

Portfolio for Housing Councillor V C Smith

Report to Council – 15 July 2026

Tenant Engagement

Last month, the Modernisations Working Group met to review the choices tenants are offered when new kitchens are installed. Tenants were invited to look at options for handles, worktops, cupboards and tiles versus panelling for splashbacks. They were shown what is currently offered to tenants as well as other options that could be included in next years choices.

Our Complaints Panel continues to offer valuable input into our Complaints processes, ensuring the Housing Service learn from complaints that are made. At the last meeting they made recommendations regarding the complaint acknowledgement letters and the approach to awarding compensation was discussed.

Over the summer months our Engagement team will be delivering 'pop-up' events within our communities, encouraging our tenants to speak to us both to ask any questions and provide their feedback on our services.

Lifeline

In addition to providing telecare services for our own tenants, we are proud that we are able to offer all residents of the borough support via our Lifeline Service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This service is allowing 775 residents to live independently in their own homes. Over the last 12 months we have completed 182 new installations. All customers receive a home visit from our Lifeline Co-ordinator who installs the system and provides advice on the service.

Support for tenants

Building upon the success of weekly surgeries at CEDARS in Eastwood, Housing have begun to offer monthly housing surgeries at Montrose Court in Stapleford. Initially, these will be offer advice on tenancy matters and rent. It is hoped that this will be built upon and sessions can be offered covering more areas and more regularly later this year.

Rent arrears

At the end of the 2025/26 financial year, the Income Collection Team finished the year with £164,772 of total rent arrears. When comparing this to the end of the 2024/2025 financial year this is a decrease of £17,199 in arrears, even with the increase in rents this year. The achievement of 100.25% rent collected means the team have collected the rent equivalent to the full annual debit as well as reducing the arrears which were outstanding at the start of the financial year.

The reduction in arrears is an excellent achievement, especially given the continuing increase in the cost of living. The Income Team continues to work closely with our tenants offering assistance through services such as our Financial Inclusion. They are working hard to sustain tenancies, demonstrated by the fact that during the year there were no evictions for rent arrears.

Homelessness

The financial year 2025/26 introduced a new key performance indicator for the Housing Options team - Total number of nights bed and breakfast accommodation is used. Based on 2024/25 usage a target was set to reduce this to 1500 nights in total. The team significantly reduced the number of days to 546. All bed and breakfast placements were made as no other suitable accommodation was available at that time. As soon as space becomes available in our own temporary accommodation or other suitable temporary accommodation, we work to move people out of bed and breakfast as soon as possible.

At the end of the 2025/26 financial year, the Housing Options Team achieved an 83.2% success rate in intervening or preventing a case of homeless, before needing to accept a relief or main duty. This is an increase of 4.8% from the end of 2024-25 financial year and significantly above the target of 70%. Throughout the year the Housing Options Team prevented 537 instances of homelessness.

Regulator of Social Housing

We continue to engage with the regulator, meeting with them on a monthly basis. With their support we are achieving actions set out in our Service Improvement Plan to address the concerns raised. We have begun a lessons learnt process, ensuring that we address the root cause of all issues to ensure that they will be fully resolved and will not reoccur.

Private Sector Housing

15 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) have been approved with funds committed to undertaking the works required. 21 House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licence have been issued. 2 Prohibition Orders and 1 Improvement Notice for Housing conditions have been served.