



12 November 2025

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| <b>Title</b>                 | RBC Landlord Services – April to July 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 Assistant 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 July 2025</li><li>2. That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee endorse the themes and programmes of the Service Improvement Plan against the Consumer Standards, (Appendix 1).</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 July 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 is working 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 from the RSH in relation to progress made on the Service Improvement Plan to date. The Regulator has complimented the Service on the volume of the work in progress to address the root cause of issues and ensure sustainable change.

- 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. To meet these new standards, housing providers are required to ensure that performance is reported transparently and subject to robust oversight through their established governance structures. In the last period an additional 'cross party working group' has been formed to provide 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 clear insight into performance, support informed scrutiny, challenge, and strategic discussion.
- 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.

### Service Improvement Plan

- 2.5. Robust oversight is maintained through:
  - Regular cross-service meetings to monitor progress against the Improvement Plan.
  - Monthly engagement with the Regulator, providing evidence of improvement and maintaining transparency.
  - Ongoing review and refinement of service delivery to ensure continued alignment with regulatory expectations.
  - Quarterly cross-party Regulator Improvement Plan Working Group.
  - Quarterly landlord performance reports submitted to HNL Committee.

### 3. The Proposal

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

The activity to date is detailed within the report below:

- 3.1 A revised Tenancy agreement was implemented from 15 September 2025. The previous Tenancy Agreement was last updated in 2016 and was due for renewal in light of legal changes, sector wide learning and best practice. The revised Agreement better protects tenants, and reflects modern expectations and responsibilities, particularly in areas such as damp and mould, tenancy fraud and gang related activity. Importantly, most of the new responsibilities, fall on the Council as a landlord rather than tenants themselves.
- 3.2 Following the implementation of the new Tenancy Agreement an Officers working group has been established to undertake a tenant census by the end of the financial year, this will update/capture information held for our tenants. Following the implementation of the new Tenancy Agreement an Officers working group has been established to undertake a tenant census by the end of the financial year, this will update/capture information held for our tenants. We are currently working on an option for tenants who have a Housing online account to be able to respond to the census directly into NEC Housing.
- 3.3 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 used to inform service delivery and achieve equitable outcomes. An outcome of the census will be a targeted recruitment campaign from underrepresented groups to join our Tenants Voice Panel ensuring fair presentation of our tenant demographic.
- 3.4 The new Tenant Accessibility Policy was approved at HNL in July 2025 and will be rolled out to all staff by the end of September 2025.
- 3.5 From 1 September 2025, we have moved to collecting and recording key tenant data in a newly configured region of NEC Housing (Person Attributes). All information captured at sign up has a dedicated field in NEC Housing which can be updated (and history/audit seen), reported on and used to flag vulnerabilities and disabilities automatically if appropriate (e.g. wheelchair users will automatically have a disability indicator against their record). Review dates can be added for certain attributes (e.g.: expected due date for pregnant tenants) and it is expected that all Officers will maintain the data going forward.

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

- 3.6 During July 2025 the Tenant's Voice Panel reviewed the following engagement fact sheets: Tenant Voices Panel, Building Cleaning Panel, Complaints Panel, Readers Panel/Tenant Quality Mark and TACT (Tenant Scrutiny Panel) these fact sheets were updated based on their feedback, and new versions were publicised as part of the Housing Information Day and have been added to the

website.

- 3.7 The Tenant Voices Panel were involved in the planning and production of the comms material for the Housing Information Day which was held on 11 September 2025. This also included co-producing the leaflet, poster and social media advert that publicised the event. The aim was to ensure that communications were engaging and effectively conveyed the intended message to tenants. This was hugely successful, with over twice as many than expected tenants attending the event.
- 3.8 The Housing Information Day was planned to relaunch the Tenant Engagement Strategy and offer tenants a face-to-face opportunity to engage with the Housing & Communities Team. Our aim was to encourage tenants to explore the various engagement opportunities available, with the ultimate goal of involving them in service scrutiny. The event was a great success, featuring 17 information stalls including representation from emergency services—and attracting around 200 tenants. The event was well received with numerous tenants signing up to be part of the Sounding Board. The Tenant Engagement Team will follow up with those that registered with the hope that they will engage further in scrutinising our performance and making recommendations for service improvements.
- 3.9 The latest edition of “Your Housing” was posted to all tenants at the beginning of September and was dedicated to tenant engagement. It featured details of the Tenant Engagement Strategy (TES) and the menu of engagement that is on offer and highlights the various opportunities tenants have to get more involved.
- 3.10 The Tenant Engagement Team in partnership with New Directions College has delivered media training to members of Tenant Voices Panel. This included the use of social media, writing articles, taking photos and videos and producing posts for various social media platforms. The training had a positive outcome with our engaged tenants coproducing all the promotional material of the housing information day and assisting the Hexham Community Team to produce a social media video to promote their community centre.
- 3.11 The Tenant Voices Panel have also recently been involved in formatting and agreeing the content of our annual report to tenants for 2024/25 which is due to be published Autumn 2025. Members of the Tenant Voices Panel have reviewed our annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) submission to provide valuable feedback. To build on this, we will be delivering training sessions throughout the remainder of the financial year to help tenants better understand the data and feel more confident in holding us to account. In May 2026, we will also carry out a benchmarking exercise with tenants, using early TSM submission data from Housemark to support their understanding of what ‘good’ performance looks like in these returns.

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

- 3.12 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.

- 3.13 There have been 177 complaints between April 2025 to July 2025, and a total of 208 complaints that have been responded to. The outcomes are listed in Table 1 below. The figures for complaints received and responded to will not align as there are complaints that were responded to from the previous periods, and there are open complaints at the time of writing this report that are in the process of being investigated and therefore remain open with a target response time that falls within the next reporting period.

**Table 1. Outcome of complaints year to date 2025-26:**

| <b>Stage 1</b>          |              |            |             |             |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>Outcome</b>          | <b>April</b> | <b>May</b> | <b>June</b> | <b>July</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| Upheld                  | 35 (68.7%)   | 32 (69.6%) | 25 (50%)    | 34 (55.74%) | 91 (61%)     |
| Partially Upheld        | 5 (9.8%)     | 1 (2.2%)   | 5 (10%)     | 7 (11.48%)  | 13 (9%)      |
| Not upheld              | 3 (5.9%)     | 8 (17.4%)  | 12 (24%)    | 10 (16.39%) | 30 (16%)     |
| No Outcome <sup>1</sup> | 1 (2%)       | 1 (2.2%)   | 2 (4%)      | 1 (1.64%)   | 4 (2%)       |
| Multiple Outcomes       | 7 (13.6%)    | 4 (8.6%)   | 6 (12%)     | 9 (14.75%)  | 19 (13%)     |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>51</b>    | <b>46</b>  | <b>50</b>   | <b>61</b>   | <b>208</b>   |

- 3.14 The number of upheld complaints increased slightly in July 2025, compared to June (50%), however the % has reduced significantly when compared to May (69.6%) and April (68.7%). 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. When looking at day to day responsive repairs, there has been an increase in tenant satisfaction since last year – 87.67% satisfaction in June 25, compared to 73.8% for June 2024.

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

**Table 2. April – July complaint themes across Housing & Communities.**

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

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

- 3.16 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. As part of the Service Improvement Plan, and our focus on learning from complaints, a full review of all upheld / partially upheld complaints is being completed quarterly, to identify specific themes where there has been service failures and dissatisfaction. We have implemented a quarterly learning from complaints report, which is reviewed by HCMT and recommendations for improvement are discussed and agreed
- 3.17 The timeliness of managing complaints has improved since the beginning of the financial year as outlined in Table 3. Performance in July 2025 has improved when compared to June's with 75% of stage 1's & 86% of stage 2 going out on time. The actions to further improvement our performance are outlined in 3.18.

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

| Complaints  | Target | Apr-25 | May-25 | Jun-25 | Jul-25 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Percentage of Stage One Complaints responded to on time | 100%   | 24%    | 17.4%  | 50%    | 75%    |
| Percentage of Stage Two Complaints responded to on time | 100%   | 33%    | 0%     | 100%   | 86%    |

- 3.18 A number of improvements have been implemented to ensure that we maintain the improvements made with complaints handling:

- 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 are now required to review and sign off all stage 1 responses to ensure their quality and reduce the risk of unnecessary stage 2 escalations. This also includes a complaints commitment tracker that is reviewed monthly by the Housing and Communities Management Team (HCMT) to ensure visibility and monitor completion of agreed actions arising from complaints.
- Training will be delivered during Autumn 2025 to Officers 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.
- We have recently recruited an additional Disrepair and Customer Complaints Lead, to assist the Teams at Bennet Road to improve complaints performance.

- The Customer Relations Team have recruited an additional temporary member of staff who is supporting the quality checking of responses, and general case management to ensure targets are met.
  - Complaints is now 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.
- 3.19 The complaint statistics for Affinity (Reading) Ltd who manage 1248 units as part of the PFI arrangement are captured separately. During Q1 of 2025-26, Affinity have reported not logging nor responding to any Stage 1 or Stage 2 complaints. This is a similar performance to Q1 of 2024-25, with only one Stage 1 complaint being logged, and responded to within time scale.
- 3.20 In response to the Regulator for Social Housing's (RSH) recommendations work is progressing with Affinity to align the services tenants receive specially in relation to complaints. 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.
- Housing Ombudsman**
- 3.21 The Housing Ombudsman (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 on at the next available HNL Committee.
- 3.22 In the year to date, the Housing & Communities Service has been notified of 10 cases that have been referred to the Housing Ombudsman, with one case being closed with no further action required. At the time of writing this report, we are awaiting information back from the Housing Ombudsman on the remaining 9 cases.
- 3.24 The Service worked with the Customer Relations Team in responding to the HO audit in July 2025 relating to our Complaints Policy complying with the Complaints Handling Code. The audit required 23 minor changes to the Policy, adding additional information or clarification within the existing context. No major changes or non-compliance were found, and these minor changes have been completed.

**Transparency Influence & 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 RBC & PFI Properties | April  | May    | June   | July                |
|---|--------|--------|--------|---------------------|
| <b>TSM - RP01 - Homes that do not meet Decent Homes Standard (percentage)</b>       |        |        |        |                     |
| Percentage not meeting decent homes   | 6.81%  | 13.71% | 13.71% | 10.27%              |
| No of homes that did not meet decent homes in period                                | 469    | 944    | 944    | 707                 |
| <b>TSM - RP02 - Repairs completed within target timescale</b>                       |        |        |        |                     |
| Percentage - Non-Emergency in timescale (40 Days)                                   | 77.33% | 76.45% | 88.47% | 86.62%              |
| Number of Non-Emergency repairs completed in timescale                              | 969    | 854    | 1327   | 1249                |
| Number of Non-Emergency repairs completed in period                                 | 1253   | 1117   | 1500   | 1442                |
| Percentage - Emergency in timescale (3 Hours)                                       | 89.30% | 81.79% | 91.59% | 71.13% <sup>2</sup> |
| No of emergency repairs completed in timescale                                      | 317    | 229    | 283    | 170                 |
| Number of emergency repairs completed in period                                     | 355    | 280    | 309    | 239                 |
| <b>TSM - BS01 - Gas safety checks</b>   |        |        |        |                     |
| Percentage of gas safety checks completed   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%                |
| No of dwellings owned that have received gas safety checks that required them       | 5497   | 5497   | 5497   | 5497                |
| <b>TSM - BS02 - Fire Safety checks</b>  |        |        |        |                     |
| Percentage of fire safety checks completed  | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%                |
| No of dwellings owned that have received fire safety checks that needed them        | 995    | 995    | 995    | 995                 |

<sup>2</sup> See point 3.29

| <b>TSM - BS03 - Asbestos Safety checks</b>   |             |             |             |             |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Percentage of Asbestos checks completed  | 100.00%     | 100.00%     | 100.00%     | 100%        |
| No of dwellings owned that have received an asbestos survey that need one                                  | 345         | 345         | 345         | 345         |
| <b>TSM - BS04 - Water Safety Checks</b>  |             |             |             |             |
| Percentage of Legionella Risk Assessments completed  | 100%        | 100%        | 100%        | 100%        |
| No of dwellings owned that have received a legionella risk assessment that need one                        | 68          | 68          | 68          | 68          |
| <b>TSM - BS05 - Lift Safety Checks</b>   |             |             |             |             |
| Percentage of Communal Passenger Lift Safety checks completed  | 88.57%      | 94.30%      | 94.30%      | 94.30%      |
| No of dwellings owned that have received a lift safety check that need one                                 | 695 (31/33) | 695 (32/33) | 695 (32/33) | 695 (32/33) |
| <b>TSM - NM01 - Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord (per 1000 properties)</b> |             |             |             |             |
| total cases opened per 1000 properties   | 1.16        | 2.47        | 3.34        | 4.21        |
| total number of ASB cases opened   | 8           | 17          | 23          | 29          |
| total hate crime cases per 1000 properties   | 0.15        | 0           | 0           | 0           |
| * of total ASB opened - how many are hate crimes   | 1           | 0           | 0           | 0           |
| <b>TSM - CH01 - Complaints relative to size of landlord (per 1000 properties)</b>                          |             |             |             |             |
| No of Stage 1 per 1000 properties  | 6.39        | 5.67        | 5.81        | 4.50        |
| No of Stage 1 complaints received  | 44          | 39          | 40          | 31          |
| No of stage 2 per 1000 properties  | 0.29        | 0.44        | 0.87        | 1.02        |
| No of Stage 2 complaints received  | 2           | 3           | 6           | 7           |
| <b>TSM - CH02 - Complaints responded to within Handling Code guidelines (percentage)</b>                   |             |             |             |             |
| Stage 1 - percentage responded to on time  | 11%         | 8%          | 50%         | 77%         |
| No of Stage 1 complaints responded to on time (by complaint start date)                                    | 5           | 3           | 20          | 24          |
| Stage 2 - percentage responded to on time  | 50%         | 0%          | 50%         | 86%         |
| No of Stage 2 complaints responded to on time (by complaint start date)                                    | 1           | 0           | 3           | 6           |

## Quality & Safety Standard - Housing Repairs

- 3.28 The Improvement Plan for Repairs and Property Services focuses on 10 key workstreams. Four working groups have been established to oversee the workstreams and fortnightly operational meetings monitor and track progress against the Plan. Quarterly updates are presented to a Cross-Party Working Group alongside updates to this Committee.
- 3.29 The working group has reviewed the emergency KPI data and determined that the drop in performance reported for July was the result of an issue with the retrospective data entry for the emergency, out of hours jobs. The system allows for the raised, and completed, date and time of these jobs to be entered retrospectively, however it defaults to the current time and date. Where the time

is not changed to reflect the actual time, the job was completed, the job can show as late, as the target is within 3 hours. The process has been reviewed, and a detailed procedure has been delivered to staff to highlight the importance of entering the correct times against the job creation and completion.

- 3.30 Significant focus has been on the Works in Progress (WIP) which has now stabilised month on month. Continued work is focussing on how we can bring it down 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 developing a timeline and a plan to reduce the WIP to circa 1000.

**Table 5. Outstanding Works In Progress**

| Timely & Efficient Repairs Service - Repairs Performance KPIs | Target | Apr 25 | May 25 | Jun 25 | Jul 25 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <b>Outstanding Repairs (WIP)</b>                              | 1000   | 4050   | 2647   | 2800   | 2650   |
| <b>Customer satisfaction (%)</b>                              | 90.00  | 83.76% | 82.81  | 87.67  | 87.57  |

- 3.31 Updates for each workstream up to the end of July are noted below:

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

#### **Workstream 2 – Embedding Culture Change**

Culture workshops were delivered to all managers and supervisors, focusing on onboarding, learning and development, performance management and organisational culture. Action points to take forward have been agreed, with the issues/topics raised and grouped into themes. The Executive Director and Assistant Director are holding workshops every 6 weeks, to work through the issues, covering:

- Staff retention
- Bullying & harassment
- Respect
- Office environment
- Shadowing trades/back office to understand roles

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

The comprehensive review of roles and responsibilities has been broken down into smaller areas, focusing initially on Job Description (JD) reviews of the Back Office and Senior Management team. A time in motion study has been completed across several teams to identify areas of significant pressure. A proposed structure for the Back Office including dedicated JDs for works planners and schedulers together with proposed standard operating procedures is being drafted and will be finalised by the end of October 25 with the aim of starting consultation with staff in November and implementation from January 2026.

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

Following approval for vacancies across repairs and property services to be advertised on social media, we have attracted an increase in interest which has seen at least 2 applicants being received for each role (an improvement on the previous rounds).

Approval has been given to pilot a refer a friend scheme for vacancies across repairs and property services which will commence on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025 with meetings in place with an approved supplier to discuss and agree the designs and adverts for vacancies to be used on our fleet vehicles, community and trade notice boards.

We are reviewing options for the gas and plumbing teams which make up 10 of the current vacancies whilst this service is externally delivered on a temporary basis.

## **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 are 16 priority 1 contracts, split into the 12 original contracts assigned as Priority 1 and 4 Priority 1b contracts which have arisen since the initial programme was agreed. To date the following original P1 contracts have been awarded:

Lot 1 Reactive Repairs and Voids and Planned Works, Interim Gas Waiver, Lift Maintenance and Decent Homes Surveys and Fire Compliance (in standstill period).

An update on the remainder is below:

**Priority 1 - Scaffolding:** call-off has been found allowing the Council to set a max value, mini-competition for scaffolding - The specifications have been drafted by the team, and a procurement strategy is being prepared for Procurement Board. This will be ready for the 19 September.

**Priority 1 - Pest control:** Discussions around internal delivery of this service have changed our approach; we will be entering a short-term agreement with extension options (2+2) to allow us to flex with the Council's decision on how the service is provided in future. The framework has been identified, specifications have been drafted by the team, terms are being drafted, and a procurement strategy is required for Procurement Board. This will be ready for the 19 September.

**Priority 1 - Managed Stores:** This contract is out to framework tender, with an end date for submissions of 24 September. We are planning a quick turnaround, aiming to have the contract issued by 17 October and a mobilisation period to start by 20 October.

**Priority 1 - Gas Servicing:** Drafting a case for the next steps whilst the 6 month waiver is in place. Meeting scheduled for week commencing 14 September to pull the case together.

**Priority 1 - Asbestos Surveys:** Contract being drafted by legal, direct award approved at procurement board - contract to be signed by the end of September.

**Priority 1 - Wensley phase 2:** Waiver has been completed for small building control consultant and approved. Direct awards for consultants already working on the project have also been approved, and the legal team have drafted the contracts which have now been issued to the contractors (x3) for signing, week commencing 8 September.

**Priority 1b - Heating Installations:** Contract is out to framework tender, and the end date for submissions was 8 September. These will be sent to the moderation panel by 12 September, and we intend to issue the contract by 7 November.

**Priority 1b - Lot 2 re-procurement (voids and planned):** Terms and conditions to have been reviewed, contract will be drafted by the framework provider. Meeting with CLC this week to look at implementation plans and integration with NEC is scheduled, with a provisional signature date of 19 September.

With the increased scope, and addition of Wensley Road phase 2, the team have been working with Procurement to remain on track for the end September 2025 deadline but there is a risk this could slip which is being monitored closely.

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

The Contractors Portal in NEC Housing has been tested by our largest contractor, MD Group for reactive repairs which went live on 8 September. This will allow for efficient job allocation, management and reporting of jobs allocated to this contractor. An NEC consultant/developer visited Bennet Road in August to shadow the works planners and understand where there are issues. A full report has been received documenting the visit and enhancements that the Council would find useful have been added to the NEC enhancement list for consideration in future developments of the product.

Process mapping has identified key areas to focus attention, and the tasks have been documented to ensure the most efficient processes are consistently being followed by all users.

Trial is underway with a new, higher specification device for trade operatives, as well as streamlined schedule of rates (SORs) available for selection, limiting to specific SORs per trade. The results are being reviewed.

Agency staff have been allocated handheld devices to allow direct access to jobs logged in NEC Housing, allowing for efficient job management.

#### **Housing Online – reporting repairs:**

- The NEC Housing Online (HOL) portal has been configured to allow tenants to request repairs online, at their own convenience.
- All new sign-ups from June were advised to create a HOL account (if they did not already have one for choice based letting) and use this to raise any repair requests going forward.
- From 1st July 2025, tenants having face to face contact with an officer were also advised of the new functionality and provided with information on how to raise a repair online.
- From 14 July 2025, details on raising repairs online was added to the repairs appointment confirmation letters, sent for every appointment.
- From Mid-August 2025, the caller waiting message was changed to advise of the new functionality when tenants call the Customer Fulfilment Centre to request a repair.
- From Mid-August 2025, our website has been updated to include details of how tenants can set up a Housing online account and then how to log a repair via this process.

- A flag has been added to the NEC Housing system, to show officers whether a tenant has a HOL account when they are looking in their records.
- An article has been included in the latest edition of “Your Housing” to highlight this new functionality.

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

This workstream is almost complete. The final step is to make all WBC properties non-current in the NEC Housing system. All the properties have been identified, and we are looking at how best to carry out this task in bulk.

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

- We continue to embed good contract management across the service, and standard agendas and minutes have been introduced.

Ongoing spot checks of contract monitoring have been introduced to audit robustness.

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

We have identified the full list of policies required by the service. 13 policies have been completed by a dedicated Policy Officer to an agreed standardised template and format. These are now in final drafting stages prior to passing the policies for sign off via the relevant processes. We identified and prioritised a full list of 35 processes that are required across the service that needed to be mapped and document. 16 of these processes have been mapped and these have/are being reviewed prior to management sign off and staff distribution by November 2025. These processes will allow the foundations to become more stable, provide local procedures that all staff members will be expected to follow and provide clarity on roles and responsibilities. We aim to have these policies and processes signed off and implemented by February 2026.

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

At the end of July there were 173 properties where mould and damp had been identified. To manage the repair works linked to damp and mould cases, a dedicated Technical Support Officer (TSO) is managing all jobs raised and communicating directly with tenants. The TSO is also working with the Housing Energy Support Team to ensure that tenants receive a whole service when reporting damp and mould – this will include energy support and advice on how to heat homes sufficiently.

**Table 6, Damp and Mould progress and performance**

| <b>Damp &amp; Mould</b>   | <b>Apr 25</b> | <b>May 25</b> | <b>Jun 25</b> | <b>Jul 25</b> |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Number of D&M repairs cat 1 & 2 / repairs within 24 hrs (emergency) | 0             | 2             | 2             | 0             |
| Urgent repairs  | 3             | 8             | 8             | 2             |
| Routine   | 63            | 111           | 123           | 73            |
| Decant required   |               |               | 0             | 0             |

|   |     |     |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|   | 0   | 0   |     |     |
| Number of D&M cases open to the service | 163 | 167 | 170 | 173 |

- 3.32 Following the publication of draft guidance for Awaab's Law, process mapping for the new procedure is underway to ensure that the Service complies with the new regulations. This will also support the move towards having an end-to-end case management function for damp and mould cases on NEC Housing with the aim to be live by the end of October 2025.

In preparation of Awaab's Law coming into effect on 27 October 2025, we have arranged for key staff to receive training in Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS), which took place during September 25 and included surveyors and key repairs staff, as well as members from the Housing Energy Support Team.

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

- 3.32 The percentage of stock failing the standard has decreased this month compared to the previous month. This is due to the completion of further detailed inspections of failing elements, together with completion of outstanding works.

**Table 7. Decent Homes progress April – July**

| <b>RBC Only</b>                                     | <b>Target</b> | <b>April 2025</b> | <b>May 2025</b> | <b>June 2025</b> | <b>July 2025</b> |
|---|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Percentage not meeting decent homes                 | 0%            | 8.1%              | 16.3%           | 16.79%           | 12.57%           |
| Total number of properties not meeting decent homes | 0             | 469               | 944             | 944              | 707              |

- 3.34 Decent Homes surveys of our stock continues with 1377 completed by Ridge & partners LLC to date. Key themes identified include front door replacement, extractor fans, kitchen and bathroom replacements, and heating upgrades. The data is being cross-referenced against our 25/26 programme of works to ensure maximum delivery of required works.
- 3.35 26 Category 1 and 2 jobs have been raised following the completion of surveys and 89% have been completed with the remaining 11% being appointed or having further works carried out.

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

- 3.36 At 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.
- 3.37 There are no high priority actions outstanding. We have struggled with our internal resource to complete the 571 medium priority actions and 168 low priority actions, and have therefore sourced 2 contractors via waivers to carry out this work on our behalf with a completion date of 30 September 2025
- 3.38 There are additional 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**

- 3.39 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.
- 3.40 An online reporting tool has now been developed and is accessible via the Council's website. This is now live and will be reflected in a refreshed factsheet for tenants when publicised in January 2026. .
- 3.41 The ASB Team Leader and Safer Public Realm Team Leader are working on 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. This will be in place to start from quarter 4 of 2025/26.

## **Tenancy Standard**

- 3.42 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.

During this period, we have delivered positive outcomes for tenants as outlined below:

- Year to date, there has been a 10% reduction on the number of legal notices served on our tenants for rent arrears compared to the same period for 24-25. There have been two evictions carried out year to date for arrears. This is owing

to tenancy sustainment work 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 £95,000 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. 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.
- 3.43 The Service is currently managed by referrals from front line officers across Housing & 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 and free up larger properties to support those in need of larger accommodation. This scheme will be advertised on the website by the end of October 2025, and a targeted letter with accompanying leaflet will be sent out by the end of December 2025.
- ## 4 Contribution to Strategic Aims
- 4.1 The work of the Housing & Communities service contributes to the Council's 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 Council's 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 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 residents 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 (27 October 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 was approved by this Committee on the 11th of March 2025, which included budgeted provision of circa £3.7 million to address the remedial works identified through Decent Homes surveys.

## **11 Timetable for Implementation**

- 11.1 Not applicable.

## **12 Background Papers**

- 12.1 Appendix 1 - RSH Consumer Standards April 2024