

	<p style="text-align: center;">Cabinet 12 December 2022</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Report from the Corporate Director Resident Services</p>
<p>Asset Management Strategy: Delivery Plan & Budget</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key Decision
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	One Appendix 1: Asset Management Strategy
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Housing Asset Management Strategy (AMS) 2020 – 2025 set out our vision for responsive repairs, investment, reform and improvement of the stock and its performance. The proposed capital budget, which is covered under this report, will set out our requirements to deliver on the commitments covering a 5-year budget period and its implications to the overall commitments from the AMS 2020-2025.
- 1.2 This report sets out a summary of the work that has been undertaken and which is being further developed, to inform the delivery action plan. It advises on work

stream requirements and how this will inform the delivery of the six commitments within the Housing Asset Management Strategy (AMS).

- 1.3 This report also includes the Housing Capital budget requirements and affordable options for the delivery of the Housing Asset Management Strategy.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the proposed Capital Budget spend for delivery of the Asset Management Strategy.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Within the context of Brent Council's housing stock, the strategic asset management delivery plan covers the range of tasks we will need to undertake to ensure we optimise the use of housing and property assets, to maximise their contribution in meeting the needs and expectations of our residents. It is also to ensure that asset management work aligns with strategic Council priorities and informs our financial planning.
- 3.2 The Housing Asset Management Strategy's stock investment and improvement of its performance will be focussed over a five-year period, but within the context of a 30-year HRA business plan. Historically there have been various strains on the HRA. Urgent fire safety works identified following the Grenfell tragedy had to be undertaken without any extra funding from the government. There have been rent reductions over the last four years that have reduced funds in the HRA, however investment in Council stock continued at the same rate as it would have without the reductions. The asset management strategy delivery plan will ensure that we invest funds in the right areas to avoid the pitfalls of previous years.
- 3.3 The asset management strategy delivery plan includes the arrangements for its implementation including, developing delivery programmes and approaches, whilst ensuring a robust performance management framework is aligned to understand our successes in delivery.
- 3.4 The delivery plan will align with the Council's strategic objectives and will need to be reviewed and adapted in response to changes in the internal and external environment including revised priorities, the performance of the HRA business plan and wider housing policy changes and their impact.
- 3.5 In similarity with other social landlords, Brent has finite funds to spend on managing assets and therefore the delivery action plan is fundamental in ensuring that our stock is efficiently and effectively maintained to ensure long-term viability and value for money. The action plan aims to set a clear approach to delivering the aims and commitments of the Asset Management Strategy. It should be noted that there are other funding streams available to social landlords for energy efficiency works such as The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) and the Green Homes Grant, which could help augment capital spend in this area.

- 3.6 There are a number of drivers that dictate or influence the works and services that are delivered to our Housing stock.
- 3.7 Some are statutory and must be undertaken under all circumstances, some are necessary to improve and/or prolong the life of the asset, whilst others are influenced by resident's choices, estate improvements and should be considered within the context of the Council's strategic priorities.
- 3.8 Statutory works include those that keep the building wind and watertight, maintain hygiene and safety, and maintain essential mechanical and electrical services.
- 3.9 All statutory works are required to be included in the programme and budgeted for.
- 3.10 Non-statutory works include façade improvements, landscaping, decarbonisation works, demolishing unused garages, remodelling properties to deal with housing need, and the like.
- 3.11 Decarbonisation works to Council homes, including energy efficiency works that reduce demand for heat, is an important part of the Asset Management Strategy (AMS). The AMS plays an important role in the delivery of the Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy. Homes account for 42% of direct carbon emissions in the Borough. The target is to achieve an average EPC band B rating by 2030 for our own stock, as it is important that the Council leads by example.
- 3.12 Energy efficiency works will be important in helping tenants and leaseholders with the cost of living crisis by helping to reduce their fuel costs. Supporting households with the cost of living crisis is a key priority in the Council's Draft Climate Strategy Delivery Plan for 2022-2024.
- 3.13 The works that are influenced by residents' choices and impact on their views of us as a landlord are mainly works to improve their individual dwellings e.g. kitchen and bathroom renewals.
- 3.14 It is recognised that there is no single element that will drive up resident satisfaction with the quality of our homes. Therefore, we have to look at a variety of measures to achieve the increase in satisfaction, within the delivery plan.
- 3.15 The delivery plan is set around our six commitments, as set out within the Asset Management Strategy (AMS). Each commitment is themed for improvement and delivery of managing our assets, maintaining customers focus and satisfaction in delivering a good service, whilst ensuring value.
- 3.16 The main drivers of overall resident satisfaction are our repairs and maintenance service and ensuring that residents feel listened to. Notwithstanding this, the repairs and maintenance service is reactive and over time, the condition of our properties will deteriorate. It is therefore essential that

our properties are invested in, in order that their overall condition is maintained to a good standard.

- 3.17 We will develop a delivery action plan. We will also monitor how the above commitments are achieved through our delivery of services and joint working with colleagues across the Council.
- 3.18 The key actions are as follows:
 - 3.18.1 Update of fire safety policies and procedures to support the new Building Safer Futures legislation and requirements.
 - 3.18.2 Development of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans.
 - 3.18.3 Deliver improvements to estate communal areas.
 - 3.18.4 Introduce feedback from major works.
 - 3.18.5 Increase resident engagement and involvement.
 - 3.18.6 Energy efficiency modelling to inform the delivery programme and the investment need.
 - 3.18.7 Investigate more efficient non-fossil fuel heating systems.
 - 3.18.8 Consideration of sustainable design and construction standards
 - 3.18.9 Review and improve the management of complex repairs and works.
 - 3.18.10 Successfully implement the rechargeable repairs policy.

4.0 Actions taken so far to deliver the strategy

- 4.1 We have improved our data collection so we now know more about our stock. We have been carrying out stock condition surveys (20% every year) and will continue to do so until we have 100%. This means we know the condition of our properties and the investment required to maintain them to a sufficient standard. It also means we can better prioritise our improvement work with accurate useful life information on our assets. Energy Efficiency Modelling has been completed and it identified that interwar, post war and pre-war are the costliest types of properties to improve. The modelling will be used to inform the delivery of works under the planned programme.
- 4.2 We have improved the process of carrying out fire risk assessments (FRA) and we also carried out FRA4s on all high rise blocks, even though there is no statutory requirement to do so. We have reviewed the evacuation plans for each block and provided new guidelines to residents living in them. We are also working with our residents to agree Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP's) where required. We have updated the Job Descriptions of Caretakers and trained them in order to effectively inspect blocks when they clean them. This means communal repairs are reported more consistently and where repairs have not been completed, contractors can be chased at an earlier stage. It also means these repairs will all have visual post inspections.
- 4.3 We have now concluded our low and medium rise fire program, where we refurbished 454 blocks and 654 street properties. This work was undertaken to bring them up to modern standards and we also took the opportunity to improve fire safety in homes and communal areas. A total of 6214 households benefited from this programme.

- 4.4 We have improved our engagement with residents, which is helping us inform our estate improvement works. We are also discussing how we can continue to keep residents involved in communal works on their estates. As a result of a lack of structured resident feedback on major works and communal repairs we have introduced transactional surveys in addition to the existing repairs survey.
- 4.5 We are also trying to address overcrowding in Council stock by identifying existing tenant homes that are suitable for extensions and loft conversions. The first one has now been commissioned and that family will no longer need to be on a waiting list for years living in an overcrowded property. We hope to replicate this solution in other properties where these works are also feasible.
- 4.6 We have piloted retrofit works on three properties. The retrofit works included external wall insulation, internal wall insulation, installation of PV panels, upgraded the ventilation and replaced the kitchen and bathroom. Whilst the costs of the pilots were significant, this has included non-energy efficiency measures also. The results of the pilots will be considered in conjunction with the housing energy modelling exercise to identify the optimum cost / benefit level, and the various specification options available.
- 4.7 We are taking steps to make a significant application for the next round of Social Housing and Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF). This will help us move closer to our target of an average EPC band B rating for all Council properties.

5.0 Capital Programme

- 5.1 The capital programme is informed by various sources of data. The main source is the stock condition data, which we started collating in 2018. A full external fabric stock condition survey of all blocks and 20% of internals, were undertaken in 2018 and each year we carry out internal stock condition surveys to 20% of our properties. We currently have 60% internal stock condition data and expect to reach 100% by the end of 2024.
- 5.2 In addition, our responsive repairs system Northgate, is interrogated to help us identify areas that require addressing due to the volume and/or nature of the repair requests.
- 5.3 Also, our responsive repairs Surveyors identify issues, which are likely to affect properties of the same archetype and put suggestions forward for the programme.
- 5.4 Finally, contractors provide feedback on component and equipment life cycles following servicing and repairs.

6.0 Current Condition of Stock and Associated Issues

- 6.1 Despite recent investment in the building fabric of the low and medium rise blocks and the converted street properties, it is apparent that the housing stock remains in poor condition with a significant investment need.

- 6.2 Our high-rise blocks that are being retained require significant investment in terms of external fabric, internal works, and mechanical and electrical services. This high-rise blocks built in the 60's/70's require major works if they are to achieve a further lifecycle of 40 to 60 years. The external walls of most of these blocks are in poor condition. Without refurbishment, these will deteriorate further and beyond the point of affordable refurbishment. The dwellings are generously sized and with refurbishment will continue to offer good accommodation to residents. The mechanical and electrical services are nearing the end of their usable life.
- 6.3 It is clear that capital investment in our high-rise blocks will reduce the number of responsive repairs raised. Previous investment at the Watling Gardens has generated a significant reduction in responsive repairs compared to other high-rise blocks as can be seen in the table below:

Block name	Number of dwellings	Number of repairs raised between April 2019 and September 2021	Average Repairs Per Block	Ranking (Highest to Lowest)
KILBURN SQUARE	75	564	7.5	4
LODGE COURT	32	240	7.5	4
MANOR COURT	33	328	9.9	1
THE OAKS	38	358	9.4	5
WATLING GARDENS (3 BLOCKS)	105	441	4.2	6
WINDMILL COURT	110	881	8.0	3
Grand Total	393	2812	7.2	

- 6.4 Many of our low and medium rise blocks have received significant investment. There have been extensive programmes of external wall and roof refurbishments over the last few years. The remaining properties require less attention and therefore the investment need for this work stream has reduced.
- 6.5 We have also invested significantly in the internal communal areas of our low rise blocks, with fire safety works, and internal communal area refurbishment. Both of these areas were essential to fulfil our landlord fire safety obligations, and to meet our tenancy and leasehold decoration commitments.
- 6.6 We are currently spending significant amounts on void refurbishment. This is because kitchens and bathrooms are in poor condition and the internal finishing has deteriorated due to age. For example, it is often necessary to re-plaster properties as the removal of wallpaper pulls off weakened and loose plaster from the walls and ceilings. Many street properties still have their original lathe and plaster, which are in poor condition.
- 6.7 Thus, the investment that was deferred from previous years has now caught up with us, and we now require to undertake more works than would normally be expected.

- 6.8 This is also noticeable in the responsive repairs budget where we are undertaking a large volume of repairs due to old and failing components and finishes.
- 6.9 Whilst we undertake major refurbishment work on the tower blocks, there are opportunities to decarbonise properties to as high a standard as is practicable and achievable targeting at least an EPC B. The five-year plan therefore includes climate emergency works within the tower block programme now rather than having to return in later years with associated disruption and increased costs.

7.0 Capital Works Budget

- 7.1 The current capital works budget set out within the business plan gives a baseline average of £15m per year.
- 7.2 This will allow us to complete mainly statutory works. This will include roofing and guttering works, fire safety works and communal electrical works. A budget of £15m per annum will not be sufficient to carry works such as the replacement of all the Kitchens and bathrooms due or any estate improvement works. This type of work has a huge impact on how residents perceive the services we provide. Kitchens and bathrooms for example provide residents with tangible improvements that have a more personal and direct influence on how they feel about the services we provide.
- 7.3 The current budget only allows for £500K per annum for kitchens and bathrooms over the next four years. This will allow replacements to approximately 200 homes. According to the stock condition data we need to undertake replacements to approximately 400 homes in 2023/24 alone. The kitchens and bathrooms we are unable to replace, will need to be picked up through responsive repairs as and when they fall into disrepair, which means partial repairs rather than full replacement.
- 7.4 Over the next four years, we intend to spend approximately £34m on tower block refurbishments, which will extend the life of four of our blocks that have not had investment in a number of years. Whilst we have acknowledged the need for these works and the future benefits, this level of investment does have an impact on what we are able to spend on the rest of our stock.
- 7.5 As we complete statutory works, we will be adhering to the Landlord and Tenants Act 1985, which is the minimum we need to do as a social housing landlord. However, with this level of investment and lack of asset replacement there will be high volumes of responsive repairs putting greater pressure on the HRA. This will also potentially generate more complaints and disrepair cases thereby affecting tenant satisfaction.
- 7.6 The tower block refurbishments and other energy efficiency works planned will support in the decarbonisation of some of our properties. However this level of investment will mean we are unable to address the climate emergency as necessary to meet our net zero 2030 target. We will also be behind in trying to

decarbonise all of our properties and making them more affordable for residents to heat in the face of rising energy prices.

7.7 See work programme below:

Work Programme	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
External Planned Maintenance Programme	£4,000,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£504,080	£510,000
Kitchen & Bathroom programme	£1,600,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000
Tower block programme - High Rise retained (Fire Safety/ Climate Emergency -8 blocks e/o asset replacement costs)	£650,000	£11,803,543	£22,045,183	£5,993,472	£356,322
Energy Efficiency works	£125,000	£700,000	£1,006,250	£43,750	£0
Fire Safety Works	£1,000,000	£650,000	£650,000	£650,000	£650,000
M&E: Domestic Electrical Testing & Remedial Works	£2,000,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000
M&E: Passenger Lift Replacement	£250,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000
M&E: Communal Heating	£50,000	£50,000	£100,000	£100,000	£150,000
M&E: Door Entry	£50,000	£50,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000
M&E: Communal Electrical Testing & Remedial Works	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000

Environmental improvement works	£400,000	£0	£0	£0	£0
Playground	£55,000	£55,000	£55,000	£55,000	£55,000
Disabled & Adaptations	£800,000	£800,000	£800,000	£800,000	£800,000
Capitalisation (incl Voids)	£1,700,000	£1,700,000	£1,700,000	£1,700,000	£1,700,000
IT & Software	£155,000	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000
LPS Blocks Intrusive structural engineering testing	100,000	£200,000	£200,000	£100,000	£100,000
Sprandrel Panel testing	£100,000	£100,000	£200,000	£100,000	£100,000
Stock Condition Surveys	£90,000	£90,000	£90,000	£90,000	£90,000
Lift Monitoring Software	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000
Grand Total	£13,300,000	£19,053,543	£29,801,433	£12,091,302	£6,466,322

8.0 Budget management

- 8.1 Accepting that an investment of £15m per annum will not be sufficient to deliver the required standard of stock improvements and understanding that we do not have the capacity to borrow. We need to ensure that we improve our budget management and reduce costs where possible.
- 8.2 We currently spend about £4.6m a year on voids. This is a combination of the high quality letting standards and the delays in turnaround. Processes have now been put in place to monitor voids spend more closely and to significantly reduce the spend. This will include more detailed asset life cycle assessments, which will create more minor voids and less major voids. We are also looking at reducing our Council Tax bill by improving the voids turnaround and decommissioning long term voids so they are no longer eligible for Council Tax. We will also develop our relationship with property guardians, which will allow them to use more of our properties thus covering any Council Tax liability.
- 8.3 Our current repairs contract with Wates is based on a fixed price per property, for responsive repairs. However, works to communal areas and some other works to dwellings (exclusion works), are not part of this fixed price. We are now implementing a process whereby 10% post inspections of all exclusion works will be undertaken by our Surveyors and we will continue the use of consultants Veale and Saunders to check value for money on all exclusion invoices. Veale and Saunders managed to recover approximately £158k in 21/22. We expect a similar savings to be made each year.

- 8.4 BHM intend to retender the Repairs, Major Works and Voids contracts over the next two years. BHM anticipate that there may be a possibility for savings to be made, considering investment into stock. However, savings are not likely to be significant due to escalating costs of materials and labour. These costs are likely to have an impact on BHM regardless of the way we decide to deliver our repairs and maintenance service over the coming years. We will review any potential of cost saving through the options appraisal and procurement process.
- 8.5 We have seen with Watling Gardens, that investment in our tower blocks will reduce future spend on repairs. Following the completion of the refurbishment works at Watling Gardens, repairs costs reduced by approximately 50% the year after the works were completed. With a more refined specification for the five tower blocks selected for refurbishment works, we believe the reduction in repairs could be even more significant. However, conservatively BHM will expect to make approximately 50% cost reduction on responsive repairs a year after the refurbishment works are completed. This would amount the following savings for each block:
- Kilburn Square £22,351
 - Windmill Court £2,550
 - Lodge Court £6,811
 - Manor Court £5,199
 - The Oaks £2,005
- *figures based on 2021/22 non PPP spend (Northgate)
- 8.6 The total cost reduction from all five tower blocks would be £38,916 per annum. These would not be realised until the refurbishment has been completed on each block taking approximately 18 months to complete.
- 8.7 There is an existing rechargeable repairs policy. However, the implementation has not been as effective as it should have been. We are now taking steps to enforce the tenant recharge policy and formalise repairs policy as planned and we believe this will result in cost reductions. This reduction will be realised by not undertaking repairs that are the resident's responsibility and recharging residents in accordance with the policy. In (20/21) we spent approximately £35k on repairs that were the resident's responsibility to complete. We also spent approximately £5k on rechargeable repairs, which we failed to recover. Whilst we do not expect to recover the costs from previous years, future costs will reduce as the customer contact centre become more empowered to enforce the policy. The number of resident responsibility repairs raised will reduce and those that are raised will be rechargeable with a robust process to recover the costs. BHM hope to make a reduction of £20k with the reduction of resident responsibility repairs raised for future years and hope to recover approximately £5k per annum through tenant recharges as the number of rechargeable repairs will increase as the policy is enforced.
- 8.8 BHM are currently taking an active approach to damp and mould issues by contacting all residents that have reported damp and mould over the last seven years. Contact being made is to establish if residents are still suffering with similar problems and agree the best way for them to be addressed. BHM have

chosen to go back seven years as this covers the Council's liability for disrepair claims. A large number of disrepair claims are linked to damp and mould therefore BHM believe this proactive approach will reduce the number of disrepair claims we receive each year. Last year BHM paid £767k in legal cost for disrepair claims. With the new approach, we anticipate a reduction of the legal costs by at least 20% over the next three years, which would amount to a saving of £153k.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 With the current budget of £60m over the next four years the Council will be able to meet our obligations enshrined in Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenants Act 1985. However, this level of investment will not allow the Council to maintain its assets in accordance with the stock condition data. With reduced investment in the areas where residents see the most impact i.e. kitchens, bathrooms and estate improvements. It is likely that the satisfaction with how the Council manages its housing stock will be impacted.

9.2 The Regulator for Social Housing has proposed that the 12 satisfaction based measures should be generated from periodic tenant perception surveys rather than interaction-based transactional surveys in order to create better comparability of data across providers. The measures sit across 6 key themes:

- Overall satisfaction with the services provided by the landlord
- Keeping properties in good repair
- Maintaining building safety
- Respectful and helpful engagement
- Responsible neighbourhood management; and
- Effective handling of complaints

The move away from transactional to perception based measures will mean that even if we do well when residents interact with us they can still have a negative view of the service we provide. If we provide less investment than we have in previous years this will be noticeable and could encourage negative perceptions.

9.3 The funding streams available for energy efficiency works along with the matched funding from the capital works budget will help decarbonise approximately 439 properties over the next two years. This still presents a huge challenge to meet the Net Zero 2030 target. In order to meet this challenge BHM will consider energy efficiency works alongside the external works programme.

10.0 Financial Implications

10.1 The Asset Management Strategy (AMS) and budget availability in the HRA 30-year Business Plan are required to be closely aligned. Current budget availability assumed within the existing Business Plan is £15m per annum for the next 30 years. This can be funded through revenue contributions from forecast income received each year, which consists of rent increases and major works cost recovery through service charges. Any expenditure on major works

above the baseline of £15m would require additional borrowing to fund the budget gap.

- 10.2 The proposed capital works programme outlined in this reports is estimated to result in a budget shortfall in years 2023 and 2024, where borrowing will be required to cover the gap. The capital programme for years 2025 and 2026 has a reduced spend profile that is below the £15m baseline budget which allows to contribute towards debt repayments. After budgets reprofiling and cashflow adjustments, a net borrowing requirement in the HRA is estimated at £7.5m, resulting in a £0.5m saving on average per annum required to finance the debt, assuming 5% interest rates.
- 10.3 In context, with proposed rent rise limitations, there is an existing budget gap within the HRA of circa £2m that requires savings to achieve a balanced budget position for 2023/24. It is challenging to find further savings and some difficult options and modifications to service delivery may need to be considered in order to fund the cost of additional borrowing.
- 10.4 As with all capital projects, there is also a risk of an overspend against the cost estimates included in this report. This needs to be mitigated and closely managed through the monthly capital programme governance process, namely monthly HCIB and CPB monitoring meetings. Any budget underspends could be rolled forward into following years, subject to wider budget pressures within the HRA.
- 10.5 There would be work elements that are rechargeable to leaseholders. Efficient billing and Section 20 consultation are essential in order to achieve successful recovery of service charges. Reductions in major works billing against budget profiles can result in lower funding availability towards capital major works.
- 10.6 An indicative profiling of major works beyond the 5-year programme is required in order to ensure that long-term investment is sustainable over the next 30 years to avoid further budget pressures.

11.0 Legal Implications

- 11.1 Under section 74 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (“the 1989 Act”), the Council is required to keep a separate Housing Revenue Account (“HRA”) of sums falling to be credited or debited in respect of its housing stock. Sections 75 and 76 of the 1989 Act set out the rules for establishing and maintaining that account. Section 76 of the 1989 Act provides that local authorities are under a duty to prevent a debit balance on the HRA. Since October 2018, local authorities with an HRA are no longer constrained by government controls over borrowing for house building and are able to borrow against their expected rental income, in line with the Prudential Code.
- 11.2 Under section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, the Council as the landlord has a duty to keep in repair and proper working order the structure and the exterior of the residential properties it owns as well as certain installations for the supply of water, gas and electricity. Failure to comply with this duty

leaves the Council liable to legal action from its tenants for being in breach of the tenancy agreement in relation to housing disrepair.

- 11.3 Section 1 of the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 amends the landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (“s11 LTA 1985”), inserting section 9A which implies a covenant on the part of the council as landlord which is let wholly or mainly for human habitation, that rented dwellings must be fit for occupation at the beginning and throughout the tenancy. This term adds to landlords’ repairing obligations implied into tenancy agreements by s11 LTA 85. The key question when determining unfitness for human habitation is whether a property is ‘not reasonably suitable for occupation in that condition’ because of one or more of the following factors: repairs; freedom from damp; internal arrangement; natural lighting; ventilation; water supply; drainage and sanitary conditions; stability; facilities for preparation and cooking of food and for the disposal of waste water; any ‘prescribed hazard’ – this is defined as any matter or circumstance amounting to a category 1 or 2 hazard under the Housing Health and safety rating system (HHSRS).
- 11.4 Tenants can also take legal action in relation to housing disrepair against their landlords by issuing proceedings in the Magistrates Court where the premises are in such a state as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance as set out in section 79 of the Environmental Protection Act 1980. ‘Prejudicial to health’ is defined as ‘... injurious, or likely to cause injury, to health’.
- 11.5 The Regulator of Social Housing has set out standards which registered providers of social housing must meet. The Home Standard which was set by the Regulator of Social Housing deals with quality of accommodation and repairs and maintenance.
- 11.6 In relation to quality of accommodation, the Home Standard states that registered providers of social housing, which includes local authorities, should do the following: (a) ensure that tenants’ homes meet the standard set out in section five of the Government’s Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard; (b) meet the standards of design and quality that applied when the home was built, and were required as a condition of publicly funded financial assistance, if these standards are higher than the Decent Homes Standard; and (c) in agreeing a local offer, ensure that it is set at a level not less than these standards and have regard to section six of the Government’s Decent Homes Guidance.
- 11.7 In relation to repairs and maintenance, the Home Standard states that registered providers of social housing, which includes local authorities, should do the following: (a) provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants, and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time; and (b) meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes.
- 11.8 Landlords must consult leaseholders before carrying out qualifying works or entering into a long-term agreement for providing services. The consultation

rules for qualifying works and the procedures which Landlords are required to follow are set out in Schedules 3 and 4 of the Service Charges (Consultation Requirements) (England) Regulations 2003 (“the 2003 Service Charge Regulations”) which were laid pursuant to section 151 of the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002 (“the 2002 Act”). The consultation rules for qualifying long-term agreements are set out in Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 of the 2003 Service Charge Regulations. If the landlord does not consult leaseholders as required by section 151 of the 2002 Act, recovering service charge costs from leaseholders will be limited to an amount of: a) no more than £250.00 per leaseholder in case of any qualifying works; and to b) no more than £100.00 per leaseholder per year in the case of any qualifying long term agreements.

12.0 Equality Implications

- 12.1 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening and Officers believe that there are no adverse equality implications.

13.0 Environmental Sustainability Implications

- 13.1 A dedicated energy efficiency programme has been included within this year for the proposed Capital Programme. This will be augmented with external bids for funding. The energy efficiency works should be targeted at the lowest performing stock wherever possible to help reduce household fuel bills and assist with the cost of living crisis.
- 13.2 Consideration should also be made to prioritising this funding in homes in the Sustainable Neighbourhood Pilot areas which are to be confirmed later this summer.
- 13.3 Decarbonising heat in council homes will be a significant challenge for technical and financial reasons and trials and a constant review of best practice will be required.
- 13.4 It will be important for BHM’s energy efficiency database to be kept up to date for monitoring and targeting purposes.

Report sign off:

Peter Gadsdon

Corporate Director of Resident Services