

Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee

21 July 2026



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	RBC Landlord Services Performance Report – Year End Update 2025/26
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Melissa Wise, Executive Director Communities & Adult Social Care
Report author	Natalie Waters - Director of Housing Landlord Services
Lead Councillor	Cllr Matt Yeo, Lead Councillor for Housing and Communities
Council priority	Secure Reading's economic & cultural success
Recommendations	1. That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee note the Year End position for the Housing Landlord Service Performance for 2025-26.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the performance of Reading Borough Council's Housing Landlord Services delivered within the 2025-2026 financial year following the inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) which concluded in April 2025. The inspection resulted 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 improvement.
- 1.2. The service met the 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 meet monthly with the RSH under the Provider Improvement regime, with positive feedback received on progress made on our Service Improvement Plan and the outcomes delivered to date to address the root causes of the issues identified.
- 1.4. Based on our evidence submissions and the commentary received during our meetings with the RSH they have confirmed that we are evidencing our ability to deliver sustainable, long-term change and that we are moving closer to regrading or reinspection.
- 1.5. A key barrier remains the underperformance of elements of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract delivered by Affinity Reading Ltd. The Council is actively addressing this through robust governance with Affinity and the associated contractors. Meetings are focused on strengthening their improvement plan and accelerating full compliance with the four Consumer Standards.
- 1.6. 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 all current and future tenants of social housing.

Landlord Performance is currently monitored against the four Consumer Standards:

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

- 2.2. In line with these standards, housing providers are required to ensure transparent performance reporting, supported by robust governance and effective oversight. The Directorate has established strong governance arrangements, further enhanced by a cross-party working group that provides additional opportunities to review progress, scrutinise performance, and challenge key issues. This report is also presented regularly to the HNL Committee, offering clear insight into performance, delivery against the service improvement plan, and enabling effective scrutiny, challenge, and strategic discussion.
- 2.3. A comprehensive Service Improvement Plan aligned with the Consumer Standards is well established to address the root causes identified during the inspection, alongside broader service enhancements. Delivery of the plan is actively monitored through coordinated cross-service working, with a clear focus on ensuring that all actions are implemented effectively, achieve intended outcomes, and embed sustainable improvements.

3. The Proposal

Quality and Safety Standard - Housing Repairs

- 3.1. The improvement plan for Repairs and Property services focuses on 8 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.
- 3.2. Significant focus has been maintained throughout the year on reducing Works in Progress (WIP). This has included detailed analysis of open jobs, monitoring volumes raised and completed each month, and reviewing aged tickets. Measures have been implemented to address identified issues and strengthen processes to prevent recurrence. The service set a target to achieve 1000 outstanding repairs by the end of March 2026. The sustained focus on this area enabled the service to achieve the 1,000 target ahead of schedule and maintain performance thereafter. Notably, the number of open repairs reduced significantly from 4,050 in April 2025 to 974 by the end of March 2026.

Table 1. Outstanding Works in Progress

	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26
Customer Satisfaction (%)	84	83	88	88	93	86	78	72	72	84	88	85
Outstanding Repairs (Works in Progress)	4050	2647	2800	2650	2599	2448	2211	1568	1239	951	982	974

- 3.3. Updates for each workstream up to the end of March 2026 are noted below:

Workstream 1 - 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 Director are holding workshops every 6-8 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 2 - Review of Roles, Responsibilities and Operating Model

This review has been structured across management groups, with initial focus on the back-office operating model and roles. Job descriptions for Schedulers, Business Support, and Team Managers have been developed and evaluated.

The Head of Service is currently working in partnership with HR colleagues to finalise proposals and initiate a formal restructure consultation.

In addition, an independent consultant has been commissioned to undertake a comprehensive review of the Housing Surveying function. This work includes an assessment of current operations, compliance, capacity, and processes, alongside benchmarking against peer authorities to inform the development of a future-fit operating model.

Workstream 3 - Recruitment & Retention

At the end of March 2026, there were 26 vacancies across Repairs & Property Services out of an establishment of 147 posts (17.7%). This represents the lowest vacancy level since January 2025, when there were 35 vacancies (23%).

Progress continues to be made in recruitment and retention. Fully structured induction processes are now in place across all service areas, with onboarding documentation centrally accessible to ensure consistency. Managers undertake periodic audits to provide assurance of compliance.

A 'refer a friend' scheme launched on 3 November 2025. Whilst no referrals have been received to date, promotion of the scheme continues through staff engagement channels. A targeted recruitment campaign was launched in January 2026 across Reading, supported by a range of promotional activity including fleet branding, depot signage, trade counter materials, and community noticeboards.

Ongoing recruitment activity is focused on strengthening in-house gas and plumbing capacity to support the transition to direct delivery. Adverts remain live, alongside targeted campaigns using industry-specific platforms to attract qualified surveyors, an area which continues to present recruitment challenges. Professional roles are being actively promoted through specialist channels including RICS, Inside Housing, social media platforms, and external recruitment agencies.

The service recognises the importance of apprenticeships to build and develop our internal resource and currently has 10 apprenticeship posts within the establishment with 8 people in post, and 2 within the recruitment process.

Workstream 4- Procurement

A number of contracts were required across the service to ensure quality and best value for externally delivered provision. These contracts have been prioritised based on cost and risk and are built into a procurement programme to ensure delivery.

There are sixteen Priority 1 contracts covered by this procurement programme of which ten have been awarded to date. These include Lot 1 Reactive Repairs*, Lot 2 Voids and Planned Works*, Interim Gas Waiver, Lift Maintenance, Decent Homes Surveys, Fire Compliance, Asbestos, Managed Stores, Windows Replacement & Door Entry Systems. All awarded contracts have been added to the contracts register.

The Procurement Programme Board meets fortnightly to review progress on the remaining six contracts, alongside weekly operational meetings designed to accelerate delivery. This focused approach will ensure that all remaining contracts will be awarded by the end of July 2026.

Workstream 5 - IT System Usage

Implementation of a Risk Management module within the Compliance Team was completed in December, followed by delivery of the associated Go Mobile functionality by the end of February. This enables Officers to undertake risk assessments and inspections via handheld devices, with real-time system updates and improved tracking of third-party compliance activities, including assessment dates and remedial actions. During the next quarter the teams will be focused on building the in-house risk inspection templates with an anticipated full rollout by the end of July.

Implementation of Go Mobile for Housing Management has also progressed, enabling Officers to carry out rents, estates, and tenancy activities in the field or remotely, with automatic system updates. Configuration has been completed, tested, and approved as 'go-live ready'. Rollout is dependent on the corporate mobile working programme, with suitable devices expected by the end of April. Supporting user guidance is being developed in readiness for deployment.

A health check of the Rents module was undertaken in November, reviewing configuration, usage, and key processes including direct debits and arrears management. The findings confirmed effective use of the system, with targeted improvements identified and subsequently implemented. A key recommendation is the transition to paperless direct debits which has been progressed, with configuration underway and engagement with banking partners in place. Delivery is being managed through a structured project approach, with go-live scheduled for the end of July.

NEC Housing continues to evolve, and options are being reviewed to further enhance functionality and ensure alignment with regulatory requirements. A system upgrade was deployed to the test environment in February, with comprehensive user acceptance testing carried out across all modules. Following successful completion, the upgrade was implemented in the live environment.

In addition, NEC will facilitate a stakeholder session in April to review future reporting solutions, ahead of the planned withdrawal of Business Objects support at the end of 2026. This will initiate a programme of work to identify and implement a suitable replacement reporting platform.

Workstream 6 -Contract Management

Contract management continues to be strengthened across the service, with standardised agendas and minutes embedded for all contract meetings. Routine spot checks of contract monitoring activity continues which provides assurance on the consistency and robustness of our approach.

A comprehensive contracts register has been developed, approved, and fully populated with current contract data. This will be maintained as a live document to support effective oversight, governance, and reporting.

A dedicated contract management resource remains in place to oversee the two largest contracts: the interim Reactive Repairs contract with Pilon and the Voids and Planned Works contract with CLC.

The Contract Management Framework has been reviewed in collaboration with the Head of Procurement, the Procurement and Contracts Spoke, and the Housing Repairs and Property Services Management Team. Implementation is scheduled from May 2026, alongside enhanced

governance arrangements for contract documentation. The contracts register is already aligned with corporate procurement pipeline requirements.

Workstream 7 -Policies, Procedures and Processes

In line with tenant expectations and regulatory best practice, which emphasise clarity, conciseness, and the removal of duplication a revised approach to our policies has been adopted. Policies covering this area have been consolidated into three overarching documents: two covering Repairs and Property Services and one addressing Damp and Mould. These are scheduled for submission to Policy Committee in September, allowing time to engage with the Tenant Voice Panel and Sounding Board in line with our commitment for co-production. It is important to note that these policies do not introduce any changes to current service delivery or operational practice.

Process mapping across Repairs and Property Services has progressed alongside policy development. Of 32 identified processes, 29 were implemented at the end of January, supported by a service-wide briefing from the Head of Service and follow-up communications. Managers have reinforced these through team meetings and one-to-one discussions, with targeted training provided where process changes directly impact teams.

The remaining three processes, lift repairs and servicing, Housing Projects programme management, and budget monitoring are more complex and require further development. Workshops are scheduled to finalise these, with implementation expected by the end of May which is on track. The Housing Projects process will also benefit from input from an external consultant commencing in May.

All approved process maps and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are centrally accessible via the Housing & Communities SharePoint site. This process mapping work forms a key component of the Continuous Improvement Plan, establishing a consistent operational framework, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and supporting improved service delivery.

Workstream 8 - Damp and Mould

The cross departmental working group continue to convene weekly to review active cases, monitor progress, and identify and address any operational barriers.

Since the introduction of Awaab's Law in October 2025, the service has received a total of 266 referrals relating to damp and mould. These have been assessed against the three defined categories within the legislation: potential emergency hazard, potential significant hazard, and cases deemed out of scope.

Of the referrals received, three were classified as potential emergency hazards and 59 as potential significant hazards. A further 128 cases were assessed as out of scope of Awaab's Law; however, 88 of these still received a visit from the Housing Energy Support Team (HEST) to ensure appropriate advice and support were provided.

To strengthen delivery, a permanent dedicated Technical Support Officer has been recruited and is responsible for overseeing cases requiring remedial works, ensuring compliance with statutory timescales, and maintaining clear communication with tenants throughout the process.

Following a post implementation review, enhancements have been made to the referral process. The updated referral form now requires both written descriptions and photographic evidence, including clear details on the size and location of damp and mould. This has improved the quality of information received, enabling HEST to triage cases more effectively and reduce delays in progressing those within scope.

In addition, updates have been implemented within the Housing IT system and associated KPIs to ensure robust monitoring, recording, and evidence of compliance with all regulatory requirements and prescribed timescales.

Further improvements are planned to the Council's website to ensure that information relating to damp and mould is more accessible, clear, and user focused.

Quality and Safety Standard - Decent Homes

- 3.4. The percentage of stock failing the standard has continued to reduce month on month and at the end of March 26 stands at 4.16%. 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 2. Decent Homes progress April – March

	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26
% of homes not meeting Decent Homes	8.12%	16.35%	16.35%	12.24%	11.10%	10.55%	9.89%	9.20%	9.00%	8.60%	8.52%	4.16%
No of homes not meeting Decent Homes	469	944	944	707	640	609	571	532	520	499	492	240

- 3.5. Our programme to gain insight behind every front door continues, with plans to appoint a new contractor to undertake a further 1,700 Decent Homes surveys during 2026/27. The recent procurement exercise was unsuccessful.
- 3.6. At the end of March 2026 there were no Health and Safety category 1 or 2 (severe or urgent) jobs outstanding.
- 3.7. The 2026/27 programme of works has been developed to support delivery of the Decent Homes Standard. Key priorities within the programme include front door replacements, installation of extractor fans, kitchen and bathroom renewals, and heating system upgrades. Options for the most appropriate contractor frameworks to deliver these workstreams are currently under assessment. To support effective delivery, fortnightly working groups have been established, alongside a programme tracker to monitor progress, key milestones, and budget performance.
- 3.8. The programme also includes external decoration works to houses and bungalows. These are currently at survey stage to re-establish a compliant and deliverable pipeline of works. Surveys are underway to validate scope, update specifications, and confirm property condition ahead of recommissioning. A structured approach has been implemented to transition stock efficiently from survey through to delivery, enabling a return to live planned works programmes.

Quality and Safety Standard - Fire Compliance contracts

- 3.9 Lot 1 contract has been awarded, mobilisation meetings held from November 2025. At the end of the financial year 39 New Fire Risk Assessments had been completed on all high risk and sheltered housing properties.
- 3.10 Lot 2 contract has been awarded, mobilisation meetings held from October 2025. At the end of financial year 32 New Fire doors had been installed and 89 doors had been repaired.
- 3.11 Lot 3 is due to be awarded, and contracts signed. Mobilisation meeting has been scheduled for early April 2026.
- 3.12 We regularly report our performance, including outstanding remedials to Councillors, Senior management and Tenant groups.

- 3.13 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

- 3.14 The Antisocial Behaviour Service Manager is currently undertaking a comprehensive review and update of all standard operating procedures, alongside a refresh of the Officer training programme to support consistent service delivery.
- 3.15 Case audits for antisocial behaviour and hate incidents were introduced in August 2025. For the 2025/26 period, completed audits have achieved an average compliance score of 53%. These audits are designed to assess adherence to service standards, as set out in the Antisocial Behaviour and Hate Incident Policy and associated procedures. The Council set target benchmark is 90% compliance across all audits, and focused improvement activity is required to ensure this standard is achieved during the current reporting year.
- 3.16 A comprehensive programme of improvement has since been implemented to strengthen compliance and drive up audit performance. This includes the introduction of quarterly feedback to individual officers on their case audit results, enabling targeted learning where policy and procedures have not been fully followed. Governance arrangements have been strengthened, with all case closures and legal referrals now subject to Team Leader sign-off to ensure appropriate contact with complainants and adherence to required processes.
- 3.17 Individual officer performance objectives have been aligned with audit expectations, with a minimum target of 75% compliance (amber) by mid-year point and full compliance (90%) by year end. This will be alongside clear expectations around maintaining regular face-to-face contact with victims a defined number of monthly visits.
- 3.18 Policies and procedures have been refreshed and relaunched from April 2026, providing clearer operational guidance supported by the implementation of the NEC ASB case management module, which prompts and records key actions throughout the lifecycle of a case. Further improvement activity includes the development of a targeted training offer for officers, including Equality Impact Assessment training, and the rollout of tenant-facing factsheets to better manage expectations at an early stage of casework, such as the noise nuisance factsheet introduced in June 2026. The service is now fully staffed, with all wards covered, placing the team in a stronger position to embed these improvements.
- 3.19 Between April 2025 and March 2026, a total of 218 antisocial behaviour cases and 6 hate crime incidents were reported.
- 3.20 Closed case satisfaction surveys have been in place since April 2024 and continue to be undertaken, with a current response rate of 34%. The service makes up to three contact attempts with complainants, via telephone or email, before cases are closed where no response is received. The survey format is currently under review to improve accessibility and encourage higher response rates. Feedback gathered will be used to inform service improvements and ensure delivery aligns with tenant expectations and established service standards.
- 3.21 The highlights from the closed case survey are as follows:
- 77% found it easy to report ASB
 - 69% said that the Officer explained the ASB procedure to them
 - 54% said that they are updated in a satisfactory manner

- 54% felt supported by their case officer throughout the case
- 54% said that the ASB stopped as a result of reporting to the ASB team
- 77% feel confident in reporting ASB in the future
- 61% are satisfied with how their case was dealt with overall

Table 3: ASB Service and enforcement actions:

	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26
No. of new Housing ASB Enquiries	11	13	23	26	12	15	10	11	10	16	19	11
No. of Enquiries opened as cases straight away	3	1	7	8	2	6	2	5	2	3	1	1
No. of injunctions	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
No. of Notice of Seeking Possessions	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	3
No of outright possession orders granted	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

3.22 Between April 2025 and March 2026, the courts granted six outright possession orders, enabling the service to take enforcement action and evict 6 tenants for breaches of tenancy conditions relating to antisocial behaviour.

3.23 In addition, the service secured three injunctions and served 10 Notices Seeking Possession, which represent the initial legal step prior to applying for a possession order. These actions demonstrate the service's use of a range of legal interventions to address serious and persistent cases of antisocial behaviour.

Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard – Tenant Information

3.24 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 respond to the census digitally and for those who are unable to access this online a paper form will be sent.

3.25 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.

3.26 Our aim is to launch the tenant census in June 2026 via a robust communication plan which will include a letter being sent to all tenants, with follow up reminders being sent via e-mail, text and through posts on social media. The census will initially be available online via the corporate Go Vocal platform with our aim to collect and update 60% of tenant's information in the first 3 months via this method.

- 3.27 In addition, Officers across the service will support data collection through targeted door-knocking, completing the census digitally with tenants. This approach will allow information to be loaded directly into the NEC system, removing the need for separate data entry and improving data quality. As a final option, paper forms will be issued where required.
- 3.28 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.
- 3.29 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 - Complaints and Housing Ombudsman

- 3.30 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.
- 3.31 During 2025/26 the Housing and Communities Service (including repairs and maintenance) received 551 complaints. 55 of these progressed to stage 2 compared to 47 in the previous year (2024-2025). These typically arise where agreed actions at Stage One have not been fully delivered by the relevant service area, highlighting a need for stronger follow-through and accountability. The breakdown of the complaints and the comparison to the previous year is outlined below.

Table 4: Total number of complaints split by Area compared to the previous year:

Area	2025-26		2024-25	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Community Partnerships	4	0.7%	9	1.6%
Housing Needs	102	18.5%	105	20.0%
Property Development	0	0%	2	0.4%
Tenant Services	90	16.3%	67	12.8%
Repairs & Property Services	355	64.5%	342	65.0%
Private Sector Housing (Adaptations)	0	0%	1	0.2%
Total	551	100%	526	100%

- 3.32 The outcomes of these complaints are listed in the table below (Table 5).

Table 5: Outcome of complaints in year compared to previous year:

Outcome	2025-26		2024-25	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Upheld	327	59.4%	250	60%
Partially Upheld	73	13.2%	37	9%
Not upheld	89	16.2%	66	16%
No Outcome	10	1.8%	23	6%
Multiple Outcomes	52	9.4%	38	9%
Total	551	100%	526	100%

- 3.33 The % of upheld decisions remain in line with the previous year. A substantial proportion of these upheld complaints relate to Repairs and Property Services, however historically and commonly with most social housing landlords, repairs complaints received are always at a higher volume compared to our other landlord services.
- 3.34 The most common themes for the complaints are listed below, in decreasing order of quantities received:

2025-26	2024-25
Failure to resolve the issue Quality of service Communication Time taken to resolve the issue	Quality of service Failure to resolve the issue Time taken to resolve the issue Communication

- 3.35 The primary themes within complaints remain consistent compared with the same period in 2024–25. The most prominent issue, failure to resolve the issue, accounting for a significant proportion of complaints, with 47% of these relating to Repairs and Property Services. Notably, there has been an increase in this theme within Housing Needs in 2025–26 compared to the previous year. In contrast, quality of service concerns are more frequently associated with Housing Management services rather than repairs.
- 3.36 Targeted improvement activity remains underway across services to address the root causes of these recurring themes. As part of this, a tenant-led scrutiny task and finish group has been established, and their report, including a set of recommendations, has now been received. Service teams are currently reviewing these findings and will engage further with the tenant group to agree how the recommendations will be implemented.

Timeliness and Performance Improvements

- 3.37 During this reporting period, 62% of complaints were responded to within Housing Ombudsman timescales, representing a notable improvement from 53% in 2024–25. Services have continued to strengthen their approach to complaint handling, focusing on both timeliness and the quality of responses to ensure they are meaningful and address customer concerns effectively.
- 3.38 To support this, a range of monitoring and oversight mechanisms are in place, including:
- Weekly performance monitoring meetings with service areas
 - Daily huddles within the Customer Relations Team
 - Daily inbox checks to ensure complaints are identified and actioned promptly
- 3.39 The complaint statistics for Affinity (Reading) Ltd. who manage 1248 units as part of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) arrangement are captured separately. The table below (Table 6) below shows the performance for 2025-26, in comparison to 2024-25.

Table 6: PFI Complaints responded to in time

	2025-26		2024-25	
Complaints	Received	Responded in timescale	Received	Responded in timescale

Stage 1	17	100%	10	80%
Stage 2	2	100%	2	50%
Total	19	100%	12	65%

- 3.40 In response to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) recommendations, work continues in partnership with Affinity to ensure greater alignment and consistency in the services provided to tenants. This includes quarterly complaints handling reports on themes and service improvements identified from this. Affinity has updated its webpages to reflect the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, improving transparency and accessibility for tenants.
- 3.41 Progress against these actions is being actively monitored by the Council through Affinity's service improvement plan to ensure sustained compliance and delivery of expected standards.

Housing Ombudsman Findings

- 3.42 The report presented to Committee in March 2025 set out the findings from the Housing Ombudsman for the 2023–24 reporting year. The Council is still awaiting the findings for the 2024–25 period which we are actively chasing. Once received, these will be reviewed and shared with Committee as part of a future update

Transparency Influence and Accountability - Tenant Satisfaction Survey and Tenant Satisfaction Measures

- 3.43 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.
- 3.44 This survey consisted of a random sample of 600 Tenants, including tenants managed under the PFI contract, and was 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. The completed survey report was sent back to the service in April 2026 and will be published on our website by the end of June 2026 together with an article in the next edition of "Your Housing". The findings and next steps will be reported at the next available HNL Committee.
- 3.45 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 TSMs.

Table 7: Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2025 – 2026

(Arrows – green for improvement, red for decline in performance, purple remains the same)

TSM / Metric	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Trend compared to
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													previous year
Repairs and Property Condition													
Percentage of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	8.12%	16.35%	16.35%	12.24%	11.10%	10.55%	9.89%	9.20%	9.00%	8.60%	8.52%	4.16%	
Number of homes that did not meet the Decent Homes Standard in period	469	944	944	707	640	609	571	532	520	499	492	240	
Percentage of non-emergency repairs completed within target timescale	69.84%	67.79%	85.81%	82.70%	79.58%	78.90%	77.58%	73.20%	85.29%	78.56%	72.05%	81.33%	
Number of non-emergency repairs completed within target timescale	653	545	1022	894	982	987	1149	683	1096	1099	1080	1329	
Repairs and Property Condition	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Trend compared to previous year
Total number of non-emergency repairs completed in period	935	804	1191	1081	1234	1251	1481	933	1285	1399	1499	1634	
Percentage of emergency repairs completed within target timescale	85.50%	70.35%	87.06%	51.75%	90.45%	89.60%	90.91%	75.22%	86.96%	88.69%	87.96%	88.20%	
Number of emergency repairs completed within target timescale	224	121	175	74	142	155	230	170	180	290	190	142	
Total number of emergency repairs completed in period	262	172	201	143	157	173	253	226	207	327	216	161	
Building Safety	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sept-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Trend compared to previous year
Percentage of gas safety checks completed	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Number of dwellings requiring a gas safety check	4641	4636	4617	4629	4629	4629	4629	4629	4629	4629	4629	4629	
Number of dwellings that received a gas safety check	4641	4636	4617	4629	4629	4629	4629	4629	4629	4629	4629	4629	
Percentage of fire safety checks completed	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Number of dwellings that received required fire safety checks	955	955	955	955	955	955	955	955	955	955	955	955	
Percentage of asbestos safety checks completed	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Number of dwellings that received asbestos surveys	253	253	253	253	253	253	253	253	253	253	253	253	
Percentage of Legionella risk assessments completed	97.21%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Number of dwellings that received a Legionella risk assessment	1118	1107	1239	1239	1239	1239	1239	1239	1239	1239	1239	1239	

Percentage of communal passenger lift safety checks completed	94.30%	94.30%	94.30%	94.30%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Number of dwellings/buildings that received lift safety checks	695	695	695	695	737	737	737	737	737	737	737	737	
Neighbourhood Management	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Juk-25	Aug-25	Sept-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Trend compared to previous year
Total number of anti-social behaviour cases opened per 1,000 properties	2.48	2.48	5.31	6.02	2.48	3.72	2.12	2.83	2.12	3.36	3.54	2.12	
Total number of anti-social behaviour cases opened	14	14	30	34	14	21	12	16	12	19	20	12	
Total number of hate crime cases per 1,000 properties	0	0	0	0	0.18	0.35	0.35	0	0	0.18	0	0	
Number of anti-social behaviour cases that are hate crimes	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	
Complaints Handling	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sept-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Trend compared to previous year
Number of Stage 1 complaints per 1,000 properties	7.79	6.90	7.08	4.96	4.78	5.84	8.32	8.50	6.20	5.13	7.43	6.55	
Total number of Stage 1 complaints received	44	39	40	28	27	33	47	48	35	29	42	37	
Number of Stage 2 complaints per 1,000 properties	0.35	0.53	1.06	1.24	0.71	0.18	1.06	0.71	1.06	0.71	1.42	0.71	
Total number of Stage 2 complaints received	2	3	6	7	4	1	6	4	6	4	8	4	
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescales	11%	8%	50%	75%	74%	91%	68%	73%	89%	69%	81%	76%	
Number of Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescales	5	3	20	21	20	30	30	35	31	20	34	28	
Percentage of Stage 2 complaints responded to within timescales	50%	0%	50%	71%	0%	0%	50%	25%	33%	25%	25%	50%	
Number of Stage 2 complaints responded to within timescales	1	0	3	5	0	0	3	1	2	1	2	2	

Transparency Influence and Accountability - Tenant Engagement and Scrutiny

- 3.46 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 that ran 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 once analysed.
- 3.47 The tenants will be focusing their scrutiny on the Repairs Service and 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. The tenants are also focusing on Housing Complaints and the group is examining whether there are further opportunities to reduce complaint volumes and to strengthen the way we manage and resolve complaints.

- 3.48 Beyond these targeted areas of work planning for our wider Tenant Engagement programme is also underway. The project plan is currently being developed and was finalised in May 2026 having been agreed by the Tenant Voice Panel.
- 3.49 Part of our new Tenant Engagement Programme for 2026-27 includes further 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 service areas.
- 3.50 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 consider joining the Tenant Voice Panel (TVP).

Planned Tenant Engagement Activity (2026)

- 3.51 A programme of tenant engagement activity is planned over the coming months to strengthen tenant involvement and co-production across services:
- Summer 2026 – “Your Housing” publication
A themed edition focused on increasing tenant engagement and awareness of opportunities to get involved in shaping services.
 - June -July 2026 – Policy Consultation
Engagement with members of the Tenant Voice Panel on a suite of key policies. Tenants will be invited to review and provide feedback on several policies, including:
 - Housing and Estate Management Policy, Decant Policy, Repairs Policy, Compliance Policy and Compensation Policy
 - Housing Information Day (Autumn 2026)
Preparations are underway to deliver a Housing Information Day between September and October 2026, aimed at providing accessible information and direct engagement opportunities for tenants.
 - Featured Communications
A coordinated programme of communications, using a range of channels including tenant testimony videos and social media storytelling, will showcase the contributions of engaged tenants. This activity aims to promote the value of involvement and encourage increased participation in engagement opportunities.
 - Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups
Further tenant-led focus groups will be established to review antisocial behaviour and housing and estate management. These areas reflect priorities identified through the Sounding Board engagement.
 - Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy
Work is progressing to develop a co-produced Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy in line with regulatory expectations. A door-knocking exercise is planned for April 2026.

Transparency Influence and Accountability - Tenant Census

- 3.52 To ensure that the service area holds the most up to date information for tenants, there will be a tenant census starting in June 2026. This will invite tenants to complete an online survey, or if they are not online, the service area will provide paper copies of the survey. For those that need more support, there will be provisions to visit the tenant and complete it in their home.

Transparency, Influence & Accountability, New Standard - Competence and Conduct Standard

- 3.53 From October 2026, a new standard will be 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 meet defined qualifications and competence requirements. The standard requires Senior Housing Executives (Directors) to hold a degree or Level 5 qualification, and Senior Housing Managers (Head of Service, Service Managers and Team Managers) to hold a level 4 qualification in housing management.

- 3.54 We have identified approximately 45 Officers who will be required to obtain a qualification in housing management. A course provider has been procured in partnership with the Learning and Development Team. The affected managers will be enrolled in three tranches; the first 15 managers will be starting in September 2026, the second 15 in September 2027 and the final 15 in September 2028. This will ensure that we meet the targets set by the Regulator; to be 50% compliant by October 2027 and 100% compliant by October 2028. Compliance is either enrolled on a relevant course, complete a prerequisite qualification or fully complete the course.
- 3.55 A survey will be carried out with the affected managers to ask a series of questions related to several areas including any support needs to help them gain the qualification, any preference as to when they start and any reasons that they would not be able to complete a level 4 or 5 qualification.
- 3.56 HR will also review the job descriptions for these roles and will be amending them to reflect this new mandatory qualification requirement. Sessions will be held with all of those who are expected to gain the qualification to offer them an opportunity to raise their own questions and concerns. Unions will also be consulted on this and invited to those sessions to ensure that there is full transparency. The costs for this training will be funded utilising the apprenticeship levy.

There will be an introductory meeting with the training provider, Kingdom, the Director of Landlord Services and the Officer's part of the first tranche in July 2026. Learning will be delivered online via Teams. The intention is to also set up a working group of the first tranche and Director of Landlord Services, to share learning and support each other through the process.

Tenancy Standard

- 3.57 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.
- 3.58 During this period, we have delivered positive outcomes for tenants as outlined below:
- Year to date, there has been a 45% reduction on the number of legal notices served on tenants for rent arrears compared to the same period for 2024-25.
 - During the year, six evictions were carried out due to rent arrears. This consistently low number reflects the effectiveness of ongoing tenancy sustainment activity delivered by the Recovery Team and Money Advice Team. Their preventative approach continues to support tenants at risk and minimise the need for eviction.
 - Reduction of £91,790 in rent arrears from the end of the 2024/25 financial year.
 - Increase of £18,000 collected in Former Tenant Arrears compared to the same period for 2024/25.
 - Following the introduction of the under-occupation scheme, 16 moves were successfully facilitated between April 2025 and March 2026, releasing 16 properties back into the housing stock. This included:
 - 9 three-bedroom properties
 - 6 two-bedroom properties
 - Engagement with tenants identified as under-occupying indicates that many prefer to remain in their current homes. The most common reasons cited include:
 - Satisfaction with their current location
 - Proximity to local services and support networks
 - Length of tenure in their existing property
 - The need to retain additional bedrooms for visiting adult children and/or grandchildren

- The service is currently delivered through referrals from frontline officers across Housing and Communities to the Under-Occupation Officer. The objective remains to encourage and support tenants to move into accommodation that better meets their needs, thereby freeing up larger homes for households requiring them.
- To strengthen this approach, the scheme is now promoted via the Council's website, and a programme of targeted communication is underway. This includes phased mailouts of letters and supporting information to tenants identified as under-occupying, aimed at increasing awareness and uptake of the scheme.

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 Councils Housing and 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 and 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 of our tenants. Ensuring our Council stock is safe, efficient and well maintained and we deliver fit for purpose and efficient Council services 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.

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
- Awaab's Law 2025

10 Financial Implications

10.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of the information outlined in this report.

10.2 The Programme of Works for 2026-27 report was approved by HNL Committee on the 10th March 2026, which included budgeted provision of circa £16 million to address major capital works programmes and the remedial works identified through the Decent Homes Surveys.

11 Timetable for Implementation

11.1 Not applicable.

12 Background Papers

12.1 There are none.