

**Update on the Housing Service's position with the Regulator of Social Housing
(Housing, Andy Vincent)**

Synopsis of report:

A notice was served by the Regulatory of Social Housing in October 2019 on Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service for non-compliance with the Homes Regulatory Standard.

A review was conducted of the Regulatory notice in March 2022. This review recognised the progress that had been made to address concerns in relation to electrical and fire safety – although indicated that further progress was required in meeting the Decent Homes Standard.

A further review was requested in November 2022. At the time of writing the outcome of this review is unknown.

Recommendation:

Members note the request made to the Regulator of Social Housing to review Runnymede Borough Council's Regulatory Notice.

1. Context and background of report

1.1 Runnymede Borough Council was sent a regulatory notice from the Regulator of Social Housing in October 2019 identifying the following areas of concern: -

- a) Runnymede Borough Council had breached the Homes Standard;
- b) As a consequence of this breach, there was the potential for serious detriment to Runnymede Borough Council tenants.

The concerns specifically related to: -

- 1 Periodic electrical testing
- 2 Management of Fire Risk Assessment recommendations
- 3 Insufficient recent data on our housing stock to confirm that all properties comply with the [Decent Homes Standard](#)

1.2 A review of Runnymede Borough Council's regulatory notice was conducted in March 2022. This review recognised the improvements the Council had made in addressing fire safety actions and electrical safety performance, but also noted the improvements required to the percentage of the Council's homes reaching the Decent Homes Standard.

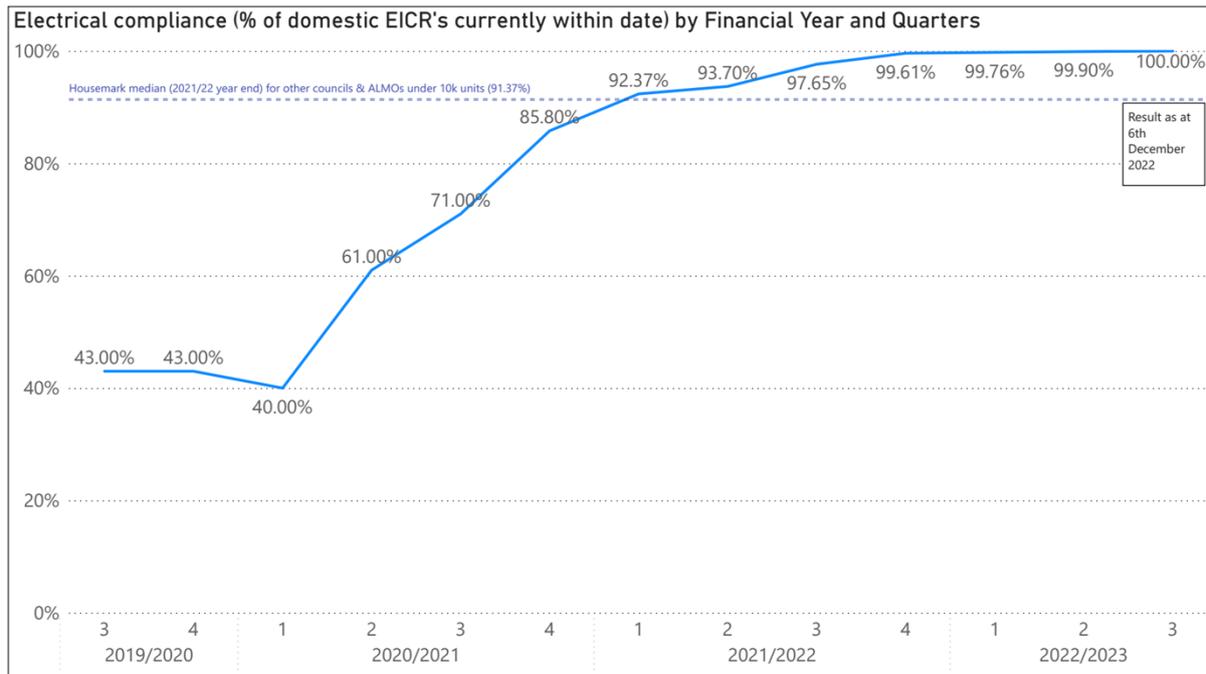
1.3 A further review of the notice was requested by Runnymede Borough Council in November 2022. It is currently not known what the outcome of the review is.

2. Performance on compliance and fire risk assessment actions

2.1 Significant improvement has been made in the compliance areas identified by the Regulator.

2.2 Electrical Safety

As of 6th December 2022, our electrical safety compliance position is 100%.



2.3 We also have in place a 5-year rolling programme of re-certification to ensure our levels of certification remain at 100%.

2.4 Compliance

Our performance as of September 2022 across the wider compliance performance indicator suite is included in appendix A.

2.5 We have also been subjected to three recent external Health and Safety Audits in June 2021, September 2021 and July 2022 exploring our management of compliance more generally. The July 2022 audit concluded the following:

It was confirmed that key recommendations made in the previous review had been implemented in relation to (i) developing policies and procedures for all compliance areas, and (ii) developing legionella risk assessments for the general housing stock.

There has been a continued improvement with respect to carrying out electrical inspections. During the 20/21 audit review, 61% of stock had a valid safety EICR certification. This increased to over 93% at the time of the 21/22 review and stood at over 99% during this review.

There has also been a continued improvement in completing high priority actions from Fire Risk Assessments. At the time of the audit there were 34 outstanding high-risk actions, down from 94 at the time of the previous review. Many of the actions relate to fire doors, with a door replacement

programme due to begin shortly which will complete these outstanding actions.

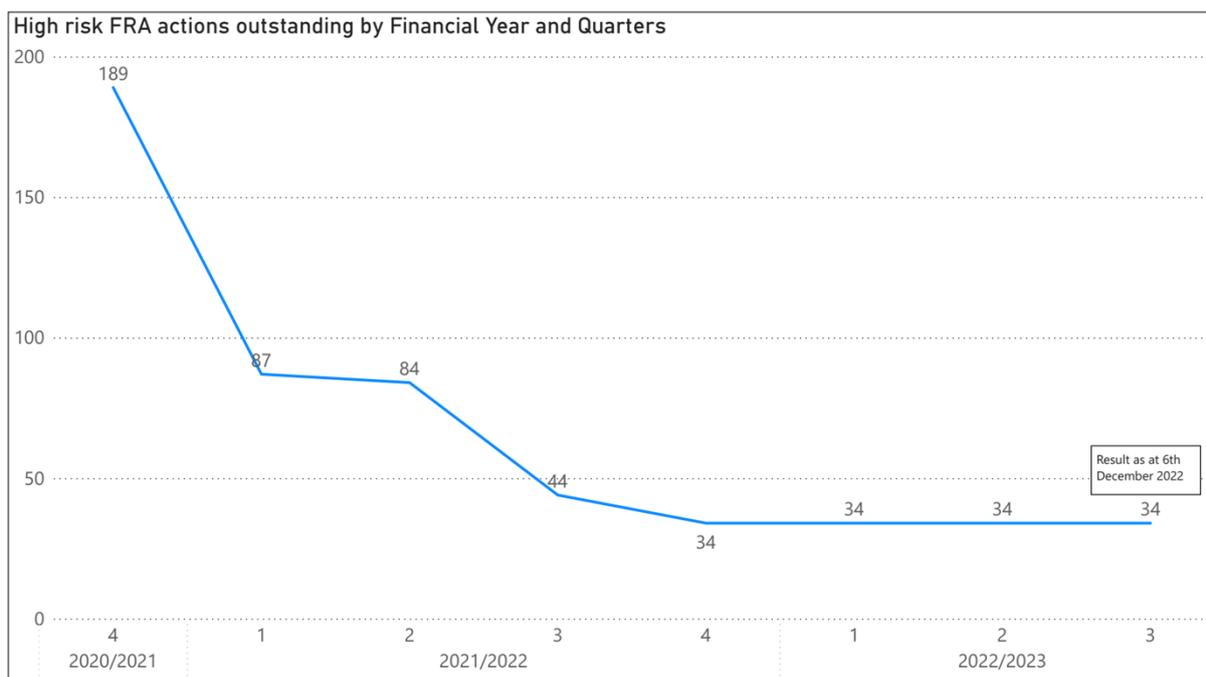
2.6 In July 2022 we also were subjected to an ISO 9001:2015 audit with the focus on health and safety compliance within our Housing Technical Services Team. The audit concluded;

The Stage 2 initial audit was carried out over 1 1/2 days (Auditor days and RW inclusive). Overall, the company showed an established Quality Management System. There were some good controls seen in the areas sampled. There was a good level of evidence provided to demonstrate that effective governance arrangements are in place. Based on the core elements reviewed, the audit activities followed and the minimal findings from these activities, the auditor recommends that certification to ISO9001:2015 is to be 'granted'.

It was evident to the auditor throughout the audit process - (this includes the Stage 1 audit at the start of the year) that there had been a tremendous amount of work completed this far. To enable them to achieve certification at the first ask in this particular industry and under the current Pandemic conditions is a fantastic effort. The team were fully committed to achieving certification and this is well deserved. All personnel interviewed and involved throughout the audit process were both knowledgeable and enthusiastic in their contribution to the organisations desire in achieving certification”

2.7 Fire Safety

Runnymede Borough Council currently (November 2022) has 34 high risk Fire Risk Assessment actions outstanding. These actions have reduced from 281 at the beginning of 2021; see graph.



2.8 Two new contracts are commencing imminently. One to replace fire doors and

another to inspect existing doors. Following the commencement of these contracts, we anticipate that the number of actions will reduce to zero.

- 2.9 Our programme of Fire Risk Assessments continues with assessments due being conducted in the new financial year.

3. Decent Homes Performance

- 3.1 Our Decent Homes performance as of October 2022 was 74.8%, having been reported in our LAHS return in June 2022 69%.
- 3.2 The step change in performance reflects a capital programme in 2021/22 of £3.35m and in 2022/23 £4.5m.
- 3.3 Our Decent Homes performance data is derived from a full 100% stock condition surveys undertaken in January 2019 and further annual data sample checks of 10 to 15%. In 2021/22 we completed a 20% targeted sample of our stock condition survey data at 600 properties.
- 3.4 We have robust plans to return to high levels of Decent Homes performance with our projected year end (31st March) performance over the next 5 years being as follows.

Total non-decent Properties	822	687	684	309	272	Year 2027/28
DH %	72%	77%	77%	90%	95%	96%
Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28

- 3.5 This information reflects our budgeted expenditure profile of £4.5m in 2022/23, £8m in 2023/24 etc or a total of £48.4m by the end of the financial year 2026/27.
- 3.6 This expenditure is budgeted in our Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2021-2051 [Runnymede Housing Revenue Business Plan 2021-2051](#) with more detail on our asset management strategy contained within our Asset Management Plan 2021-2026, [Housing Asset Management Plan \(runnymede.gov.uk\)](#).

4. Policy Framework

- 4.1 The capital investment Runnymede Borough Council is putting into its homes is articulated in the Housing Asset Management Plan 2021-2026.
- 4.2 This identifies when the Decent Homes Standard will be achieved.
- 4.3 Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Compliance Performance indicators are reported to the Housing Committee four times per year (at the end of each quarter).

5. Resource implications

- 5.1 Resources in place in place to maintain compliance performance and to deliver 100% Decent Homes Standard performance.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 The Regulator of Social Housing undertake economic regulation of providers of social housing registered with them, focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer. They also set consumer standards and may take action if those standards are breached and there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants or potential tenants.
- 6.2 If the Regulator concludes that consumer standards have not been met, they can issue what is a notice requiring the recipient organisation to take action to remedy the default.

7. **Equality implications**

- 7.1 Equality implications are considered when undertaking Decent Homes work.
- 7.2 Refusals are monitored and followed up to promote uptake.

8. **Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications**

- 8.1 A significant proportion of the work be undertaken to achieve the Decent Homes Standard will improve the energy performance of our homes.
- 8.2 This will both reduce carbon emissions and help address fuel poverty – addressing two key objectives of the Housing Service.

9. **Conclusions**

- 9.1 Runnymede Borough Council are proceeding with improving the condition of their homes and ensuring all possible health and safety precautions are taken to ensure the safety of our tenants.
- 9.2 Runnymede Borough Council has asked the Regulator of Social Housing to recognise the improvements that have been made by removing the Regulatory Notice served on the authority in October 2019.

(For information)

Background papers

Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Asset Management Plan 2021-2026

<https://democracy.runnymede.gov.uk/documents/s4445/Housing%20Asset%20Management%20Plan%20Report.pdf>