

Appendix 2: Housing Management Service – Improvement Plan

Why is this plan needed?

National context

The social housing sector has recently seen significant legislative and regulatory change. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act became law in July 2023 and brought with it several key changes which will impact the way social landlords deliver their services and are held accountable, including:

- A strengthened and more proactive Regulator of Social Housing, including a new data submission of Tenant Satisfaction Measures;
- A statutory duty to comply with the Complaints Handling Code set by the Housing Ombudsman;
- Expected standards relating to the competence and conduct of staff working for social landlords; and
- More robust requirements relating to health and safety leadership and health and safety repairs in homes.

In April 2024, the Regulator implemented their new inspection programme which will see social landlords receive an external inspection within the next four years against a set of refreshed regulatory standards. These standards include requirements around the safety and quality of homes, estate and tenancy management, partnership working in neighbourhoods, transparency and accountability with performance information and availability of tenant engagement opportunities. Moving forward it is vital that Brent Council and our Housing Management Service is compliant with these regulatory requirements and can effectively evidence how we achieve this.

In June 2024, social landlords will need to submit their first set of Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) data to the Regulator. This data covers core management functions like compliance rates, meeting repairs timescales, numbers of complaints and anti-social behaviour cases, as well as tenant satisfaction scores against these and other areas, and is required to be published at a local level by Brent Council as well as being published nationally by the Regulator.

Voices from the wider social housing sector, for example, the [Better Social Housing Review](#) developed by the National Housing Federation and Chartered Institute of Housing, and London Councils' [Foundations of an Effective Local Authority Landlord Service](#), are calling for a 'back to basics' approach. Both of these documents, informed by feedback from social housing tenants, Councillors and Officers across the country, recommend that landlords take time to re-establish clarity and focus on their core purpose, before extending and diversifying to other commitments and ambitions.

Local context

The Housing Management Service in Brent manages around 12,600 homes, made up of approximately 8600 tenants and 4000 leaseholders. We deliver services differently to tenants and leaseholder based on the terms of their tenancy agreement or lease, however ensuring the safety and satisfaction of those who live in the homes we manage and access the services we deliver is our priority.

Tenant and leaseholder feedback

Our 2023-24 TSM results put us below the London average for tenant satisfaction across almost all measures.

TSM	Housing Management Service 2023-24 result	London Councils lower quartile**	London Councils average**	London Councils upper quartile**
Overall satisfaction	51.4%	53.3%	60.2%	64.5%
Satisfaction with repairs service	55.1%	55.5%	64.1%	71.3%

Satisfaction with time taken to complete last repair	50.2%	54.5%	59%	76.3%
Satisfaction that the home is well maintained	53.4%	56.3%	57.1%	60%
Satisfaction that the home is safe	60.2%	62%	69%	74.3%
Satisfaction that communal areas are clean and well maintained	57.2%	55.5%	58.5%	64.7%
Satisfaction with approach to handling ASB	38%	37%	42%	53%
Satisfaction that we make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods	41.8%	49%	54%	55%
Satisfaction that we listen to views and act upon them	35.2%	41%	45.6%	51.2%
Satisfaction that we keep tenants informed about things that matter to them	54.8%	57.3%	64%	68.5%
Agreement that we treat tenants fairly and with respect	61.7%	58%	61%	70.8%
Satisfaction with our approach to handling complaints	17.5%	21.3%	25.5%	28.6%

***Housemark Benchmarking Data published in April 2023 – updated Benchmarking expected later this year.*

We recognise that our TSM results mean we are falling below where we want to be as an organisation and are not meeting the expectations of our tenants when it comes to the services they receive from us. Moving forward, it is a priority for Brent Council and our Housing Management Service to target our time and resources on tangible changes that will improve the way tenants experience our services and increase satisfaction. As a starting point, the Housing Management Service is re-organising the structure and remit of our core teams across landlord functions, with the aim of creating efficiencies and better aligning our resources to service and tenant priorities. A key change will be to focus Officer time on being present on estates, engaging directly with tenants and leaseholders in and around their home on a day-to-day basis.

In line with the above, another key driver for these improvements will be to focus on developing our relationship with our tenants through our new Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy. This sets out how we will listen to and use the feedback we receive, be more transparent with how the service is performing, welcoming challenge and provide opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to influence decision-making, ensuring that the voice of social housing tenants is reflected in the way social housing services are delivered in Brent.

Budget pressures and the strategic change programme

At Brent Council we, like all other local authorities, are facing significant financial pressures and are needing to make changes to address budget challenges.

Some of the main challenges that could affect the long-term viability of the HRA Business Plan are rent levels, major works and repairs. There has already been a change to the Council's power to increase rents annually up to a maximum of CPI plus 1%, with rent rise limitations of 7% in 2023/24. Implications of future Government regulated rent policy remain uncertain beyond April 2026.

Global conflicts, the long-term impact of pandemic, Brexit, high levels of inflation, labour shortages and rising interest rates present the Council with a volatile and uncertain economic environment. The cost of living crisis will impact residents of Brent and the Council is committed to doing what it can to support those in greatest need. Cost pressures and risk of income collection losses are continuously monitored.

Inflation over the past year has experienced such high levels that have not been seen since the 1980's. Besides rising energy costs, other goods are also experiencing increases in prices, due to factors such as labour shortages, pay rises, logistic issues and a general trend to increase prices and restore profit margins where previously slumps in demand had suppressed price levels.

In September 2023 CPI stood at 6.7% against a Bank of England target of 2%. The September inflation figures are important as they are used for the following years uplift on formula rent levels, 2023/24 being an exception with a 7% ceiling, as opposed to 11.1%. This ceiling resulted in an estimated £2m reduction of income when compared to the standard policy of CPI plus 1 (11.1%). Like most other housing providers, difficult decisions were required to reduce costs in order to close the gap between rental income and increasing cost of service delivery. Brent Housing Management services identified £3m worth of cost reductions during budget setting for 2023/24. The gap between inflation on rent levels and inflation on costs is a significant risk to the long-term business plan.

The impacts of Universal Credit and cost of living crisis can affect the HRA Business Plan, as the number of rent arrears may increase considerably. A number of mitigations are in place to help support tenants on universal credit, along with Council Resident Support Fund to help with financial hardship.

As the Council adds more stock to its portfolio and complexities of new additional requirements to building standards are increasing, such as fire safety works and decarbonisation, the cost of major works are rising. At the moment, there is insufficient government subsidy available to address these changes. The Asset Management Strategy and investment plans must be approached cautiously and allow for flexibility to scale back on schemes where required.

Impacts of national housing policies and any changes proposed in future Government papers can have an adverse impact on the HRA and could require additional resources to address any unexpected changes.

As a local authority, we want to harness opportunities to create efficiencies and generate income in the face of growing demand and increased costs of providing services whilst still ensuring we can deliver the outcomes needed and expected by our residents. One way in which the Council is responding to the ongoing budget pressures is by embarking on a strategic change programme with the overall aims of supporting financial sustainability, enabling delivery of Council priorities and developing a workforce fit for the future. The strategic change programme provides corporate context for this Housing Management Service Improvement Plan, with a number of workstreams identified in this plan feeding directly into workstreams under the strategic change programme.

Responding to regulatory changes

The Housing Management Service has been preparing for the new regulatory changes through ongoing assurance reports which have been presented to the Corporate Management Team regularly over the past year, self-assessments against the new consumer standards and Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code and an audit carried out by an external organisation to provide an objective view of where we currently stand against key requirements.

These assurance reports, audit outcomes and self-assessments have identified a number of key actions which we believe will bring the Housing Management Service back to basics, ensuring we are delivering services that are aligned to the new regulations and meet tenant expectations, as well as support the Council's strategic change programme and provides efficiencies where needed.

This improvement plan pulls together all of these key actions to ensure focus and provides a vision for the Housing Management Service moving forward.

Vision

Through delivery of the outcomes identified in this plan over the next three years, we aim to achieve our vision:

*to provide **good quality, safe homes alongside reliable and responsive landlord services, for which our tenants report satisfaction rates that put us in the top 25% of local authority landlords across London.***

Structure of this plan

This improvement plan sits under the wider strategic change programme for the Council and is made up of three overarching themes which intend to achieve our vision by putting the focus on getting 'back to basics', ensuring we're meeting our legal duties and regulatory requirements whilst delivering the core functions of the Housing Management Service to the highest standards possible. These themes are:

- Our people, culture and partnerships;
- Our relationship with tenants and leaseholders and;
- Delivering a good landlord service.

Each theme has a set of desired outcomes with key workstreams that work towards achieving them, all of which are set out in this plan.

Governance

The delivery of this plan is a corporate priority for Brent Council. A Housing Management Improvement Board will be established who will have strategic oversight and accountability for this plan and its workstreams.

This board will report regularly into the Corporate Management Team and progress updates will be provided to the Cabinet member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security during regular portfolio meetings.

Our people, culture and partnerships

Why is this important and what risks are we currently facing in this area?

Recruitment and retention

Having the right people in the right roles is vital for delivering good quality, reliable housing management services. In Brent, we have faced challenges to recruit and maintain permanent staff across several housing teams, including senior manager posts in high-risk areas like building safety compliance. High staff turnover in key areas is impacting consistency in leadership and service delivery, as well as stability of key contacts i.e., a Housing Officer for tenants. Ongoing budget pressures also mean that staffing budget is stretched, limiting the number of posts in certain teams meaning additional challenges in delivering services against expectations.

We need to refresh our approach to recruitment and retention, exploring how we can widen our reach for potential candidates as well as make sure we're identifying the potential and investing in our existing workforce to support development and encourage internal career progression. We also need to ensure we're using Housing Revenue Account (HRA) staffing budget as effectively and efficiently as possible, where it can provide the most value for money, and skilled staff can have the most impact without feeling overworked.

Restructuring the service

We know that the way services and teams are structured can impact the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery. The Housing Management Service are in the process of a re-organisation which will make significant changes to the way some of the teams are structured. For example; Housing Officer, Income Officer and Lettings Co-ordinator roles will be deleted and combined into a new generic post encompassing a range of duties currently fragmented across different parts of the service. The aim of this is to encourage more ownership over patches for Officers, with expectations that more time is spent out on estates, directly engaging with our tenants in and around their homes. Without effective grip on the implementation and embedding of the re-organisation, along with having the right tools (e.g. IT systems) and people in place, there are risks of service failure and of the intended benefits not being realised.

Partnership working and contract management

The Housing Management Service has several internal Service Level Agreements with other areas of the Council, as well as contracts with external organisations for the delivery of some key housing management functions, including contact centre arrangements, estate caretaking and delivery of the repairs and maintenance to homes. There are instances where ownership, approach to partnership working and performance management grip of these agreements and contracts is not where we want it to be. It is vital that we review and strengthen our approach to this moving forward to ensure standards are consistently maintained, the right resources are in place and value for money is being achieved for tenants and leaseholders.

Professionalising the service

Embedding the right skills, knowledge and behaviour across our teams is an important part of fostering the culture needed to deliver good quality, reliable and responsive services. The Regulator is developing a new standard focused on competence and conduct of staff working in the social housing sector, expected to be published and for regulation against it to begin, from April 2025. It will include requirements for certain staff across the service to achieve qualifications within a two-year transition period. If all relevant staff are not qualified within the timescales set by the standard upon publication, the service risks being found non-compliant with regulatory standards.

It is important that we identify where there are gaps in qualifications across relevant roles as early as possible, so we can appropriately plan and spread-out enrolment on courses as required, managing the needs of individuals, and reducing overall impact on service capacity.

Desired outcomes

- The Housing Management Service attracts and maintains a diverse and talented workforce
- Our teams and partnership working arrangements are structured to deliver effective services and provide value for money
- Staff have the right skills, knowledge and behaviours to deliver good quality services
- Tenants and leaseholders have confidence in the Housing Management Service, our staff, contractors, and corporate partners we work with

Key workstreams

The following key workstreams will be essential in achieving the desired outcomes and mitigating the risks outlined above:

Workstreams	Specific actions	Timescale
The Housing Management Service attracts and maintains a diverse and talented workforce		
Work with HR colleagues to develop and roll out a comprehensive recruitment campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage external consultants to shape an innovative recruitment plan for the service Roll out recruitment package with extended recruitment timeframes to capture as many applications as possible 	Y1 – 2024/25
Implement a 'grow your own' approach to tackle hard to recruit roles and support career development for existing staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include trainee posts in re-structure Evaluation of hard to recruit posts to identify opportunities for 'grow your own' and apprenticeship level roles 	Y2 – 2025/26
Our teams and partnership working arrangements are structured to deliver effective services and provide value for money		
Finalise and embed the re-organisation of the Housing Management Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete consultation with staff on proposed restructure plans Set up working group from across the Council to ensure core requirements for new structure in terms of systems, processes, training etc. are in place. 	Y1 – 2024/25
Handover the management of the estate caretaking team to the Public Realm directorate and embed an effective Service Level Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Public Realm colleagues to develop an agreed SLA Set up structured ongoing monitoring of the SLA which includes KPI's, monitoring meetings and escalation processes where needed 	Y1 – 2024/25
Review all Service Level Agreements in place across the Housing Management Service and embed a consistent approach to managing them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pull together a centralised register of all SLA's, establish review date, key contacts etc. Develop an approach to SLA management which includes KPI reporting, regular contract monitoring meetings and escalation processes for any issues Ensure accountability for TSM's is embedded into SLA's where required and partner services are fully engaged in the regulatory requirements that are dependent on their service 	Y2 – 2025/26
Introduce an additional team to Property Services who can deliver quick, responsive service against priority work i.e. damp and mould	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify business development support to research and develop business case for the proposed team Draft JD's (supervisor post and operatives) and submit for job evaluation Push forward recruitment, secure resources i.e. vehicles and documentation required i.e. policies, processes, insurances as needed Rollout of service, including internal and external comms 	Y2 – 2025/26
Staff have the right skills, knowledge and behaviours to deliver good quality services and a positive service culture		
Develop a consistent induction programme for all new starters to the Housing Management Service which includes vision, values and expectations from senior management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree and embed a process with HR for notification of all new starters Create a welcome pack for new starters and service overview presentations for each service Schedule quarterly service overview sessions to be delivered by the senior management team Develop a mandatory learning programme for new starters Embed monitoring for the induction process to provide assurance that all new starters have completed it as required 	Y1 – 2024/25

<p>Ensure all relevant Directors, Heads of Service and Managers have achieved (or are working towards achieving) the required qualifications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all managers who do have the required qualifications have evidence of this on file with HR • Identify managers without required qualifications and work with the individual, their manager and HR to agree enrolment dates • Ensure qualification requirements are included in all relevant JD's and the above steps are included as part of recruitment / new starter induction • Introduce and facilitate peer support sessions for managers working towards their required qualification 	<p>Y2 – 2025/26</p>
<p>Refresh the learning programme delivered through Housing Skills Academy to ensure it aligns with priorities, gaps in knowledge/skills and can respond to emerging training needs quickly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme to be reviewed at DMT every 6 months (Q2 and Q4) • Develop and introduce a training request form and schedule a standing agenda item at DMT for training request approvals 	<p>Y1 – 2024/25</p>
<p>Centralise all professional memberships held by the service (e.g. Housemark, Chartered Institute of Housing, Housing Quality Network etc) and ensure membership benefits are being effectively used</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create register of professional memberships, confirm budget arrangements and key service contacts • Facilitate attendance / use of membership benefits e.g. webinar screenings, attendance at networking sessions etc. 	<p>Y1 – 2024/25</p>
<p>Tenants and leaseholders have confidence in the Housing Management Service, our staff, contractors, and corporate partners we work with</p>		
<p>Develop process guidance for all core functions, ensuring consistency in service delivery, timeframes and communication no matter which staff member manages a case</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree format for process guidance across the Housing Management Service and run a programme of process mapping sessions with key teams to finalise process guidance. • Develop programme of process audits as quality checks across core functions ensuring timeframes are met, agreed communication is taking place, record keeping is effective etc. 	<p>Y2 – 2025/26</p>

Our relationship with tenants and leaseholders

Why is this important and what risks are we currently facing in this area?

Regulatory standards relating to engagement

The importance and value of effective engagement with tenants and leaseholders is at the forefront of discussion across the social housing sector. The refreshed regulatory standards include requirements focused on engagement with tenants, providing access to information, supporting effective scrutiny of services, and addressing complaints. Without effective mechanisms in place to deliver on these requirements, the service risks non-compliance, resulting in potential fines and damages to reputation. Most importantly though, by failing to meet the required standards we would be letting down our tenants and leaseholders.

Brent Council have recently developed a Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy which sets out in more detail our ambitions for engagement across the Housing Management Service over the next five years, including how we aim to involve tenants in decision making and support them to scrutinise our performance and service delivery. By listening to our tenants and leaseholders authentically and seeing the value in all types of feedback, whether positive or negative, we can better design and improve our services to drive up satisfaction and deliver value for money.

Desired outcomes

- Tenants and leaseholders voices are heard in decision-making for the Housing Management Service
- Tenants and leaseholders feel informed and empowered to access information, scrutinise services and review performance
- The Service embraces all forms of feedback from tenants and leaseholders as a tool for learning and making change

Key workstreams

The following key workstreams will be essential in achieving the desired outcomes and mitigating the risks outlined above:

Workstream	Specific actions	Timescale
Tenants and leaseholders voices are heard in decision-making for the Housing Management Service		
Publish the final version of the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy and work with the Partnerships and Engagement Service to develop and deliver an annual engagement plan in line with service priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish the final Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy on the website and share with the wider housing management service. • Agree engagement plan for 2024-25 and supporting KPI's which sets out all engagement planned for the financial year. • Set up quarterly sessions with the Partnerships and Engagement Team to: monitor the engagement plan, ensure ongoing alignment with service priorities and review evidence of changes made a result of engagement activity. 	Y1 – 2024/25
Achieve the Tpas Landlord accreditation to ensure the service is meeting best practice expectations around engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the requirement for the repairs and maintenance contractor(s) to be accredited to Tpas Contractor Accreditation is included in the tender document under the re-procurement • Carry out a self-assessment against the TPAS standards and take action to address any gaps and review self-assessment following a 6-month review • Schedule formal assessment with Tpas consultant to achieve accreditation • 	Y2 – 2025/26

Tenants and leaseholders feel informed and empowered to access information, scrutinise services and review performance		
Work with the Partnerships and Engagement Service and the Communications Team to review the webpages for the Housing Management Service, ensuring all key information and policies are accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit tenants and leaseholder to participate in design workshops for new content Recruit tenants and leaseholders (target 15) to attend a workshop lead by House Mark to review experience of My Account Work with web team to review accessibility of the content Ensure communications going forward include links to the website to signpost tenants to self-serve where appropriate 	Y1 – 2024/25
Develop an ongoing communications plan for the Housing Management Service which includes an approach to regularly sharing performance information with tenants and leaseholders (TSM results, complaints information and performance of services provided by contractors and corporate partners).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise content for communications campaign as agreed with Corporate Communications Service. Launch communications (annual report style) following submission of TSM results to Regulator and ahead of publication of league table to ensure tenants and leaseholders are sighted on our performance ahead of national publication. Embed performance information updates on the forward plan for the Chair of resident associations meeting so performance is discussed with engaged residents on a quarterly basis Agree regularity and format for sharing performance information more widely and ensure web-review includes development of a page to publish performance information for the housing management service 	Y1 – 2024/25
Ensure tenants and leaseholders living in high risk blocks have access to the Building Safety information unique to their block, have opportunities to provide challenge and know how to report issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring a report to Housing DMT following completion of first round of Building Safety Engagement meetings held which identifies learning for future approaches and formats for these meetings, future communication methods etc. and plan for next round. Embed improvements identified in report and kickstart next round of meetings in December 2024, using these to increase awareness of annual audits for all homes in high rise blocks. Ensure information is available on the website and embed as a key theme in communications. 	Y1 – 2024/25
The Service embraces all forms of feedback as a tool for learning and making change		
Use our TSM results to inform targeted improvements to Housing Management services and engage with tenants on how this can best be achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold a dedicated session with tenants and leaseholders on our TSM results to discuss challenges and gather feedback on how we can work to improve across key areas, as well as identify areas where expectations need to be managed more broadly so this can be factored in to communications moving forward Develop internal comms plan for the wider housing service and corporate colleagues delivering aspects of Housing Management (the Contact Centre, the Public Realm etc) which includes the TSM's, what they mean and what actions we're prioritising to drive up satisfaction as well as regular updates on themes coming out of complaints so that individual teams can take away learnings and implement improvements Deliver engagement plan alongside reviewing and updating all policies across Housing Management to ensure tenants have opportunities to provide feedback and influence policy setting across the service 	Y2 – 2025/26
Establish a process for more detailed complaints analysis, incorporating tenant and leaseholder reviews of complaint responses and learning from Housing Ombudsman decisions and wider publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-run tenant led scrutiny of complaint responses issued by Housing Management Staff and embed learning Present recommendations to Heads of Service for agreement and then Chair of Resident Association group to confirm what recommendations are to be implemented and provide reasons for those that cannot. Work with the Change and Customer Insight Service to develop more robust complaints reporting, identifying themes across reasons for complaints, geographical areas, property types, tenant demographics etc. 	Y1 – 2024/25

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver an AI pilot on complaint response generation and engage with tenants to gather feedback• Develop an approach to complaints response auditing and feed outcomes of these cases audits back to Housing Management Service Managers as opportunities for learning	
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Delivering good landlord services

Why is this important and what risks are we currently facing in this area?

Changes to building safety regulation

The safety of the homes we manage and those who live in them is a priority for the Housing Management Service. The Building Safety Act 2022 reforms the building safety system and addresses issues identified in the independent review following the Grenfell Tower fire, including the need for more transparency and engagement with tenants and leaseholders about the safety of their homes, better record keeping and the introduction of a new Building Safety Regulator to oversee more stringent safety regime for higher-risk buildings.

The Housing Management Service has registered all our high-risk buildings with the Building Safety Regulator and have delivered a full year of our block safety engagement meetings with tenants and leaseholders. Our fire door inspection programme is also coming to an end for this year and will restart once complete. A new IT system (True Compliance) is now live and in use, which will hold all compliance data for the homes we manage, ensuring accurate monitoring and reporting is in place.

Reprocuring the repairs and maintenance contract

Delivery of repairs and maintenance is a core function of housing management and the main reason that our tenants and leaseholders will interact with our services. The repairs and maintenance contract currently in place is due to be re-procured and the procurement process has begun. Working with the Council's Procurement Service to ensure this process is managed effectively and the Engagement Team to ensure tenant and leaseholder input is in place from an early stage, is vital for shaping this core service moving forward.

Tenant and leaseholder satisfaction

We recognise that there are occasions where our services fall below the standards both ourselves and our tenants and leaseholders expect, and our 2023-24 Tenant Satisfaction Measure results reflect this. Analysis of complaints, Housing Ombudsman findings and feedback received from our Contact Centre identifies communication as a key area for improvement, with tenants feeling like they aren't being updated on their ongoing cases and that they are not able to easily contact the people they need to.

We need to pull our focus back to delivering the basics of our Housing Management Service to a high standard, prioritising communication, and building a solid foundation from which to drive innovation and improvements in the future. This is a challenge with ongoing budget pressures, so efficient and effective resource management will be key.

Quality assurance

Successfully delivering the basics of a Housing Management Service means that we need to be confident in our compliance with the refreshed regulatory standards and have the right tools and resources in place to deliver services effectively and efficiently. There are instances where essential quality assurance is not in place across the Housing Management Service currently e.g. out of date and inconsistent policy documents and a lack of accessible performance monitoring information.

IT systems across the service are fragmented, inconsistently used by staff and hold significant data quality issues which impacts performance reporting as well as day-to-day delivery of services. It is vital that we carry out a review of our systems to establish whether they are fit for purpose and consider consolidation where possible. We also need to prioritise improving the quality of data they hold so that we can use it to effectively monitor, plan and inform service delivery.

Desired outcomes

- The homes, communal spaces and estates we manage are safe and well-maintained
- We prioritise tenancy sustainment and take quick action to address tenancy-related concerns
- The services we deliver are easy to access, well communicated and can be tailored to meet individual needs
- As an organisation we meet the standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing and have an embedded quality assurance framework

Key workstreams

The following key workstreams will be essential in achieving the desired outcomes and mitigating the risks outlined above:

Workstream	Specific actions	Timescale
The homes, communal spaces and estates we manage are safe and well maintained		
Re-procure the repairs and maintenance contract, ensuring tenants and leaseholders have been involved in the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a tenant and leaseholder engagement plan for the re-procurement, including opportunities to be involved in evaluation for potential contractors and establish how they can be involved in ongoing monitoring once the contract is in place • Deliver an online session open to all tenants and leaseholders where they can hear more about the re-procurement and ask any questions • Deliver a workshop with tenants and leaseholders focused on appointment management, communication and performance management under the new repairs and maintenance contract moving forward • Deliver a programme of summer roadshows across estates with a focus on the re-procurement where tenants can ask questions and provide feedback • Recruit tenants and leaseholders to support the bid evaluations of potential contractors • Work with corporate communications to develop an external comms plan for the repairs re-procurement and develop internal plan for sharing updates to the wider housing service • Publish the tender for the re-procurement • Conditionally award the contract and being mobilisation • Go live with the contract 	Y1 – 2024/25
Fully embed the True Compliance system, ensuring accurate, reliable and up to date data and reporting is available across all key compliance streams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing weekly working groups focused on uploading all compliance data and identifying and fixing any issues arising • Develop and agree a reporting framework for compliance reporting moving forward – what are the KPI's (should they match TSM formula moving forward?), where do they get reported etc. 	Y1 – 2024/25
Ensure the service is meeting central Governments Decent Home requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor progress of central Governments review of the Decent Home Standard so the Housing Management Service can be prepared to embed changes as announced 	Y2 – 2025/26
Embed a rolling programme of estate walkabouts so issues on estates can be picked up and tenants have an opportunity to engage with the service in their local area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise patches following the restructure and map out where, and how often, walkabouts need to take place across each patch • Develop guidance for officers for carrying out walkabouts, things to look out for and how outputs from them should be managed. • This should be developed in partnership with key corporate services so there is process agreement in place for actioning work that comes out of walkabouts and effective monitoring is in place • As new patch officers are recruited following the restructure, they must confirm attendance and schedule walkabouts in advance across their patch where required 	Y2 – 2025/26
Develop and embed an emergency response process for the Housing Management Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set out process for when an emergency situation arises which includes named lead officers, key actions, planned approach for decanting residents if needed etc. • Identify any resources or 'grab kits' needed in an emergency situation, pull these together and identify where they should be stored – ensure staff are aware. 	Y1 – 2024/25

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for all Housing Management staff on how to pull off details of households for a specific block in the case of emergency that includes name, contact details, household members etc. • Agree comms and expectations re. updating resident and household information, ensuring tenancy audits and other touchpoints are being used as opportunities to refresh and update these details. • Have a requirement with the Contact Centre that with every call or communication tenants details are checked and updated on the system. • Develop evacuation plans for all blocks that align with Building Safety Case Reports as required and share these with staff and residents. 	
We prioritise tenancy sustainment and take quick action to address tenancy-related concerns		
Develop a clear and robust approach to tenancy sustainment across the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pull a cohesive picture together re. what sustainment activity is currently in place across the service, its effectiveness and research best practice to establish where there may be gaps, including where additional income could be identified for potential sustainment support resource. • Work with customer services to review sustainment support currently being offered through the Hubs to assess effectiveness and identify improvements. • Engage with tenants who have received tenancy sustainment support from the service about what worked, what didn't, areas for improvement etc. • Formalise an updated tenancy sustainment offer through the development of a policy, guidance documentation for Officers and comms with tenants. • Work with other services across the Council to provide a collective response to key tenancy sustainment issues i.e. ASC to address hoarding, Mental Health Services to provide support for tenants with mental health related needs etc. 	Y3 - 2026-27
Develop a clear and robust approach to managing anti-social behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Community Protection Team to develop a corporate ASB policy document and supplementary policy statement for the Housing Management Service. • Review the ASB SLA with the Community Protection Team to ensure the needs of tenants and leaseholders are being met, following which embed effective monitoring of the SLA and reporting on ASB cases • Engage with tenants and leaseholders to review ASB process and guidance documentation currently in place for the service, ensuring it is fit for purpose • Include ASB case management as part of specific induction requirements for tenancy management roles under the restructure. 	Y1 – 2024/25
Embed a programme of tenancy audits across all patches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Experian to run a matching exercise against tenancy data we hold to identify inconsistencies which can then be used to prioritise tenancies for audit • Review tenancy audit function in CRM to ensure it is fit for purpose and work with Digital Transformation to make any changes needed, including effective performance monitoring via dashboards • Develop tenancy audit guidance for Officers including why they're important, how to talk to tenants about tenancy audits, what to do when they're struggling to gain access etc. 	Y2 – 2025/26

Achieve the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation for the Housing Management Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assess against DAHA's 8 priority areas to identify and address gaps. • Schedule formal assessment from DAHA. 	Y2 – 2025/26
The services we deliver are easy to access, well communicated and can be tailored to meet individual needs		
Work with tenants and leaseholders to review our digital offer when it comes to reporting repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a workshop with tenants and leaseholders as part of the systems review across housing to establish how well it is working for them, identifying pain points and opportunities to improve the functions available. • Identify improvements and potential alternative options for digital information sharing and live communication with tenants (e.g. an App) and work with the Digital Transformation Service to embed these. 	Y2 – 2025/26
Review and improve opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to communicate with and hear directly from the service re. ongoing cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a template for email signatures and letterheads that all Housing Management staff must use following the restructure which include direct telephone numbers in order to reduce tenants need to 'start from scratch' with the contact centre, and expected timelines for a response. • Review all shared mailboxes to confirm they are in use and what for, how and by who they are monitored, and where they are shared with tenants / leaseholders to access • Review the customer journey of tenants and leaseholders accessing our services through the Contact Centre or Officers, to establish how it can be streamlined, easier to access and more transparent. • Comms to go out from Director of Housing Services on use of signature template, shared mailboxes and general expectations re. being contactable, seeing cases through to an end point etc. • Schedule regular surgeries out in communities where repairs and tenancy management representatives can be available for tenants and leaseholders to discuss any ongoing cases with. • Develop an operational comms plan for the service which considers how text messaging, newsletters etc. may be used across patches 	Y2 – 2025/26
Develop a 'tone of voice' guidance document for the Housing Management Service which provides advice on consistency in communication and language style expectations across all interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain advice from corporate communications on what currently exists in way of 'tone of voice' guidance for the Council • Research best practice examples of tone of voice documents from other organisations • Develop guidance document in partnership with corporate communications and embed into Housing Management Service induction moving forward 	Y2 – 2025/26
Develop a vulnerability / reasonable adjustments policy in line with Housing Ombudsman spotlight report recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment against the HO spotlight recommendations • Engagement with residents on their current experience, preferred language to be used, what reasonable adjustments would be useful to have available etc. • Internal engagement with front line staff, ASC etc. • Final draft, approval and publication of the policy 	Y2 – 2025/26
As an organisation we meet the standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing and have an embedded quality assurance framework		
Carry out a detailed self-assessment against the consumer standards, identifying gaps and an action plan for addressing them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External auditor to carry out a high-level assessment of the service against the consumer standards • Audit report findings to inform more detailed discussions with core service areas to identify key evidence for a future inspection and actions needed to address them 	Y1 – 2024/25

<p>Build organisational awareness of social housing regulation and its implications for key stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver full-service briefings to the Housing Management Service on the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 and changes to regulation • Run a 'getting regulatory ready' session with relevant CMT and DMT members to develop organisational awareness and identify areas requiring focus where services co-deliver / SLA's are in place. • Deliver a session with both TMO's on the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023, changes to social housing regulation and specifically what it means for them • Deliver a members development session on the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 and changes to social housing regulation • Include comms to tenants and leaseholders in future newsletters, and during summer roadshows scheduled, around changes to regulation and how they can get involved in scrutinising our services against these moving forward 	
<p>Review the IT systems in place across the Housing Management Service, ensuring they are fit for purpose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Housemark to carry out a systems review • Work with the Change and Customer Insight Service to identify, prioritise and establish a programme of data quality improvements across key systems based on the findings of the wider systems review • Identify opportunities to reduce the number of systems in use across the service, reducing the need to enter data across multiple systems and opportunities for errors to occur 	<p>Y2 – 2025/26</p>
<p>Develop an agreed approach and rolling programme for policy reviews moving forward</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a centralised policy register for the Housing Management Service, identifying policy owners, required review date etc. • Schedule policies in order of review with consideration of regulation requirements and service priorities. • Agree a set process for policy reviews, ensuring best practice standards are upheld, tenant engagement and front-line officer involvement is included from a formative stage, appropriate governance, approvals and comms are followed and version control is in place. 	<p>Y1 – 2024/25</p>
<p>Expand and embed the Quality Assurance resource and remit across the Housing Management Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit Quality Assurance and Standards Officers • Gap analysis against ISO 9001:2015 • Embed horizon scanning as a core function of the new Quality Assurance team, ensuring publications from key organisations i.e. Housing Ombudsman, the Regulator etc. are being reviewed and any key learning is being communicated and implemented within the service 	<p>Y3 - 2026-27</p>
<p>Develop an effective performance management framework across all core functions of the housing management service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Change and Customer Insight Service to map and embed a performance management framework across the service, identifying all reporting need from external statutory reporting to corporate reporting, through to operational day-to-day performance data needs. • Agree appropriate formats for all required reporting and develop processes for these moving forward. 	<p>Y2 – 2025/26</p>
<p>Develop a robust approach to case auditing across core housing management functions, identifying good and bad practice, training needs, process or system issues etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Service Managers following the restructure to refresh the case auditing tool in place (not currently being used) and embed an agreed process and schedule for case audits, embedding discussion of these into 121's etc. • Agree escalation and quality checks (e.g. Heads of Service and Director to audit a case(s) once a month) • Collate learning from case audits and use this to inform 'bitesize' or 'lunchtime learn' sessions for the service, changes/improvements to processes and/or systems etc. 	<p>Y1 – 2024/25</p>

<p>Embed structured and consistent approach to horizon scanning which includes keeping abreast of Housing Ombudsman publications and ensuring learning is being taken and improvements to services embedded where identified</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include Housing Ombudsmans publications as standing agenda item of Housing Services DMT so learning can be identified • Agree process for disseminating learning across wider service through team meeting discussions etc. and take action to embed improvements to policies, processes etc. as identified. 	<p>Y2 – 2025/26</p>
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