



London Borough of Enfield

Report Title	Council Housing Work Plan 2024/25
Report to	Cabinet
Date of Meeting	13 March 2024
Cabinet Member	Cllr George Savva, Cabinet Member for Social Housing
Executive Director / Director	Joanne Drew, Strategic Director of Housing and Regeneration
Report Author	Will Solly Will.Solly@Enfield.gov.uk
Key Decision Number	KD 5720
Classification	Part 1 Public

Purpose of Report

1. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 represents the biggest change to social housing regulation in a decade. It will provide a pro-active regulatory environment for social housing.
2. This report reviews the progress of the service over the last year as part of the journey of improvement set out in the previous plan. The proposed Work

Plan for 2024/25 continues to take forward the ambitions of the Good Growth Housing strategy, feedback from tenants and external standards and good practice on the development and improvement of homes and services.

3. The Good Growth Housing strategy sets out the investment in our Council homes, balancing between existing homes, the building of new council homes (both drawing on capital resources) and day to day services (revenue). This is essential to drive services and the quality of homes for tenants and leaseholders and to meet the required standards of the Regulator for Social Housing. At the centre of our plans is the resident experience of those in our council homes and residents across the borough who need homes. This strategy is supported by the annual strategic review of the HRA Business Plan and the Rent and Service Charge setting policy which were reported to Cabinet in February.

Recommendations

- i. Approve the Work Plan for 2024/25 for the Council Housing service to drive forward improvement in services and resident satisfaction.
- ii. Note the Tenant Satisfaction Measure scores which will be submitted to the Regulator of Social Housing in March.
- iii. Ask the Housing Scrutiny Panel to review progress of the plan alongside Cabinet's oversight of progress through the monitoring of key performance indicators in the Corporate Performance dashboard

Background to the developing regulatory environment

4. From April 2024:
 - a. The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) will issue revised Consumer Standards:
 - a. The Safety and Quality Standard
 - b. The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
 - c. The Neighbourhood and Community Standard
 - d. The Tenancy Standard.

The RSH will also have the power to issue a Code of Practice in relation to these Standards.

- b. On site inspections by the RSH on a four yearly cycle to test compliance with the new Consumer Standards. A new charge will be levied for membership based on landlord size. For 2023-2024 the charge for providers with over 1,000 units was at £5.40 per unit. The rates for 2024-2025 have not yet been confirmed.
 - c. The Building Safety Regulator (BSR) will start reviewing Building Safety Case files for above 50 metre buildings.
 - d. Additionally, the BSR has taken responsibility for all Building Control approvals in respect of high-rise blocks (above 18 metres in height). There is some uncertainty at present in terms of the timescales for processing, although this is likely to be an eight-week minimum period with a charge of £144/hour for processing. As there is little experience so far in the sector of this approach, there is some reticence from contractors to adopt their usual Principal Designer role, so the Council is closely

monitoring the situation. However, it is likely to impact lead-in times for projects and the sign off process which may affect delivery of our investment programme and leaseholder billing.

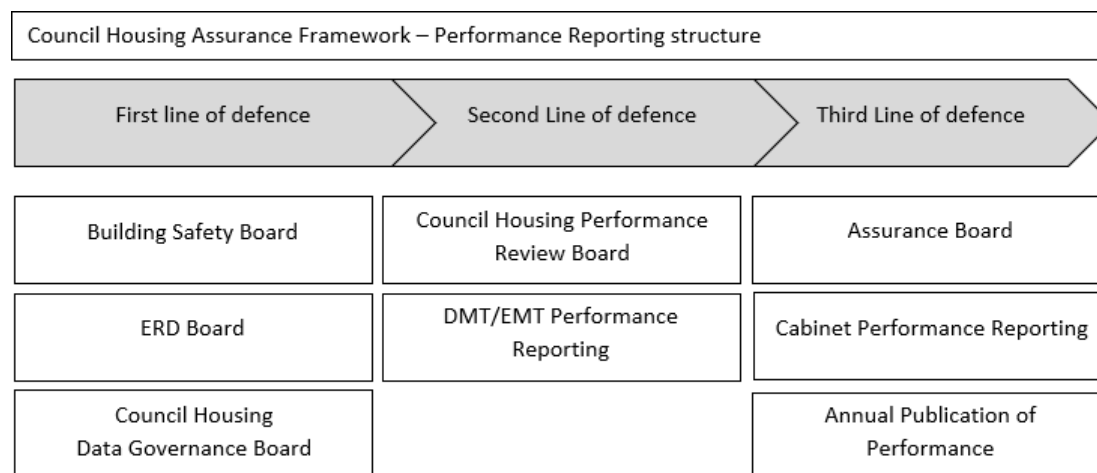
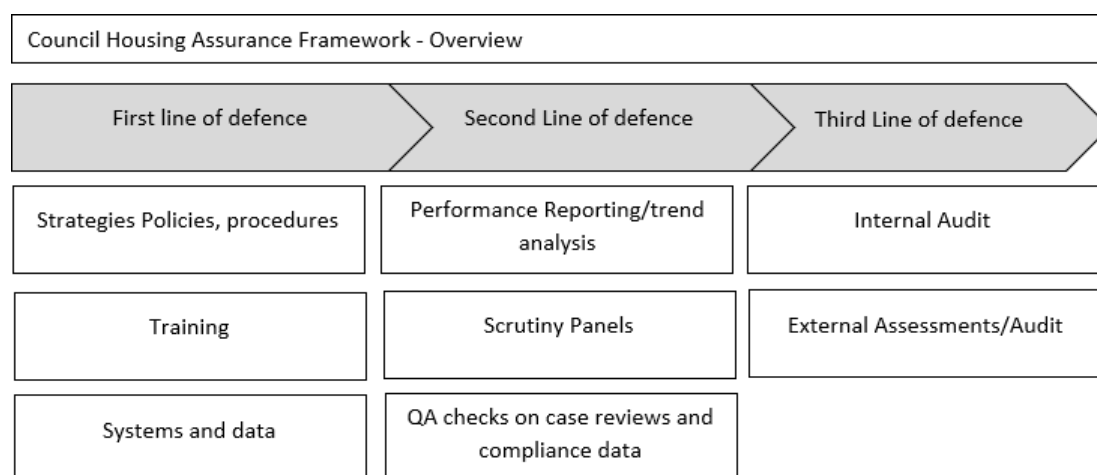
e. Update to the Statutory Complaints Handling Code which will be a joint complaint handling code working to adjusted time scales.

5. As outlined in the Good Growth Housing Strategy and reflecting the Corporate Plan Priority to provide More and Better Homes, the Council is seeking to continually improve both its day-to-day landlord services, including support for vulnerable residents and the quality and safety of its housing stock, while balancing that investment against the resources needed to deliver regeneration and development programmes.

6. The updated Council Housing Work Plan, attached in Annex A, sets out our programme of continuous improvement and conformance with new standards.

Progress on the 2023/24 service plan

7. Cabinet approved the Council Housing Assurance Framework in February 2023. The Council Housing Assurance Framework sets out how performance and compliance is reported on and action taken when necessary – this is illustrated below.



8. The model incorporates a three lines of defence system. The Housing Scrutiny panel plays an important role in this process and its work programme will have regard to the issues of performance and progress with our improvement plans. Cabinet reviews key KPIs related to Council Housing on a quarterly basis. Our last line of defence being our internal audits and external assessments and during the year the following audits are programmed:
 - Fire safety
 - Rent standard
 - Voids
 - Service charges

9. An improvement plan for 2023/24 was implemented and the main achievements are as follows:
 - a. We have made significant progress to achieving 100% Decent Homes compliance with homes free from any category 1 hazards. We now stand at a 79.06% level of decency as at February 2024 and we will exceed our target of 80% by the end of March. This has been achieved because of the Good Growth Strategy agreed in 2020 which prioritised investment in existing homes and set aside over £200m for this purpose addressing what was a two-decade backlog of decent homes investment requirements. Since April 2023 we have replaced 1,175 boilers, 670 front entrance doors, 309 kitchens, 258 bathrooms, 104 electrical re-wires and 279 roofs along with external fabric and building safety works.
 - b. During 2023/24 we have to date undertaken just under 2662 property condition surveys. This has gone to further ensure our stock condition information is accurate and to identify any HHSRS hazards which have been addressed.
 - c. We are at 100% compliance on landlord health and safety checks on gas safety and very high levels of compliance on electrical safety checks and carbon monoxide and smoke detector checks with access being the barrier to 100% compliance.
 - d. We have consulted on and introduced a new policy on Domestic Abuse. During the year we have supported 39 survivors of domestic abuse to seek refuge, core members of the Police's Operation Dauntless Perpetrator Panel set up in October to prosecute perpetrators. Consulted on a new DA policy.
 - e. We have consulted on and implemented a new policy on ASB. This has involved creating easy reporting pathways into our Antisocial Behaviour services, trialled and purchased a noise app to improve our offer in dealing with noise nuisance and created an additional ASB resource within the housing team.
 - f. We have completed 349 welfare audits on 405 single households identified as vulnerable recording this information on the system so we can better tailor services to needs.
 - g. The Data Government Board provides assurance on our performance monitoring and asset information so that we can have confidence in the information being reported for management and governance oversight.
 - h. Void repairs have shown considerable improvement in 2023/24 with the latest data from November 2023 showing an average of 28 days to

complete void repair works (17 days for standard works and 29 days for non-standard works), compared to an average of 42 days in November 2022. Challenges remain with the number of decant projects in place, pre-localism case offers, and the timing of suitability assessments. The Service is committed to further improvements, and a weekly Voids and Lettings Project Board has been initiated to this end.

- i. The Civica housing management system has been introduced and represents an opportunity to ensure that our resident profile information is completely up to date so that we can better serve residents needs and also that we are using the information to pro-actively improve services.

Housing Ombudsman findings

10. The Housing Ombudsman published their 22-23 report in Autumn 2023. Enfield had 7 Determination cases involving 11 orders and 10 findings. 9 of the findings were maladministration findings.
11. Most maladministration findings relate to Complaint Handling and Property Conditions. Both of which are key focus on points the Council Housing Plan for 2024/25.
12. A review of The Housing Ombudsman cases and the associated recommendations is underway to establish areas for improvement and any themes that require additional training or systems development. Providing regular updates to the staff within the housing service on the Spotlight reports published by the Ombudsman to improve awareness of good practice and develop an environment for continuous improvement and professional development.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

13. In the Autumn of 2023 BMG Research were appointed by tender to deliver the Tenant Satisfaction Measure survey for 2023 and the next three years. The first survey was completed by face-to-face interviews with residents. Data collection method included Face-to-face interviews of around 15 minutes in length. These 15-minute meetings took place in 1035 tenants' homes, with sampling points across the borough. Please note, due to rounding, some aggregate values, including totals, will sometimes be 1% higher or lower. The approach followed is consistent with the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing.
14. The data from the survey will be shared with the regulator in Summer 2024 and published in the following Autumn. Council Housing have started working with Housemark to review our TSM data against similar sized authorities, and those in London. This analysis has been used to identify new benchmarking, target setting and necessary service improvement themes.
15. Due to the change in methodology, findings from 2022 are not directly comparable. Face to face methodologies were used as felt to be a more accurate view of true feelings. It is intended this methodology will be used for future TSM Surveys. Any changes in methodology in the future, would need to be referred to the Regulator.

16. Overall satisfaction has improved from 22-23 to 23-24. Three in five Enfield Council housing tenants are satisfied with the services they receive. Satisfaction has increased from the yearly comparison data available.

Tenant Satisfaction Measure	Enfield 23-24	Enfield 22-23	London	Sector
TP01: Satisfaction / dissatisfaction with the Housing Service, overall	60	52	60.8	72.3
TP02: Satisfaction / dissatisfaction with the repairs service, overall	71	59	66	74.5
TP03: Satisfaction / dissatisfaction with the time taken to complete your most recent repair after you reported it	69	59	60.1	70
TP04: Satisfaction / dissatisfaction that the Housing Service provides a home that is well maintained	69	57	62	72.2
TP05: Satisfaction / dissatisfaction that the Housing Service provides a home that is safe	79	61	68.5	78.7
TP06: Satisfaction / dissatisfaction that the Housing Service listens to your views and acts upon them	57	40	51.3	61
TP07: Satisfaction / dissatisfaction that the Housing Service keeps you informed about things that matter to you	69	52	69.1	71.4
TP08: Agree / disagree the Housing Service treats me fairly and with respect	79	58	67.1	72
TP09: Satisfaction / dissatisfaction with the Housing Service's approach to complaints handling	23	26	23.5	34
TP10: Satisfaction / dissatisfaction with communal areas being clean and well maintained	54	55	61.5	66
TP11: Satisfaction / dissatisfaction that the Housing Service makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood	62	49	61.9	64
TP12: Satisfaction / dissatisfaction with the Housing Service's approach to handling	64	37	55	57.6

anti-social behaviour				
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17. Resident engagement plays a key part in the Council Housing Plan including communication strategies on how to best share, provide and receive information with residents. This is a key area for ongoing improvement so that residents feel that they drive the engagement process according to their priorities.
18. Following the recent results of the latest TSM and reviewing KPI data the key themes highlighted for focus include improving communication involving and engaging with residents (for example repairs being dealt with quickly), the standards of communal areas, our VOID turnaround time and standard as well as our complaints handling and member enquiry response times.

Council Housing Plan 2024/25

19. The revised plan shown at the annex has been developed to take into account all the areas for improvement and Regulatory compliance. In particular this includes:
- Improvement in complaints management timescales and resolution
 - An improvement in the overall approach to managing communal facilities and the external environment addressing residents priorities for this area
 - Ensuring our resident profile information is up to date on our new housing management system and that services are well designed to meet diverse needs.
20. The continuation of the Decent Homes programme in 2024/25 will move us to a minimum 90% Decent Homes compliance. Our pathway to compliance by 2026 involves wider actions including:
- Completion of our stock condition surveys – surveys so far have shown that current records are indicating that our non-decency level is higher than the reality with surveys recommending 651 component changes with 78% of these reflecting components pass that were previously reported as fail.
 - The regeneration of the Joyce and Snells estate which will address the 67 homes currently failing the decent homes criteria immediately.
 - Ongoing options appraisals of properties on a case-by-case basis, to determine the value of investment compared to disposal.
21. As outlined in the report to Cabinet in February, the HRA business plan provides for ongoing investment to the Decent Homes standard with a shortfall of £43m over the next 10 years. It does not address any enhanced decent homes standard nor the cost of addressing the retrofitting of homes which we are doing as external funding becomes available and through our component replacement programme. Building safety works are being progressed and we are well up to date on our fire risk assessment programme and the implementation of actions and have building safety case files with action plans for all our high rise (over 18 metres) blocks.

22. 2024-2025 will also be the first full year with the new Civica CX housing management system. The more joined up approach should see improved data on residents (supporting wider projects such as vulnerability) and be able to improve complaint handling processes. Council Housing are also part of a pilot project utilising Microsoft CoPilot to utilise AI technology.

Preferred Option and Reasons For Preferred Option

23. Approve the updated Council Housing Plan to ensure delivery of the Assurance Framework for Housing continues

24. Note the TSM results for submission to the Housing regulator.

25. Agree Housing Scrutiny Panel will review progress of the work plan.

Relevance to the Council Plan

26. The Council's Housing and Growth Strategy recognises the importance of Council Housing, and the Council Housing Work Plan will deliver the Council's commitment to ensure all residents, regardless of whether they are council tenants or leaseholders, are provided with good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods and the creation or management of safe, healthy and confident communities.

27. Improvements to properties will aid wider perception of the borough. For example focusing on improving the grounds maintenance on estates.

Financial Implications

28. This report is requesting to approve the 2024/25 work plan for the Council housing service.

29. In 2024/25 there is an approved capital budget of £101.7m, with £50m allocated to deliver stock decency standards and meet fire safety regulatory requirements.

30. In addition, there is an approved revenue expenditure budget of £51m to deliver the management and maintenance core services to the residents.

31. It should be noted that the latest Business Plan remains constrained within the first ten years, and it is only after this time that cash balances start to increase. The overarching plans included within the work plan are included within the HRA budget for 2024/25, however if additional measures are required, this may lead to resource constraints and choices may have to be made over prioritisation of future projects.

Legal Implications

32. This Report seeks to drive forward the Council's Housing and Good Growth Strategy by strengthening the current Council Housing Work Plan ('the Plan'). The Plan sets out to ensure compliance with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.
33. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act (the Act) facilitates a new, proactive approach to regulating social housing landlords on consumer issues such as safety, transparency, standards and conduct of staff and tenant engagement, with new enforcement powers to tackle failing landlords. The intent of this Act is to reform the regulatory regime to drive significant change in landlord behaviour to focus on the needs of their tenants and ensure landlords are held to account for their performance.

The Act has three core objectives:

- To facilitate a new, proactive consumer regulation regime;
- To refine the existing economic regulatory regime; and
- To strengthen the Regulator of Social Housing's (the regulator) powers to enforce the consumer and economic regimes.

The Act also strengthens the powers of the Housing Ombudsman and enables requirements to be set for social landlords to address hazards such as damp and mould within a fixed time period.

34. To achieve a new proactive consumer regulatory regime, the Act makes safety and transparency explicit parts of the regulator's objectives and gives it new powers on the competency and conduct of staff and the transparency and provision of information. The Act removes the serious detriment test (a legislative barrier to regulator action on consumer issues) and requires landlords to nominate a designated person for health and safety issues. The Act also makes provision for the introduction of new requirements for social housing landlords relating to electrical safety checks and makes some changes to the powers of a housing ombudsman.
35. With the economic regulatory regime, the Act maintains and refines the regulator's current economic regulatory role, ensuring that providers are well governed and financially viable to protect homes and investment in new supply. This supports the existing work of the regulator, creating continued stability and viability in the sector through robust economic regulation. Through these measures the Government aims to encourage continued investment in the sector, to support the development of new homes, while protecting tenants from the risks of provider insolvency.
36. The Act strengthens the regulator by giving it new enforcement powers ensuring they can effectively intervene when required. The measures seek to encourage landlords to maintain standards, to avoid the threat of enforcement action, and ensure that the regulator has the appropriate tools available to deal with non-compliance with the standards.

37. The economic objective is about good governance, financial viability and value for money of registered providers of social housing (registered providers) that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer. The consumer objective is about supporting the provision of quality social housing that is well managed and ensuring tenants have choice and protection and can hold their landlord to account. The regulator is accountable to Parliament for the discharge of these fundamental objectives. add measures on the relationship between the regulator and a housing ombudsman in order that they can work together effectively to provide better protection for tenants.
38. The regulator and the housing ombudsman both have a role in overseeing the performance of social housing landlords and making sure that landlords treat their tenants fairly. The regulator regulates registered providers in England and the housing ombudsman seeks to resolve complaints from residents about registered providers.

Equalities Implications

39. The updated Council Housing Plan looks at supporting vulnerable residents. Including; updated checks on welfare, improved data capabilities with the new Civica CX system, capturing vulnerable residents with the PIBs (high rises) and supporting delivery of the new Domestic Violence policy and possible DAHA accreditation.
40. Following an equalities impact assessment there are noted positive impacts for residents in all protected groups with no noted negative impacts noted, and therefor no actions are required.

Public Health Implications

41. Housing is an important social determinant of health, a lack of housing, or poor quality housing, can negatively affect health and wellbeing. There is a 30 year gap in the life-expectancy between the homeless and the general population. Equally, poorer housing is associated with progressively poorer health. These may result from a combination of factors including but not limited to the subjective experience of housing, the negative physical health effects of toxins within the home, damp and mould, cold indoor temperatures, overcrowding and safety factors as well as geographical location and access to such as work, green spaces and services.
42. The workplan for 2024/25 should help to improve housing standards within the borough with a concomitant improvement in health. Equally, it is expected that the revised Consumer standards will drive improvements though future evaluation of any effect would be useful.

Conclusions

43. Council Housing Services believes the proposed improvement plan should give assurance that residents are being listened to and safety concerns taken seriously.

44. The proposed option would be to approve the Council Housing Service Work plan and note the results of the Autumn Tenant Satisfaction Survey for submission to the Housing Regulator in Summer 2024.

Report Author: Will Solly
Service Development and Improvement Lead
Will.Solly@enfield.gov.uk

Appendices

Council Housing Service Work Plan 2024-2025

Equalities Impact Assessment – Council Housing

Background Papers

Tenant Satisfaction Survey – BMG

Tenant Satisfaction Measures – Housemark

Equalities Impact Assessment – Council Housing