

**Report of the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Asset Management, Resources and Personnel Policy, and Leisure and Health.**

**STOCK CONDITION SURVEY FOR 2024/25**

1. Purpose of Report

To seek Cabinet approval for an additional budget of £100,000 to implement a stock condition survey programme to understand the condition of Council owned residential stock and inform the delivery of the modernisations programme.

2. Recommendation

**Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that a revenue budget of £100,000 to implement a stock condition survey programme be approved. The cost of the programme will be met from Housing Revenue Account (HRA) working balances.**

3. Detail

The Asset Management Strategy (2022) delivered by Ark Consultancy highlighted the need for using stock condition data to develop a 3-5-year investment programme and to use the data to replace the current contract to deliver the modernisations programme in March 2025.

The need for the stock condition surveys has been further identified within the Asset Management Service Improvement Plan undertaken in October 2023 by the Head of Service for Asset Management & Development.

Legislation changes in the form of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 lays foundations for changes to how social housing is managed with regard non-compliance and poor performance. It includes increased regulation of social landlords and new rules for protecting tenants from serious hazards in their home. By including Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) within in these stock condition surveys, this should offer a pro-active approach to mitigating risk to the Council by identifying hazards, particularly around damp and mould within our housing portfolio and ensure we comply with the Decent Homes standard.

Without this additional budget the Council will be unable to implement an accurate investment programme across its portfolio, miss an opportunity to protect itself from potential litigation, reputational damage and provide decent homes for our tenants.

The additional budget request will facilitate between 1150-1250 stock condition surveys across the 24/25 financial year. The Council will review the remaining surveys to be undertaken in 25/26 with a view towards achieving a 100% stock

condition surveys before moving towards a rolling 20% stock condition survey ensuring all of our residents homes are inspected at least once every five years.

#### 4. Key Decision

This report is a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 and is a decision made or to be made in connection with the discharge of an Executive function which is likely to:

1. be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards or electoral divisions in the Council's area.

#### 5. Updates from Scrutiny

Not Applicable.

#### 6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

There is currently no budgetary provision in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the Stock Condition Survey programme in 2024/25. This revenue development was not included in the regular budget setting process due to the unknown cost of the programme at the time of budget submissions and the ongoing review of current data held by the Council not being completed in time.

If Members are minded to support the proposal, a one-off revenue development of £100,000 will be required to implement a stock condition survey programme in 2024/25. This would be financed from HRA working balances. A budget to support the remaining surveys to be undertaken in 2025/26 and beyond as an annual rolling stock condition survey (20% of all dwellings per annum) will be considered as part of 2025/26 budget setting process.

Whilst acknowledging that HRA working balances are under pressure, it is anticipated that stock condition surveys will provide the benefits which should lead to financial savings going forward:

- Savings on repairs as kitchens, bathrooms, doors, windows are replaced at the end of life or in such disrepair that would otherwise result in numerous minor repairs.
- Savings in energy for tenants as windows and doors are replaced to make properties more energy efficient
- Capturing any data around damp and mould that could be referred to the Repairs team for resolution and minimising complaints

- Ensuring that the Council improves the number of decent homes it owns and provides and maintains stock for the long term

Ensuring that works provided to the modernisation contractor under a planned maintenance programme are necessary and achieve value for money and do not result in works not being completed or unnecessary component replacements

#### 7. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

The Social Housing Regulation Act (2023) sets out the regulatory regime for social housing. The Regulator for Social Housing has a specific expectation that social landlords will have an accurate record at an individual property level on the condition of their stock, based on a physical inspection of all homes and that this is kept up to date. Ensuring compliance with the Decent Homes Guidance is a requirement also put on the Council.

#### 8. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

Not Applicable

#### 9. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows:

Not Applicable

#### 10. Climate Change Implications

The climate change implications are contained within the report.

#### 11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain OFFICIAL (SENSITIVE) information. There are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

#### 12. Equality Impact Assessment

Not Applicable

#### 13. Background Papers

Nil.