

URN: 21-035

Subject: Council Housing Compliance and Performance – six monthly update
October 2021

Report to: ELT 20 October 2021
Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee 8 November 2021

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SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper provides the first six-monthly compliance and performance update in relation to the Council’s housing stock. It provides information on regulatory compliance as well as an update on Resident Engagement and satisfaction with the Housing Service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:

1. **Note the report.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 On 15 July 2021, committee considered a report which set out the Council’s compliance and performance for its housing stock for the 2020/21 financial year. This information provides a benchmark for the ongoing monitoring and scrutiny by committee of compliance and performance through six monthly reports. This report provides the first six monthly report and reflects the position at 30 September 2021.

2.0 Regulatory Compliance

- 2.1 The table below provides updated information on the Council’s compliance against each of the Consumer Standards and the Rent Standard. Compliance is RAG rated to identify where the Council is fully compliant (green), compliant but there is a need for

further improvement (amber) and where the Council is non-compliant (red). The current position is shown below, along with the position reported in July 2021 for the 2020/21 financial year:

Standard	Sub area	Current Rating 2021	Previous Rating 2020/21
Neighbourhood and community			
	Neighbourhood management	Fully Met	Fully Met
	Local area co-operation	Fully Met	Fully Met
	Anti-social behaviour	Fully Met	Fully Met
	Overall rating	Fully Met	Fully Met
Tenancy			
	Allocations and mutual exchanges	Fully Met	Fully Met
	Tenure	Fully Met	Fully Met
	Overall rating	Fully Met	Fully Met
Home			
	Quality of Accommodation	Not compliant in one area	Met - improvement required
	Repairs and maintenance	Met - improvement required	Met - improvement required
	Overall rating	Met - improvement required	Met - improvement required
Tenant involvement and empowerment			
	Customer service, choice and complaints	Fully Met	Fully Met
	Involvement and empowerment	Met - improvement required	Met - improvement required
	Understanding diverse needs	Met - improvement required	Met - improvement required
	Overall rating	Fully Met	Fully Met
Rent Standard			
	Setting rents	Fully Met	Fully Met

2.2 The assessment recognises some areas where further improvement is required and further information on these areas is provided below:

Home Standard

This standard relates to the standard of homes and delivery of a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service.

Quality of Accommodation

At the 30 September 2021, 89% of homes met the Decent Homes Standard, this reflects a lower position than reported for 2020/21 outturn, but the level of

compliance will increase over the rest of the financial year as the reduction on performance at the end of 2020/21 relates to new properties which became non-decent at the start of the financial year. By the end of the 2021/22 financial year, it is expected that 95% of the Council's housing stock will meet the Decent Homes Standard.

The red status reflects the requirement to:

- Address a backlog of completion of some Fire Risk Assessments. The backlog is being actively addressed and monitored and will be removed by the end of 2021.

In addition, the following areas of improvement are required

- Build upon current reductions in non-decency and ensure all homes meet the Decent Homes Standard and are free of Category 1 Hazards (as defined by the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System). Currently 8 homes have Category 1 Hazards – where works have been declined by the tenant (4) or where the extent of works required is planned or current status is being reviewed (4).
- Produce a new Asset Management Strategy for 2021-26 to provide the strategic plan for the maintenance of council homes including the requirement to decarbonise the housing stock.

Repairs and Maintenance

The amber status reflects the requirement to:

- Ensure value for money in repairs and maintenance through a forthcoming review.
- Focus on communal areas to ensure they are well maintained in terms of both repairs and decoration – enhancing both homes and neighbourhoods. In 2021/22, a programme has been introduced with a focus on timber screens, cyclical decoration and block flooring.
- Timely and cost-effective void process and bringing long term empty homes back into use. Since April 2021, works have been completed on all long-term voids except two that require specialist support.

Identified interventions will address the areas identified above allowing the amber status to change to green.

Tenant Involvement and Empowerment

This standard requires landlords to provide choices, information and communication which reflects the diverse needs of tenants, to have a clear approach to complaint

handling and provide wide opportunities for tenant involvement and influence. The July 2021 report provided information on what was to be progressed to further strengthen our position in meeting the requirements.

Involvement and Empowerment

A new Resident Engagement Strategy has been developed with tenants reflecting the new approach developed since December 2019 which will be presented to committee in November for adoption. Once the Council has adopted the Resident Engagement Strategy this will enable the Council to build on current progress on resident engagement allowing the amber status to change to green.

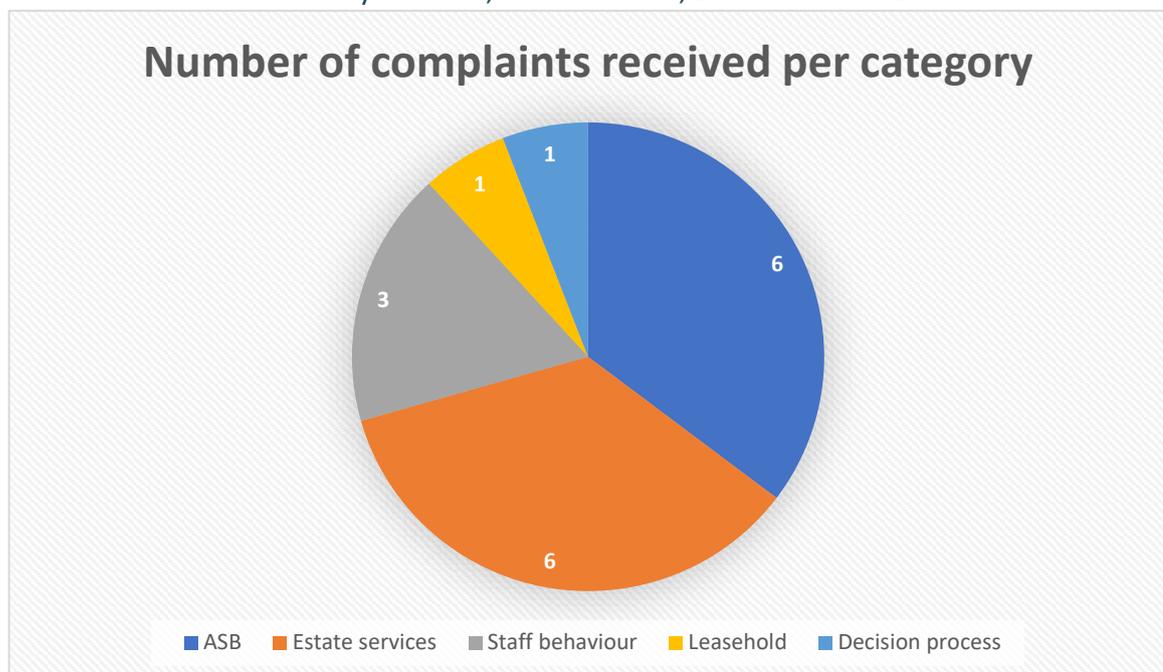
Understanding diverse needs

The amber status of this measure reflects the fact that the Council's current IT system limits the ability to access and analyse up to date information on the needs of tenants which means the Council is unable to use this insight to support resident engagement and service improvement.

3.0 Complaint Handling

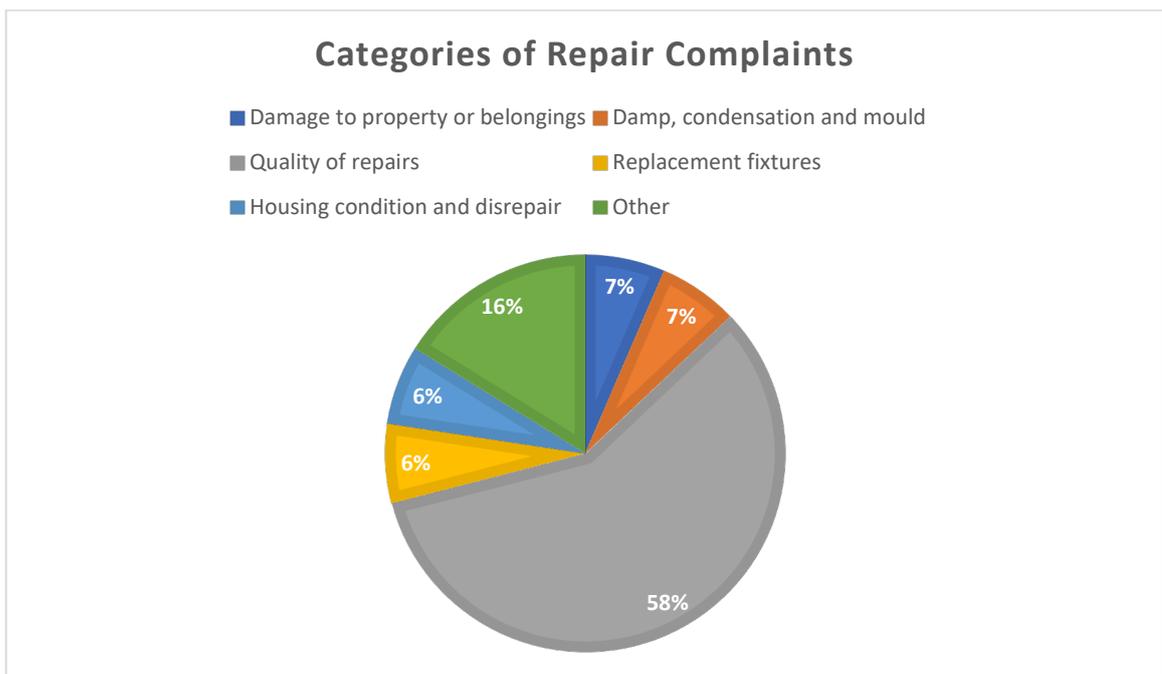
3.1 The Council has improved the way it is recording complaints and outcomes. Since 1 April 2021, 48 Stage One complaints have been recorded in addition to one compliment.

3.2 Complaints relating to the Housing Service numbered 17, the categories of complaints received related to Tenancy Services, Income Team, Leasehold and Estate Services



3.3 In responding to complaints, the Council continues to capture and implement identified improvements to the Housing Service and its processes or procedures. Recent examples of learning from complaints include:

- 3.3.1 Supporting residents with measuring noise nuisance and the use of different tools for measuring noise nuisance
- 3.3.2 Further consultations with the community regarding access to communal areas
- 3.3.3 Clearer communication when a complaint is initially responded to as a service request
- 3.4 Staff behaviour is linked to dissatisfaction with decisions and how staff were received over the phone.
- 3.5 There is a need for a renewed focus on recording compliments received across all methods in which they are made. This recognises individuals and teams focus on delivering great customer service as well as enabling the service to learn from what is done well. The compliment received was regarding Estate Services caretaking.
- 3.6 The number of complaints recorded relating to the repairs service was 31. The breakdown of categories of complaints is shown below:



4.0 Resident Engagement Update

- 4.1 The Resident Engagement Strategy and associated action plan will be considered by committee in November 2021.
- 4.2 Following the last Committee meeting, further progress has been made through:
 - Expanding the number of transactional surveys to include tenancy review visits
 - Supporting the Sheltered Housing Review.

5.0 Satisfaction

5.1 The following transactional surveys to understand the level of resident satisfaction with various aspects of the Housing Service were undertaken during quarters one and two:

- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
- New Home (quality of home and sign-up process)
- Tenancy Support
- Tenancy Review Visits

5.2 Over the first two quarters 2021/22, a total of 124 surveys have been returned, the satisfaction figures below reflect the percentage of tenants who rated the service good or very good.

Survey	Q1	Q2	Satisfaction
ASB	25	18	81%
New Home	26	24	86%
Tenancy Support	3	6	67%
Tenancy Review Visits	1	22	100%

5.3 Overall tenant satisfaction across all transactional surveys:

- Q1 - 88.70%
- Q2 – 85.71%
- Overall - 87.10%

5.4 The results of the surveys and in particular comments made by tenants completing surveys, supports the team to identify service improvements. From the responses received, the following changes have been identified:

- Ensuring tenants and residents are clearer on how to contact the Housing Service – changes are to be made to the Council’s website, letters and News and Views newsletter.
- Supporting the Out of Hours service and residents when receiving calls about Anti-Social behaviour – currently exploring what guidance can be provided to the Out of Hours Control Operators to support residents when calls are received. To be progressed in January 2022
- Garden condition at sign up – a new approach to reduce the number of gardens requiring work at sign up is to be agreed with GYB Services
- Feedback has been received from respondents about the effectiveness of block letters that are sent out when reports of nuisance are received but the cause of the Anti-Social Behaviour is not identifiable. A review of the block letters will be

undertaken so they are clearer to residents to support how reports of Anti-Social Behaviour are managed.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

7.0 Risk Implications

7.1 The Council remains focused on ensuring it is compliant with the regulatory requirements for social housing. The most significant risk with maintaining compliance relates to the Home Standard reflecting the need to ensure the Council's Homes are safe, well maintained and meet the Decent Homes Standard. This risk is mitigated by the Council's capital and responsive repair programmes which remains focused on ensuring the Council's homes meet required standards.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 The report evidences that the Council continues to be compliant with the Consumer Standards and the Rent Standard. The report identifies that in relation to the Home Standard and Tenant Involvement and Engagement Standard there are areas where further improvement is required although the Council does meet the requirements of the standards.

8.2 Background Papers

Council Housing Compliance and Performance report – 15 July 2021, Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee

Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Via ELT
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Via ELT
Existing Council Policies:	Tenancy Policy, Housing Allocations Scheme, Void Policy, Social Housing Tenancy Fraud Policy, Rechargeable Repairs Policy
Financial Implications (including VAT and tax):	None associated with the report.
Legal Implications (including human rights):	No legal implications associated with the report.

Risk Implications:	Set out in the report.
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	None
Crime & Disorder:	None
Every Child Matters:	None