

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development

Achieving Decent, Good Quality and Safe Homes

1. Purpose of Report

To inform Cabinet of the current progress of planned maintenance works and procurement of services to enable the Council to meet the Decent Homes Standard and the new Consumer Standards relating to the Safety and Quality Standard.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to NOTE:

- 1. The Council's efforts in delivering planned maintenance works to meet the Decent Homes Standard and the new Consumer Standards.**
- 2. That the Council is currently re-procuring its planned maintenance services to commence from April 2025.**
- 3. The current level of Decent Homes is 98%**

3. Detail

The Council owns 4,363 rented homes within the Borough. The Council also provides planned maintenance services via s20 consultation to 316 leasehold properties of which 309 are located in the south of the Borough with the remaining seven properties being split between Eastwood, Kimberley and Nuthall.

There are 348 low rise blocks (three-storey) and communal areas that come under fire risk assessment requirements and nil high rise blocks. All residential blocks will attract external and internal cyclical works (e.g. decorating, flooring, roof works). 80% of the FRA's have been completed and an additional contractor has been employed in order to complete the FRA's by the end of September 2024.

The Council owns a significant level of responsibility towards its rented housing in relation to meeting the Decent Homes Standard, and the new Consumer Standards. The stock is currently 98% compliant with the standard. Over the course of the last 12 months it has implemented a service improvement plan resulting in improvements to meet both Decent Homes and the Consumer Standards including the procurement of its planned maintenance services.

Appendix 1 which provides additional detail on the following:

1. A breakdown of the location of Council owned homes by ward
2. An introduction to the Consumer Standards as part of the Social Housing (Regulations) Act 2023
3. Planned Maintenance Programme

4. EPC Programme
5. Fire Risk and Asbestos Management

Key performance measures to achieve Decent Homes and the Consumer Standards in relation to Safety and Quality are provided as an action plan in **Appendix 2**.

4. Key Decision

Not applicable.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

Not applicable.

6. Financial Implications

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

The cost and financing of the Council's housing maintenance programme is provided through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The HRA revenue estimates and capital programme are agreed as part of the annual budget setting process. There are no additional financial implications for the Council at this stage with costs being contained within existing budgets. Any significant budget implications in the future, over and above virement limits, would require approval by Cabinet.

7. Legal Implications

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

As a landlord, the Council is under a statutory obligation to carry out repair works in respect of properties it lets out to its assured Tenants. Under section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, it has a duty to keep in repair and proper working order the structure and the exterior of the residential properties it owns as well as certain installations for the supply of water, gas, and electricity. The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 lays foundations for changes to how social housing is managed. It includes increased regulation of social landlords and new rules for protecting tenants from serious hazards in their homes. There are a number of provisions to enhance the powers of both tenants and the Regulator of Social Housing. The effect of the Fire Safety Act 2021 is to require fire risk assessments of buildings with two or more sets of domestic premises to be updated to take account of structure, external walls and doors, if they have not already done so - the Fire Safety Act 2021 amends The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to bring this into effect. The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, which implement most of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations, requires 'responsible persons' of mid and high-rise blocks of

flats to provide information to fire and rescue services to “assist them with operational planning and provide additional safety measures”. All multi-occupied residential buildings, residents should now be provided with fire safety instructions and information on fire doors. All of the above will assist the Council in achieving decent, good quality and safe homes for all of its’ Tenants.

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

Improving the energy efficiency of homes is essential with regards to addressing climate change implications. Achieving an EPC rating of C or above ensures that properties consume less energy, thereby reducing carbon emissions. Currently, 59% of council properties meet this standard, indicating significant progress. However, substantial efforts are required to meet the 2030 target for all council homes.

11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

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

12. Equality Impact Assessment

As this is not a change to policy or a new policy an equality impact assessment is not included.

13. Background Papers

Nil.

Appendix 1

The table below lists the location of Council owned homes by ward.

Table 1: Council properties by ward

Ward	Rented Homes
Stapleford	923
Chilwell	909
Beeston	874
Eastwood	697
Nuthall	274
Bramcote	163
Kimberley	125
Newthorpe	108
Watnall	84
Brinsley	62
Toton	54
Awsworth	36
Trowell	33
Cossall	21
TOTAL	4363

Following the introduction of The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 the Regulator of Social Housing can take action against social landlords where people are at risk and hold landlords to account with regular 'In Depth Assessments' (IDA). It introduced new social housing Consumer Standards (as at 1 April 2024) as part of the Social Housing Regulators framework. These standards are assessed as either C1, C2 or C3 with C1 being the highest achievable rating.

The four standards that are classified as 'consumer' are as follows:

1. *Safety and Quality Standard* – which requires landlords to provide safe and good quality homes and landlord services to tenants.
2. *Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard* – which requires landlords to be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, when necessary, influence

decision making and hold their landlord to account. This standard incorporates Tenant Satisfaction Measure requirements.

3. *Neighbourhood and Community Standard* – which requires landlords to engage with other relevant parties so that tenants can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods and feel safe in their homes.
4. *Tenancy Standard* – which sets requirements for the fair allocation and letting of homes and for how those tenancies are managed and ended by landlords

All areas of the Consumer Standards are relevant to the Asset Management and Development Service area but it is mostly aligned with the *Safety and Quality Standard* and the below commentary provides an overview of the level of compliance in this area.

The required outcomes to meet this standard are below:

1. Stock quality

Registered providers must have an accurate, up to date and evidenced understanding of the condition of their homes that reliably informs their provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for tenants.

2. Decency

Registered providers must ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in section five of the Government's Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard unless exempted by the regulator.

3. Health and safety

When acting as landlords, registered providers must take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of tenants in their homes and associated communal areas.

4. Repairs, maintenance and planned improvements

Registered providers must provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which they are responsible.

5. Adaptations

Registered providers must assist tenants seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services.

Although the Council is currently not fully meeting the above thresholds it has developed a strategic approach which is tracked through monthly Housing Improvement Board meetings which has seen significant changes to the structure of the team and changes to the delivery of services as the Council follows its route

map towards achieving C1 status. The Council has also met with the Social Housing Regulator and provided assurance around key measures on stock condition surveys, fire risk assessments and asbestos surveys.

The Council's current position on meeting the Consumer Standards relating to services being delivered by the Asset Management and Development Service are as follows:

Stock quality

Guidance from the Social Housing Regulator as contained within the Consumer Standards advised on the need to undertake regular inspection to our homes. This is particularly important to ensure instances of damp, mould and condensation can be identified early and dealt with accordingly.

A programme to achieve 100% actual (as opposed to cloned) stock condition surveys and then a rolling programme of 20% per year to ensure the Council can achieve a visit to each home once every five years is now underway.

The Council has recently instructed a contractor to carry out our stock condition surveys and have completed 785 out of 4,363 stock condition surveys to date (18%). Although the Council expects to achieve 1,250 surveys by March 2025, the current performance means the Council cannot yet demonstrate an accurate record at an individual property level of the condition of homes based on a physical assessment of all homes. The Council expects to achieve 100% stock condition surveys by September 2026.

HHSRS (Health and Hazard Safety Rating System) categories are now being captured within the stock conditions surveys and any damp related works are being referred to the Repairs team for remediation works.

Decency

The Council is currently delivering its planned maintenance programme to meet the Decent Homes Standard. The current number of homes that meet the Decent Homes Standard is 98% with the planned programme shown in table 2 and a new five-year programme to be delivered from April 2025 to enable the Council to achieve and maintain 100% in the Decent Homes Standard.

A decent home meets the following four criteria:

1. It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing

Dwellings below this standard are those defined as unfit under section 604 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by the 1989 Local Government and Housing Act), namely a property to be free from "serious" disrepair and to be free from dampness prejudicial to the health of the occupants.

2. It is in a reasonable state of repair

Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those where either:

- one or more of the key building components are old and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair; or
- two or more of the other building components are old and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair.

3. It has reasonably modern facilities and services

Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those which lack three or more of the following:

- a reasonably modern kitchen (20 years old or less);
- a kitchen with adequate space and layout;
- a reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less);
- an appropriately located bathroom and WC;
- adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem);
- adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.

4. It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

This criterion requires dwellings to have both an effective insulation and efficient heating.

Building components (as defined by Decent Homes Guidance)

Building components are the structural parts of a dwelling (e.g. wall structure, roof structure), other external elements (e.g. roof covering, chimneys) and internal services and amenities (e.g. kitchens, heating systems). A full list of building components is given in Annex A of this guidance. Key building components are those which, if in poor condition, could have an immediate impact on the integrity of the building and cause further deterioration in other components. They are the external components plus internal components that have potential safety implications and include:

- external walls
- roof structure and covering
- windows/doors
- chimneys
- central heating boilers
- gas fires
- storage heaters
- plumbing
- electrics

Lifts are not considered to be a key component unless the lift or the lift shafts have a direct effect upon the integrity of the building.

If any of these components are old and need replacing, or require immediate major repair, then the dwelling is not in a reasonable state of repair and remedial action is required.

Planned Maintenance Programme

The below table illustrates the performance against our planned maintenance programme for 2024/25 to achieve the Decent Homes Standard that was issued to our contractors for delivery this year.

Table 2: No. of forecasted component replacements for 2024/25

Work Stream	Forecast	Complete 01/08/24
Heating Replacement (Planned)	135	54
Heating Replacement (Unplanned)	100	58
Kitchens	75	35
Bathrooms	75	15
Roofs	45	22
Doors	51	27
Windows	252	206

The five-year planned maintenance programme for delivery in April 2025 will focus on Decent Homes, Retrofit and fire remediation works. The Council will ensure fire remediation works is given priority to ensure fire safety in residential blocks.

EPC Programme

As part of the wider ambition to meet the 'net-zero-carbon' challenge by 2050, social housing providers have been set a target to attain a C rating on Energy Performance Certificates by 2030.

To inform its retrofit and future planned maintenance programmes the Council has completed 3,668 of 4,363 (84%) Energy performance certificates (EPC) with the remaining EPCs to be completed by 30 September 2024 (properties without an EPC after this point will be those with no access). Capital works will work with Housing Services to gain access to these properties. The Council will consolidate these EPCs against works already completed and ensure it is ready to meet this target through a renewed retrofit and planned maintenance programme to be delivered through to 2030.

The table below shows a high number of dwellings at EPC D and below and will require investment to achieve EPC C where such grant funding for retrofit is not forthcoming. The Council will be working to identify and prioritise those properties for works to include within the five-year planned maintenance programme.

Planned works have already been done to circa 400 hundred properties since their last EPC, which now require a new EPC, meaning the Council's position is better than these figures suggest. The table below shows those properties where works have been done, the majority of which are now expected to achieve at least EPC C.

Energy efficiency improvement works are planned to 124 properties this year through the Social Housing Decarbonisation and Devolution projects.

Table 3: No. of properties by EPC band

EPC	01/08/24	% of stock	Awaiting new EPC
A	2	0.05%	
B	61	1.66%	
C	2101	57.3%	
D	1342	36.6%	276
E	146	3.98%	111
F	13	0.35%	8
G	3	0.08%	3
Total	3668		

In order to continue to deliver planned maintenance works within the ethos of value for money the Council has commenced the re-procurement of key services (kitchens, bathrooms, roofing and windows and doors) with Procure Plus, the framework provider, with key contracts to commence in April 2025 with a costed five-year programme for delivery.

Lastly, to further reinforce the Council's commitment to meeting the Decent Homes Standard and the Consumer Standards the Council will be undertaking a full review on ensuring it has the necessary policies and procedures in place to ensure that the Council is working towards these standards within Asset Management and Development.

Fire Risk and Asbestos Management

Fire Risk Assessments are currently 80% complete for all 348 residential blocks and communal areas that require one. The Council has employed an additional

contractor in order complete the remaining 68 FRA's by the end of September. In undertaking this piece of work it has resulted in circa 4,500 actions and identified a cost implication to meeting fire remediation works. With an existing budget of £500,000 the Council will seek additional budget needs in year and as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process where required to deliver fire remedial works.

Asbestos surveys to communal areas are at 93% and the Council expect to achieve 100% by Q3 2024/25. This is a key compliance area for the Social Housing Regulator and will be closely monitored to achieve full compliance.

Asbestos management surveys to Council rented housing built post 1999 are underway for the purposes of taking reasonable steps to identify asbestos, keeping up-to-date records of location and condition of asbestos containing materials and assessing and managing risks (as required by the Health and Safety Executive).

The Council has appointed an asbestos contractor to undertake these surveys on its behalf and 835 out of 4,272 (19%) asbestos management surveys required have thus far been completed. This is inadequate to fulfil the Council's obligations as a landlord and further work is being undertaken to procure an additional contractor to compile and manage a functioning asbestos register.

Fire and Asbestos Compliance Officer Role

The Council will be proposing a new permanent role to be established within the Asset Management and Development team. The remit of the role will be to act as the Fire and Asbestos Compliance Officer and to achieve key performance measures to ensure compliance in these areas.

Appendix 2

Key performance measures to achieve Decent Homes and the Consumer Standards in relation to Safety and Quality

Function	KPI	Action	Target Date	Lead Officer
Fire Risk	Resolve all fire actions	To review, action and close down outstanding actions from FRAs	31 March 2025	Compliance Officer
Fire Risk	Complete Fire Policy and Procedure review	A full policy and process review is undertaken on the Council's approach to fire safety across its portfolio	31 March 2025	Compliance Officer
Fire Risk	Complete internal audit on Fire remedial work	Internal audits are undertaken to ensure internal requirements of testing and monitoring are happening and are compliant	31 March 2025	Chief Audit and Control Officer
Asbestos	Complete Asbestos Policy and Procedure review	A full policy and process review is undertaken on the Council's approach to fire safety across its portfolio	31 March 2025	Head of Health, Safety and Emergency Planning
Asbestos	Implement an asbestos register	Review approach to maintaining an asbestos register	31 March 2025	Compliance Officer
Asbestos	Provision of asbestos awareness training to all relevant staff	Asbestos awareness training is rolled out to all staff within the Asset Management and Development Team and Housing Services Team	31 March 2025	Compliance Officer
Capital Works	100% Decent Homes	Ensure five year programme achieves and maintains 100% Decent Homes	31 March 2025	Capital Works Manager (Vacant)
Capital Works	100% stock condition surveys	Ensure all residential homes have a stock condition survey	1 September 2026	Capital Works Manager (Vacant)
Capital Works	All properties at EPC C and above	Ensure all EPC D and below have been programmed or works to achieve EPC C	1 January 2030	Project Manager