

Housing Committee

Wednesday 10 November 2021 at 7.30pm

**Council Chamber
Runnymede Civic Centre, Addlestone**

Members of the Committee

Councillors J Gracey (Chairman), J Hulley (Vice Chairman), A Balkan, J Broadhead, M Cressey, S Mackay, I Mullens, M Nuti, P Snow, and S Whyte.

Mrs J Hill (co-opted non-voting member) for the purposes affecting Council housing tenants

In accordance with Standing Order 29.1, any Member of the Council may attend the meeting of this Committee, but may speak only with the permission of the Chairman of the committee, if they are not a member of this Committee.

AGENDA

Notes:

- 1) **The following Measures to comply with current Covid guidelines are in place:**
 - **restricting the number of people that can be in the Council Chamber to 60**
 - **temperature check via the undercroft for Members/Officers and Main Reception for the public**
 - **NHS track and trace register, app scan is next to the temperature check**
 - **masks to be worn when moving around the offices**
 - **masks can be kept on whilst sitting in the Council Chamber if individuals wish**
 - **use of hand sanitisers positioned outside and inside the Council Chamber**
 - **increased ventilation inside the Council Chamber**

- 2) Any report on the Agenda involving confidential information (as defined by section 100A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972) must be discussed in private. Any report involving exempt information (as defined by section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972), whether it appears in Part 1 or Part 2, may be discussed in private but only if the Committee so resolves.

- 3) The relevant 'background papers' are listed after each report in Part 1. Enquiries about any of the agenda reports and background papers should be directed in the first instance to
Andrew Finch, Democratic Services Section, Law and Governance Business Centre, Runnymede Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel: Direct Line: 01932 425623). (Email: Andrew.Finch@runnymede.gov.uk).
- 4) Agendas and Minutes are available on a subscription basis. For details, please ring Mr B A Fleckney on 01932 425620. Agendas and Minutes for all the Council's Committees may also be viewed on www.runnymede.gov.uk.
- 5) In the unlikely event of an alarm sounding, members of the public should leave the building immediately, either using the staircase leading from the public gallery or following other instructions as appropriate.

6) **Filming, Audio-Recording, Photography, Tweeting and Blogging of Meetings**

Members of the public are permitted to film, audio record, take photographs or make use of social media (tweet/blog) at Council and Committee meetings provided that this does not disturb the business of the meeting. If you wish to film a particular meeting, please liaise with the Council Officer listed on the front of the Agenda prior to the start of the meeting so that the Chairman is aware and those attending the meeting can be made aware of any filming taking place.

Filming should be limited to the formal meeting area and not extend to those in the public seating area.

The Chairman will make the final decision on all matters of dispute in regard to the use of social media audio-recording, photography and filming in the Committee meeting.

List of Matters for Consideration

Part I

Matters in respect of which reports have been made available for public inspection

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PART II

Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection.

a) Exempt Information

15. Surrey Towers Update

b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

| TERM | EXPLANATION |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1-4-1 receipts | A proportion of retained RTB sale receipts that must be used by the authority to help provide new social housing. |
| Affordable Housing | Affordable Housing is the generic term which includes social rented, affordable rented and products such as shared ownership and rent-to-buy and is provided by local authorities and registered providers such as housing associations. |
| Affordable Rent | Affordable Rent must be no more than 80% of market rent |
| Benefit cap | A Government limit on the total amount of benefit, including Housing Benefit, payable to people aged 16 to 64 who are not working. |
| CBL | Choice Based Lettings system allows Housing Register applicants to 'bid' for available council and housing association properties online. |
| CHaRMM | Community Harm and Risk Management Meetings |
| Decent Homes Standard | A Decent Home meets the criteria for statutory minimum standard, state of repair, provision of facilities and services and thermal comfort required by MHCLG. |
| DFG | Disabled Facilities Grants are mandatory, means tested grants to provide adaptations such as shower rooms, ramps and stair lifts to disabled people who can be owner occupiers or private or social tenants. |
| DHP | Discretionary Housing Payments can top up the housing costs of Housing Benefit and UC claimants, for example to make up a rent shortfall due to the 'benefit cap' or 'spare room subsidy'. Awards are made in accordance with the Council's DHP policy. Payments are subsidised by Government with additional funding from the HRA. |
| DWP | The Department for Work and Pensions. |
| FRA | Fire Risk Assessment |
| H-CLIC | Homelessness Case Level Information Collection |
| HMO | House in multiple occupation. |
| HQN | Housing Quality Network |
| HRA | Housing Revenue Account. The statutory account that sets out expenditure and income arising from provision of social housing by the local authority as a landlord and is ring fenced from other council activities. |
| IRL | Independent Retirement Living is the brand for Runnymede's sheltered accommodation for older people. |
| LHA | Local Housing Allowance is the Housing Benefit entitlement for private sector tenants, based on a household's bedroom requirements. It is applied to areas known as Broad Rental Market Areas and determined by calculating the 30 th percentile of market rents for each area (i.e. 3 in 10 properties should be at or below the LHA level). |
| MHCLG | Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| New Homes Bonus | The New Homes Bonus has been paid each year by Government, based on the number of new homes within an area when the Council Tax extract is submitted in October with additional payments for new affordable homes and a reduction for long term empty properties. |
| PSL | Private Sector Landlord. |
| PRC | Pre-reinforced concrete (non-traditionally built) properties. |
| RCRA | Runnymede Council Residents Association. |
| RP | Registered providers of social housing including; local authority landlords and housing associations |
| RTB | Right to Buy legislation and regulations giving secure tenants of councils and some housing associations tenants the right to buy the home they are living in, at a discount. |
| S. 106 | Section 106 agreements are a legally binding agreement between the Planning authority and a landowner or developer in association with the granting of planning permission, often requiring a contribution to infrastructure and sometimes affordable housing – which can be on site or by way of a commuted sum. |
| SHMA | The Strategic Housing Market Assessment provides an evidence base for assessing the need and demand of future housing supply. |
| Shared Accommodation Rate | The level of LHA (Housing Benefit) that applies to single people in the private rented sector who are aged under 35 years. |
| Social Housing | Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers |
| Social Sector Size Criteria | Also colloquially known as “the bedroom tax” which was introduced in 2013 and which reduces Housing Benefit to working age claimants who are assessed as having a spare room. |
| Universal Credit | This benefit is gradually replacing a number of benefits including Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit etc. and in most cases is paid four weekly in arrears direct to the applicant. |

1. **Fire Precautions**

The Chairman will read the Fire Precautions, which set out the procedures to be followed in the event of fire or other emergency.

2. **Notification of Changes to Committee Membership**

3. **Minutes**

To confirm and sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 September 2021 (Appendix A) as a correct record.

Appendix A

Runnymede Borough Council

HOUSING COMMITTEE

8 September 2021 at 7:30pm

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Members of the Committee present | Councillors J Gracey (Chairman), J Hulley (Vice-Chairman), A Alderson, A Balkan, J Broadhead, T Burton, M Cressey, M Nuti and P Snow Mrs J Hill (Runnymede Council Residents' Association Representative – co-opted non-voting member) |
| Members of the Committee absent | Councillor S Mackay |
| Non Members of the Committee present | Councillors R Bromley, R King |

178 NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Groups mentioned below had notified the Chief Executive of their wish that the changes listed below be made to the membership of the Committee. The changes were for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting and thereafter the Councillors removed would be reappointed.

| <u>Group</u> | <u>Remove</u> | <u>Appoint instead</u> |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Lib Democrat RIRG | Cllr S Whyte Cllr I Mullens | Cllr T Burton Cllr A Alderson |

The Chief Executive had given effect to the change to Committee membership in accordance with section 16(2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

179 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 June 2021 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

180 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

181 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

182 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2021-2026

As the Housing Business Unit increases its development activity to achieve an initial aspiration of 125 units over 5 years, the Head of Housing and Business Development

advised that a Development Strategy was necessary to define the aspirations and processes within which development would be initiated, approved, financed and delivered.

The strategy would ensure that HRA developments and acquisitions were identified, progressed, and delivered within parameters approved by Housing Committee, and would include making sure all new properties would be built or refurbished to an approved standard and value for money was achieved on all schemes.

In response to why young people and the elderly took up a lot of one bedroom places, the Head of Housing and Business Development replied that the figures would always naturally be distorted by homelessness and downsizing.

Resolved that –

Members approved the Housing Revenue Account Development Strategy 2021-2026.

183 **OLDER PEOPLE STRATEGY**

Further to approval to go out to consultation at the previous Housing Committee, the Corporate Head of Housing confirmed that 108 responses were received in relation to the older people strategy, with the results demonstrating that residents were generally happy with the vision, whilst some amendments would be made to reflect feedback.

One of the drivers to updating the strategy was there were embryonic signs of low demand within some of the retirement living accommodation, which is something the department was keen to nip in the bud and ensure that the service provided was of good quality and there was a clear pathway into older people accommodation.

A sizeable investment was being requested from Committee, but this would improve the quality of the offer for older people and modernise the support service and provide an offer the Council could be proud of.

The Committee Chairman was pleased that officers were boosting engagement, adding that there was no one size fits all policy. Furthermore, where no clear results were evident further consultations would be undertaken.

The Corporate Head of Housing went on to explain the consultation method, advising that officers had written to lots of individuals and organisations and held a series of events to try and gauge genuine feedback. However, the approach to consultations was being developed, and a report on tenant engagement strategy was on the forward plan for a future meeting.

The issue of consultations would be discussed at an upcoming Constitution Member Working Party, that would see all Members informed of all consultations, as well as a webpage dedicated to consultations.

The Corporate Head of Housing confirmed there was lots of dialogue and cross-working with Planning and Economic Development, looking at housing needs changes and how that was reflected in new developments.

Resolved that –

Members approved the Housing Service – Older People Strategy recognising that this work alongside Decent Homes work – will lead to a significant upgrade in the quality of accommodation Runnymede Borough Council provides for older people living in our Independent Retirement Living.

184 HOUSING TECHNICAL SERVICES DAY-TO-DAY POLICY

Further to the draft policy coming to the previous Housing Committee, the Head of Housing Technical Services advised that a consultation took place over the summer, with over 400 different stakeholders notified and 37 responses received.

The draft policy had been discussed at length at a recent Member Working Party.

The existing policy had not been updated for some time and lacked specific detail. Some of the aims of the new policy would see new repair timescales for emergency and routine works, appointments listed as morning or afternoon, and greater detail around who is responsible for what repair.

Budget provisions were already in place, with no increase in staff or budget required.

Resolved that –

Members approved the Housing Technical Service Day to Day Repairs Policy.

185 REQUEST TO APPROVE PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES

The Head of Housing Technical Services advised that the purpose of the report was to provide detail about the procurement activity to bring the Council up to decent homes standard. The report listed proposed activity for the following 12-18 months.

Some of the work expected for the next five years included the replacement of over 2,000 boilers and two commercial boilers, as well as re-wiring contracts, roof and window replacement, Surrey Towers roof replacement and fire door replacement.

A range of procurement methods would be under consideration, including framework providers, but this would depend on the type of contract.

The Chair of the Committee emphasised that this was in principle rather than final sign off, and where applicable the Committee's approval would always be sought.

Whilst praising the officers' work, a Councillor voiced frustration of continuing to use contractors who had not previously provided value for money. Officers advised that whilst the team were building up competence and expertise in-house, using external consultants was sometimes unavoidable, although they would be used as little as possible.

Furthermore, Committee approval had previously been received for a managed service provider to deliver works over the next five years, which would pick up much of the work described in the report. This would soon be going out to tender, and an extremely thorough procurement exercise was underway, and each bidder would be asked to explain how they would support local businesses as part of that exercise.

In response to the number of fire doors not fully compliant, Members were advised that whenever changes were made to a door or it became damaged, it was more cost effective to replace the entire door than repair it.

Members were keen to see environmental issues taken into account as part of all future procurement exercises, which officers would follow up on. Furthermore it was expected that the Council's existing pipework infrastructure was already hydrogen ready.

Resolved that –

Members approved in principle the procurement of the new contracts listed within the report.

186 UPGRADE OF HOUSING IT SYSTEM

Following the initial report on the IT upgrade at June's Housing Committee, the Corporate Head of Housing advised that since that meeting work had been undertaken to understand how resources were being spent, as well as associated costs.

Furthermore it was felt that the sizeable sum being requested was to make up for a significant underspend in the area over the past twenty years.

The Corporate Head of Housing added that he felt there was over £1m cashable efficiencies and considerable non-cashable efficiencies to be made associated with this, which had now been articulated in the report following feedback from the recent Service & Digital Transformation Member Working Party.

To demonstrate how badly needed the upgrade was, the Committee Chairman advised that following the Regulator of Social Housing notice in October 2019, the Housing department were unaware whether they were meeting data as opposed to not meeting it – such was the siloed and disparate nature of the systems currently in place.

A Member added that having a cloud based system helped to prevent against cyber attacks, and also suggested benchmarking the required capital costs against a percentage of the revenue – this would help understand the extent of the IT costs.

Resolved that –

Members approved and recommended to Corporate Management Committee the following:

- i) A supplementary capital estimate in the sum of £116,694 to be used to procure and implement essential new modules within the ongoing Housing NEC system upgrade.**
- ii) A supplementary revenue estimate in the sum of £13,500 for support and maintenance of new mobile capabilities within the recommended phase 2 project.**
- iii) A supplementary capital estimate in the sum of £129,688 to be used to recruit additional internal resources for the implementation.**

- iv) **A waiver to contract standing orders to permit the additional services not contracted for in the original contract with Northgate as the uplift required for additional services is greater than 10% of the original contract value.**
- v) **Subject to approval of the procurement strategy; authorise the Corporate Head of Law and Governance to enter or execute under seal any contractual documentation to fulfil the change contract being recommended.**

187 **HOUSING STAFFING RESOURCES**

The Head of Housing and Business Development confirmed that the report covered a number of proposed changes within the Housing staffing establishment to reflect changes in duties and responsibilities.

This was subject to HR agreeing and benchmarking all of the proposed job descriptions.

The Committee Chairman added that this would help build on the internal skillset, and also reward the staff who were performing well. Some posts would go across bands so the Council were not fixed to paying higher rates, but would also reflect experience and expertise.

The Head of Housing and Business Development spoke of the challenges of recruitment given the lack of skillset in the area and the fact that Runnymede is a small authority which means less scope for progression, and was close to London but not offering London wages.

Resolved that –

- i) **Approval for the recruitment to the post of Housing Maintenance Inspector (Empty Homes) at grade 9**
- ii) **Approval to the recruitment to the Repairs Manager role at grade 10**
- iii) **The Allocation Team Leader post was regraded to 9/10 to reflect the supervisory responsibility and attain parity with other roles in the section.**
- iv) **Approved the creation of an Estate Services Team Leader at Grade 9/10 to manage the Council's Estate Wardens.**
- v) **Permission granted for the roles of Housing Services Manager and Homelessness, Housing Advice and Allocations Manager to be regraded. Pay scales may change from SMA to SMB.**
- vi) **Approved a supplementary revenue estimate in the sum of £69,700 (at top of scale and including on-costs) as follows: General Fund £8,500, HRA £61,200.**
- vii) **Corporate Management Committee be requested to approve a supplementary revenue estimate in the sum of £8,500 for the general fund element.**

188 **SURREY TOWERS UPDATE**

The Head of Housing Technical Services reported that progress on works at Surrey Towers in conjunction with the passive fire and kitchen and bathroom upgrades had

progressed well since commencement of the contract, notwithstanding a slower than anticipated start due to lack of materials.

The addition of kitchen and bathroom upgrades had increased the time required to 52 weeks, with an expected completion date of December 2021. The project was currently on time and on budget.

Further to the discovery of cabling issues in one of the apartments, additional doors, frames and finishing works were found to be unsatisfactory at the time of installation, and additional, urgent work was required to provide a fix due to the fire risk.

Given the nature of the findings approval would be sought from Procurement Board to fully replace the relevant doors, at an expected cost of £260k. This remained within budget, and whilst the safety of tenants was being prioritised, legal options were being considered to address the historic works.

Officers would change the layout of the appendix to include overall programme, key dates, project price and variations.

189 **PURCHASE OF SITE FOR DEVELOPMENT**

The Head of Housing and Business Development updated Members on the acquisition of a site in Chertsey for HRA development.

This land was being purchased from Network Rail, and two outstanding matters remained prior to completion involving the removal of slow worms on the site in line with the ecology requirements, and obtaining title documentation from Network Rail.

The purchase was still in the conveyancing stage, and the legal work had been outsourced to an external company. Officers reassured Members they were in regular contact with the company.

190 **HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Corporate Head of Housing advised that the report related to an annual review of the plan following Committee's approval in March 2021.

The plan was primarily focussed on achieving Decent Homes standard and ensuring health and safety obligations were being adhered to.

Some of the key parts of the report highlight where there is a change in forecasted additional spend, such as for the older people strategy and lift maintenance. However, Committee approval would always be sought for considerable additional expenditure.

The intention would be to continually review the plan as intelligence was received, and keep coming back to Committee to finesse it. Furthermore, the Corporate Head of Housing admitted that historically the Council had not fully utilised available grants to fund development, but this was continually being looked into for additional grants that could be exploited.

Resolved that –

- i) Members supported the aspirations set out within the plan and investment identified to support their delivery.**

- ii) **Members acknowledged the progress made against the actions contained within the plan and consider the additional actions required for effective long-term delivery of the plan.**

191 **CONSULTATION ON THE GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS PITCH ALLOCATIONS POLICY**

The Corporate Head of Housing informed the meeting of the development of a new draft Pitch and Plot Allocation Scheme for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople for the pitches and plots allocated in the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan.

Permission was being sought from both Housing and Planning Committee to go out to consultation.

The item had also been discussed at the recent Housing Member Working Party, and a review of where these pitches had been allocated had been suggested, whilst concerns were raised at the prospect of sub-letting.

The next stage of the consultation would see the Council working alongside individuals and groups who had existing relationships with those affected to ensure a sufficient cross-section of views. Members asked for it to be made clear as part of the consultation that it focussed on how allocations were made rather than where they will be.

Resolved that –

Members approved the draft Pitch and Plot Allocation Scheme for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople for public consultation for a period of six weeks.

192 **URGENT ACTION TAKEN UNDER STANDING ORDER SO42**

The Head of Housing and Business Development updated Members on a successful application made to MHCLG's Rough Sleeping Initiative to fund a housing led scheme for rough sleepers, personalisation budgets and the appointment of full-time staff.

The funding was to be used to introduce rough sleeping initiatives that immediately intervene in and reduce rough sleeping.

193 **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS, 2021/22 Q1**

The Head of Housing and Business Development advised that void performance continued to be poor as the team worked through the backlog of empty properties left by the previous contractor.

The results for quarter 3 were expected to improve significantly. The actual number of void properties had reduced and work was ongoing to improve our own internal processes and maximise use of IT.

Work remained ongoing around gas safety certification, whilst there were minor issues with tenants refusing access or abandoned properties that need to go through the correct process to recover.

The electrical certification was now 93% and the team were working to get into the remaining properties following the summer holidays and multiple attempts to gain access. The next stage would be notifying residents legal proceedings would commence should an appointment not be made.

Some actions for fire assessment works were now overdue, although a contract had been awarded for the urgent actions.

194 **UPDATE ON COMMUNICATION WITH REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING**

The Head of Housing Technical Services advised that the Regulator had been informed of the Council's Decent Home percentage of 61%, and had been informed of the five year plan to bring the submission up to 100%.

A health & safety audit took place earlier this year, and following a recent six month review a better grading had been obtained, with lots of good practise in evidence. This would be shared with the Regulator at the next meeting.

195 **AFGHAN LOCAL EMPLOYED STAFF RELOCATION SCHEME**

Further to the signing off of the SO42 to accept three households into the borough as part of the Afghan Locally Employed staff, the Corporate Head of Housing advised that the arrival of the first household into the borough had been delayed, but they were expected imminently. Government funding was in place to fund the scheme.

Lots of work had gone on to ensure as smooth as possible transition and provided with appropriate support and the necessary facilities such as GP, dentists, etc.

The households would initially be put in temporary accommodation whilst work was ongoing to allow them to set up national insurance and benefits, with a longer-term view to help them seek employment, which might see them remain in the borough or move further afield.

The Corporate Head of Housing confirmed that the families would not be joining the household register or be placed into social housing.

Some Members were keen to see Runnymede take more than three households. The Committee Chair confirmed that three families – regardless of size of family – would be taken on an initial basis with a view to increasing the numbers further down the line, subject to a review on the success of the first phase.

Resolved that –

- i. Members noted the imminent arrival of the first household with Runnymede Borough Council.**
- ii. Members noted that additional households would be received during September.**

196 **ADDITIONAL HOURS FOR DISABLED ADAPTATIONS TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Further to the approval of Community Services Committee to a 30 hour per week Surveyor post to provide the technical functions required for administration of Disabled

Facilities Grants (DFG), the Head of Housing and Business Development advised that the report proposed to increase the post to 37 hours.

The additional cost would be paid from the Housing Revenue Account to facilitate applications for aids and adaptations from Council tenants who were not covered by the DFG regime.

The level of adaptations to HRA properties had reduced as the Council were no longer adapting properties where the tenant was under-occupying the home, but a resource would be required. Sharing this resource with Community Services would increase flexibility.

Resolved that –

(i) The current DFG Surveyor role be extended to 37 hours from 30 hours, with the additional cost, currently £9,087 to be funded by the Housing Revenue Account.

(ii) An HRA Supplementary Revenue Estimate be approved for future budget years.

(The meeting ended at 9:57pm)

Chairman

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

If Members have an interest in an item please record the interest on the form circulated with this Agenda and hand it to the Legal Representative or Democratic Services Officer at the start of the meeting. A supply of the form will also be available from the Democratic Services Officer at meetings.

Members are advised to contact the Council's Legal section prior to the meeting if they wish to seek advice on a potential interest.

Members are reminded that a registrable interest includes their appointment by the Council as the Council's representative to an outside body. Membership of an outside body in their private capacity as a trustee, committee member or in another position of influence thereon should also be declared. Any directorship whether paid or unpaid should be regarded as a disclosable pecuniary interest, and declared.

Members who have previously declared interests which are recorded in the Minutes to be considered at this meeting need not repeat the declaration when attending the meeting. Members need take no further action unless the item in which they have an interest becomes the subject of debate, in which event the Member must leave the room if the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest or other registrable interest and/or the interest could reasonably be regarded as so significant as to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest.

6. Housing Services Fire Risk Management Policy (Housing, Simon Allen)

Synopsis of report:

Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service has identified that whilst corporate policies relating to Health and Safety are in place, a policy specifically relating to Fire Risk Management within Housing Services was required.

The Housing Services Fire Risk Management policy identifies what Housing Services need to do to ensure compliance with the Regulatory (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Fire Safety Act 2021.

The policy clearly identifies roles and responsibilities of staff at all levels of the Housing Service.

Recommendations:

- (i) Subject to the Equality Screening Assessment being reviewed by the Equalities Group and no major implications found which require a full Equality Impact assessment to be undertaken or revisions to the proposed implementation, Members approve the Housing Services Fire Risk Management policy.**
- (ii) In the event that implications are found that would significantly affect the Fire Risk Management Policy, the Head of Housing be authorised, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee, to determine whether the Policy be brought back to Committee to consider any issues raised by the Equalities Screening Assessment.**

1. Context of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to clearly communicate standards of fire risk management throughout our housing stock, for our tenants, staff and contractors.
- 1.2 The Housing Service has produced this document to ensure those affected by our undertaking understand the fire risk management standards that we require across our business.

2. Housing Services Fire Risk Management Policy

- 2.1 Enclosed with this report is the draft Housing Services Fire Risk Management Policy, appendix A. This document has been reviewed by the Housing and Enabling Member Working Group.
- 2.2 Subject to the Equality Screening Assessment being reviewed by the Equalities Group and no major implications found which require a full Equality Impact assessment to be undertaken or revisions to the proposed implementation, it is proposed that this policy will be implemented with immediate effect subject to approval by Housing Committee Members.

3. Policy Framework Implications

- 3.1 The Housing Services Fire Risk Management Policy is one of a suite of policies that will link into the key Housing Services Health and Safety Policy. The current

fire safety legislation places several duties and responsibilities on Runnymede Borough Council and this policy will help Housing Services staff to understand their roles in ensuring the Council adheres to these duties and responsibilities.

3.2 This policy will help Housing Services to ensure the safety of staff, contractors and residents.

3.3 This policy will assist Runnymede Borough Council in ensuring compliance with current legislative duties.

4. Resource implications

4.1 It is practical to assume that the identified training needed of officers will be required following its implementation as there are duties to provide training for employees where required. The identification and provision of some fire safety training is statutory and, therefore, should not delay the implementation of this policy. The budget allocation for this was approved for the financial year 2021/22 and is adequate to facilitate such requests.

5. Legal implications

5.1 The Council is a responsible person under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and as such has a number of duties to adhere to. The Fire Safety Act 2021 has provided clarity relating to some of these duties and added to them.

5.2 This policy outlines how Housing Services will carry out these duties in relation to the Council's housing stock.

6. Equality implications

6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment screening form has been completed and will be considered by the Council's Equalities Impact Assessment group. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 is statutory and, therefore, must be adhered to by all employers, employees and contractors irrespective of any protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

7.1 None

8. Other implications

8.1 Approval of this policy will give further assurance to the Regulator for Social Housing and, also forms part of a limited assurance audit undertaken in late 2020.

9. Conclusions

9.1 Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Services Fire Risk Management policy will assist Housing Services in carrying out their duties under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Fire Safety Act 2021.

- 9.2 It will give clarity for individuals and help them understand their roles and responsibilities and thereby assist all Housing Services staff ensure the Health and Safety of themselves and others in relation to fire risk management.

(To Resolve)

Background papers

Draft Housing Services Fire Risk Management Policy

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING

**HOUSING FIRE RISK
MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Version 3

Document History

Version 1 Approved July 2012

Version 2 Approved September 2017

Version 3 Approved July 2021

Contents

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- 2. Policy Statement**
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- 4. Control**
- 5. Confidentiality, Safeguarding and Equality Duty**
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- 7. Organisation**
- 8. Management of communal areas**
- 9. Mobility Scooters**
- 10. Monitoring, Training and Review**
- 11. APPENDIX A – Block Risk Based Categorisation**

1. Introduction

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 imposes a number of duties upon the council. The Order places a statutory duty (Article 5) on the responsible person to comply with Articles 8 to 22 or by regulations made under Article 24 of the Order.

This policy applies to the social housing stock owned and managed by Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) and looks to address those responsibilities within Housing.

2. Policy Statement

RBC recognises its responsibility as a social landlord to ensure that residents, staff, contractors, visitors to property and property managed by RBC are safeguarded in the event of fire.

As far as is reasonably practical, RBC will do all it can to prevent or minimise the risk of fires starting and spreading in properties managed by RBC. However, as the Council can never be certain that fire will not occur, it will put systems in place to ensure the safety of those residing in or visiting adjacent domestic units. Where necessary these systems will be routinely checked.

Through its Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) process, RBC aims to:

- Evaluate the risk to people from fire.
- Enable the responsible person to determine the necessary fire safety measures required.
- Ensure that the chance of fire occurring in the areas under control of the responsible person is minimised.
- Help ensure that in the event of a fire anywhere in the block, people can, if necessary, use common parts safely to evacuate the building
- Ensure that appropriate managerial arrangements, such as fire procedures and maintenance of fire safety measures are in place.
- Evaluate the risk to people of fire, taking into account existing fire safety measures and to determine whether additional measures are needed.

3. Legislation and Guidance

The following legislation is relevant to the delivery of this policy:

- [The Housing Act 1985](#)
- [The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)
- [Fire Safety Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Building Regulations 2010](#)

- [Construction \(Design and Management\) Regulations 2015](#)
- [Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002](#)
- [The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989](#)

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) applies to:

- The common parts of buildings containing flats and maisonettes, including flat entrance doors
- The common parts of IRL (sheltered) accommodation
- Offices and shops
- Community halls and other community premises

The Order does not apply to purely domestic premises, including flats, maisonettes, bedsits and other residential units occupied by a single household.

The Fire Rescue Authority have a statutory duty to enforce the requirements of the RRO.

The Fire Safety Act 2021 amends parts of the RRO by confirming that duty holders/building owners of buildings containing multiple domestic premises must manage and reduce the risk of fire for:

- The buildings structure and external walls (including cladding, doors, windows and balconies)
- All doors to individual flats that open into common parts
- The external walls of a building, the fire doors to individual flats and those located in common areas are to be assessed as part of the requirement for a fire risk assessment on any given building.
- From now on, the responsible person has a legal responsibility to commission a fire risk assessment with these points being considered.
- It applies to all multi-occupied residential buildings and is not dependent on the height of the building
- It allows the Fire and Rescue service to enforce against non-compliance in relation to the external walls and the individual doors opening onto the common parts of the premises.

Although the Bill received Royal Assent in April it is yet to come into force and be a legal requirement. This will happen once the risk based guidance has been finalised and published which is due to happen in September 2021

RBC will review our Fire risk assessments to ensure they cover external walls and individual entrance doors to bring the FRA's in line with the requirements of the Act.

The following guidance notes are applicable in administering the legislation:

- [Fire Safety Risk Assess – Sleeping Accommodation](#)
- [LACORS National fire safety guidance 08.pdf](#)
- [LGA: Fire Safety Guidance for purpose built flats – amended 2021](#)
- [Building Regulations: Fire safety Approved Document B](#)

4. Control

In order to comply with our responsibility to ensure the safety of our tenants and other from fire, the Council has to establish that it has sufficient control measures in place to minimise the risk of fire occurring and enable the safe evacuation of those affected if it becomes necessary in the event of a fire.

These control measures include:

Conduct Fire Risk Assessments (FRA's) in accordance with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order to all properties and buildings managed by RBC and review these as necessary following any change in activity, process or location. or at least every 1-3 years depending on building type and associated risk of fire, IRL, high rise annual, all medium and low rise 3 yearly. There are four types of FRA, Type 1- Common parts only (non-destructive), Type 2 – Common parts only (destructive), Type 3 - Common parts and flats (non-destructive) and Type 4 – Common parts and flats (destructive).

- Ensure FRA's are suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments of the communal areas in blocks of flats and Independent Retirement Living schemes. They will assess whether risks are adequately controlled and identify further measures which should be taken to eliminate or reduce the risk further.
- Employ suitably qualified and competent fire risk assessors to carry out the FRA's.
- The risk assessments being managed by RBC's Compliance Manager.
- Ensuring the actions arising from the FRA's, will be entered into the interim FRA action spreadsheet and Propeller where they will be tracked and monitored through to completion. In the longer term the data relating to FRA actions will be held within one system used to monitor all Compliance areas including fire safety.
- Carry out intrusive FRA's where justifiable concerns have been identified for example concern regarding structural fire precautions.
- Ensure the FRA's consider the general fire precautions as defined in the RRO which relate to purpose-built blocks of flats:-
 - Measures to reduce the risk of fire and the risk of the spread of fire
 - Means of escape from fire
 - Measures to ensure that escape routes can be safely and effectively used

- An emergency plan, including procedures for residents in the event of a fire
 - Measures to mitigate the effects of fire
-
- To categorise the portfolio of housing into priorities and develop a programme of compliance for both inspection and subsequent good housekeeping and regular maintenance regimes. See appendix A.
 - To communicate to tenants and leaseholders any works arising from risk assessments.
 - To communicate to tenants and leaseholders any significant finding from the FRA and details of the
 - To train all relevant staff on fire risk management.
 - To ensure that premises comply with relevant fire safety legislation and standards.
 - Fire safety incidents will require investigation, in accordance with the incident investigation and reporting policy. Investigation is the responsibility of RBC managers, supported by the Compliance Manager and or the corporate Health and Safety Advisor, for incidents involving RBC residents and staff, visitors, contractors or consultants on premises RBC control.

5. Confidentiality, Safeguarding and Equality Duty

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998 all personal and sensitive information, however received, is treated as confidential. Officers will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information with the consent of the tenant or Leaseholder concerned unless required to by law, or where the information is necessary for the protection of children and/or vulnerable adults in accordance with RBC's Safeguarding policy.

RBC is committed to fulfilling its Public Sector Equality Duty.

6. Responsibilities

Under the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2008 an organisation can be found guilty of corporate manslaughter in situations where there has been a collective failure leading to a gross breach of the duty of care. If an incident occurs that leads to injury or death those making decisions within an organisation will be under significant scrutiny. This will include senior managers and elected members. It is therefore important that managers and members are familiar with the council's obligations and that they monitor the delivery of this policy.

While the responsibility for fire safety management within RBC ultimately remains with the Chief Executive, the delegated responsibility for the delivery of fire safety within domestic properties owned and or managed by RBC is with the Corporate Head of Housing.

7. Organisation

- a. Members are responsible through the committee structure for ensuring that adequate resources are made available for the Council to meet its statutory obligations and it is the Housing Committee who must consider any reasonable request for resources needed to ensure fire safety in the Council's housing properties.
- b. The Chief Executive is deemed to be the responsible person within the organisation and is ultimately responsible for ensuring the implementation of the policy at all levels within the Council.
- c. The Compliance Manager, Technical Services is responsible for the production and maintenance of the Housing Fire Risk Management Policy and is also the designated competent person to provide advice on the management of fire safety for Housing.
- d. The Corporate Head of Housing is responsible for provision of adequate resources to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, other relevant regulations and guidance within Housing by ensuring:
 - i. Systems are properly assigned and accepted.
 - ii. That sufficient financial resources are available for the implementation and administration of this policy and associated management systems.
 - iii. That the responsibility for the implementation of and compliance with fire safety management is relevant and in line with all current legislation and guidance.
 - iv. The Council's policies and management system are complied with and properly assigned, understood and actioned by their staff
- e. The Head of Technical Services is responsible for the implementation of the policy within Council owned and Council managed stock and the provision of adequate resources to meet the requirements of this policy. They must also ensure a coordinated approach is delivered through the assessment, maintenance and management of properties by:
 - i. Ensuring that FRAs are completed and any actions noted are addressed through the appropriate process.
 - ii. Ensuring that the fire safety training programme for their staff is followed and suitable records retained.
 - iii. Liaising with consultants, other members of staff and enforcement officers over fire safety matters.
 - iv. Ensuring that any contractors (including contract or agency staff) taken on are competent
 - v. Ensuring that contractors are adequately assessing and managing fire safety risks in relation to maintenance, servicing, major works and improvements.
 - vi. Ensuring that incidents are reported to RBC in accordance with RBC policy and procedure.
 - vii. Ensuring that contractors/ consultants report all fire safety related RIDDOR reportable incidents to the HSE and informing the Compliance Manager as

- soon as possible.
- viii. Investigating fire safety incidents related to activities undertaken by the contractors or consultants and providing suitable reports in line with RBC procedures.
 - ix. Ensuring that contractors or consultants identify the fire safety training needs of their staff and fulfil; them accordingly.
 - x. Ensuring communication and co-operation with contractors or consultants as appropriate to implement this policy
 - xi. Ensuring that all employees of contractors or consultants are responsible for the reporting to their manager and or most appropriate or named person of any fire safety matter of a serious nature or one which may pose immediate danger to any person, or has resulted in injury, in a timely manner.

The Compliance Manager is responsible for ensuring the FRAs annual testing and maintenance regimes for detection and prevention for the Council's owned and Council's managed housing stock by:

- I. Identifying the properties requiring a FRA and creating a programme of inspections.
- II. Creating a programme relating to the action plans arising from the FRAs.
- III. Ensuring that technical tests are undertaken to maintain the detection and prevention systems in a safe and operational condition.
- IV. Ensuring that all planned maintenance activities and contractors carrying out the work in any housing stock are adequately monitored and controlled with regard to fire safety.
- V. Ensuring all statutory records, registers and other documents concerning the provision, installation, inspection, testing and maintenance of plant and equipment for the housing stock are kept in accordance with relevant legislation.
- VI. Providing advice on fire safety
- VII. Supporting implementation of the RBC Fire Risk Management Policy
- VIII. Advising and developing appropriate policies and procedures to provide RBC with necessary guidance for achieving compliance with legislative requirements
- IX. Reporting to the organisation any actions relating to fire safety taken by enforcement agencies, both formal and informal, and monitoring progress made by RBC in complying with those actions.
- X. Monitoring fire safety incidents within Housing where staff, residents or visitors are involved.
- XI. Acting as primary contact with the fire safety enforcing authority
- XII. Monitoring reporting of fire safety RIDDOR incidents to the HSE
- XIII. Ensuring that adequate arrangements are made to provide appropriate fire safety training at all levels

- XIV. Monitoring periodic inspections arrangements for communal areas in blocks of flats to ensure compliance with the RRO.
- XV. Will act as the lead officer for fire and act as the competent person under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and as the Competent person under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- XVI. Will be the named Building Manager as required under the Draft Building Safety Bill. Further details of the requirements under this Bill will be added to this policy when further details are known. This policy will have to be amended to include any changes which RBC will have to adhere following the enactment of the Building Safety Bill.

Housing Maintenance Inspectors and staff are responsible for:

- I. Undertaking inspections which incorporate an element of fire safety checks, ensuring premises, facilities and equipment under their control are safe, clean and tidy.
- II. Ensuring contractors and agency staff are made aware of fire safety procedures and are notified of known hazards identified at the premises, thus enabling them to carry out their work without risk to themselves or others.
- III. Ensuring all records, registers and other documents concerning their inspection programme, the testing and maintenance of emergency lighting installations and fire equipment etc. are kept up to date.
- IV. Liaising with consultants, enforcement officers and other members of staff about fire safety matters.
- V. Ensuring safety inspections and regular housekeeping inspections are completed.

The Senior IRL Manager and IRL Managers are responsible for:

- i. Encouraging all their team members to be fire safety conscious.
- ii. Ensuring that the Fire Risk Management Policy is distributed and communicated to all members of their teams.
- iii. Ensuring that the responsibility for the Fire Risk Management Policy operation is properly assigned, accepted and understood by the relevant staff they manage.
- iv. Ensuring that premises inspections which incorporate an element of fire safety checks re completed and appropriate action is taken by their staff.
- v. Supporting their staff and providing guidance on how to respond to any reported concerns to ensure they are monitored, reviewed and that appropriate action is taken.
- vi. Ensuring their staff manage their premises and equipment in a safe way.
- vii. Completing Person Centred Fire Risk Assessments for all tenants.,

- viii. Liaising with consultants, enforcement officers and other member of staff about fire safety matters and ensuring their staff notify the Compliance Manager of any such visits.

The Housing Services Manager is responsible for the dissemination of any fire safety information relevant to property, either generic or specific, at the time of letting that property. If these responsibilities are delegated to another member of staff, then that person must be deemed competent through the completion of appropriate training or briefings.

8. Management of communal areas

A managed approach will be taken regarding maintaining sterile areas in IRL schemes. In IRL schemes this approach will allow for items within the corridors to be considered on their merit, based on their contributing risk. Within the communal area of general needs blocks a zero-tolerance approach will be taken to items within the sterile zones. This will include any items of furniture, non-RBC flooring or the storage of personal possessions.

A zero-tolerance approach is one in which residents are not permitted to use the common parts to store or dispose of their belongings or rubbish. No exceptions would apply. This ensures that the common parts are effectively sterile i.e. free of combustible material, ignition sources and obstructions.

The benefits of this approach are:-

- It is the simplest policy to adopt in terms of easiest to manage for Housing staff
- It removes the risk from accidental fires involving items in the common parts
- it removes fuel in the common parts for arsonists
- it is easy for residents and leaseholders to understand, it is very clear what is allowed i.e. nothing.
- It is simpler to audit for the Fire Risk Assessors

9. Mobility Scooters

This policy should be read in conjunction with RBC's Mobility Scooter Policy and RBC's Disabled Adaptations Policy.

RBC will not provide provision for tenant's mobility scooters other than in Independent Retirement Living.

Mobility scooters should not be positioned in communal areas or stored near dwelling buildings, to ensure prevention of risk of fire.

10. Monitoring, Training and Review

- a. The Head of Technical Services is responsible for the auditing of the FRA programme to ensure compliance. The Compliance Manager is responsible for the regular review and management of the delivery of the outputs resulting from all FRAs relating to the housing stock. The Compliance Manager is responsible for ensuring

- that all 'urgent' remedial works identified through the FRAs, or through the regular inspection processes, are completed in a timely fashion to ensure compliance.
- b. Reviews of individual training requirements, including fire safety, will form part of the regular appraisal process. New members of staff will receive fire safety training as part of their induction, and it will be the responsibility of the relevant line manager to ensure the delivery of this is relevant to the position held. The Compliance Manager is responsible for ensuring all staff with premises management responsibility receive detailed and specific fire safety awareness training
 - c. This policy will be subject to periodic audit and reviewed as necessary through the authorised process to ensure that the procedures relating to fire safety are kept up to date and relevant. The procedures will be made accessible to all staff and to all other interested parties on request.

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APPENDIX A – Block Risk Based Categorisation

As part of the control measures, the housing stock is categorised to both develop a programme of compliance for FRA inspections and subsequent good housekeeping and regular maintenance regimes.

The categories below reflect how fire safety is managed:

| Type | Category Description |
|-----------------------------|--|
| High High rise high risk | Supported housing and high rise (7 storeys or more) where staff are present for part of the day. |
| Medium rise medium risk | General needs housing and temporary accommodation consisting of a selection of medium rise (between 3 – 6 storeys) blocks of flats, sharing communal access. |
| Low rise low risk | General needs housing and temporary accommodation consisting of a selection of terraced, semi-detached low rise (3 storeys or less) blocks of flats, shared communal access. |
| | |

High – Currently IRL (sheltered) schemes and Surrey Towers. The properties are managed by the following procedure:

- i. Initial FRAs will be conducted by an external consultant. This will be reviewed annually, or where there is significant change to the property.
- ii. The risk assessment will identify the site-specific required control measures for suitable and sufficient smoke control, fire control, evacuation procedures and firefighting equipment.
- iii. These properties will operate a 'Stay Put' policy, with suitable management processes to support this approach.
- iv. The documentation for the FRA will be detailed and provided in the site-specific fire safety management files.
- v. Competent and suitably qualified staff will undertake regular inspections of the communal areas on a weekly, monthly, six monthly and annual basis, dependent on the risk associated with the block, to complete property safety checks.
- vi. Maintenance will be carried out in accordance with policy for testing gas appliances, electrical installations, PAT testing and fire systems.

Medium – Properties with a mixture of tenanted and leasehold self-contained flats. These properties are all considered as medium rise. They have no regular staff involvement and are managed by the following procedure:

- Initial FRAs of the communal areas will be completed by an external consultant. The FRA will be reviewed within a three year cycle or where there is significant change to the property.
- The risk assessment will identify the site-specific required control measures for suitable and sufficient smoke control, fire control and evacuation procedures.
- No firefighting equipment will be provided within these communal spaces unless specifically identified as a requirement by the FRA or by Surrey Fire and Rescue service.
- The documentation relating to the FRA is site specific and is centrally collated for the purpose of future management.
- Competent and suitably qualified staff will undertake regular inspections of the communal areas on a weekly, monthly, six monthly and annual basis, dependent on the risk associated with the block, to complete property safety checks
- Maintenance will be carried out in accordance with policy for testing gas appliances, electrical installations, PAT testing and fire systems.
- At the time of any rewire or change of tenancy, tenanted flats will have their electrical systems checked and where necessary, upgraded to include hardwired smoke detection systems.
- As part of the asset management strategy periodic checks will be made of the electrical installation within tenanted properties and, where necessary, upgraded to include smoke detection.
- At the time of any new tenancy information will be given to the incoming tenant advising them of the importance to know their plan in the event of a fire breaking in their home or elsewhere in the block which affects their home and how they would leave the building via the quickest route available to them.
- Leaseholders are responsible within their lease for the upgrading and checking of their electrical installations and in creating their own fire safety plan.

Low – Properties with a mixture of tenanted and leasehold self-contained flats. They have no regular staff involvement and are managed by the following procedure:

- Initial FRAs of the communal areas will be completed by external contractors The FRA will be reviewed every three years, or where there is significant change to the property.
- The risk assessment will identify the site-specific required control measures for suitable and sufficient smoke control, fire control and evacuation procedures.
- The documentation relating to the FRA is site specific and is centrally collated for the purpose of future management.
- Competent and suitably qualified staff will undertake regular inspections of the communal areas on a weekly, monthly, six monthly and annual basis, dependent on the risk associated with the block, to complete property safety checks.
- Maintenance will be carried out in accordance with policy for testing gas appliances, electrical installations, PAT testing and fire systems.
- At the time of any rewire or change of tenancy, tenanted flats will have their electrical systems checked and, where necessary, upgraded to include hardwired smoke detection.

- As part of the asset management strategy periodic checks will be made of the electrical installation within tenanted properties and, where necessary, upgraded to include smoke detection.
- At the time of any new tenancy information will be given to the incoming tenant advising them of the importance to know their plan in the event of a fire breaking in their home or elsewhere in the block which affects their home and how they would leave the building via the quickest route available to them
- Leaseholders are responsible within their lease for the upgrading and checking of their electrical installations and in creating their own fire safety plan.

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7. Housing Services Asbestos Policy (Housing, Simon Allen)

Synopsis of report:

Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service has identified that whilst corporate policies relating to Health and Safety are in place, a policy specifically relating to Asbestos within Housing Services was required.

The Housing Services Asbestos policy identifies what Housing Services need to do to ensure compliance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

The policy clearly identifies roles and responsibilities of staff at all levels of the Housing Service and at Senior Management level of Runnymede Borough Council.

Recommendations:

- (i) Subject to the Equality Screening Assessment being reviewed by the Equalities Group and no major implications found which require a full Equality Impact assessment to be undertaken or revisions to the proposed implementation, Members approve the Asbestos Management Plan.**
- (ii) In the event that implications are found that would significantly affect the Asbestos Management Plan, the Head of Housing be authorised, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee, to determine whether the Policy be brought back to Committee to consider any issues raised by the Equalities Screening Assessment.**

1. Context of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to clearly communicate standards of asbestos management throughout our housing stock, for our tenants, staff and contractors.
- 1.2 The Housing Service has produced this document to ensure those affected by our undertaking understand the asbestos management standards which we require across our business and housing portfolio.

2. Housing Services Asbestos Policy

- 2.1 Enclosed with this report is the draft Housing Services Asbestos Policy, appendix A. This document was reviewed by the Housing and Enabling Member Working Group on 21 July 2021.
- 2.2 Subject to the Equality Screening Assessment being reviewed by the Equalities Group and no major implications found which require a full Equality Impact assessment to be undertaken or revisions to the proposed implementation, it is proposed that this policy will be implemented with immediate effect subject to approval by Housing Committee Members.

3. Policy Framework Implications

- 3.1 The Housing Services Asbestos Policy is one of a suite of policies that will link into the key Housing Services Health and Safety Policy. The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 places a duty to manage asbestos on Runnymede Borough

Council and this policy will help Housing Services staff to understand their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the Council adheres to this duty.

- 3.2 The duty to manage asbestos only applies to non-domestic premises, which includes common areas of domestic properties, however, it is the intention of Housing Technical Services to obtain and record as much information as possible regarding the presence and condition of asbestos containing materials within our housing stock. This policy identifies how we intend to do this through processes and procedure.
- 3.3 This policy will help Housing Services to ensure the safety of staff, contractors, and residents.
- 3.4 This policy will assist Runnymede Borough Council in ensuring compliance with current legislative duties.

4. Resource implications

- 4.1 It is practical to assume that identified training needed of officers will be required following its implementation as there are duties to provide training for employees where required. The identification and provision of Asbestos awareness training is statutory and, therefore, should not delay the implementation of this policy. The budget allocation for this was approved for the financial year 2021/22 and is adequate to facilitate such requests.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 The Council has a duty under regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos Regulations to manage asbestos in common areas of blocks of flats and non-domestic buildings.
- 5.2 This policy outlines how Housing Services will carry out this duty in relation to the Council's housing stock.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment screening form has been completed and will be considered by the Council's Equalities Impact Assessment group. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 is statutory and, therefore, must be adhered to by all employers, employees and contractors irrespective of any protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 None

8. Other implications

- 8.1 Approval of this policy will give further assurance to the Regulator for Social Housing and also forms part of a limited assurance audit undertaken in late 2020.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Services Asbestos Policy will assist Housing Services in carrying out their duties under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.
- 9.2 It will give clarity for individuals and help them understand their roles and responsibilities and thereby assist all Housing Services staff ensure the Health and Safety of themselves and others in relation to asbestos.
- 9.3 It is therefore requested that Housing Committee Members approve this policy in full, and subject to no further action being required as a result of the Equality Screening Assessment, it will be rolled out across the department.

(To Resolve)

Background papers

Draft Housing Services Asbestos Policy

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING SERVICES

**DRAFT
ASBESTOS POLICY**

Author: Debbie Daly

Approved By:

Approved Date:

Review due:

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- 16. Risk Assessment Reports: Basic Principles**
- 17. ACM Re-inspections**
- 18. Audit and Review**
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- 20. RBC Asbestos Management Plan**

Appendix One Training Requirements

Appendix Two: Suggested Inspection Intervals

1. Introduction

This Asbestos Policy is the umbrella policy setting out the over-riding aims and objectives of asbestos management procedures in non-domestic (which includes common areas of domestic blocks) properties owned or managed by Runnymede Borough Council (RBC). Also, private dwellings when undertaking Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) adaptations to privately owned properties.

The council owns 2875 residential properties as well as 1214 garages many of which may contain asbestos. As a responsible landlord we will remove or encapsulate asbestos containing materials where they are damaged or dangerous.

The objective of this policy and the Asbestos Management Plan is to ensure all reasonable steps are taken to prevent the risk of exposure of tenants, staff, contractors and visitors, to asbestos in a manner that could adversely affect their health.

2. Policy Statement

RBC acknowledges the risks to health arising from exposure to asbestos.

RBC recognises and accept it responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASWA 1974) and the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012(CAR 2012) and all other statutory provisions relating to the control of risks from asbestos. It will comply with all relevant Approved Codes of Practice (ACOP's) and guidance notes issued by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in respect of controlling the risk of exposure to asbestos by their employees and anyone else that may be affected by their undertakings.

No employee of RBC shall carry out direct work on Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM's). All such work shall be conducted by competent third parties and in the case of work requiring a licence, by approved licenced contractors. Steps will be taken as far as is reasonably practicable, to reduce the exposure or likely exposure of contractors, tenants and leaseholders and any affected third parties to asbestos.

All premises owned or managed by RBC will be presumed to contain asbestos unless there is evidence to the contrary. Suitable evidence includes that derived from a suitable and sufficient survey inspection or 'as-built drawings' or files produced in accordance with the Construction (Design &

Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015) which stipulate the absence of asbestos in the premises construction and/or subsequent maintenance.

RBC is committed to:

- Ensuring the effective application of the Housing Asbestos Management Plan, plus all associated procedures to reduce as far as reasonably practicable the risk of exposure to asbestos fibres.
- Ensuring that suitable arrangements are in place to require staff, who may, during the course of their work encounter asbestos, to attend asbestos awareness training appropriate to their area of work and level of responsibility/duty.
- Managing the risks from all known or suspected asbestos containing materials (ACMs) in communal areas and, where reasonably practicable, take steps to manage the risk from ACMs within domestic premises.
- Providing an asbestos register, detailing the location of all known ACMs within all its maintained properties.
- Implementing an effective asbestos management strategy, based on an overall risk assessment (material and priority), to ensure that all asbestos-containing materials are managed safely.
- Undertaking periodic re-inspections as agreed within the Asbestos Management Plan, commission further surveys in order to ensure that all ACMs have been identified and addressed prior to commissioning/undertaking any form of refurbishment work.
- Undertaking to assess the risks from ACMs and implement procedures to manage them by undertaking on-going monitoring.
- Implementing Asbestos Management Procedures for all RBC's Social Housing Stock and ensure that these are monitored, audited and reviewed regularly.
- Providing information, instruction and ensuring the provision of training (where appropriate) for anyone potentially at risk of exposure to known or suspected ACMs.
- Regularly review the Housing Services Asbestos Management Plan.

3. General Asbestos Information

What is Asbestos?

There are predominantly six types of asbestos fibre that have been used in the production of various materials throughout the UK, with these six falling into two separate groups;

The Serpentine Group, consisting of Chrysotile (white asbestos), and
The Amphibole Group, consisting of Tremolite, Actinolite, Anthophyllite, Crocidolite (blue asbestos) and Amosite (brown asbestos).

Chrysotile, Amosite and Crocidolite were most commonly used throughout the UK and are therefore found within numerous materials/products used up to 1999 throughout the built environment.

Details of the phased banning of these in the UK are as follows:

1985 - Ban on import and use of Crocidolite and Amosite

1999 - Ban on import and use of Chrysotile

Asbestos has a wide range of uses due to its chemical resistance, low conductivity and thermal properties.

Examples of asbestos containing materials & where they can be found include:

Asbestos cement

- Roofs and wall claddings.
- Gutters and rainwater pipes.
- Cisterns and tanks.
- Flue pipes, vents and ducts.
- Windows panels

Asbestos insulating board

- Fire breaks
- Boxing in structural steel for fire protection.
- Ceiling tiles
- Door panels

Sprayed asbestos and loose packing

- Lagging
- Roofing felts, mastics and sealants
- Yarns, ropes, textiles, paper and millboard
- Textured coatings to ceiling / walls
- Reinforced PVC
- Friction materials

4. Health Implications

If left intact and undisturbed, asbestos presents no direct risk. However, disturbance of the material may result in the release of asbestos fibres into the environment and this could be detrimental to health.

Breathing in asbestos fibres can lead to the development of three fatal diseases:

- Asbestosis - scarring of the lung leading to shortness of breath
- Lung cancer
- Mesothelioma - cancer of the lining around the lungs and stomach.

5. General Policy Principles for the Management of Asbestos Risks

Where ACM's are identified which are in good condition and in a position, which is not vulnerable to damage these may be left undisturbed, assuming that persons potentially at risk are made aware of its presence. The materials in non-domestic premises, this includes communal areas of domestic blocks, are to be re-inspected annually to ensure that their condition has not changed.

ACM's that are damaged, deteriorating or are inadequately sealed, shall either be removed or encapsulated. All remedial work shall be appropriately managed, specified, supervised and monitored by approved consultants. Asbestos removed shall be disposed of as hazardous waste in accordance with the Hazardous Waste (England & Wales) Regulations 2005.

All persons at risk of exposure due to potentially working on asbestos, including contractors, employees, and other authorised persons shall be provided with the relevant information to avoid inadvertent exposure when working on the fabric of the building.

Where any properties are to be acquired by RBC, a copy of the asbestos report shall be requested. If this is not available RBC shall arrange for a survey to be conducted prior to the purchase to ascertain any asbestos risks and potential implications.

Adequate standards of training and instruction shall be provided to employees and regularly reviewed to effect continuing improvement. Any employees and contractors working on RBC Repairs and Planned Maintenance contracts or

development sites shall be required to have received asbestos awareness training.

Not all ACM's are easily recognisable or visible without undertaking dismantling works. Consequently, refurbishment and demolition asbestos surveys will be carried out where demolition, major repair works, disabled adaptations, boiler and central heating installs, planned maintenance projects, cyclical painting or major void works are planned. The information gathered is entered on both contract documentation and the asbestos register held on RBC's database with access provided to all council staff and contractors. Consultants that are used to undertaking surveys will be responsible for undertaking their own risk assessments. They shall inform the Responsible Person within RBC, who has instructed them to carry out the survey if the process of carrying out the survey may affect the health and safety of employees, residents or others.

6. Compliance Strategy

As an employer and a landlord, RBC's Housing Technical Services has a statutory and regulatory obligation to manage the risks from asbestos containing materials within the properties it owns, leases and manages.

The purpose of this document is to communicate the strategy and planned arrangements for the management of asbestos containing materials (ACMs) within properties. It aims to inform internal and external parties of the resources and processes that are to be employed to enable the organisation and its personnel to discharge its duties in relation to the relevant regulatory statutes and best practice.

The document sets out the general principles under which RBC's Housing Technical Services will manage safety and environmental requirements pertaining to the presence of ACMs within their property portfolio.

Compliance with requirements will be monitored and audited in accordance with the regulations and corporate policy.

7. Duty Holder Specific duties under Regulation 4 of CAR 2012

Where Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Technical Services has maintenance or repair responsibilities for or controls access to a premises then Housing Services has a 'duty to manage' the risks from asbestos in those premises under regulation 4 of CAR 2012.

The 'Duty Holder' under these regulations, is the person/organisation who legally has maintenance and repair responsibilities for any part of a non-domestic premises.

In addition to this, a 'Responsible Person' is assigned to ensure that ACM's within Runnymede Borough Council's Social Housing premises are properly managed. This individual is responsible for management of asbestos related activities on a day to day basis and will need the necessary resources, skills, training and authority to fulfil the role.

Under the current regulations all employers have a legal duty to ensure that employees or other persons are not exposed to asbestos containing materials. Accurate information on asbestos containing materials must be provided by 'The Duty Holder' under Regulation 4 as detailed in the Control of Asbestos Regulations (CAR) 2012 to anyone at risk from asbestos.

The duty holder will also undertake all necessary steps to ensure that the asbestos information is made readily available to all relevant persons who may be affected by the presence of asbestos containing materials in RBC premises.

Under Section 4 of CAR 2012, Housing Technical Services are required to:

- Take reasonable steps to find out if there are materials containing asbestos in non-domestic premises, and if so, its amount, where it is and what condition it is in.
- Presume materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence that they do not.
- Make, and keep up-to-date, a record of the location and condition of the asbestos containing materials, or materials which are presumed to contain asbestos.
- Assess the risk of anyone being exposed to fibres from the materials identified.
- Prepare an asbestos management plan that sets out in detail how the risks from these materials will be managed.
- Take the necessary steps to put the plan into action.
- Annually review and monitor the plan and the arrangements to act on it so that the plan remains relevant and up-to-date. The plan will be reviewed sooner if required following an asbestos related incident.
- Take action to manage the risks from asbestos.

- Prevent employees or anyone else who may be affected from being exposed to asbestos, or where this is not practicable, to reduce exposure to the lowest reasonably practicable level.
- Make a suitable and sufficient assessment of risk prior to work being carried out with asbestos and then take steps to control and monitor exposure.
- Provide information, instruction or training for its contractors and employees that may come into contact with asbestos during the course of their work.

8. Documentation & Database

The Management Plan has been developed with due regard to information as produced and retained by Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Services.

Original hard or 'PDF' copies of asbestos surveys and other documentation are held on the Council's Information at Work system and within the asbestos register currently held in the ACT system.

The information from these documents has been entered onto the client asbestos register, ACT, and indicates the presence of asbestos. This information is shared with contractor partners to denote whether asbestos is present, not present or unknown. Contractors and staff can access the information directly from the asbestos register by logging on to the ACT web portal using the following web site [ACT Systems \(act-online.co.uk\)](http://act-online.co.uk)

It is important that all relevant information is reviewed relating to the property(ies) being worked on. Survey reports, where available, will contain details on the areas included in and excluded from the survey and this information may affect ability to undertake the work.

It is mandatory that existing information on the Asbestos Database is referred to in advance of any work being undertaken. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action, a penalty, or action by the Health and Safety Executive.

9. Our strategy to manage the risks

- The management of asbestos risk will be delivered through the asbestos management procedures.
- A budget sufficient to deliver programmed and reactive asbestos survey and abatement work will be provided.

- Utilisation of an asbestos database that is maintained and updated for the unhindered use by all personnel and contractors that may need access to information on asbestos in our properties.
- Use of specialist consultants and contractors on mutually exclusive long-term contracts to deliver support services including asbestos surveys, air monitoring, 4-stage clearances, consultancy and abatement or removal works.
- Arrangement to be made by the Compliance Manager/ Technical Assistant of on-going surveys and re-inspection of communal areas.
- Arrangement of reactive surveys arising from accidental damage, or concerns over suspicious materials made by residents, contractors or staff.
- Asbestos surveys and abatement work where appropriate will be commissioned in line with other improvement works programmes.
- The Maintenance Inspectors will commission asbestos surveys where asbestos is suspected to be present that impacts on the refurbishment of a property to the lettable standard, in addition to reporting any defects in suspected asbestos materials to the Compliance Manager/ Technical Assistant for information.
- The Planned works Surveyor will commission asbestos surveys where asbestos is suspected to be present that impacts on the refurbishment of a property, in addition to reporting any defects in suspected asbestos materials to the Compliance Manager/ Technical Assistant for information.
- All other staff that visit our premises who have been briefed on how to report damaged suspected ACMs will do so via the Compliance Manager. However, if damaged suspected ACM's are found whilst works are being carried out the project manager or surveyor who is responsible for these works should deal with the problem and only pass to the Compliance Manager/ Technical Assistant for information.
- The Maintenance Inspectors will commission asbestos surveys where asbestos is suspected to be present that impacts on the repair to a property, in addition to reporting any defects in suspected asbestos materials to the Compliance Manager/ Technical Assistant for information.

- Where temporary accommodation is required, efforts will be made by the Housing Services Department to obtain any information relating to asbestos from the provider. The absence of any records may result in the services being declined.
- Abatement works will be actioned on assessment of the risks and will include initially making safe, labelling (where appropriate, encapsulation / repair work and removal where considered appropriate by the relevant responsible officer.
- Existing contractors and consultants shall provide information on their arrangements for asbestos awareness training for both directly employed staff and for any sub-contractors.
- A training needs assessment will be carried out for all staff and appropriate asbestos awareness training and other training for relevant industry qualifications (e.g. P402 or P405) will be provided for.
- Information, instruction and training will be provided to all staff that may be affected by ACMs in our properties based on need and will include how to make appropriate communications with residents. These staff members will be required to attend annual refresher training

10. Material Assessment & Priority Assessment

Each identified or presumed ACM is assessed to provide an overall risk rating and should be used to establish the priority for ACMs needing remedial action and the type of action to consider. This is sub-divided into a material assessment and priority assessment.

The material assessment looks at the type and condition of each ACM and the ease with which it will release fibres if disturbed. The parameters affecting fibre release are assigned a score. This is then added together to obtain a material assessment rating. In accordance with HSG264: Asbestos The Survey Guide, the four parameters taken into consideration are as follows:

- Product type
- Extent of damage or deterioration
- Surface treatment

- Asbestos type

The priority assessment considers the likelihood that the ACM will be disturbed. As with the material assessment rating, the parameters affecting this are also given a score. In accordance with HSG 227: A Comprehensive Guide to Managing Asbestos In Premises the parameters are as follows:

- Normal occupant activity
- Likelihood of disturbance
- Human exposure potential
- Maintenance activity

11. Management Options & Timetable For Action

RBC will consider the removal options on a case by case basis via communication between the responsible person and the duty holder. Any decision should consider the risk assessment priority given by the Asbestos Survey.

The risk assessment priority algorithm is calculated by adding the material assessment score to the priority assessment score. This will give an overall score which will indicate the priorities for action and form the basis of the RBC asbestos management plan.

Wherever possible the following score bandings based on the overall risk rating should be considered in determining the management requirements for each ACM:

- Score 8 or less - very low risk – Similarly this category requires regular monitoring. Although the current risk of fibre release is very low, this material may suffer deterioration through time and or accidental damage.
- Score of 9- 13 – low risk - This category requires regular monitoring. Although the current risk of fibre release is very low, this material may suffer deterioration through time and or accidental damage.
- Score of 14-17 - medium risk – This category indicates that deterioration in any of the contributory factors may result in fibre release. Therefore, all asbestos should be contained, sealed, encapsulated or removed as per asbestos survey recommendation. The required remedial works should be completed within 6 months. Apply warning labels immediately (where required only) following remedial works and monitor as part of reinspection regime, where the asbestos isn't removed. Implement increased monitoring frequency where removal/enclosing/encapsulation not possible or feasible

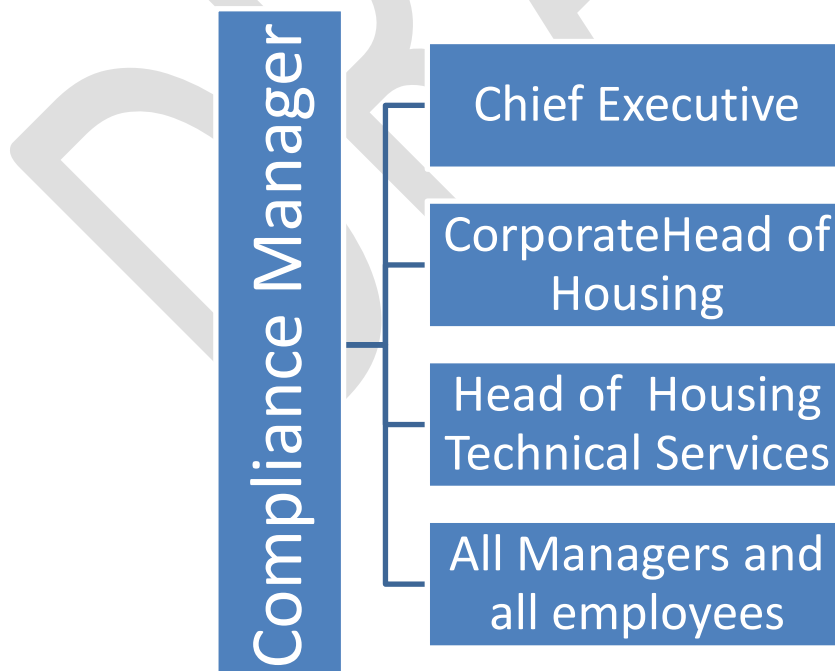
- Score of 17 or higher – Restrict access to area immediately and remove, enclose or encapsulate if removal not possible or feasible. Apply warning labels immediately (where required only) following remedial works and monitor as part of reinspection regime if asbestos not removed.

This is only to be used as a guide and it is accepted that there will be certain conditions that would result in deviation of the management options based on the above scoring.

Examples of this would be as follows:

- The overall risk rating is low but visible debris is present (likely for low risk ACMs)
- There is prior knowledge that due to a change in building use, the overall risk rating is likely to increase
- A planned installation activity will disturb the ACM
- The overall risk rating is high but the building is vacant (likely for damaged high risk ACMs), therefore sealing and restricting access to the area rather than removal may be feasible

12. Roles and Responsibilities



Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is responsible for health and safety compliance at Runnymede Borough Council ensuring that all legal obligations are met. The Chief Executive ensures the implementation of Council policy, monitors compliance via the service performance indicators and reports to the Corporate Management Committee on health and safety, to ensure that health and safety performance is an integral function of management.

The Corporate Head of Housing

RBC will be the corporate duty holder under the CAR 2012 in respect of employees of RBC and the properties owned, managed and leased by RBC. The responsibility for exercising this duty is delegated to the Corporate Head of Housing.

Responsibilities relating to the asbestos policy include;

- Acting as Dutyholder to comply with Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Oversees the effective application of the Asbestos Management Procedure
- Nominates the Head of Housing Technical Services Manager as the competent person
- Ensuring sufficient resources are available
- Provides adequate management systems and support to ensure standards are maintained
- Communicating standards, requirements and providing updates on performance.
- Ensure that employees are released to attend appropriate training sessions and that training is funded
- Ensure that the Competent person is competent
- Ensure that the Competent person is allowed sufficient time and resources to effectively undertake the role of Competent person.

Head of Housing Technical Services

Responsibilities include;

- Establish training needs and prepare training programmes, in compliance with the provisions of the Asbestos Policy and associated procedures.
- Assist with the annual review of the application of the RBC Asbestos Policy and the associated procedures as well as to amend and update in the light of experience and legislative changes.
- Develop and update the Asbestos Management Plan (AMP).
- Setting and monitoring performance standards
- Facilitates staff consultation and communication.
- Ensuring Housing Service policies are implemented.
- Promoting greater risk management and Asbestos awareness amongst all Housing Services employees by example and ensuring that only properly trained and competent staff are responsible for assessing risks and determining adequate control measures within the working environment.
- Nominated as Competent Person
- Ensure RBC remains compliant with relevant regulation.
- Has day to day management of the implementation and control of the asbestos management arrangements, including providing and arranging for performance monitoring activities, training and auditing
- Act as the Competent person and as the point of contact for asbestos related information, queries and requests for the organisation
- Ensure emergency arrangements are in place

Managers

Responsibilities include;

- Ensure staff are provided with such information, instruction, supervision and training to enable them to safely carry out their duties.
- Ensure risk assessments are carried out on work activities that may present a significant risk to staff, and suitable control measures are devised and implemented.
- Ensuring that the asbestos awareness training needs of all their staff are assessed and fulfilled.
- Ensuring that both they and their staff are aware of personal responsibilities.
- Providing regular reports on health and safety performance and issues to the Head of Housing Technical Services
- Ensuring that any contractors appointed are competent and adequately resourced
- Ensure Contractors provide Key Performance Indicators or other performance information as required
- Carry out regular reviews with contractors and where necessary handle matters of non-conformance or poor performance.,

- Ensure contractors comply with RBC Asbestos Management Policy and procedures The Senior Contract Manager / Senior Repairs Manager manages the provision of asbestos information to persons at risk of disturbing asbestos and liaise with and coordinate contractors and consultants

Employees

Responsibilities include;

- As employees we all have a legal duty to take care of our own health and safety and that of others, fellow employees, contractors, tenants and visitors or anyone else who could be affected by their actions or omissions.
- Compliance with all Runnymede Borough Council requirements, instructions, policies and procedures.
- Reporting any defect or deviation from expected conditions
- Shall not undertake any task where they are not authorised or trained to do so
- Measures to control risks must be followed at all times.
- Co-operate with all supervisory and management staff to ensure all relevant statutory regulations, policies and procedures are adhered to.
- Participate in any training designed to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to asbestos awareness
- Report to their manager all faults, hazards, errors, accidents/incidents, near misses, dangerous occurrences or damage, regardless of whether anyone is injured.
- Be aware of the risk assessment process and its relevance to their roles.

Compliance Manager

Responsibilities include:

- Establish training needs and prepare training programmes, in compliance with the provisions of the Asbestos Policy and associated procedures.
- Assist with the annual review of the application of the RBC Asbestos Policy and the associated procedures as well as to amend and update in the light of experience and legislative changes.
- Develop and update the Asbestos Management Plan (AMP).
- Advising the Housing Service on the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Producing management updates as required.
- Review as directed management compliance against legal, best practice and our requirements and reporting on a timely basis.

- Conducting regular risk assessments and audits to identify, analyse and eliminate or mitigate any potential risks.
- Liaise with the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor to ensure all CPD and training requirements for Housing Services employees are met.
- Liaise with the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor on the identification of any mandatory training needs for Housing Services employees.
- Ensure RBC remains compliant with relevant regulation.
- Has day to day management of the implementation and control of the asbestos management arrangements, including providing and arranging for performance monitoring activities, training and auditing
- Ensure emergency arrangements are in place

Competent Advisor – Corporate Health and Safety Officer

The “Competent Advisor” is responsible for:

- Producing management updates as required.
- Undertaking risk assessments and inspections as directed by the Head of Housing Technical Services.
- Review as directed management compliance against legal, best practice and our requirements and reporting on a timely basis.
- Undertaking accident investigations when required to do so.
- Delivering training when required to do so
- Reports RIDDOR events to the HSE on behalf of the RBC Housing Services

13. Communicating asbestos information for residents, staff and contractors

RBC Housing Services recognises its legal duty to co-operate with all parties who have, by virtue of a contract, license or tenancy agreement, responsibilities for the maintenance or repair of premises or for access or egress to premises.

Housing Services will keep all Stakeholders, including tenants. Leaseholders and contractors informed of all relevant issues about any part of the premises under their management, or of information known to them about the presence, or otherwise of ACMs that might reasonably be relevant to them.

In recognition of the above Housing Services will ensure that: -

- a register and/or database of all known or presumed asbestos containing materials is maintained and kept up to date

- employees are provided with appropriate information, instruction and/or training to explain both this policy and procedures as well as to meet Regulation 10 of CAR 2012
- ensure that relevant content of this policy, the asbestos management plan and procedures are communicated as part of formal induction training to all new recruits
- copies of asbestos records are retained in a secure accessible location and are readily available for reference to all employees, consultants and contractors
- all employees, consultants and contractors working at the premises we own and manage are provided with up-to-date information on asbestos risks within those premises so far as reasonably practicable
- on disposal of a property or group of properties, any information on asbestos for that property or group of properties is provided to the purchaser or purchasers solicitor/conveyancer
- on acquisition of a property or group of properties that any information on asbestos for the property(ies) is requested from the vendors and passed onto the Compliance Manager/ Compliance technical assistant for inclusion onto the Asbestos Database

14. The Asbestos Register

The Register is held on RBC's database and is updated as further asbestos surveys are completed. Where asbestos surveys have not been conducted, then the presence of asbestos shall be presumed when arranging work upon the fabric of the building unless there is strong evidence to suppose otherwise. The Asbestos Register information is available to contractors in PDF full electronic report form from RBC's Asbestos Web Portal for each site.

For all relevant building and maintenance works, the Asbestos Register must be inspected by all contractors prior to carrying out any works that may potentially disturb asbestos containing materials and / or such suspect materials.

The records identifying the location of retained asbestos are to be updated as necessary. This shall be conducted by the nominated consultants following the removal of asbestos and updated copies sent to RBC.

In the event of a property becoming void where an inspection has not been completed arrangements will be made as soon as possible to survey for asbestos. Upon the presence of asbestos being identified, a decision will be made regarding whether it shall be removed to avoid the need to remove asbestos from the property in the future once it has become occupied.

Where contract specifications are produced for works upon RBC assets, all relevant asbestos register information (and any assumptions made) shall be included with this information.

15. Competency, Information, Instruction and Training

RBC Responsible Officers - Persons charged with ownership of the policy should update themselves appropriately regarding asbestos legislation changes as well basic awareness training that will be provided on an annual basis. They should be familiar with the HSG264 guidance: Asbestos – The survey guide.

RBC Employees - All persons whose work could involve dealing with or coordinating asbestos should receive asbestos awareness training conducted by a United Kingdom Asbestos Training Association (UKATA) audited asbestos trainer (or other party who can demonstrate relevant compliance with Regulation 10 of CAR 2012).

The Compliance Manager will assess the asbestos awareness training needs of Housing Services staff. Details of training records and copies of current asbestos awareness training presentations and materials will be held by the Compliance Manager. See Appendix One - Training matrix

Contractors - As a minimum any contractor working on RBC properties should have received awareness training conducted by a UKATA audited asbestos trainer (or other party who can demonstrate relevant compliance with Regulation 10 of CAR 2012).

This is to ensure that operatives are aware of:

- The risks associated with asbestos
- How to interpret asbestos reports
- Types of ACM existing in the group's properties
- Action in the event of discovering suspect ACM's which are not listed in the existing asbestos report.

Contractors will be required to provide proof of compliance and facilitate the attendance of operatives/site supervisors at any asbestos awareness training sessions which may be jointly provided with RBC and specifically relating to ACM's present / potentially present at RBC properties.

Asbestos consultants - In accordance with HSG264 consultants acting on behalf of the RBC shall hold:

- Professional Indemnity insurance for asbestos works
- UKAS accreditation to ISO 17020 (surveying)
- UKAS accreditation to ISO 17025 (air monitoring and analysis)

- Training and quality systems in accordance with the above accreditations.

16. Risk Assessment Reports: Basic Principles

Asbestos that is found to be present does not necessarily create an unacceptable risk. Asbestos is the hazard; the risk can only be defined when the hazard is assessed within the environment in which it is found. The assessment must take into account the activities carried out near or on the asbestos for the assessment to be able to present viable recommendations.

Hazard Assessment - HSG264 guidance – The survey guide The consultants' reports shall provide a calculated risk assessment scored on the basis of assessing the following parameters in accordance with current guidance HSG264: Product type, asbestos fibre type, condition, surface treatment. This provides a score for all identified and presumed ACM's of between 2 (lowest) hazard and 12 (highest hazard).

Priority Ratings Identified asbestos shall also be assessed using the priority ratings supplied by the surveying company in terms of:

- Priority 1 – High risk (e.g. removal required).
- Priority 2 – medium risk (e.g. minor sealing, protection or encapsulation required)
- Priority 3 – Low risk (e.g. removal is not required. Manage and monitor its condition in accordance with the policy).

The above priority ratings shall be used in the compilation of action plans.

17. ACM Re-inspections

All identified asbestos materials in non-domestic parts of a building i.e. common parts of domestic buildings, shall be inspected periodically to ensure that their condition has not deteriorated over time. The monitoring frequency adopted shall be on a hierarchical basis such that the period of re-inspection of each ACM is dependent upon the risk the ACM poses to occupants and the public. See Appendix Two for examples.

The inspection frequency shall generally be at least every 12 months or more frequently if the risk of damage is significant.

The re-inspection shall be conducted by persons with training and experience sufficient to ensure that risk assessments are in accordance with the HSE guidance HSG264 'Asbestos: The survey guide'.

This information shall be transmitted to the electronic data so that only one true updated copy of the register is used as a point of reference.

All identified asbestos materials in domestic dwellings shall also be re-inspected periodically. All domestic dwellings will be inspected to ensure that their condition has not deteriorated over time. The frequency of the reinspection's will be based upon the overall scoring of the ACM identified.

The Compliance Technical Assistant will arrange re-inspections of known or presumed asbestos containing materials for the non-domestic parts of the property portfolio that have been surveyed. Current guidance will be used to derive the re-inspection schedule.

18. Audit and Review

In general terms, asbestos abatement works will be instructed based on the following principles:

- Removal of ACMs from all common areas and void properties will be the preferred option, however, it is sometimes safer not to disturb ACMs and to leave them where they are and monitor them.
- ACMs affecting improvement works will be removed wherever reasonably practicable.

All other ACMs will be managed based on their individual risk assessment

19. Audit and Review

This policy, and its use by Housing Services staff and contractors will be subject to regular internal review.

It is the responsibility of the Compliance Manager to organise the undertaking of regular reviews of the procedures to determine that they are appropriate, they are being utilised and are effective. The objective of the reviews will be to ensure effective execution of the plan and compliance strategy.

The Housing Technical Services Asbestos Management Plan must be formally reviewed to ensure the information it contains remains correct and that asbestos is being managed effectively. This review is co-ordinated by the responsible person. The frequency of the review is aimed to be annual and should cover the following:

- The level of information provided in the Asbestos Register and how it is being updated
- The condition of ACM's left in situ including the adequacy and frequency of re-inspections, and compliance with the recommendations detailed in the asbestos register
- Communication and training of appropriate staff and contractors

- Recording of incidents and accidents, and lessons learned

Instances where this review may be brought forward could be due to a change in legislation, change in the council structure which affects asbestos management or an incident relating to asbestos exposure.

The on-going maintenance of the management plan is a requirement of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 and is a key responsibility of senior management. When contemplating the implementation of the plan consideration should be given to the following:

- Monitoring the action plan to make sure that all remedial work has been adequately carried out;
- Monitoring of ACMs or presumed ACMs left in position;
- Frequency of monitoring of ACMs/presumed ACMs;
- Updating the asbestos record following repair/removal of ACMs;
- Ongoing communication/training of maintenance workers/contractors, including regular toolbox talks to stay up-to-date on plan implementation.
- Continued awareness amongst employees;
- Monitoring of the implementation timetable; and
- Lessons learned following incidents and accidents involving ACMs

The management plan must be subject to at least an annual review. This should critically review all the management processes and their effectiveness as well as the overall progress made against the follow-up actions and implementation timetable. As a minimum this should include: -

- If the plan is referred to in the safe systems of work procedures;
- How the plan is communicated to maintenance workers, others working in the vicinity of asbestos and external contractors;
- If the plan is referred to in specifications for tenders;
- If emergency plans/contingency procedures refer to the management plan;
- Provisions for emergency services.

19. Equalities Implications

Managers are responsible for ensuring that this policy is applied with due regard to RBC's Public Sector Equality Duty.

20.Runnymede Borough Council Asbestos Management Plan

| Runnymede Borough Council Housing Asbestos Management Plan | | |
|---|-------------|---|
| Action | Frequency | Responsible Officer/s |
| Review Asbestos policy and management plan annually | Annual | Head of Technical Services/ Compliance Manager |
| Carry out asbestos management surveys on every property owned and or managed by RBC within three years | Ongoing | Compliance Manager/ Compliance Technical Assistant |
| Carry out re-inspections of all communal areas with known ACM's annually | Annual | Compliance Manager/ Compliance Technical Assistant |
| Ensure all remedial works are carried out within agreed timescales according to risk and recommendations made by the Asbestos Surveyor. | Ongoing | All Technical Services Officers who raise asbestos works orders |
| Carry out surveys on all communal areas of buildings owned or managed by RBC in accordance with CAR 2012 | Annual | Compliance Manager/ Compliance Technical Assistant |
| Ensure all remedial works are carried out within agreed timescales. | As required | Compliance Manager/ Compliance Technical Assistant |
| Provide monthly asbestos data to include number of properties surveyed, communal areas surveyed and number of re-inspections carried out | Monthly | Compliance Manager |
| All voids will have an asbestos survey carried out if one has not been completed in the last five years or where there is evidence of disturbance or if major works are to be carried out i.e. new kitchen, bathroom or heating installation as part of the void works. | As required | Maintenance Inspectors |
| Ensure all remedial works are carried out as required. | As required | Maintenance Inspectors |
| Attend appropriate training | As required | All |
| Provide training for all existing and new staff members | Annual | Compliance Manager |

Appendix One Training Requirements

| | Asbestos Awareness Training | Asbestos Awareness Refresher Training (Every 2 Years) | Ad-Hoc Asbestos Toolbox Talks | Site Specific Asbestos Awareness | On Site Training (Re-inspections) | BOHS P402: Surveying & Sampling Strategies For | BOHS P403: Asbestos Fibre Counting (Or Equivalent) | BOHS P404: Air Sampling Of Asbestos (Or Equivalent) | BOHS P405: Management Of Asbestos In Buildings |
|--|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Corporate Head of Housing (Duty holder) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | |
| Head of Housing Technical Services (Competent person) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Responsible Persons | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Compliance Manager (Competent person) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Senior Housing Maintenance Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Maintenance Inspectors | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Site Staff, caretakers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | |
| Senior Contracts Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | |
| Planned Surveyor | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Other RBC Council Departments | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | |

Appendix Two: Suggested Inspection Intervals

The suggested inspection intervals for ACMs are intended only as a guide based on considering the overall risk category of the materials and the practicalities and costs of re-inspecting large numbers of known ACMs in a large portfolio of buildings.

HSE guidance provided in paragraph 108 of the Approved Code of Practice L127 suggests that ACMs are monitored, as a minimum every six to twelve months if the ACMs are in good condition and not going to be disturbed. However, HSE guidance in HSG 227 'A comprehensive guide to managing asbestos in premises' elaborates further in paragraph 4 of page 82 stating that:

'The time period between monitoring will vary depending on the type of ACM, its location and the activities of the area concerned, but it would not be expected to be more than 12 months in most cases. ACMs in remote locations, with little or no routine activity can be inspected infrequently. For example, an asbestos insulating board ceiling in a remote unoccupied building may only need inspecting once every 12 months or even less frequently if the building is rarely entered.'

It may be inferred from the above that materials that pose a lower risk of releasing airborne fibre, such as bonded materials could be re-inspected at a lower frequency.

Management arrangements are in place so that staff and contractors can report any damage of presumed or known ACMs should they come across them in their routine site activities. In this way and in combination with planned inspection activity it is likely that all known or presumed ACMs at our non-domestic premises will undergo some form of inspection or re-inspection within a 12 month period.

The table below sets out suggested planned or routine inspection / re-inspection periods for known ACMs to be undertaken by suitably trained personnel. In order to maintain a higher rate of re-inspection, all known or presumed ACMs at a given site will be re-inspected at the same time.

| Product Type | Overall Risk Category at last inspection | Area usage ¹ | Inspection/re-inspection period |
|------------------|--|---|--|
| Sprayed Coatings | D (very low) or C (low) | Normal occupant Activity Rare or low disturbance activities | Every 6-12 months and prior to planned works |
| | | Likelihood of disturbance Outdoors / large well-ventilated areas Usually inaccessible / occasional disturbance Small amounts / less than 10m ² or 10m length | |

| Product Type | Overall Risk Category at last inspection | Area usage ¹ | Inspection/re-inspection period |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | <p>Human Exposure Potential From 0 to 3 occupants Infrequent use / monthly Used for less than 1 hour up to 3 hours</p> <p>Maintenance Activity Minor to low disturbance activities ACM unlikely to be disturbed or infrequently disturbed</p> | |
| | B (medium) or A (high) | Not applicable. See note ² | Not applicable. See note ² |
| Thermal Insulation to Pipes, Boilers, Vessels etc. | D (very low) or C (low) | <p>Normal occupant Activity Rare or low disturbance activities</p> <p>Likelihood of disturbance Outdoors / large well-ventilated areas Usually inaccessible / occasional disturbance Small amounts / less than 10m² or 10m length</p> <p>Human Exposure Potential From 0 to 3 occupants Infrequent use / monthly Used for less than 1 hour up to 3 hours</p> <p>Maintenance Activity Minor to low disturbance activities ACM unlikely to be disturbed or infrequently disturbed</p> | Every 12 months and prior to planned works |
| | B (medium) or A (high) | Not applicable. See note ² | Not applicable. See note ² |
| Insulating Board, Millboard, Gasket, Rope, Paper | D (very low) or C (low) | <p>Normal occupant Activity Rare or low disturbance activities</p> <p>Likelihood of disturbance Outdoors / large well-ventilated areas Usually inaccessible / occasional disturbance Small amounts / less than 10m² or 10m length</p> | Every 12 months and prior to planned works |

| Product Type | Overall Risk Category at last inspection | Area usage ¹ | Inspection/re-inspection period |
|------------------|--|---|---|
| | | Human Exposure Potential From 0 to 3 occupants Infrequent use / monthly Used for less than 1 hour up to 3 hours | (the period between inspections may be increased if the area is not used or occupied for long periods) |
| | | Maintenance Activity Minor to low disturbance activities ACM unlikely to be disturbed or infrequently disturbed | |
| | B (medium) or A (high) | Not applicable. See note ² | Not applicable. See note ² |
| Cement Products | D (very low) or C (low) | Normal occupant Activity Rare or low disturbance activities | 12 – 18 months and prior to planned works (the period between inspections may be increased if the area is not used or occupied for long periods) |
| | | Likelihood of disturbance Outdoors / large well-ventilated areas Usually inaccessible / occasional disturbance Small amounts / less than 10m ² or 10m length | |
| | | Human Exposure Potential From 0 to 3 occupants Infrequent use / monthly Used for less than 1 hour up to 3 hours | |
| | | Maintenance Activity Minor to low disturbance activities ACM unlikely to be disturbed or infrequently disturbed | |
| | B (medium) or A (high) | Not applicable. See note ³ | Not applicable. See note ³ |
| Bonded Materials | D (very low) or C (low) | Normal occupant Activity Rare or low disturbance activities | 12 – 24 months or |

| Product Type | Overall Risk Category at last inspection | Area usage ¹ | Inspection/re-inspection period |
|--|--|---|--|
| (Vinyl Floor Tiles, Bitumen Products, Textured Coating, Toilet cisterns etc.) | | Likelihood of disturbance Outdoors / large well-ventilated areas Usually inaccessible / occasional disturbance Small amounts / less than 10m ² or 10m length | prior to planned works (the period between inspections may be increased if the area is not used or occupied for long periods) |
| | | Human Exposure Potential From 0 to 3 occupants Infrequent use / monthly Used for less than 1 hour up to 3 hours | |
| | | Maintenance Activity Minor to low disturbance activities ACM unlikely to be disturbed or infrequently disturbed | |
| | B (medium) or A (high) | Not applicable. See note ³ | Not applicable. See note ³ |

Notes:

1. 'Area Usage' makes reference to a number of the assessment parameters used in the priority assessment process.
2. Spray coating, thermal insulation and insulating board should not normally be left in-situ at the same level of risk if the original assessment has categorised the ACM as B (medium) or A (high) risk. This would mean that they would not normally be included in a routine re-inspection as procedures are in place to ensure ACMs at these risk levels are reduced as soon as reasonably practicable.
3. In the unlikely event that asbestos cement or other bonded materials are assessed as risk category B (medium) or A (high), then the Responsible Officer will follow procedures to ensure that either the risk is reduced or regular inspections are undertaken to monitor the condition of the materials until the risk is reduced.

8. Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy Consultation (Housing, Andy Vincent)

Synopsis of report:

The proposed Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy will provide an additional mechanism for continuous service improvements, with the aim of increasing tenant and leaseholder satisfaction. It will set out a range of methods to improve meaningful engagement and introduce challenging targets against which delivery can be measured.

Recommendation(s):

- i. That Members approve the request for Officers to draft and consult on an Engagement Strategy for tenants and leaseholders.**
- ii. That Members anticipate receiving the results of the consultation along with the final Strategy for approval in March 2022.**

1. Context of Report

- 1.1 In order to promote a culture that values tenant and leaseholder engagement and places the voices of our customers at the centre of strategic decision making, it is proposed that Officers will consult on a draft Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy.
- 1.2 The Social Housing White paper outlines proposals to further strengthen the requirement for landlords to listen to tenants through effective engagement. It is anticipated that the Regulator of Social Housing will require landlords to show how they have considered ways to improve tenant engagement and also to report against a series of new key performance indicators to include tenant satisfaction with engagement.
- 1.3 An Engagement Strategy with clear objectives and measurable targets is expected to help identify and address weaknesses in service delivery, providing an additional mechanism for continuous and challenging service improvements. This in turn will lead to increased customer satisfaction.
- 1.4 Members at the meeting of the Housing and Enabling Members Working Party on 15 September 2021 were supportive of the proposed strategy objectives.

2. The purpose of the Engagement Strategy

- 2.1 The Regulator of Social Housing requires landlords to ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in the development of policies and decision making. The Social Housing White paper, published in November 2020 outlines proposals to further strengthen the consumer standard and to require landlords to listen to tenants through effective engagement. It is anticipated that registered social landlords will be required to demonstrate they have sought out and considered ways to improve tenant engagement and tailored their engagement for their local circumstances. Additionally, better engagement should enable the concerns of leaseholders to be heard. A measure on respectful and meaningful resident engagement is expected in the new suite of performance indicators being developed by the regulator, along with proposed satisfaction measures on repairs, safety, complaints and neighbourhood management. They

should include both objective quantitative measures and tenant perception measures.

- 2.2 Demonstrating a commitment to listening to tenants and leaseholders and evidencing how their views have been taken into account is expected to increase satisfaction. There is a strong business case for meaningful engagement with customers as the information obtained leads to targeted investment, more effective processes, efficiency savings, better services, increased satisfaction and motivated staff, all part of a cycle of continuous improvement.
- 2.3 Traditional forms of involvement have tended to result in a 'one size fits all' approach that fails to gather useful data and can be expensive for the landlord to administer, with few tangible outcomes. The Engagement Strategy is intended to provide a framework in which a range of methods are used to engage with specific groups of residents to meet a defined objective.

3. The Proposed Strategy

- 3.1 The draft Engagement Strategy can be found at Appendix A. The objective of the Strategy is to set out the Council's commitment to listening to tenants and leaseholders and to taking account of their views by:
- Providing a range of opportunities to engage, with appropriate support systems to meet the diverse needs of tenants and leaseholders and by removing barriers to engagement.
 - Including methods to encourage as many tenants and leaseholders as possible to participate, particularly from groups who are currently underrepresented.
 - Improving insight into tenants and leaseholders' experience of our services.
 - Demonstrating that we welcome feedback, sharing results and giving examples of where we have learnt from engagement and made changes.
 - Setting out training for staff and recruitment of staff to be engagement champions.
 - Creating opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to be empowered and aim for the co-creation of policies and services.
 - Measuring specific outcomes with targets for example percentage increase in profiling data, feedback provided, evidence of service improvements initiated etc.
- 3.2 Performance against these targets will be reported to the Council's Housing Committee as part of the annual review of the implementation of our strategy.
- 3.3 The Action Plan sets out the steps proposed to meet the Strategy objectives by 2024, to be implemented by a Steering Group. Actions include:
- Collect and refresh profiling data as part of investment in the IT system functionality; and using all available interactions with customers for example Tenancy Audit visits and new tenant sign-up interviews.
 - Develop a menu of opportunities, with creative and appropriate use of methods, language and tools to form a clear view of our customers' priorities and our progress in addressing them.
 - Remove barriers to engagement, for example training to support digital uptake and by providing information in plain and appropriate language.
 - Support RCRA and recruit new members.

- Launch Housing Online accounts
 - Budget for estate improvements identified with residents.
 - Scrutiny Panel to explore in detail issues of concern
 - Regular feedback to residents to demonstrate the value of their input, providing examples of where we have learnt from engagement and made changes, for example 'you said, we did.'
- 3.4 Recent service users will be encouraged to give feedback on their experience to enable the collection of good quality data on what is working well and what is not. Such surveys will increasingly use digital technology, but all engagement will be targeted and involve other methods including face-to-face conversations as appropriate.
- 3.5 In addition to introducing a range of transactional surveys of customers using our housing services to identify our strengths and weaknesses, it is proposed to regularly carry out the industry-standard Satisfaction of Tenants and Residents (STAR) survey. Together this will track improvements to satisfaction ratings over time.
- 3.6 It is anticipated that initiatives such as focus groups will provide insight into residents' priorities and views on how services are developing. A scrutiny panel will look at specific issues in more detail, examining evidence about service performance, making recommendations for service improvements and reviewing outcomes.
- 3.7 Up-to-date contact information is vital to the success of these initiatives. Improved insight will promote effective targeting of communications including harder-to-reach groups and aid effective service planning by ensuring services are developed to meet the needs of tenants based on evidence rather than anecdote. The Strategy will detail actions to identify and fill gaps in current contact and profiling data and ensure relevant data is kept accurate. As above this will facilitate using all available interactions with customers for example Tenancy Audit visits and new tenant sign-up interviews.

4. Consultation and Next Steps

- 4.1 It is proposed that, subject to Members' approval, Officers will begin immediate consultation with stakeholders on the draft Engagement Strategy. This will include tenants, leaseholders, the RCRA, prospective tenants, staff, elected Members, other social landlords and tenants' organisations such as TPAS. Methods will include the Council's website, social media, focus groups and including information on the consultation in correspondence. The consultation will close on 14 January 2022.
- 4.2 The Strategy incorporating feedback from the consultation will be presented to this Committee for approval in March 2022 for immediate adoption. It is proposed to formally launch the Strategy in April, with a Tenants' newsletter to be posted to all tenants with their annual rent letter in March. Leaseholders will also be sent letters as part of the launch.

5. Policy framework implications

- 5.1 The Corporate Plan commits the Council to empowering communities to enable them to make decisions which impact on their future. This strategy supports and facilitates

the tenant and leaseholder community within Runnymede to shape the services that meet their needs. It will be developed in consultation with council tenants, leaseholders, Members and other stakeholders as above.

6. Resource implications/Value for Money

- 6.1 The appointment of the Housing Engagement and Inclusion Officer was approved by this Committee in March 2021, and the annual budgets include an ongoing provision for producing and mailing newsletters to tenants. It is anticipated that the annual budgets to be presented to this committee for approval in March 2022 will include some increases to reflect the additional engagement work planned for the future.
- 6.2 It is anticipated that once improved engagement mechanisms have been established, effective consultation with tenants and leaseholders on the appropriate level of services charges will enable the Council to consider adopting a comprehensive and transparent charging structure.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 requires tenants to be consulted regarding changes to the Housing Landlord Service.
- 7.2 The five regulatory standards place obligations on social landlords. The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard requires landlords to provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants, a clear approach to complaints and a wide range of opportunities for them to have influence and be involved.

8. Equality implications

- 8.1 In line with its Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council must consider the need to advance equality of opportunity. The proposed strategy will aim to extend meaningful engagement opportunities to groups who have previously been underrepresented. An Equality Impact Screening Assessment of the proposed draft strategy will be carried out.

9. Other implications

- 9.1 The Strategy will promote social inclusion. Data Protection issues will be addressed in line with legislation and best practice. A Communications Plan will be agreed in consultation with the Head of Public Relations and Marketing.

10. Conclusions

- 10.1 The draft Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy sets out a range of methods to improve meaningful engagement. This in turn is expected to lead to service improvements that deliver increased customer satisfaction and better value for money.

(To resolve)

Background papers

None

Appendix A

Runnymede Borough Council **Listening and Accountable:** **D R A F T** **Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement** **Strategy 2021– 2026**

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Introduction

At Runnymede we want to improve our approach to listening to and working with tenants and leaseholders. We aim to create a culture that values tenant and leaseholder engagement and places the voices of our customers at the centre of the Council's strategic direction and priorities. We understand that listening to tenants and leaseholders gives us the best insight into their priorities and the quality of our services. This enables us to make improvements that deliver increased customer satisfaction and better value for money.

We want our Council tenants and leaseholders to recognise that we are really listening and trying to improve. We are committed to demonstrating how we are achieving this and we will show how services have developed as a result of us engaging together.

Aims

1. A culture that recognises and values tenant and leaseholder engagement
2. Improved customer satisfaction as we learn from service user feedback
3. Better value for money as we focus on tenants' and leaseholders' priorities
4. Increasing number of tenants and leaseholders engaging with us, especially from groups currently underrepresented
5. Removal of barriers to engagement and increased diversity of residents who chose to engage
6. A more focused engagement approach developed through customer insight.

Context

The Regulator of Social Housing Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard requires landlords to ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in the development of policies, decision making, scrutiny, right to manage and agreeing local offers. This strategy aims to ensure that all aspects of the standard are incorporated into the delivery of our housing services and that we are prepared for the proposals to further strengthen these requirements in law.

The Equality Act 2010 says public authorities must consider the need to advance equality of opportunity. This strategy aims to extend meaningful engagement opportunities to groups who have been underrepresented, including young people and people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. By demonstrating the value of really listening to our customers, it will also celebrate diversity and help to address the stigma experienced by some social housing tenants.

The Corporate Plan commits the Council to empowering communities to enable them to make decisions which impact on their future. This strategy supports and facilitates the tenant and leaseholder community within Runnymede to shape the services that meet their needs. It has been developed in consultation with council tenants, leaseholders and Local Councillors.

The Council's Housing Strategy aims to work with partners to deliver:

1. Access to affordable housing for local people
2. Good quality affordable housing for local people
3. Increased provision of affordable housing including low cost home ownership
4. Specialist housing to meet the identified needs of local people.

The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan contains the following themes and ambitions:

1. Optimising Income and Efficiencies
2. Good Quality Housing
3. New Council owned homes
4. Review and modernise provision for older tenants
5. Well managed neighbourhoods.

Objectives

The Council is committed to showing how we listen to tenants and leaseholders and take account of their views. We will do this by:

- Providing a range of opportunities to engage, with appropriate support systems to meet the diverse needs of tenants and leaseholders and by removing barriers to engagement
- Encouraging as many tenants and leaseholders as possible to participate, particularly from groups who are under represented
- Demonstrating that we welcome feedback, sharing results, explaining decisions and giving examples of where we have learnt from engagement and made changes
- Named staff acting as engagement champions
- Supporting solutions devised by the community without our involvement.
- Create opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to be empowered
- Co-creation of policies and services
- Improving insight into tenants and leaseholders experience of our services,
- Collecting feedback to measure how successful we have been in achieving these ambitions.

Better value for money by focusing on customer priorities

Investing in our tenants and leaseholders' priorities will increase customer satisfaction. We will undertake a regular Satisfaction of Tenants and Residents (STAR) survey and introduce a range of transactional surveys of customers using our housing services to identify where our strengths and weaknesses are. We will use focus groups to understand our customers' priorities and their views on how our services are developing. These interactions will use the most appropriate channels including digital and social media.

Understanding more about our tenants and leaseholders

Traditional forms of involvement can result in a 'one size fits all' approach that fails to gather useful data and can be expensive for the landlord to administer. We want to target recent service users with our engagement approach, to enable us to collect good quality data on what is working well and what is not. We also want to ensure we proactively contact tenants and leaseholders from traditionally under-represented groups, using the most appropriate methods.

To do this, we need good quality profiling and contact information. We will identify gaps in our current data and seek to complete them within two years from the publication of this strategy by maximising all the opportunities to interact with our customers. We will then ensure all data is protected and kept up-to-date.

Measuring Achievements

We will set targets to demonstrate that we are increasingly reaching a larger proportion of residents and gathering a cross section of views. These will include:

- Number of contacts we have with our tenants and leaseholders designed to improve our services, for example satisfaction surveys
- Number of tenants and leaseholders who open an online account for transactions
- Percentage increase in engagement with under-represented groups
- Number of customers interacting with our social media platforms
- Number of tenants and groups actively involved in improving their estates and neighbourhoods
- Outcomes of consultation published on website to show difference made.

Creation of a Participation Tracker will also help monitor whether tenants and leaseholders receive the information they need for meaningful engagement, to the degree they want and in the most appropriate way.

Performance against these targets and the Action Plan on page 5 will be reported to the Council's Housing Committee as part of the annual review of the implementation of our strategy. This strategy will be reviewed within the next 3 years.

Related Strategies

Financial Inclusion Strategy

Digital Transformation Programme

Next Steps

A Steering Group will implement the Action Plan below:

Action Plan

| Aim | Where we are now | What we are going to do to make a difference | Where we will be in 2024 |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>A culture that recognises and values tenant and leaseholder engagement</p> | <p>Traditional methods of tenant involvement offer limited insight into satisfaction with the services provided</p> | <p>Transparency and honest information sharing to build trust and sustain relationships</p> <p>Ensure projects consider engagement early in the design process, with sufficient priority for it to influence outcomes.</p> <p>Staff training, briefings and staff engagement champions. so all staff have a clear understanding of the benefits of engagement and how their role should listen to residents' voices.</p> <p>Promote digital engagement, with traditional methods as appropriate.</p> <p>Carry out an annual review of the implementation of this Strategy and report progress to Housing Committee.</p> | <p>Tenant and leaseholder engagement embedded in service provision.</p> <p>Staff Engagement Champion in each service area.</p> <p>TPAS accreditation.</p> |
| <p>Improved customer satisfaction as we learn from feedback</p> | <p>Very limited data on satisfaction</p> | <p>Surveys of the customer experience following a transaction e.g. repair</p> <p>Undertake STAR survey.</p> <p>Focus groups of customers who have used a service e.g. Repairs & Maintenance. These could be in a variety of format including online and social media</p> <p>Promote use of complaints procedure and demonstrate service improvements made as a result.</p> <p>Set performance targets for satisfaction with operational services.</p> <p>Regular feedback to residents to demonstrate the value of their input, providing examples of where we have learnt from engagement and made changes, for example 'you said, we did.'</p> <p>Annual Report to tenants and leaseholders will include satisfaction measures and outcomes from engagement.</p> | <p>Regular reporting on a suite of indicators with targets for example 90% satisfaction with landlord, 20% of our tenants completing surveys, attending focus groups etc. annually</p> <p>Achieving targets for engagement with harder-to-reach groups such as younger people</p> <p>40% of customers signed up for Housing Online.</p> <p>Programme of regular STAR surveys.</p> |

| Aim | Where we are now | What we are going to do to make a difference | Where we will be in 2024 |
|--|--|--|--|
| Better value for money as we focus on tenant and leaseholder priorities | Business decisions do not routinely consider tenant and leaseholder priorities | <p>Promote use of cost effective digital engagement methods including social media.</p> <p>Residents to scrutinise performance measures.</p> <p>Budget for improvements identified with residents.</p> <p>Promote resident-let groups.</p> <p>Consult with tenants on the scope for local offers, for example service charges for communal areas.</p> <p>Benchmark against other landlords and learn from best practice.</p> <p>Evaluate success against targets</p> | <p>Monthly Estate inspection programme.</p> <p>Scrutiny Panel to explore in detail issues of concern</p> <p>Co-creation of policies and services</p> |
| Increased number of tenants and leaseholders engaging with us, especially from groups currently underrepresented | No data on engagement | <p>Launch Housing Online.</p> <p>Remove barriers to engagement, for example training to support digital uptake and by providing information in plain and appropriate language.</p> <p>Support RCRA and recruit new members.</p> <p>Support residents' groups in Independent Retirement Living (IRL) schemes</p> <p>Develop a menu of opportunities and resources available.</p> <p>Use targeted methods of engagement for example social media.</p> | <p>Meeting targets for digital engagement.</p> <p>Costed proposal for online chat facility to further enhance digital engagement.</p> |
| Develop a more focussed engagement approach | Traditional methods of tenant involvement | <p>Develop a menu of opportunities and resources available.</p> <p>Creative and appropriate use of methods, language and tools to form a clear view of our customers' priorities and our progress in addressing them.</p> <p>Establish liaison groups for shared interests or experiences</p> | <p>Able to demonstrate service improvements made as a result of resident engagement.</p> <p>Analysis of most effective forms of engagement</p> |

| Aim | Where we are now | What we are going to do to make a difference | Where we will be in 2024 |
|---|--|--|---|
| | | <p>Appropriate use of the most effective methods of engagement including fact-to-fact, digital and social media</p> <p>Use of appropriate language, style and presentation</p> <p>Inclusive engagement that complements digital engagement</p> | |
| Business and strategic decisions informed by customer insight | Limited profiling data on tenants available. Very limited profiling data on leaseholders | Initiate a project to collect and refresh profiling data as part of investment in the IT system functionality; and using all available interactions with customers. | <p>Gaps filled and contact data complete for all tenants and leaseholders with procedure in place to keep data up-to-date.</p> <p>Accurate profiling data available</p> |

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DRAFT: October 2021

9. Recharge Policy Consultation (Housing, Maggie Ward)

Synopsis of report:

The Housing Revenue Account has made limited use of recharges to tenants where neglect or damage has resulted in additional work. This new Recharge Policy seeks to widen the scope of recharges, enabling tenants to access repairs that are their responsibility through the Council's contractors.

The objective of the policy is to assist tenants to maintain their homes to a good standard, to ensure repairs that are tenants' responsibility can be carried out immediately if there is a health or safety risk even if the tenant does not have the funds.

Where tenancies end and the property is not left in a reasonable condition the tenant will be recharged.

This policy will include discretion so that in line with our Financial Inclusion Strategy tenants can be supported to sustain their tenancies.

Recommendation:

Members approve a consultation exercise on the proposed Housing Revenue Account Recharge Policy, appendix A.

1. Context

- 1.1 The Housing Revenue Account can make recharges where tenants are in breach of their repairing responsibilities or essential repairs are needed that are tenants' responsibility. This has been done historically on a limited basis, but officers are now seeking to widen the scope of the Recharge policy to enable tenants to access repairs and to facilitate the emerging Financial Inclusion Strategy and our tenancy sustainment work.

2. Report

- 2.1 The Recharge Policy will ensure that the Council is able to:

- Recover costs incurred due to tenant damage or neglect
- Provide a service to tenants to access repairs that are their responsibility, but they are not able to arrange.
- Ensure that the actions of a small number of tenants do not impact disproportionately on the funds available for managing and maintaining other tenants' homes.
- Recover costs of reletting properties that are left in a poor condition or not cleared of possessions when a tenancy is ended and if this is not paid restrict access to the Housing Register in future.
- Ensure that tenants can access health and safety repairs which are their legal responsibility, but they do not have funds to organise this.
- Assist a next of kin or executor to clear properties where a tenant has gone into a nursing home or passed away

- Ensure that tenants are encouraged to report repairs in their homes without being concerned this will draw attention to issues they have failed to manage or indicate potential neglect or domestic abuse.
 - Support a wholistic approach to repairs and tenancy management.
- 2.2 The policy will be proportionate and will have links to the emerging Financial Inclusion Strategy
- 2.3 Recharges will be at the Schedule of Rates Code payable to the contractor with an administration charge for arranging, managing the repair, and collecting the charges. Where applicable to the repair, VAT will be charged.
- 2.4 The draft Recharge Policy was considered by the Housing & Enabling Member Working Group on 15 September 2021. Officers are requesting approval to carry out a consultation exercise. The draft policy will be on the Council's website with a user-friendly summary of the policy with a response survey. The Council holds email addresses for 1,900 tenants who will be emailed to inform them that the consultancy is open. As older tenants are less likely to be in the group for whom we hold emails additional contact will be made with any unrepresented cohorts to ensure that the consultation is representative.
- 2.5 Once approved the policy will be available at the start of the tenancy and through Housing Online on our web pages in a user-friendly format for tenants.

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 Under all Tenancy Agreements issued by Runnymede there are landlord and tenant responsibilities and the tenant must keep the property in good condition including the garden and exterior of the property. Recharges will be made in line with this legal agreement.

4. Resource implications/Value for Money

- 4.1 In order that Housing staff can ensure that the appropriate charges (linked to Schedule of rates & prevailing VAT rates) are recharged, and that Tenants are repaying the charges in line with agreements this income will be detailed against tenants Housing accounts within the Northgate system.
- 4.2 Periodic outputs from the Northgate system will enable the appropriate sums (VAT) to be passed unto Customs & Excise.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Tenants were consulted extensively when the current agreement was introduced in 2014. Section 5 of the Tenancy Agreement sets out obligations in relation to: Repairs, improvements and alterations to your home. The proposed Recharge Policy introduces the facility to allow tenants in certain circumstances to have work completed to assist them to comply with their obligations and to pay for this either fully in advance or where appropriate by incremental payments. The Tenancy Agreement states:

1 (f) If this agreement says that we will charge you, for example to carry out work or clear rubbish, we will do so in line with our recharge policy which will be summarised in your tenancy handbook.

4.3 You must also pay any rent or other charges you owe us. Payments made by you will first be made to pay off any former debts from previous tenancies such as rent arrears or rechargeable repairs and finally rent for the property to which this agreement relates.

5.2 As this revised policy has wider scope than what is currently in use it is proposed to carry out a full consultation exercise, the policy complies with the existing. Tenancy Agreement but provides additional access to repairs for tenants.

5.3 If tenants fail to pay their recharges this can be enforced subject to management approval as a breach of tenancy. In all instances a proportionate approach will be taken with repayment options available in line with the financial circumstances of the tenant. However as with other breaches of tenancy the sanction will be applied if the tenant refuses to engage and meet their obligations.

6. Equality implications

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is being carried out – we believe there are no issues that will not be covered within a robust procedure and regular monitoring to ensure that charges and discretionary relief are applied consistently.

7. Environmental Implications

7.1 Properties that are not maintained impact on the local area and cause distress for neighbours. When gardens have been allowed to overgrow or have been used for waste items, they cannot be used safely for children and this policy will enable the Council to arrange for works to be carried out for tenants to ensure that the matter is resolved.

8. Timetable for Implementation

8.1 The Consultation will be open for 12 weeks following Committee approval of the process, the results to be reported to committee with the final policy in March 2022.

9. Conclusions

9.1 A new Recharge Policy will ensure costs are recovered where appropriate, but tenants can also benefit from the wider scope of accessing rechargeable repairs that they can pay for or for which they can get discretionary assistance.

9.2 Members are asked to approve consultation on the proposed policy.

(To Resolve)

Background Papers

None

Appendix A

Runnymede Housing Revenue Account Recharge Policy

November 2021



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Runnymede
BOROUGH COUNCIL 

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Introduction

A key activity of the housing service is to maintain our stock to the highest standard possible by managing the repairs & maintenance budget and using the rent we collect effectively. We recognise that most tenants act responsibly and maintain their homes to a satisfactory standard and condition but on occasion circumstances lead to repairs being required which would otherwise be the tenant's responsibility. When this happens, we may need to act to prevent the property from deteriorating further by undertaking the repair and then recovering the cost from tenants.

Whilst the majority of tenants do keep their homes in good condition there are others who do cause damage deliberately or through neglectful acts. When repairs are required we call these rechargeable repairs. We do not want tenants who look after their homes to share the cost of repairs for those who do not.

Tenants should be encouraged to report accidental damage or health and safety matters to the Council even if it is the tenant's responsibility if they are unable to resolve this themselves. The Council will take a proportionate approach with the primary aim of ensuring that tenants live in homes in a good state of repair.

This Policy covers the subject of recharging for repairs and other reasons associated with housing management. This policy is intended to apply to all Council tenants (where the Council accepts that it is the tenant's direct landlord) of whatever legal tenure they occupy their premises at the time when any damage to the Council's property (to include land as well as premises) is caused.

The Recharge Policy to tenants for repairs undertaken at their former or current property and will be provided to tenants at the start and at the point of notice to end the tenancy either by the Council, the tenant, or their representative. Unless the tenant has been approved for written communication documents will be available to them through their online Housing Account.

This policy will not provide a comprehensive list of potential rechargeable repairs but outlines the approach that the Council will take to ensuring that properties are well maintained and safe, that tenants comply with their obligations to maintain their home under the tenancy agreement and where this is not done the Council has the ability to enforce compliance and ensure homes are not allowed to deteriorate. At all times the Council will balance our statutory obligations with our role as a social landlord and take into consideration the needs of individual residents.

A user friendly version of the policy will be produced and will be available on request, on the Council's website and through Housing Online accounts when launched.

Principles

The Council aims to deliver 'Value for Money' services and ensure maximum and efficient use of Housing Revenue Account funds.



- We will be consistent and fair in the treatment of all tenants and leaseholders
- We will aim to raise recharges promptly and accurately with the minimum of administration cost.
- Recharges will be set to ensure that tenants are covering the cost of carrying out these “additional” repairs including staffing costs for raising, managing, post inspecting and invoicing the item, this will be monitored to ensure that this service is self-funding but does not result in the tenant paying more than the true cost to the Council.
- We will ensure that tenants with a disability will not be unfairly penalised under this policy
- Tenants who are suffering from financial hardship will be able to access repairs to their homes with incremental payments.
- Tenants who are the victims of crime or domestic abuse will be able to access repairs such as lock changes and repairs to doors to ensure their home is secure.
- Tenants will be encouraged to report repairs even where they are caused by neglect or wilful damage and work with the Council to restore their home to an acceptable condition.

Potential Recharge Reasons

The general circumstances where repairs are likely to be recharged are:

- The repair is caused by neglect, wilful/malicious damage, misuse, and accident
- Repairs for Tenant’s Obligations following Notice to Vacate/Possession Order/ Eviction
- Repairs for Tenant’s Obligations in connection with Mutual Exchanges
- Repairs for Tenant’s Obligations in connection with Transfers
- Repairs that are the tenant’s responsibility but they are unable to carry them out and for health and safety / safeguarding reasons the Council agrees to carry out the works and recharge.

Rechargeable Repairs

Runnymede aims to promote a culture of providing homes with rent levels which remain affordable and in return we expect our tenants to act responsibly and look after their homes. The following list are repairs which would attract a charge to the current or former tenant of the Council property where damage or neglect necessitates additional repairs.

- Wilful damage e.g., replace broken door damaged by someone in the household or a visit,
- Remedy work carried out by the tenant which has damaged the fabric/ structure of the Property



- Neglect e.g., repairs required further to rubbish removal, missing keys (including windows locks),
- Clear blocked sink, drain, bath and toilet of e.g., nappies, toilet fresheners, etc. removal of fire doors, frozen/burst pipes, etc
- Misuse - e.g. – replace tiling, repair damage to walls (graffiti), allowing water damage through failure to report a leak, broken kitchen units.
- Damaged decoration (related to start of tenancy)
- Accident - e.g. – damage or loss of function to a fixture and/or fitting that occurs suddenly as a result of an unexpected and non-deliberate external action e.g., broken sink or bath due to an item being dropped in it.
- Tenants will also be responsible for work that may be required when moving out of their home in order to bring it up to an acceptable standard for it to be re-let. This includes cleaning of the property, replacing missing fixtures and fittings, clearing gardens.

The Council understands that from time to time repairs may be required that are not the landlord's responsibility and this may be difficult for some tenants to organise or pay for. One of the aims of this policy is to ensure that tenants are able to access good quality repairs and maintain their homes so that they are complying with their Tenancy Agreement. Tenants are in breach of their repairing and maintaining obligations may be offered the services of a rechargeable repair and if they fail to remedy the defect will be served a Notice

Garden Maintenance

Tenants are responsible for maintaining their gardens (where they are part of the tenancy, not communal spaces). This means keeping plant growth under control so that it does not encroach onto neighbouring properties. Trees must be safely maintained and water features should be safe for pets and small children.

Lawns should be maintained and growth must not be allowed to cause damage to fences, windows, wastewater pipes, drains or pathways etc. Maintenance of gardens is a tenancy condition and in exceptional circumstances where tenants are unable to manage their gardens the Council can arrange for a contractor to carry out the work on payment by the tenant of the relevant charges. Tenants will be encouraged to move to a more manageable home.

Where Health and Safety concerns are raised about the condition of a garden the Council may carry out works and recharge the tenant if the item is their responsibility.

Recharges – Housing Management General

Recharges may also be appropriate for other reasons associated with housing management

- Damage identified following routine property inspections
- Mutual exchange inspections



- Unauthorised alterations identified during routine property inspections
- Rubbish, fly tipping, blocking refuse chutes
- Excessive hoarding of items within the property
- Damage to fences and gates to car parks
- Damage to controlled access systems
- Damage to TV aerials
- Gas servicing access difficulties that result in forced entry and/or a lock change being requested
- Recharges by gas contractor when called out to calls that result from no meter credit, turned down thermostat, tenant damage to heating system fixtures and fittings
- Dog fouling within or upon the demised premises and communal areas
- Graffiti within or upon the demised premises and communal areas
- Misuse of recycling bins
- Garage evictions (to include clearance costs and lock change costs)
- Removal of garden shrubs and trees
- Removal of garden rubbish
- Tidying of gardens where it is the responsibility of tenant(s)

Hoarding

Hoarding can be a complex issue to manage, tenants will be supported to gradually reduce hoarding and officers will have discretion to recharge a proportionate amount for clearances if the resident is on a low income without savings. The primary concern will be for the welfare of the resident and agreeing a manageable reduction in the problem.

Charges on Termination of a Tenancy

When the Council receives or gives notice to end a tenancy, before the end date of the tenancy a technical or management officer will arrange to visit and carry out an inspection which will be photographed and all rechargeable repairs will be identified and the tenant put on notice that if they are not carried out to an acceptable standard will be done by the Council at the end of the tenancy and will be recharged to the tenant or their estate. This will be known as a "Notice Inspection" All properties should be inspected before the tenant leaves and where the tenant is transferring to another social housing tenancies the new home will be held or withdrawn if the level of rechargeable repairs is unacceptable.

When a tenant signs the tenancy agreement for a new property, they will be provided with a condition report including photographs of each room. The Council has a Void Standard to which each property will be brought. On termination of the tenancy the tenant must return the property to the Council in the same condition, other than reasonable wear and tear. A check out report will be completed in the same format and any additional cost caused by tenant, neglect, unreasonable condition of the property or damage will be recharged to the tenant. This will include recharges to the estate of a deceased tenant. Their representatives will be notified on receipt of the



death certificate that the estate should not be disposed on until such time as the Council confirms any applicable charges.

Charging Policy

Where any work is carried out by the Estate Services staff, it will be at the actual hourly cost to the Council (per operative time allocated and cost of material) plus a % (or fixed rate) admin fee. This may be to external areas, communal areas or within an individual property.

Where works require an external or internal contractor, the total costs incurred by the Council will be invoiced and will be re-charged in full with an admin fee.

Estate Services Staff

Where any work is carried out by the Estate Services staff or a contractor, it will be at the actual hourly cost to the per operative and cost of material) plus a % (or fixed rate) admin fee. This may be to external areas, communal areas or within an individual property.

Where works require an external contractor, the total costs incurred by the Council will be invoiced and will be re-charged in full with an admin fee.

Examples of works that Estate Services staff may carry out for which the fee above will be levied are:

- Rubbish removal
- Graffiti cleaning,
- General cleaning after rubbish removal,
- Cleaning of carpets (Temporary Accommodation)
- Additional refuse collection due to contaminated recycling
- Dog fouling
- Cleaning of communal areas in shared houses.
- Bulk items left in communal areas or refuse areas. Only general household refuse is covered by the Waste service funded though Council Tax. Bulk items must be removed like any other resident of the borough.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances such charges will be paid in full prior to the work being carried out.

Recharge Categories – Current Tenants

When a repair is requested that is not the landlord responsibility arranging a rechargeable repair will fall into two categories

Category 1 Health & Safety where the Council may arrange the repair once the tenant has contracted to pay the recharge and has set up a direct debit



Category 2 Non urgent items which can wait until the charge is paid or depending on the item following a financial assessment when 25% of the charge has been paid.

The Recharge procedure will outline repairs that can be carried out without the full cost being paid, where the ability to carry out a normal life with the property is hindered, e.g., broken door to a bedroom.

Insurance

Runnymede Borough Council are only responsible for undertaking any necessary repairs to the building; tenants are strongly advised to take out a comprehensive contents policy to insure their private possessions and belongings and to cover damage caused by overflowing sinks, defective washing machines etc which will be the responsibility of the tenant.

Damage caused to another property such as to a property below will be the financial responsibility of the causing tenant, e.g., repair of decorations to a flat where a washing machine has leaked into the ceiling of the property below.

Accidental damage

Where damage has been caused to a property accidentally and where rechargeable Repair is agreed, an officer may give due consideration to the incident and the tenant's account of the incidents before recommending discretion to a senior officer.

Fair wear and Tear

Where damage has been caused to a property and where a rechargeable repair is appropriate, provided that the damage was only caused further to the reasonable use of the premises by the tenant and the ordinary operation of natural forces (i.e., the passage of time), an officer may give due consideration to the tenant's account of the cause of the damage before consulting with their Line Manager to decide whether the Council would apply discretion and not levy any charges for the Rechargeable

Discretion

Runnymede Borough Council may decide not to recharge in certain instances. This will not always be applicable and if the following circumstance apply but if the tenant is in receipt of additional benefits and has funds available discretionary assistance will not be given solely on the basis of a disability or condition:

- Those with Learning Disabilities living alone
- Registered Physical Disability that prevents tenant carrying out their obligated repairs and they live alone.
- Debilitating Medical or Mental Health condition, and living alone
- Households that have been the victim of crime or Domestic Abuse (where the perpetrator is not living in the property)



- In addition, an officer may recommend a relaxation of the recharge policy for a tenant who has an excellent record of conduct during their tenancy

Former Tenants

Action will be taken to recover recharge debts from former tenants, the debt will be considered a Housing related debt and will be considered in assessing future applications under the Housing Allocation Scheme. Debts will be subject to the Corporate Debt Recovery Procedure ensuring that residents with multiple debts and a low income are able to make management payment plans.

Discretion

All potential rechargeable items will be identified on the housing system. When a recharge is applied or waived the system will require the reason for this to be recorded. Recharges will be monitored to ensure that they are being applied and waived with consistency and are not being disproportionately levied on any particular cohort of residents.

Recovery

There will be a recovery policy for debts to the Housing Revenue Account, this will cover recharges, court costs, rent and any other sundry debts which are outstanding.

Appeals against decisions to levy Rechargeable Repairs can be made to the Head of Housing and Business Planning or Head of Housing Technical Services. Appeals will be considered where the policy has not been adhered to, and financial hardship will not necessarily result in charges being waived on tenant responsibilities.

Human Rights

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) provides a right to respect for private family life and home. The Council will continue to respect all the protocols of the ECHR and will have consideration of this in determining whether to carry out rechargeable repairs.

Equalities

An Equality Impact Assessment is being undertaken and no adverse impact has been identified which ensures that tenants with a protected characteristic are treated equally in accordance the Equality Acts duties. The results of the consultation will be considered in finalising the EIA.



10. Afghan Local Employed Staff Relocation Scheme (Housing, Andy Vincent)

Synopsis of report:

1. Runnymede Borough Council committed on 18 August 2021 to support three households being relocated from Afghanistan under the Local Employed Staff scheme.
2. Runnymede Borough Council contacted the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration on 2 September 2021 to request the first household be relocated to the borough.
3. Accommodation and support will be facilitated by the Council Housing Team – Homeless Service specifically.
4. Central Government funding is in place to off-set the costs to the Council of providing assistance.

Recommendations:

- i. Members note the anticipated date for the arrival of the first household with Runnymede Borough Council.
- ii. Members note that additional households will be received during November.

1. Context of report

- 1.1 The UK Government contacted local authorities on 3 June 2021 and 30 July 2021 to seek assistance with relocating individuals who had worked with the British Army in Afghanistan under a scheme that the Government had put in place as a result of events which had taken place in Afghanistan (what is referred to as Locally Employed Staff).
- 1.2 Approval was given via a Standing Order 42 on 18 August 2021 for Runnymede Borough Council to support three households containing Locally Employed Staff being relocated to the UK.

2. The Support Process

- 2.1 The aim of the scheme devised by the Government is to provide a range of support services to such individuals for a limited period to enable them to establish themselves in the UK. The Government has explained that due to individuals in these households having good language skills they should find it easier to adjust to a new country than those whose language skills are less developed but will require short term support.
- 2.2 Staff within the Housing Service will coordinate the support for the households.
- 2.3 This will involve arranging temporary accommodation and supporting the families to secure permanent accommodation within the private sector.
- 2.4 The Housing Team will also be the lead service for coordinating a “team around the family”. This work will be multi-agency and will also involve services such as Surrey Heath Council’s Family Support Team, Law and Governance, Finance, Chief Executive’s Office, Community Development and

Community Services. Work undertaken with the families initially will include help to: -

- Establish their home
 - Orientate them into the borough
 - Ensure they have access to finances, National Insurance Numbers, Bank Accounts etc.
 - Sign them up for GP and other health services
 - Access English as a Second Language courses
 - Request assistance from Surrey County Council to arrange formal education for any children
 - Provide help with religious/social activities outside of the home
 - Access employment; etc.
- 2.5 A request was made to the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration on 2 September 2021 for the first household to be relocated to Runnymede.
- 2.6 We anticipate the first household arriving with us week commencing 1 November 2021 with others arriving shortly after.

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 The policy framework being utilised to support the LES households relocating from Afghanistan replicates the framework in place for supporting homeless households or households threatened with homelessness.
- 3.2 It is usual for the authority to provide emergency/temporary accommodation in this instance and source permanent accommodation within the private rented sector.

4. Resource implications

- 4.1. Financial assistance to support households relocating to the UK from Afghanistan under the LES scheme is provided by central government and is paid in arrears via a series of claims.
- 4.2 The annum financial rate of support for each household member are as follows: -

| Descriptor | Tariff (£) |
|---|-----------------------|
| Integration Support Package (per person for 12 months following arrival) | 10,500 |
| ESOL (single payment per adult who requires it) | 850 |
| Cash Support ** (per person per week up to a maximum of 4 months – if required) | Variable Tariffs * |
| Rent/Accommodation ** (per person per day, up to a maximum of 4 months – if required) | £15 |

- 4.3 The cost of housing and settling in the families will be met from the initial grant allocation set out above. The Council's Homelessness Team have the

capacity to manage this service in-house and as such we will be able to defray some of the staff costs against the scheme.

- 4.4 Provision may need to be made to fund additional support e.g. translation services if the Council decides to accept additional Afghan households via other initiatives.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 The UK Government has made a public commitment to aid Afghan nationals who worked for the UK in Afghanistan. Assistance is being provided by allowing such nationals leave to enter the UK initially with a view to them obtaining indefinitely leave to remain.
- 5.2 Local authorities in the UK are being asked to provide temporary assistance to such Afghan nationals to enable them to settle. Funding for the delivery of assistance services is being provided by the Government for a limited period of time. It is expected that due to the language skills such Afghan nationals will settle into the UK relatively easily.
- 5.3 Any services and assistance that local authorities provide will be under their existing statutory powers.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 The Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010. Section 149 of the Act provides that we must have due regard to the need to;
- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - b) to advance equality of opportunity
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share protected characteristics.
- 6.2 We are aware of the makeup of the households Runnymede are receiving and consider that the protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Race and Ethnicity, Sex and Religion and Creed may be engaged.
- 6.3 The information we have received to date indicates that the households do not have any significant health, mobility and/or mental health issues.
- 6.4 Runnymede Borough Council will enlist the relevant statutory agency to support with any health and other concerns. Appropriate accommodation will be identified to meet any mobility needs and where required for it to be adapted to meet any long-term needs.
- 6.5 At this stage of the project it is considered that there are no known negative impacts regarding any protected characteristic each of the families has and measures are referred to which could help mitigate any negative impacts that may arise during the implementation of the project.
- 6.6 Financial provision is made within the Central Government Funding for the adaptation of any permanent property.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

7.1 Consideration will need to be given to the energy performance of any permanent accommodation to ensure that the household are not at risk of fuel poverty.

8. Other implications

8.1 None

9. Conclusions

9.1 The Council has worked quickly to fulfil its commitment to support three Afghan households, to put in place support arrangements and identified emergency/temporary accommodation for households being relocated under the LES scheme.

9.2 Runnymede had the provision to accept three households within weeks of receiving the request from government.

9.3 Colleagues within the Council and various other agencies will be working actively to support the households and to integrate them into their new community.

(To resolve)

Background papers

Afghan LES report approved under Standing Order 42

11. Update on Communication with Regulator of Social Housing (Housing, Simon Allen)

**Synopsis of report:
To advise Members of the recent contact with the Regulator of Social Housing**

**Recommendation(s):
None. This report is for Information.**

1. Context

1.1 Following the notice served by the Regulator of Social Housing in October 2019 Members requested an update at each committee on progress with remedying the service failures outlined in the notice.

2. Report

2.1 The Council continues to have monthly meetings with the Regulator to appraise them of progress with achieving compliance across the stock, issues

encountered and to detail improvements to ensure full compliance is achieved.

- 2.2 The Notice was served on the Council on 31st October 2019, and this will remain in place until the regulator is satisfied that the Council has proven that we are managing all risks detailed in the notice and can evidence this.
- 2.3 A meeting was held with the regulator in September in which it was expressed that whilst significant improvements has been seen with both the electrical certification and fire safety, the Council last LARS return which confirmed that the Council was 62% compliant with decent homes, was not acceptable. Indications were given in that the Council would need to achieve a minimum standard of 75% of properties achieving the decent homes standard before further discussions could be had to remove the regulatory notice.
- 2.4 The Housing Technical Services Team will re-report our decency data to the regulator again in late November, once we have collated the last set of stock condition surveys which were undertaken within the last six months and further analysed our capital investment data held within Northgate.
- 2.5 The electrical certification was 94.15% as of 15 October 2021 with 167 tests still to be completed.
- 2.6 High risk fire safety actions outstanding as reported on the 15 October 2021 are at 44 in total. This is a significant reduction from 282 on 1 January 2021.
- 2.7 A further tender will be issued to address all medium and low actions and further subsequent actions arising from our yearly surveys. This is likely to be awarded in spring 2022.

3. **Legal implications**

- 3.1 The Regulator of Social Housing served a Regulatory Notice on the authority as a Registered Provider, under the powers in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. The Notice, published on 31st October 2019, cited the statutory fire and electrical safety standards that gave rise to the authority's breach of the Homes Standard.
- 3.2 It remains open to the Regulator to take further formal action if they are not satisfied with the progress towards compliance.

4. **Conclusion**

- 4.1 The Council is continuing to engage with the Regulator monthly and are committed to ensuring that we have an open and transparent professional working relationship to end the issued notice within the quickest timescale.

(For information)

Background Papers

None

12. Purchase of Site for Development (Housing, Maggie Ward)

Synopsis of report:

The Council is in the process of acquiring a plot of land in Chertsey and this report advises members of progress on the purchase.

Recommendation(s):

None. This report is for Information.

1. Context of report

- 1.1 Members were informed that they would receive an update at each meeting on the purchase of the plot of land in Chertsey.

2. Report

- 2.1 There are still outstanding matters which are currently preventing completion.
- Network Rail still need to provide documentation proving ownership to our satisfaction or provide a statutory undertaking
 - The Planning application shows access rights to enter and leave the site over land owned by other entities. The documentation provided shows that not all the development site is covered by the existing arrangements which would mean that some properties would not be able to utilise the shortest route in and out of the development. It would be the responsibility of the Council to ensure that our tenants did not use this route which would be impossible to manage and puts the Council at risk of future legal action from the landowners. Negotiations continue on this matter. External property solicitors are advising the Council on this matter.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The purchase of the site in Chertsey is progressing but timescales will be determined by the outstanding matters which must be resolved by the vendor.

(For information)

Background Papers

None

13. Key Performance Indicators, 2021/22 Q2 (Housing, Maggie Ward)

Synopsis of report:

This report provides the results of the Key Performance Indicators for quarter two and the recent monthly health and safety compliance statistics

Recommendation:
That Members note the results of performance monitoring.

1. Context

1.1 This report informs Members of the Key Performance Indicator results for the second quarter of 2021/22, the results of the monthly health and safety compliance monitoring up to September 2021 and additional information on complaints and Universal Credit.

2. Report

2.1 This report presents the full suite of KPIs for this year and the results of the monthly monitoring of health and safety compliance measures up to September, as reported to the Regulator of Social Housing. Analysis of complaints and Universal Credit is provided for information.

| Performance Indicator | Q1 Result | Q2 Target | Q2 Result |
|--|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| H1: Percentage of dwellings re-let to deadline per quarter | 2.8% | 70% | 9.1% |
| H2: Average number of calendar days to re-let a void property (excludes major works voids) | 131 | 25 | 65 |
| H3: Satisfaction with the overall reactive repairs service received (% of total number of responses returned) | 94.9% (159 surveys) | 95% | 90.9% |
| H4: Number of households in B&B for more than 2 weeks per quarter | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| H5: Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due (cumulative result) | 1.72% | 1.75% | 1.84% |
| H6: Percentage of tenants with more than 7 weeks rent arrears at the end of each quarter | 3.65% | 4.0% | 3.85% |
| H7: Percentage of stock with a valid annual landlord gas safety certification | 99.81% | 100% | 99.85% |
| H8: Percentage of stock with a valid safety certification Electrical Installation Condition Report | 92.4% | 90% | 93.7% |

| | | | |
|---|----|----|----|
| H9: Number of outstanding high-risk Fire Risk Assessment actions | 87 | 30 | 47 |
|---|----|----|----|

2.2 Performance on reletting void properties, while still unacceptable, has seen a significant improvement this quarter as the backlog is being cleared. The contractor has more than doubled the number of empty properties that they are working on since taking on the contract for the whole borough and have upscaled their labour resources, but this is difficult in the current market. There have been some supply chain issues for doors and windows. The overall improvement has been achieved with only two members of Runnymede Council staff working on voids and reactive maintenance, compared to four last quarter. Further improvements are anticipated following the appointment of a Maintenance Inspector with responsibility for void properties and the in bedding of new working practices. Recruitment for the two vacant posts is currently underway.

2.3 The new measure of average number of calendar days to re-let a void property (H2) has been introduced to reflect the importance being placed on improving this area of work. There has been an improvement, with average (mean) void times reducing from 131 to 65 days. The Void improvement plan continues with weekly monitoring meetings between management and operational teams.

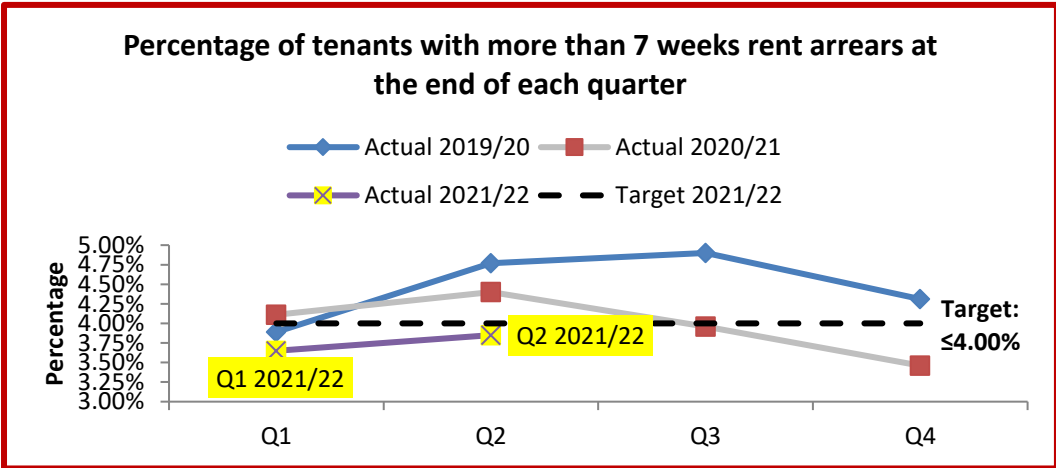
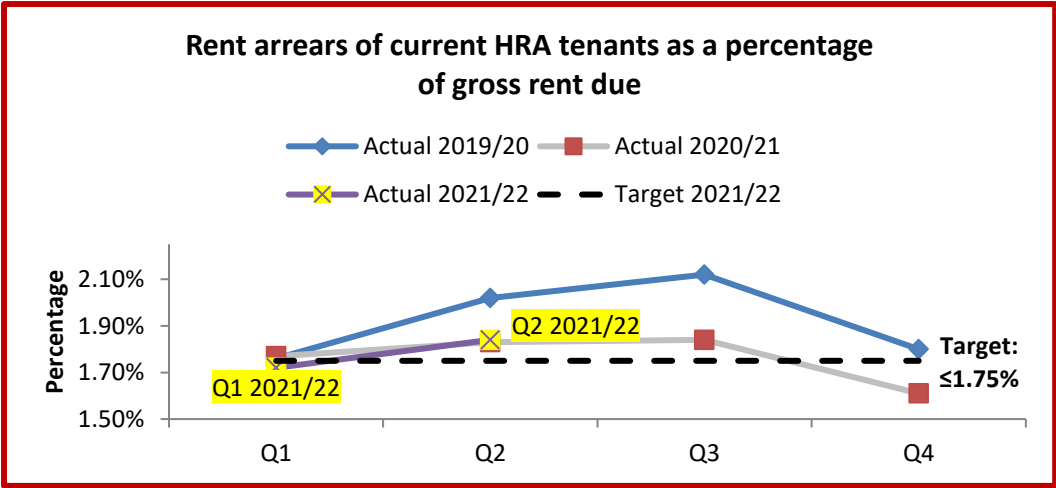
2.4 Void properties as at 28 October 2021

| Total Properties | Properties Empty | Percentage of properties Empty | Percentage of Properties Empty Excluding Redevelopment and Major Projects |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 2869 | 68 | 2.37% | 1.53% |

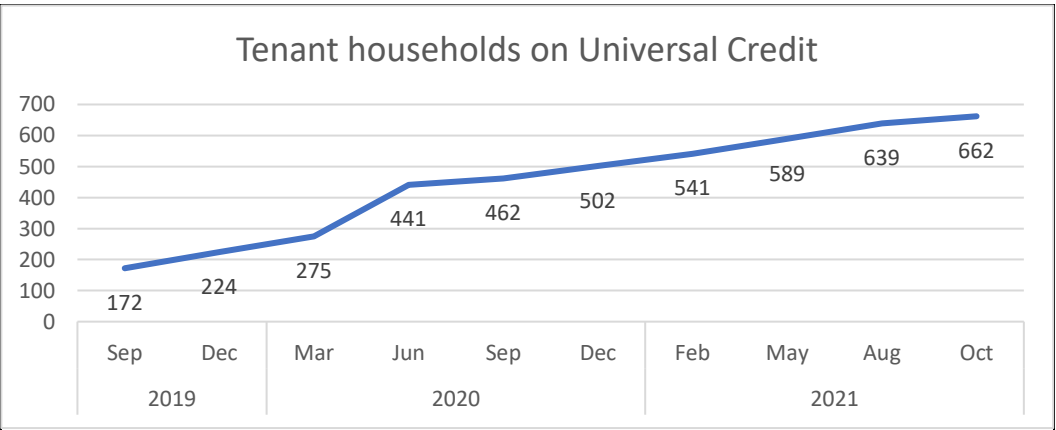
| Void Path | No of Voids |
|--|--------------------|
| PROJ - Major Works, properties used for decants and undergoing Surrey Towers Works | 12 |
| REDE – properties to be leased to Accent | 12 |
| Routine works | 35 |
| Major Works | 9 |

2.5 The Housing and Neighbourhood Services Team have seen a recent turnover in staff and are currently working at reduced capacity. This has impacted on the ability to maintain our previous successes with caseload completion on Rentsense. To address this, other staff have been taken off regular duties to assist with rent collection and an action plan has been implemented to manage rent collection going forward.

2.6 The results for rent collection are following a pattern consistent with the last two financial years.



2.7 Tenants claiming Universal Credit



2.8 Analysis of arrears by Benefit type

| October 2021 | Percentage of tenants | Percentage of tenants in arrears | Percentage of tenants more than 7 weeks in arrears |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Tenants on UC | 23.6% | 39.8% | 11.1% (73) |
| Tenants on HB | 36.5% | 10.7% | 0.8% (8) |
| Tenants paying full rent | 39.8% | 18.1% | 3.4% (38) |

2.9 Analysis of complaints resolved April - October 2021

| | Not upheld | Upheld/ partly upheld |
|---------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| About a member of staff | 1 | 1 |
| ASB | 1 | |
| Empty property | | 1 |
| Fence disrepair | 1 | |
| Garden Clearance | 1 | |
| Housing Management | 1 | |
| Housing Register | 2 | 1 |
| Neighbourhood Dispute (not ASB) | 1 | |
| Planned Refurbishment | 1 | |
| Repairs (contractor service) | | 1 |
| Tree Surgery | 1 | |
| Total | 10 | 4 |

2.10 We did not gain access to four tenanted properties for gas inspections on time. The reasons included where a tenant had passed away and another had gone into care. In order to address such issues with occupied properties, the gas safety inspection process is under review. Staff are continuing to work closely with the contractor to achieve 100% compliance.

2.11 Staff are working with the contractor who carries out the domestic Electrical Installation Condition Reports to address those properties where, despite numerous attempts, they have failed to gain access. Tenants have been advised by letter that the Council may seek a court injunction for this inspection if access continues to be denied.

2.12 The number of outstanding overdue high-risk actions identified through Fire Risk Assessments has been reduced over the second quarter but has not met the target of thirty due to the contract starting a few weeks later than originally planned. The remaining high-risk actions will reduce again over the next three to four weeks when the contractor has completed their fire safety works.

| Fire Risk Assessment: Outstanding Overdue Actions over Target | | | |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| | High Risk Factors | Medium Risk Factors | Low Risk Factors |
| Q2 2021/22 | 47 | 536 | 326 |

2.13 Since the engagement with the Regulator of Social Housing, Members have also received the results of the monthly monitoring of health and safety compliance measures. Officers have monthly calls with the Regulator to provide updates on the Council's progress with compliance and share the most recent data, as shown in the following table.

| | KPI Target | Result Apr '20 | Result July '20 | Result Oct '20 | Result Jan '21 | Result Feb '21 | Result Mar '21 | Result Apr '21 | Result May'21 | Result Jun'21 | Result Jul'21 | Result Aug'21 | Result Sep'21 |
|--|------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Gas Safety | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No. of CP12 certificates out of target | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| % of valid CP12 certificates | 100% | 99.96% (2644) | 100% (2645) | 99.92% (2647) | 99.74% (2641) | 99.77% (2642) | 99.81% (2643) | 99.89% (2646) | 99.81% (2643) | 99.81% (2643) | 99.89% (2646) | 99.85% (2643) | 99.85% (2639) |
| Electrical | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| % of stock with valid safety EICR certification | 100% | 41% (1184) | 47% (1340) | 64% (1827) | 75% (2150) | 81% (2312) | 86% (2434) | 90% (2583) | 92% (2631) | 92% (2639) | 93% (2649) | 94% (2678) | 94% (2679) |
| % of emergency lighting tests completed against target | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 87% | 78% | 77% | 81% | 73% | 81% | 100% | 80% |
| Water Management | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| % of water management inspection tests undertaken | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Passenger Lifts | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| % of inspections undertaken against programme | 98% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Asbestos | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| % of stock with a valid asbestos survey | 100% | 45% (1280) | 46% (1312) | 50% (1443) | 57% (1625) | 58% (1670) | 60% (1703) | 64% (1836) | 67% (1909) | 68% (1946) | 68% (1953) | 69% (1967) | 70% (1989) |
| Accidents Reporting | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number of RBC RIDDOR reportable incidents | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Number of days lost to accidents and incidents | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fire Risk Assessment | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| % of inspections completed in target | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Lightning conductors | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| % of works required completed in target | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Sprinkler systems | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| % of annual servicing completed within target | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

2.14 A reconciliation of all data across all compliance areas is planned to ensure that the data held is completely up to date and accurate. The information currently held in Propeller is believed to be largely accurate, however minor discrepancies may have occurred when properties have been sold or acquired which could be relevant to areas such as asbestos and electrical certification. The reconciliation exercise will ensure that clean data is uploaded into the new modules of Northgate. Once all the Northgate modules have been implemented the need for manual updates between systems will no longer be required, giving confidence that we are inspecting and servicing all properties as legislation requires, keeping our residents safe and have robust data to report.

3. Implications

3.1 These results are presented for information and no additional implications have been identified.

4. Conclusions

4.1 This report presents a range of performance data for information, including the KPIs for quarter 2.

(To Resolve)

Background papers

None

14. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the relevant report under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the report in question would be likely to involve disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in the relevant paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

(To resolve)

PART II

Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection

- a) Exempt Information
- 15. Surrey Towers Update
- b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)