to the Housing Ombudsman, which is broken down as follows:

- 1 case being closed with no further action required
- 13 cases for which we are awaiting further information from the Housing Ombudsman to determine whether they will proceed to formal investigation.
- 4 cases where we are waiting for a final decision (possibly a judgment) from the Housing Ombudsman
- 4 cases where the Housing Ombudsman has asked for information from us, and we are currently in the process of responding to these requests.

**Transparency Influence and Accountability - Tenant Satisfaction Survey and Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)**

- 3.25 Reading Borough Council (RBC) Housing Services has again commissioned NWA Social and Market Research to undertake a satisfaction survey with a random sample of tenants to collect the 12 Tenant Perception Measures (TP01-TP12) as required by the Housing Regulator for the financial year April 2025 – March 2026.
- 3.26 This survey will consist of a random sample of 600 Tenants, including tenants managed under the PFI contract, and will be completed via telephone interviews between October 25 and February 26 to achieve the sample, this follows best practise guidelines for collecting Tenant Satisfaction data from Housemark. Once the survey is completed the report will be sent back to the service in March 2026, and the findings and next steps will be reported at the next available HNL Committee.
- 3.27 Tenant Satisfaction Measures are a mandatory set of performance indicators set by the Regulator for Social Housing. They are made up of two elements, a set of prescribed management information to cover key areas such as decent homes, compliance and complaints, and mandatory satisfaction questions which must be answered by tenants, which is known as the Tenant Satisfaction Survey. This data is used by the Regulator to judge Housing Providers performance and relates specifically to work undertaken by Landlord Services. You will note the statistics for complaints in the table below are different from those specified above, as the complaints that do not relate to Landlord Services have been removed from the TSM.

**Table 4. Tenant Satisfaction Measures**

Tenant Satisfaction Measures – Performance Information 2025–26 RBCProperties	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>TSM - RP01 - Homes that do not meet Decent Homes Standard (percentage)</b>									
Percentage not meeting decent homes	8.31%	16.73%	16.73%	12.53%	11.10%	10.79%	10.12%	9.20%	9%
No of homes that did not	469	944	944						

meet decent homes in period				707	640	609	571	532	520
<b>TSM - RP02 - Repairs completed within target timescale</b>									
Percentage - Non-Emergency in timescale (40 Days)	69.84%	67.79%	85.81%	82.70%	79.58%	78.9%	77.58%	73.20%	85.29%
Number of Non-Emergency repairs completed in timescale	653	804	1022	894	982	987	1149	683	1096
Number of Non-Emergency repairs completed in period	953	804	1191	1081	1234	1251	1481	933	1285
Percentage - Emergency in timescale (3 Hours)	85.50%	70.35%	87.06%	51.75%	90.45%	89.60%	90.91%	75.22%	86.96%
No of emergency repairs completed in timescale	224	121	175	74	142	155	230	170	180
Number of emergency repairs completed in period	262	172	201	143	157	173	253	226	207
<b>TSM - BS01 - Gas safety checks</b>									
Percentage of gas safety checks completed	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
No of dwellings owned that have received gas safety checks that required them	4629	4629	4629	4629	4629	4629	4629	4629	4629
<b>TSM - BS02 - Fire Safety checks</b>									
Percentage of fire safety checks completed	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
No of dwellings owned that have received fire safety checks that needed them	995	995	995	995	995	995	955	955	955
<b>TSM - BS03 - Asbestos Safety checks</b>									
Percentage of Asbestos	100%	100%	100%		100%			100%	100%

checks completed				100%		100%	100%		
No of dwellings owned that have received an asbestos survey that need one	345	345	345	345	345	345	345	345	345
<b>TSM - BS04 - Water Safety Checks</b>									
Percentage of Legionella Risk Assessments completed	97.21%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
No of dwellings owned that have received a legionella risk assessment that need one	1118	1107	1239	1239	1239	1239	1239	1239	1239
<b>TSM - BS05 - Lift Safety Checks</b>									
Percentage of Communal Passenger Lift Safety checks completed	94.30%	94.30%	94.30%	94.30%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
No of dwellings owned that have received a lift safety check that need one	695 (36/37)	695 (36/37)	695 (32/33)	695 (32/33)	737 (35/35)	737 (35/35)	737 (35/35)	737 (35/35)	737 (35/35)
<b>TSM - NM01 - Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord (per 1000 properties)</b>									
total cases opened per 1000 properties	2.48	2.48	5.31	6.02	2.48	3.72	2.12	2.83	2.12
total number of ASB cases opened	14	14	30	34	14	21	12	12	19
total hate crime cases per 1000 properties	0	0	0	0	0.17	0.35	0.35	0	0.17
* of total ASB opened - how many are hate crimes	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	1
<b>TSM - CH01 - Complaints relative to size of landlord (per 1000 properties)</b>									
No of Stage 1 per 1000 properties	7.79	6.90	7.08	4.96	4.78	5.84	8.32	8.50	6.20

No of Stage 1 complaints received	44	39	40	28	27	33	47	48	35
No of stage 2 per 1000 properties	0.35	0.53	1.06	1.24	0.70	0.17	1.06	0.70	1.06
No of Stage 2 complaints received	2	3	6	7	4	1	6	4	6
<b>TSM - CH02 - Complaints responded to within Handling Code guidelines (percentage)</b>									
Stage 1 - percentage responded to on time	11%	8%	50%	75%	74%	91%	68%	73%	89%
No of Stage 1 complaints responded to on time (by complaint start date)	5	3	20	21	20	30	30	35	31
Stage 2 - percentage responded to on time	50%	0%	50%	71%	0%	0%	50%	25%	33%
No of Stage 2 complaints responded to on time (by complaint start date)	1	0	3	5	0	0	3	1	2

### 3.28 Transparency, Influence & Accountability, New Standard – Competence and Conduct Standard

3.29 From October 2026, there will be a new standard introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing, this will require all social housing landlords to ensure that all relevant managers who have direct responsibility for the operational, day to day management of Tenant Services to meet defined qualifications and competence requirements. The standard requires Senior Housing Executives (Directors and Assistant Directors) to hold a fountain degree or Level 5 qualification, and Senior Housing Managers (Head of Service, Service Mangers and Team managers) to hold a level 4 qualification.

3.30 We are currently working towards a plan to ensure that we comply with this new upcoming standard. This affects approximately 50 managers across the service, and the deadlines require for us to be 50% compliant within one year (by October 2027) and 100% compliant by October 2028. This training will be funded utilising the apprenticeship levy.

### Quality & Safety Standard - Housing Repairs

3.31 The improvement plan for Repairs and Property services focuses on 10 key workstreams. Four working groups have been established to oversee the

workstreams and weekly operational meetings monitor and track progress against the plan. Quarterly updates are presented to a Cross-Party Working Group alongside updates to this Committee.

3.32 Significant focus has continued on the Works in Progress (WIP) with a noteworthy decrease in the number of open repairs from 4050 in April to 1239 at the end of December. Work continues focussing on how we can continue to improve in line with the target including a deep dive into open jobs, looking at numbers of new jobs raised within a month, and the number completed each month, as well as aged tickets. The service is on track to meet the 1000 target by the end of March 2026 albeit the service will strive for this to continue to improve.

**Table 5. Outstanding Works In Progress**

Timely & Efficient Repairs Service - Repairs Performance KPIs	Target	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Outstanding Repairs (WIP)	1000	4050	2647	2800	2650	2599	2448	2211	1568	1239
Customer satisfaction (%)	90.00	83.76%	82.81%	87.67%	87.57%	92.55%	85.86%	77.51%	72%	72.31%

Updates for each workstream up to the end of December 2025 are noted below:

**Workstream 1 -Transition of service to DCASC – this has been completed.**

**Workstream 2 – Embedding Culture Change**

Culture workshops continue to be delivered to all managers and supervisors, focusing on onboarding, learning and development, performance management and organisational culture. The Executive Director and Assistant Director are holding workshops every 6 weeks, to work through the current themes covering:

- Sickness Absence
- Performance Management
- Bullying & harassment
- Respect
- Office environment
- Shadowing trades/back office to understand roles

**Workstream 3 - Review of Roles, Responsibilities and Operating Model**

This review has been broken down into manageable groups and initially efforts are concentrated on the back-office structure and roles. Job descriptions for Schedulers, Business Support and Team Manager have been drafted and are

waiting to be evaluated. Alongside this, a business case for the proposed back-office structure has been drafted and passed to the Director for review and sign off.

A wider review of the rest of the service will begin in Q1 of 2026/2027.

#### **Workstream 4 - Recruitment and Retention**

There are currently 25 vacancies across Repairs & Property Services from 147 posts, totalling 17.9% which is the lowest it has been since January 2025 when there were 35 vacancies (23%)

Progress continues in the recruitment and retention space. There are now full inductions processes established for each department in the service area, and all the relevant documentation for onboarding is saved to a shared location for all to access, so each new starter follows the induction plans. Managers are asked to audit these records on an ad-hoc basis.

A refer a friend scheme went live on 3rd November 2025.

A campaign has been launched across Reading, to fill vacancies across the service area. Promotional material has now been supplied and shared in various locations (on magnetic signs to apply to fleet vans, in trade counters, community noticeboards).

Recruitment activity to bring additional gas and plumbing resources in-house supporting our transition back to direct delivery is now underway. Adverts were issued at the end of January. Further targeted recruitment is being undertaken using industry-specific platforms and publications to attract qualified surveyors. This has historically been a challenging area to recruit to, so securing the right expertise remains a key priority.

Adverts for a range of professional roles are being placed in RICS and Inside Housing, with several already live.

#### **Workstream 5 - Procurement**

Due to the number of contracts required across the service, the procurement of these contracts was initially prioritised based on cost and risk, and a time frame pulled into a procurement program.

There were 16 priority 1 contracts covered by this procurement programme, divided into 12 original contracts assigned as Priority 1 and 4 Priority 1b contracts which were added after the initial programme was agreed.

Eight Priority 1 contracts have been awarded: Lot 1 Reactive Repairs\*, Lot 2 Voids and Planned Works\*, Interim Gas Waiver, Lift Maintenance, Decent Homes Surveys, Fire Compliance (Lot 3 in standstill), Asbestos and Managed Stores. Two Priority 1b contracts have also been awarded, Windows Replacement & Door Entry Systems, bringing the total to 3 Priority 1b contracts awarded. All awarded contracts have been added to the contracts register.

The procurement programme board meet fortnightly to discuss progress on the remaining priority 1 and 1b contracts. The specifications and strategies for the Scaffolding contract were presented and approved by Procurement Board in

January. Pest Control will be presented at board in February. Final moderation sessions for the Heating and Boiler contract have taken place and award letters are being sent. The final contracts left to complete are Wensley Road, which is expected to be awarded by the end of March, and Air Source Heat Pumps which is aiming for Procurement Board sign off in February.

### **Workstream 6 - IT System**

Consultancy sessions are now complete to configure the system for in-house gas servicing via NEC Mobile. This will result in works orders being raised through the system, and digital LGSRs to be produced. The team have finalised testing and signed off the certificate, so the system is ready ahead of bringing gas servicing back in house.

The implementation sessions for the new Risk Management module in Compliance were completed in December. Following this, sessions are underway and booked through February to implement the accompanying Go Mobile – Risk Management module. This will allow risk assessments and risk inspections to be carried out by RBC officers through a PDA, and this will auto update in the system, as well as keeping track of 3rd party compliance risk assessment dates and remedials.

Configuration work to onboard all contractors into the system is progressing well. The system now enables jobs to be seamlessly transferred from the Council's Repairs Service to subcontractors as required. This ensures full traceability and visibility of all jobs, with actions clearly identifiable within the system and accurately reflected in the Work in Progress (WIP) report.

The trial of the new higher-specification handheld devices for trade operatives has been highly successful, with all operatives reporting significant improvements in performance and usability. As a result, we are now rolling out the upgraded devices across the workforce, with all operatives expected to be equipped with the new technology by March 2026.

### **Workstream 7 - Closure of Wokingham Borough Council Repairs Service**

This workstream is complete.

### **Workstream 8 - Contract Management**

We continue to strengthen contract management across the service, with standardised agendas and minutes now in place for all contract meetings. Routine spot checks of contract monitoring activity have been introduced to provide assurance on the robustness and consistency of our approach.

A comprehensive contracts register has been developed, approved for use, and fully populated with all current contract information. This will be maintained and updated on an ongoing basis to support effective oversight and governance.

### **Workstream 9 - Policies, Procedures and Processes**

Thirteen policies were initially identified as required for the service, and draft versions were produced for review. Following review by the Director and in line with best practice, it was agreed that a revised approach is necessary to ensure the policies are meaningful, accessible, clear, and concise. The service is now

undertaking this work, and a series of follow-up meetings have been held during this period to ensure the revised policies are fit for purpose. These will be submitted for approval at the next HNL Committee.

Work to map processes across Repairs and Property Services continues alongside the policy development programme. A total of 32 processes have been identified across the service, and a central tracker is in place to monitor progress. Each process is being drafted and circulated for review prior to approval and sign-off.

This process-mapping activity forms a key element of the Continuous Improvement Plan, providing a stable foundation for service delivery and producing clear local procedures that all staff will be expected to follow. This will ensure greater consistency and clarity around roles and responsibilities.

Currently, three processes are with the Head of Service for approval. To date, 29 processes have been signed off, and we anticipate all 32 will be fully launched by the end of February. Once approved, all processes will be stored centrally on the Housing & Communities SharePoint site for staff access.

### **Workstream 10 - Damp and Mould**

Following the introduction of Awaab's Law on 27 October 2025, we have implemented a new process map and supporting standard operating procedures to ensure full compliance with the new regulatory requirements. The Tenant Support Module within NEC has now been configured to manage Damp and Mould cases, enabling accurate recording of all activities undertaken by Housing Energy Support Officers. These actions are logged directly against the individual's account in NEC Housing, allowing for improved case management and KPI reporting. A comprehensive 'How To' guide has also been developed to support officers in operating the new process.

All key staff involved in assessing and supporting tenants with damp and mould in their homes have undertaken HHSRS training.

A cross-departmental working group, comprising officers from Housing and Communities, meets weekly to review active cases and identify any operational barriers. A three-month post-implementation review of Awaab's Law will be undertaken in February. This review will assess how effectively the new processes are operating, evaluate outcomes to date, and identify any areas requiring refinement or improvement. The findings and proposed next steps will be presented to the next available HNL Committee.

### **Quality & Safety Standard - Decent Homes**

- 3.33 The percentage of stock failing the standard has continued to reduce month on month and now stands at 9%. This improvement reflects the completion of further detailed inspections of previously failing elements, alongside the delivery of outstanding remedial works. The 2026–27 programme of works report sets out the priority areas the service will focus on over the coming year, supporting progress towards achieving full Decent Homes compliance by March 2028.

**Table 6. Decent Homes progress April – July**

RBC Only	Target	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sept 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25
Percentage not meeting decent homes	0%	8.1%	16.3%	16.79%	12.53%	11.10%	10.79%	10.12%	9.20%	9%
Number of properties not meeting decent homes	0	469	944	944	707	640	609	571	532	520

3.34 Our programme to get behind every front door continues, with plans underway to appoint a new contractor to complete a further 1,700 Decent Homes surveys during 2026/27. The Asset Manager presented the procurement strategy to the Procurement Board on 16 October 2025, where approval was granted to proceed to market via a framework mini-competition. The opportunity has now been issued to tender and is scheduled to close at the end of February.

3.35 There are no current category 1 or 2 jobs outstanding.

3.36 The 2026/27 programme of works has been developed to deliver the requirements needed to achieve compliance with the Decent Homes Standard. Key themes within the programme include front door replacements, installation of extractor fans, kitchen and bathroom renewals, and heating system upgrades. Options for the most suitable contractor frameworks to deliver these workstreams are currently being assessed. To support effective delivery, fortnightly working groups have been established, and a programme tracker is in place to monitor each project’s progress, milestones, and budget.

**Quality & Safety Standard - Update on completion of overdue fire remedial actions**

3.37 1At the time of the inspection, the RSH noted that outcomes across health and safety compliance areas were broadly being met. However, they identified some weaknesses with the completion of overdue fire remedial actions. It is important to note that all Fire risk assessment ratings in our buildings are either moderate or tolerable.

3.38 By 19 December 2025 all 571 medium priority and 168 low priority remedial actions were completed.

3.39 Fire Compliance contracts:

Lot 1 covering Fire Risk Assessments, Fire Door surveys, and Building Fabric has been awarded, and contracts have been signed. Mobilisation meetings have taken place and a programme of works agreed with works now commenced.

Lot 2 covering Fire Stopping/Compartmentation remedial works and Fire Doors Replacement has been awarded, and contracts have been signed. Mobilisation meetings have taken place and a programme of works agreed with works now commenced.

Lot 3 covering Emergency Lighting Maintenance, Fire alarm and Refuge systems, Wet and Dry Riser Maintenance, Fire Extinguisher Maintenance, Automatic Opening Smoke Ventilation Maintenance, Sprinkler Servicing & misting systems, Bin Chute Remedial Works and Compliance/Contingency - (Fire alarms, remedial & upgrades) is in stand still due to us receiving a formal legal challenge. This is being managed by the Head of Procurement sighted by the Head of Repairs and Property Services.

- 3.40 We regularly report our performance, including the elements listed above to Councillors, Senior management and Tenant groups.
- 3.41 In addition to the above reporting, there are monthly KPIs that we collate and deliver to the corporate management team to track our progress. We have established monthly meetings to track the progress of performance against our overarching Housing and Committee's improvement plan via the Building Communities, Empowering Lives Working Group which oversees our service improvement plan.

### **Neighbourhood and Community Standard – Anti Social Behaviour**

- 3.42 Improvements have been made on recording and reporting data around Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) and Hate Incidents. We have implemented an updated Policy to include Hate Incidents, the ASB and Hate Policy which was approved at HNL in July 2025.
- 3.43 New Enquiry Referrals into the ASB team have plateaued since August. Case Audit performance remains under 90%, however, clear patterns for improvement have been identified for individual officers and are being managed through performance meetings.
- 3.44 During November and December 4 evictions for ASB took place.

**Table 8: Referrals into the Service:**

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
No of new Housing ASB Enquiries	11	13	23	26	12	15	10	11
No of Enquiries opened as cases straight away	3	1	7	8	2	6	2	4

- 3.45 The ASB tenant factsheet has been refreshed to include information of the online reporting tool which has approved by the tenant voice panel and has received the tenant quality mark.
- 3.46 The ASB Team Leader and Safer Public Realm Team Leader have implemented a sign off process to ensure that there is management oversight of cases that are being closed. This is to ensure that they are closed in line with the procedure.

### **Tenancy Standard**

- 3.47 The Tenancy Standard is one of the consumer standards set by the Regulator for Social Housing and relates to how registered providers of social housing must allocate their tenancies and dictates the type of tenancies that they can offer. This area during our recent inspection was one that had no failings found, but there have been updates within this area in the work delivered by the service.
- 3.48 During this period, we have delivered positive outcomes for tenants as outlined below:
- Year to date, there has been a 51% reduction on the number of legal notices served on our tenants for rent arrears compared to the same period for 24-25. There have only been 5 evictions carried out year to date for arrears. This is owing to the tenancy sustainment work that is taking place within the recovery teams, maintaining a standard of low number of evictions due to our ongoing preventive work.
  - There has been a reduction in rent arrears of £82,055 since the end of the 2024/25 financial year.
  - A new under occupation scheme was implemented in June 2025 and it is projected that this will help facilitate 21 moves. From June to December 10 moves under this new scheme have been enabled. The new package offers:
    - £1,000 per empty room becoming available
    - Up to £1,000 to assist with removals, reconnection and disconnection of white goods and flooring and a decoration package.
- 3.49 The service is currently managed by referrals from front line officers across Housing and Communities to the Under Occupation Officer with the aim to encourage tenants to move out of their larger properties into alternative suitable accommodation that meets their needs to free up properties to support those in need of larger accommodation. This scheme is now advertised on our website, and a targeted letter with accompanying leaflet is being sent out in phases to those identified as under occupying.

## **4. Contribution to Strategic Aims**

- 4.1 The work of the Housing & Communities service contributes to the Council Plan themes around:

- **Promote more equal communities in Reading** - by introducing new meaningful ways for our tenants to engage with and scrutinise the services they receive from Reading the Councils Housing & Communities Service, ensuring their voice is heard and represented
- **Secure Reading's economic and cultural success** - by seeking to let contracts for major projects to contractors who provide a level of social value to the town including opportunities for education, skills and training.
- **Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint Environment** - by retrofitting existing homes where possible with low carbon initiatives to improve thermal efficiency and ultimately contribute to Reading becoming a carbon neutral town by 2030.

**4.2** The programme of works to Council homes makes a difference to our tenants by:

- Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable; and
- Providing homes for those in most need.

**4.3** The Housing & Communities service aspires to deliver a common purpose of 'supporting the life that matters to you'. This aims to ensure we tailor our services to meet the individual needs and aspiration of our tenants. Ensuring our Council stock is safe, efficient and well maintained aligns with this ambition.

## **5 Environmental and Climate Implications**

**5.1** There are no environmental or climate implications as a result of this information report.

## **6. Community Engagement**

**6.1** The Housing Service has an engagement approach that enables consultation with tenants on a range of issues and through different means including, surveys, focus groups, a tenant scrutiny panel and formal consultation, the results of which drive service improvement.

**6.2** Details of engagement with tenants via complaints and surveys is included in the body of the report alongside references to the planned improvements around tenant engagement

## **7. Equality Implications**

**7.1** Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

**7.2** There are no proposed changes to services that will negatively impact on the way people access and experience services therefore there is no requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment for the purposes of this report.

## **8. Other Relevant Considerations**

**8.1** N/A

## **9. Legal Implications**

**9.1** The 2006 Decent Homes Standard is a government-set standard for council housing. The standard describes a Decent Home as one that is fit to live in, in a reasonable state of repair, having reasonably modern facilities and services, and being insulated to a reasonable standard and weatherproof. The standard was updated in 2006 to include the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

**9.2** In addition, work outlined in this report is covered by the following legislation, which gives councillors a flavour of the highly regulated nature of the service:

- Landlord & Tenant Act 1985
- Social Housing (Regulations) Act 2023
- Housing Act 2004
- Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Commonhold & Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Building Regulations Act 1984
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Sections 2, 3 and 4
- Equality Act 2010
- HCA – The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Awaabs Law 2025

## **10. Financial Implications**

**10.1** There are no financial implications as a result of the information outlined in this report. The additional post supporting the improvements in the service were previously agreed by Council in February 2025 as part of the Housing Revenue Account budget setting.

**10.2** The Programme of works for 2025-26 report is presented to this committee on the 11th of March 2025, which includes budgeted provision of circa £3.7 million to address the remedial works identified through Decent Homes surveys and continued investment in the Council's Housing stock.

## **11. Timetable for Implementation**

11.1 Not applicable.

**12. Background Papers**

12.1 Not applicable.