

Housing Recovery and Improvement Highlight Report

Reporting period	5 September to 26 September 2024	Senior Responsible Owner summary This theme is now established and continues to make good progress in a number of areas. Several Resident engagement events were held over the summer with resident feedback informing the development of a Resident Engagement Strategy. The HRA working group continues to work towards the 30-year HRA business plan and address historical issues. Stock condition surveys have begun on site with 11% of properties surveyed. This will provide robust data on the condition of our stock to inform future planning. There continues to be delays in commissioning the additional remedial fire safety works and Bailey Partnership continues to oversee the procurement of contractors. SRO: Louise Strongitharm
Reporting to	Improvement and Recovery Board	
Lead Commissioner	Mervyn Greer	
Senior Responsible Owner	Louise Strongitharm	
Project Manager	Katherine Hiscock	
Report date	26 September 2024	

Workstream Summary

Workstream	Workstream aim	Aug RAG	Sept RAG	Progress last month	Priorities next month
Homes and Safety	Demonstrate compliance with the regulatory standards, leading to homes for our tenants that are safe and fit for purpose. Design and deliver the capital investment programme and asset management strategy.	A	A	High Risk sections of cladding now fully removed. Plans are developing in terms of cladding replacement with works expected to start in Q3 for the high-risk sections. Meetings will be held with Planning and Building Control. Commercial Gas contract negotiations are ongoing. Repairs contract extension is pending sign off by CLT. FRA works with Beechwood are making good progress with no complaints from residents and good quality being reported on site. Some progress in procuring additional Fire Safety remedial works contractors led by Bailey Partnership. Decent Homes works are on track. Stock Condition Surveys have commenced with 11% of stock surveyed to date. Building Safety Surveyor due to start 30.9.24. Ark Compliance Report (DRAFT) received and under review prior to sign off. Final circulation due late September.	Lakeview Cladding Resident Event and resulting outcomes. Commence localised cladding replacement works. Commence procurement of additional Fire Safety Contractors. Install Fire Action Notices to all sites. Develop an action plan and response to the Compliance Report. Issue fire safety comms documentation to residents. Continue with Stock Condition Surveys and Decent Homes works. Complete Mountjoy Contract extension and Commercial gas contracts. Identify Compliance contracts that require procurement and agree contract specifications.

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Finance	Ensure the Council has a sustainable Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30-year Business Plan that can adequately deliver services to tenants and support its capital investment requirements.	A	A	Scenario testing has been taking place which will feed into the HRA Business Plan. Work underway to review and smooth capital expenditure over a 30-year period. Working group continues to meet fortnightly to monitor progress against agreed actions and work towards the production of the 30-year business plan. HRA legacy adjustments completed including fuel cell.	Review refreshed capital budgets. Complete scenario testing. Report on progress to Communities and Housing Scrutiny Committee. Consultants to refresh business plan with 24/25 baseline and new scenarios. Draft Rent Setting Policy to be completed ready for internal approval.
Data and insight	Improve all housing services through the greater use of performance data, benchmarking data and resident feedback.	A	A	Housemark annual datasets 50% complete, including financial data. Further work being done to review performance monitoring requirements with focus on improving reporting on homelessness stats and void stats. Creation of full Asset register has begun with initial priority for collation of data concentrating on compliance information. Advert out for Systems & Data Quality Officer vacancy. Impact assessment of rent standard review has been completed - cases for amendment have been identified to be completed by March 2025.	Submit all Housemark data sets. Continue performance framework review. Continue to work on asset register. Complete recruitment of Systems & Data Quality Officer post. Start work on actioning rent standard review cases.
Tenants and communities	Comply with the regulatory standards, build strong communities and neighbourhoods and increase tenant and leaseholder satisfaction across all parts of the service.	R	R	Staffing issues remain an issue for this workstream. Recruitment and retention of staff is key to improving the service. Meetings in place to look at Housing Management service and identify any potential gaps in resource. Two policies partially drafted (ASB and Domestic Abuse).	Continue recruitment and identify service needs. Discussion needed around self-assessment against regulatory framework. Complete outstanding actions on Income Audit. Further planning day for Policy work. Urgent review of tenancy agreement as well as standard documentation.

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Resident engagement and consultation	Build the Council's relationship with its tenants and leaseholders and increasingly involve and seek their views in shaping its service offer.	G	A	<p>Summer Events took place and have been successful, with a number of tenants interested in volunteering, information provided and surveys about engagement completed.</p> <p>Focus Groups continuing and first actions from these have been reviewed.</p> <p>Demo of Survey System for TSMs took place and Business Case in production.</p> <p>Lakeview Focus Group occurred (12 attendees).</p> <p>Successful Website Focus group with Invuse completed.</p> <p>Resident Landlord Partnership met with a really good focus on the stock condition surveys.</p> <p>August was the highest amount of volunteering hours produced (48 hours), due to the volunteers attending the August summer events. There has been an additional 4 Tenant Volunteers signed up. Volunteer management strategy and resident engagement strategy is currently being worked on. The complaint policy is being reviewed with corporate.</p> <p>Progress made with Housing Call loop review and the Housing Customer Service calls, project to record and review option 2.</p> <p>Due to the amount of progress made with engagement this month, there is a concern that the complaints administration is falling behind and there is a risk, without resources that it will be non-compliant. There is more work that needs to be focused on in complaints, such as the complaint action plan to ensure progress is made before the next self-assessment.</p>	<p>TSM development - survey system and getting this set up.</p> <p>Recruitment in the team (Customer Service Officer and Resident Engagement Officer).</p> <p>Communications to all tenants '1 year on' fire safety stickering and winter repair info.</p> <p>Fire safety event at Lakeview.</p> <p>Focus group at Lakeview.</p> <p>Focus group at West Byfleet.</p> <p>Progress with IT service desk room, filing system and the housing calls.</p>

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Tools and ways of working	Modernise tools and practice across the housing service, including digital tools, upgrades, and channel shift to online applications and information.	A	A	<p>Project board agreed project plan with Capita for Phase 1 - Upgrade Open Housing to One Housing. Test servers set up by ICT - Capita to start installation of test environments 23.09.2024. Review of test plans started.</p> <p>Project Manager secured through Gravitas for period of 6 months to work primarily on Phase 2 of Capita project - One Asset implementation - due to start on 30 September 2024.</p> <p>Review of Housing Management processes and creation of 'as is' process maps 85% complete.</p>	Kick-start Phase 1 of Capita upgrade project. Make decisions on introducing additional elements of the project including moving the software to a hosted environment.
Staffing and developing culture	Deliver the cultural change across the housing service to deliver the Housing Improvement Programme and achieve compliance with all regulatory standards.	G	G	<p>Began reviewing and implementing feedback received about Housing All Staff Sessions, including more team spotlight events to increase knowledge of other housing teams. Regular "special" events to be held every few months which will focus on one key service area and deliver training/upskilling, test knowledge and deliver key messages and process changes in an engaging interactive way. The first of these specials will be in October and will focus on repairs as we move into the winter months.</p> <p>Looking at off site Housing All Staff session perhaps in December.</p> <p>Policy and procedure working group continuing to make progress. Q3 and Q4 priorities have been agreed as well as leveraging colleague expertise from across the council to support this work.</p> <p>Housing colleagues have been briefed on One Housing implementation/upgrade, including training and UAT requirements and need to begin engaging volunteers to support with UAT as well as workshops to be arranged to review processes/system requirements.</p>	<p>Holding "Repairs Special" All Staff Housing Session</p> <p>Managers Away day – agree quick wins, "ways of working" across department and agree improvements required. Focus on culture and behaviours.</p> <p>Continue to progress Q3 policy work with intention to bring forward policies for scrutiny in January 2025.</p>

Theme risks

	Risk description	Level	Mitigation
1	Risk that the Housing property portfolio will continue to deteriorate without sufficient investment.	High	See finance risk below, New Stock Condition Surveys planned for 2024/25.
2	Risk that new regulatory standards may not be met.	High	Self-assessment planned for Autumn, Compliance ICT System being procured.
3	Risk that there are insufficient numbers of staff with the necessary skills and capacity to deliver Housing Improvement Programme.	High	Monitor workloads, engage external specialist support when required, appoint programme lead.
4	Risk that Housing Revenue Account remains in a precarious position with limited reserves. There is a continuing concern around the viability of the HRA and its ability to fund revenue and capital to achieve regulatory compliance.	High	30-year HRA Business Plan work commissioned 100% stock condition survey commissioned (to complete November 2024), which will give up-to-date information and costings of future investment needs. Lobby on future Government rent policy. Look for ways to reduce costs and increase income, including bringing Sheerwater properties back into use. Strategic asset management, including disposal of poor performing and/or high value stock.
5	Risk that not maintaining the housing and community and associated compliance work in Sheerwater could lead to health and safety issues.	Medium	H&S audit of occupied and unoccupied buildings, increased staffing and monitoring of risks. Transfer of site to developer

Impact and evidence to demonstrate the delivery of desired outcomes:

Success Measure	Evidence
A balanced Housing Revenue Account and a sustainable Housing service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HRA 30-year business plan model: Consultants have produced an initial 30-year HRA forecast based on current circumstances, which presents an extremely challenging picture. Urgent and significant action will be required to deliver a viable HRA position. The consultants have provided some suggested actions, but the implications of these need to be worked through to understand the impact on tenants and property conditions. HRA oversight: The HRA working group has been established to plan, track and manage workstreams within the project. The HRA working group will be meeting fortnightly to review progress and discuss barriers, risks and outcomes.
A high quality housing service, underpinned by a single plan, which meets the regulatory requirements for the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Improvement Programme: The Council has established a Housing Improvement Programme, comprising of 7 workstreams, to improve the

Housing Service and ensure regulatory compliance. This is overseen by a Programme Board that meets monthly, along with monthly engagement meetings with the Regulator of Social Housing.

- **Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs):** The Council submitted its first set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures to the Regulator of Social Housing in June 2024. These included the results of the tenant survey undertaken in early 2024. Whilst these highlighted significant room for improvement, the TSMs provide a good baseline upon which to develop and measure progress.
- **Resident Engagement:** Strong progress has been made with resident engagement, including building the Tenant and Landlord Partnership Board and running a number of summer events and focus groups to capture the views of tenants.