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Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Peter Holt

Housing Board

Date: Tuesday, 27th September, 2022

Time: 11.00 am

Venue: Jubilee Garden Room, Hill Street, Saffron Walden

Chair: Councillor A Coote

Members: Councillors A Armstrong, A Dean, G Driscoll, M Foley, A Khan, P Lees, M Lemon, S Merifield and N Reeve

Tenant and Leaseholder Panel Representatives: Carole Mandy (Chair) and Simon Trimnell

AGENDA PART 1

- 1 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**

To receive any apologies for absence and declarations of interest.
- 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting** 4 - 9

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 3 Self Referral to the Regulator for Social Housing - Potential breach of the Home Standard** 10 - 18

To receive an update.
- 4 Development Programme Update** 19 - 22

To note the report.
- 5 Allocations of Rural Exception Sites** 23 - 30

To consider the five options relating to the Allocations Policy (Rural Exceptions Sites) for wider public consultation.
- 6 Tenant and Leaseholder Report** 31 - 34

To receive the Tenant and Leaseholder Report and the Repairs Reporting Survey results.
- 7 Independent Housing Ombudsman`s Scheme Complaints Handling Code Self Assessment** 35 - 54

To consider the Self Assessment Independent Housing Ombudsman Scheme Complaints Code report.
- 8 Timeline for completion of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan** 55 - 59

To receive a report on the timeline for the completion of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

For information about this meeting please contact Democratic Services

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Agenda Item 2

HOUSING BOARD held at THE JUBILEE GARDEN ROOM, SAFFRON WALDEN, on THURSDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2022 at 11.00 am

Present: Councillor A Coote (Chair)
Councillors G Driscoll, M Foley, A Khan, P Lees, M Lemon and N Reeve

Officers in attendance: P Holt (Chief Executive), P Kingston (Interim Deputy Director of Housing, Health and Communities), A Lindsell (Democratic Services Officer) and S Russell (Housing Consultant)

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dean and Merifield.

There were no declarations of interest.

Councillor Lemon declared a personal interest as he was a private landlord.

2 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022 were approved as accurate.

Councillor Reeve asked whether the next meeting of the Housing Board would include the allocation policy for rural exception sites on the agenda. The Leader of the Council agreed that this was correct.

3 **UPDATE ON MANAGEMENT OF COUNCIL HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE**

The Chair said that he had been very concerned about the partnership with Uttlesford NORSE and wanted to work with them to improve things. He said that he hoped the Chief Executive could help improve the partnership and noted the work that he had undertaken within the last few months and the subsequent recommendations that the Council had now carried out.

The Chief Executive introduced the Housing Consultant who would be joining the Council on 3 October 2022 and the Deputy Interim Director of Housing, Health and Communities who he said would provide extra capacity as housing experts.

He said that the internal audit report had examined how as a landlord the Council managed the function and that he had wanted to see what reporting the Council had in place to fulfil their duty as landlord and what other health and safety checks were in place.

He said that he had identified that:

- Residents said that the Council were a good landlord, who had established trust and confidence over many years
- There were not regular indicators served up in a comprehensible manner around health and safety

Councillor Foley joined the meeting.

- There were six key health and safety factors, and he needed to ensure that UNSL were using the right denominators and numerators for each of the categories of compliance, so that he could be sure the performance being reported was always accurate.
- When it came to compliance, the standards required were 100%. There may be one or two out of compliance at any one time but when this is the case Members should be questioning what actions were being taken to achieve 100%.
- The system was slightly complicated with numbers fluctuating through purchase and sale of properties.
- The reporting had not been exactly what it needed to be and it had been taking this time to get to a point where the numbers could be relied on to demonstrate exactly what was being achieved.

The Chief Executive acknowledged that shortly after staff transferred to the Newport depot in April 2020 the whole world changed due to the pandemic, which made access to homes very difficult to achieve.

He said that there were currently eight Councils that had self-referred and eight who had been put in special measures. A lot more Councils were self-referring as a direct response to the inability to access homes during the pandemic.

He said that there had been some handover issues arising from the transfer from in-house service to partnership service new computer systems, which had resulted in corruption of data and temporary loss of documentation. Some had now been recovered, but there were in the region of 70,000 unscanned documents.

He said that since he wrote the letter of self-referral:

- Four of the six key indicators required additional checks
- One was asbestos, which could not currently be definitively reported
- He was most concerned about electrical checks, where the legal requirement was a ten yearly check, but best practise was five yearly. All orders have been raised and were due to be completed by Christmas. He explained that it was very difficult to achieve 100%, but that escalation plans were in place with imaginative alternative methods to solve the unresolved 2% of expired ten yearly checks. He noted that resident's assistance was necessary to achieve 100% as the failure rate for access to carry out the electrical checks was frustratingly high at 20%

The Chief Executive said;

- That he believed that the council houses were safe, that the Council have 98% of the housing electrically tested, for the 2% the Council cannot locate the electrical certificates

- The housing department worked hard and were dedicated housing professionals that were passionate about what they did
- The Council had a detailed action plan, were meeting the Regulator next Monday, who would decide whether to put the Council into special measures or a whether a lighter touch was more appropriate

A Member of the Tenant and Lease Holder Panel asked whether the properties built in approximately the 1950s required specialist attention due to the potential for asbestos in the properties.

The incoming Housing Consultant said that the Asbestos Regulations 2012 required communal areas of dwellings to be checked for asbestos and that each individual property should have a management plan to identify the presence of asbestos. She noted that asbestos was only dangerous if disturbed and noted the intention to work towards individual properties all having asbestos management plans.

Councillor Khan said that good communication and contract management of the provider was necessary to ensure responsibilities were fulfilled. He asked whether Uttlesford NORSE were being asked to fulfil their responsibilities.

The Chief Executive said that there was unlikely to be the need for new assessments. He said that the contract had not been managed well and that value for money had not been achieved. He said that his priority was ensuring that what needed to be done was done, and that contract management would be addressed in the future.

The Chair agreed that this was a health and safety issue and the clear priority. He said that he was not convinced that the Council were getting value for money in some parts, but that there had always been concern with the type of maintenance received. He said that Uttlesford NORSE were no worse than previous contractors and that he received no more complaints now than he did with the previous contractors.

The Leader of the Council said that the Council were in the process of employing two contract managers to assist with better management of the contract.

The Chief Executive said that Uttlesford NORSE were a third party contractor, and that there was an acute sensitivity that at some point legal action could be taken and that therefore the relationship should be mindfully and robustly managed. He said that any unanswered questions would be followed up in writing and carefully defined to ensure commitment. He said that as an £8 million contract it was commercially sensitive, as the Council's largest contract, and that all figures were taken direct from Uttlesford NORSE to ensure transparency.

Councillor Foley congratulated the Chief Executive for addressing this issue head on and noted that the safety of residents remained the Council's priority.

The Chief Executive said that he had ruled nothing in or out if Uttlesford NORSE do not satisfy the Council and said there were other options to achieve the best outcome for residents.

A Member of the Tenant and Lease Holder Panel said that a new contractor had started to clean the windows in the sheltered housing. She said that she had received calls that only half of the windows were cleaned and that residents had been paying for the service for six months.

Members agreed that this was unacceptable and the Leader of the Council agreed to raise the issue at the meeting on Monday. She said that residents would get the money they have paid refunded and asked the Member of the Tenant and Lease Holder Panel to email her further details.

Councillor Reeve said that it was important that all issues are flagged up and asked for further details of the meeting with the Regulator.

The Chief Executive said that he was meeting with the Regulator with the incoming Housing Consultant and the Interim Deputy Director of Housing, Health and Communities. He said that the purpose of the meeting was for the Regulator to ask technical questions about data and talk about the action plan and timetable and whether the Regulator thought that it was too ambitious.

Councillor Reeve asked why the previous Housing Board team were not being represented at the meeting. The Chief Executive responded that the Regulator had requested that the meeting focus on technical issues and were satisfied that the attendees would fulfil this purpose.

The Chief Executive said:

- That staff annual leave and sickness had impacted availability, that continuity was in place and that expertise was being applied, alongside coping with the scenario as it unfolded.
- The measures now in place represent good contract management, an issue had been identified and a plan had been implemented and worked forward.
- There were broader issues in the Uttlesford NORSE contract, he was reassured that every clause of the contract would be checked and that the two new staff would be doing that for every clause to identify the gaps in the contract to achieve improvement.

Councillor Khan said that the Council had not put in place a robust contract management plan or employed the people with the right skills at the beginning of this process.

Councillor Reeve said that lessons had been learned and that there was a path to go forward. He said that the relationship with the contractor had to also be maintained to move forward. He said that future projects would be improved.

The Interim Deputy Director of Housing, Health and Communities said that this was a key contract for the Council and may not have been as robust as it could have been. He said that they wanted to get to a point where they could move on and leave the council in a robust position.

He said that they need to make sure that work was checked and accurate and that he was confident that a more positive relationship with the partnership could be achieved going forward.

Councillor Driscoll asked whether there was insurance in place for sub-contractors and why evidence of insurance had not been provided.

Councillor Lemon said that the Council need to get the problem sorted then find out how it happened and if necessary, go back to Uttlesford NORSE. He said that he had every confidence that the right route was being taken and that there may not be much action required.

The Chief Executive said that the Director of Finance and Corporate Services was investigating the insurance and may already have an answer.

The Chair said that mistakes had been made on both sides, he noted that it was a partnership not a contract and acknowledged that lots of things in the partnership have worked and were better than the smaller contracts previously held. He said that the Council had to try to make it work with Uttlesford NORSE and that it was important to improve.

The Interim Deputy Director of Housing, Health and Communities said that he did not know a single social housing landlord that didn't have a problem with repairs and maintenance contractors and that lots of landlords were experiencing regulatory issues. He said that Uttlesford NORSE were currently undergoing a restructure which would commence on 26 September and be operational by the end of October.

The Chief Executive shared the plans to host a joint workshop to understand the issues and use multiple perspectives to find solutions.

Councillor Reeve said that Uttlesford NORSE reported 99.38% compliance and of the eleven properties not covered, those addresses had been passed through to the Council in relation to heat poverty inquiries.

The Interim Deputy Director of Housing, Health and Communities confirmed that there are currently eight properties where inspections have not yet been achieved, although three future appointments have been made. He said that he had persuaded the legal team to implement injunctions rather than evictions to help expedite access in more difficult cases.

The Housing Consultant said that there needed to be an effective working relationship in place. There would be a team building event early October and following the event, there would be weekly maintenance touch point meetings, to meet collaboratively to check in together on issues that needed to be resolved. She said that tenants also had an important part to play in the process.

The Chair said that the Council had lacked good governance historically and need to get it right this time. He said that he remained optimistic that the Council

and Uttlesford NORSE would have a good partnership and achieve the best they could for residents.

The meeting finished at 12:01.

Agenda Item 3

Committee: Housing Board
Title: Self-referral to the Regulator for Social Housing for breach of the Home Standard
Report Author: Paul Kingston and Simone Russell

Date: 27
September 2022

Summary

1. Members will recall the Special Housing Board on the 8 September regarding the above.
2. The meeting with the Regulator took place on the 12 September 2022. This meeting went as well as could be expected. The Regulator thanked the Council for self referring. A briefing note was sent by Peter Holt, Chief Executive to the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Housing and staff the same day. Appendix 1
3. The Regulator subsequently contacted the council on 12 September seeking further information on compliance and our reasons for wishing to validate the building safety performance data. Officers responded to the Regulator on the 20 September and a copy is provided in Appendix 2.
4. We are now awaiting confirmation of whether the Regulator will take action for breach of the Home Standards this could take several weeks. The decision will be published and will be in the public domain.
5. Members will recall that we have informed all tenants of the position by letter on the 23 August. In the two weeks following the letter being sent, the Customer Service Centre 14 phone calls and out of these, 13 were calling to enquire whether they were on the list of outstanding electrical checks. Four tenants emailed the dedicated inbox but all were raising general repair requests. On two occasions the inbox was used by Customer Service Advisors, but neither was a new enquiry about the electrical checks.
6. The Interim Deputy Director of Housing Health and Communities has met with colleagues at Uttlesford Norse (UNSL) 3 times since the referral to the Regulator has been made and has endeavoured to build a more positive working relationship including the development of many initiatives to drive improvements with building safety compliance many of which are outlined in appendix 2 above.
7. Pennington Choices, an expert in health and safety compliance within the housing sector have been appointed to validate all of the building safety data held by UNSL commencing 3 October. This will provide vital assurance to the Council that the data used to report performance is accurate.

Recommendations

8. For noting.

Financial Implications

9. The Governance and Audit Performance (GAP) Committee have been advised that the indicative cost of managing the breach of the Home Standard could reach £300,000. Regular reports will be given to Cabinet on this matter going forward.

Background Papers

10. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report:

- Appendix 1 – Email from the Chief Executive
- Appendix 2 – Officer response to the Regulator

Impact

11.

Communication/Consultation	All tenants received a letter advising them about the breach of the Home Standard. Q&As are also available on the Council's website. Further communications will be required when the Regulator makes the decision on whether to serve a Regulatory Notice on the Council. A priority is to provide reassurance to tenants that we are working hard to improve the situation and to encourage tenants to cooperate in making appointments for the safety check.
Community Safety	Officers are working tirelessly with UNSL to improve building safety compliance
Equalities	No particular protected characteristic has been unduly affected. 700 plus tenants have an outstanding electrical safety inspection.
Health and Safety	A breach of the Home Standard regarding outstanding electrical safety inspections and inadequate data held on asbestos has been reported to the RSH
Human Rights/Legal Implications	A referral to the Regulator has been made
Sustainability	No direct impact on sustainability

Ward-specific impacts	N/A
Workforce/Workplace	Two interim staff have been appointed to support the Housing Team in managing the compliance issues

Situation

12. We are now awaiting a decision from the Regulator as to whether they will take further regulatory action involving publishing the Council's breach of the Home Standard and issuing a regulatory judgement.

Risk Analysis

13.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The risks associated with the various six (soon to be seven) key health and safety elements are each obvious, whether fire, explosion, electrocution, poisoning, physical injury etc. This inspection and repair and maintenance regime is precisely there to manage, mitigate and minimise such risks. Successful completion of this work will reduce the likelihood down from 3 – significant, to 1 – low.	Significant - 3	High - 4	As detailed throughout the report that went to the Housing Board – 8 September 2022

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

From: Peter Holt <PHolt@uttlesford.gov.uk>

Sent: 23 August 2022 14:27

Subject: self-referral of Uttlesford District Council to the Regulator of Social Housing for possible breaches of the Home Standard

Dear colleagues

I am writing to all staff to let you know that I have today written to the Regulator of Social Housing, making a self-referral of the authority for possible breaches of the Home Standard. I enclose that letter.

This relates to the ongoing and unresolved concerns that the high standards of inspection (and where necessary, remedial works) on two key health and safety indicators (out of six – namely electrical checks and around asbestos management) cannot as of today properly be demonstrated. This does not mean that I believe that any of our c2,800 council houses are unsafe in this regard, but that without a proper reporting regime, I cannot properly satisfy myself that they are properly safe.

For anyone who wants a fuller description of this situation, its history, its management to date, and what is happening next, you can read the second attachment – which is a series of papers published today and due for consideration at the Council's Governance, Audit and Performance Committee on 31st August, and at an additional meeting of the Housing Board in early September.

Of course this will be of concern to our council tenants. I have therefore written yesterday, by first class post, to every council tenant, as well as a similar letter to the much smaller number of leaseholders of council properties (that they bought under the right to buy). I enclose a sample letter, so you can see what tenants have been told directly. It is important that we are both honest and transparent, but also that we give as much reassurance as is possible in these circumstances. This is a hard balance to strike, and your assistance in doing so will be much appreciated in any discussions you have over this. This is particularly important both for housing colleagues, of course, and also for colleagues in customer services, who are gearing up to take calls on the matter.

Let me reassure you that this is the absolute top priority for action in the council, and we have deployed all appropriate resource to remedy the situation speedily, including bringing in additional senior management support into housing to work with our existing team, starting work last Thursday.

As is good practice when we face such issues, I have briefed colleagues in housing on this issue in person this morning. Finding ourselves in this situation is going to be stressful for housing colleagues in particular, but we have a strong team in place with a proud track record, and now supported by extra senior management capacity, and we have a clear plan to see us through this challenge. I don't need to ask all other staff to rally round in support so much as thank you in advance for doing so, as I know that is who you all are as dedicated public servants and supportive colleagues.

We are a good landlord, and that we are popular and well-regarded by our tenants is a tribute to the hard work of many over many years. This current problem notwithstanding, ours is a proud record, and serves as a very strong foundation from which to move forward positively.

Peter

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APPENDIX 2

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL RESPONSE TO REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING FOLLOWING MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2022

Regulator's question:

Confirmation on the current landlord health and safety compliance figures for gas, fire, electrical, water, lifts and asbestos broken down for domestic and communal/non-domestic properties (if you are not able to break down by communal/domestic please tell us your up-to-date position). Please confirm where you are unable to provide assurance of the accuracy of the figures for any of the areas.

Response by Uttlesford District Council:

Please refer to Appendix 1 – 'Current reported performance position'

UNSL has now been able to provide a breakdown by domestic and communal/non-domestic for gas and electrical safety inspections. This is included in the information provided in Appendix 1.

We have more assurance in some areas than others, because of our recent intensive engagement with UNSL at a local level. This has included FRA action spreadsheets. However, until the performance data provided has been independently validated, we are unable to provide full assurance on the accuracy of the data provided by UNSL against any of the areas of compliance.

UDC will be able to advise the Regulator of the date by which the validation process will be completed during w/c 3 October 2022, following the project inception meeting being held on 3 October 2022 with Pennington Choices.

Regulator's question:

Current remedial actions for all 6 health and safety compliance areas above. Where remedial actions are overdue, please tell us how far overdue they are and the risk rating of the actions. For fire safety please include both the property and management actions (if you are not able to provide information and/or a breakdown please tell us the Councils position). Please indicate where you are unable to provide assurance for remedial actions having been completed.

Response by Uttlesford District Council:

Remedial actions - FRAs

- The FRA actions have been rated by risk type and broken down by maintenance and management actions and are presented for both general needs blocks and sheltered blocks. This information is provided in Appendix 1. The quantum of out-of-date FRA actions are reported in Appendix 1A. UNSL have reported that there are no high-risk actions outstanding. There are a total of 31 medium-risk actions overdue and 25 low-risk/advisory actions. The Council has had sight of the spreadsheet detailing all the actions, with detailed description of each of the actions required.
- Detail on the FRA actions was provided to us because of recent intensive engagement with UNSL. The information has never been provided in this way previously, given our

inability to access the Connect system. Nor has it been provided through previous requests the Council has made. Now that the information has been provided the Council will immediately ensure that the management actions are completed and will closely monitor the completion of the maintenance actions, through to their completion.

Remedial actions - overdue electric inspections

- UNSL has informed us that the electrical inspection catch-up programme will be complete by the end of December 2022. This timescale factors in the need to prevent further inspections falling out of compliance.
- UNSL has increased to five the number of electrical sub-contractors carrying out the safety inspections. The largest contractor with the most resources has been asked to prioritise the inspections of those homes where the inspections are more than 10 years out of date. A new process has been introduced whereby contractors telephone the tenant directly and send a letter. Two contractors are now offering evening and Saturday appointments.
- Outstanding electrical safety inspections are being prioritised and we are monitoring progress very closely through weekly compliance performance data returns from UNSL.
- All tenants and staff were made aware in writing about our decision to self-refer to the Regulator. Both the letter sent to tenants and information provided on our website reminded tenants of the importance of providing access to carry out the checks. Tenants were also reminded to report repairs for urgent attention, where they had any concerns. We will be updating tenants through the Tenants Panel and newsletter, both due this month. We will reinforce the importance of tenants of providing access for appointments through these channels.
- Since commencing in post on 23rd August the Interim Deputy Director of Housing, Health and Communities has met formally with the Operations Director and depot manager at UNSL three times and is working closely with them to improve working methods to gain access. This will be helped by the council's determination to work constructively in partnership with UNSL to address management issues.
- We will begin legal proceedings against tenants, where tenants continually fail to engage in allowing access. The council will procure external legal support as required to achieve this.

Gas safety

- We are now applying for injunctions to facilitate access in the most difficult of cases, rather than rely on the longer route of legal actions for breach of tenancy.

Asbestos

- UNSL have very recently informed us that out of the 48 blocks in management, 47 had an asbestos risk assessment or re-inspection more than five years ago. One block has never had a survey, or there are no records for this.
- UNSL has reported that it has records of asbestos being removed where it has been identified in certain properties. But there isn't currently a management plan in place to manage any asbestos still in situ.
- To remediate this situation UNSL have informed us that they have appointed a specialist asbestos contractor to attend every block to carry out a new survey. UNSL have confirmed that they have issued the purchase order for this, for the visits to take place and return of certification to UNSL within 28 days, i.e., by mid-October 2022. In the

interim UNSL is issuing instructions to contractors that asbestos surveys must be undertaken before carrying out intrusive works to communal areas of flat blocks and sheltered housing scheme communal areas.

Regulator's question:

Details of any mitigations in place to ensure residents safety in any areas where the Council does not have assurance.

Response by Uttlesford District Council:

- The Council will implement the Path to Compliance improvement plan, as provided to the Regulator in the self-referral letter dated 23 August 2022
- Where any further issues are identified following the independent validation exercise, these will be added to the improvement plan
- As stated above, now that the council is in possession of more granular information as provided by UNSL, it will immediately address the outstanding fire safety actions, both directly, through its housing management team and by close contract management of UNSL, where the actions fall into the latter's remit
- The Council will be supported by an Interim Deputy Director of Housing and Interim Director of Housing, appointed in August and October 2022 respectively. Their first priority will be to ensure the implementation of the Path to Compliance improvement plan
- The Council recognises the need to employ a suitably qualified maintenance contract manager, who will work closely with UNSL and ensure that compliance is achieved and maintained. The council is in the process of recruiting an interim resource for this purpose, with a view to a permanent role being appointed in the near future
- The Council is considering the findings of consultants employed through the East of England Government Association, so that they can determine the longer-term future of the UNSL joint venture partnership and in the immediate term, re-set the relationship. This will include much closer scrutiny than was previously the case
- New governance arrangements, including a robust performance management framework will be put in place to ensure effective monitoring and oversight of the performance of UNSL, as per the recommendations of the internal audit report (published November 2021) and the Path to Compliance improvement plan. This will ensure greater accountability on the part of the Council's CMT and Members, to closely scrutinise performance and hold UNSL to task where performance is not being maintained
- The Chief Executive has openly shared the issue of non-compliance with council staff in a meeting held on 23 August 2022. Council staff will support each other and work in a partnership spirit with UNSL to make our homes safe

Regulator's question:

[provide] A copy of the internal audit reports from October 2021 and June 2022.

Response by Uttlesford District Council:

Internal audit report published November 2021 is attached as Appendix 2

Internal audit progress report, June 2022 is attached as Appendix 3

Regulator's question:

A brief overview of why the Council have instructed Pennington Choices to undertake a full validation exercise across all compliance areas.

The Council is unable to be assured of the reliability of the performance data provided by UNSL. This is for the following reasons:

- The metrics which have been historically provided by UNSL do not meet the Council's requirements or that which we consider are needed to meet the requirements of Home Standard
- UNSL have not yet been able to provide the Council with access to the data and evidence which sits behind the performance dashboards generated by the Connect compliance portal. Therefore, the Council has been unable to validate the accuracy or quality of the performance data provided

The Council has therefore taken the decision to commission a highly regarded property compliance specialist (Pennington Choices), to carry out an independent, in-depth analysis of all property and compliance data held and managed by UNSL. This will include ensuring that every one of the Council's housing assets (domestic and communal) is on the appropriate compliance programme. This will enable the Council to:

- Verify its position on health and safety compliance, against its required metrics— Pennington Choices have confirmed that it will be able to extract the required information without having direct access to Connect portal
- Gain an impartial view. The Council wishes to gain an objective insight in pursuance of its ongoing discussions with UNSL around service improvement
- Have the task delivered within a short timescale
- Have a verified baseline upon which to improve its performance for each of the areas of compliance, including any further mitigations.

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 27 September 2022

Title: Development Programme Update

Officer: Judith Snares Housing Strategy and Operations Manager

Key decision: **Yes**

Summary

1. This report provides the Housing Board with an update on the current and proposed development by the HRA across the District.

Recommendations

That the Housing Board notes the contents of this report

Financial Implications

2. Financial provision for the development of new council owned homes is included within the Housing Revenue Account. The development of these sites will also enable the use of Right to Buy capital receipts. Homes England grant will be sort on future developments where appropriate.
3. Re-development of Walden Place already has an agreed budget.

Background Papers

4. None
- 5.

Communication/Consultation	Existing tenants, local residents, Town Council and external agencies
Community Safety	Appropriate precautions would be taken during works
Equalities	Equality and diversity is a key issue for the Council with regards to housing provision
Health and Safety	During the management of the project all risks will be constantly reviewed, revised and managed
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Legal team have been consulted

Sustainability	An opportunity to construct new thermally efficient homes for people in housing need.
Ward-specific impacts	Various as detailed in report
Workforce/Workplace	There are sufficient resources in the housing team to manage the project

Situation

6. **Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden**

Work is progressing well on site with handover anticipated early January 2023, subject to industry wide supply chain issues. This site will deliver 14 homes.

7. **Batholomew Close, Great Chesterford**

Work is progressing well on site with handover anticipated early November 2022, subject to industry wide supply chain issues. The site will deliver 13 new homes including a 3 bed bungalow specifically adapted to meet an identified family's needs.

8. **Parkside, Saffron Walden**

The site is now empty and a Planning application has been submitted. The Architects for this project have developed a scheme of 24 flats for the over 60s with a mixture of 1 and 2 bedrooms, including 2 wheelchair standard flats. The current budget estimate is £3.7 million, and this will be continually reviewed as our proposal for the site is firmed up. If planning permission is obtained, a report will be taken to Cabinet to agree funding for this project. We will look to obtain some grant funding from Homes England for this scheme with the remainder borrowed through the HRA

9. **Alexia House, Great Dunmow**

The proposal here is to demolish the existing building to provide new self-contained apartments for the over 60s. There are no residents left within the building. Our architects and officers have met with planning for a pre-app meeting and it is anticipated that a full planning application will be submitted in October 2022. The scheme is for 24 apartments, a mixture of 1 and 2 bed including some fully wheelchair accessible units. Surveys are currently being carried out in support of the planning application. If planning permission is obtained a report will be taken to Cabinet to agree funding for this project. We will look to obtain some grant funding from Homes England for this scheme with the remainder borrowed through the HRA.

10. Walden Place

Planning approval has been granted for this scheme and the contractor for the scheme has been procured. Contracts are being prepared for signing, with a start on site is anticipated in October 2022. The scheme will see the detaching of the listed building from the rest of the sheltered scheme and a build of 2 new flats and new communal facilities. The cost for the building works is £2.16 million and funding has already approved for this through the HRA. A report will be brought to Members on the disposal of the listed building in due course.

11. Takeley Day Centre/Garage Site

Architects have been appointed for this scheme which is looking to deliver up to 8 properties. Officers are exploring with our architects the potential to deliver this scheme using Modern Methods of Construction. This would be with the intention of delivering low carbon homes. A pre planning response has been received from the Planning Department. Detailed drawings are now being prepared, along with all necessary survey works, in order to enable a Planning submission.

12. Garden Reduction Sites

Officers have identified 4 garden reduction sites which have potential as single building plots. A site for a 4 bedroom house has now received reserved matters approval. A site for a 2 bedroom wheelchair bungalow has received outline planning permission, with detailed drawings to be submitted for reserved matters imminently. This bungalow is being designed to meet the needs of a specific tenant. A detailed planning application has been submitted for a standard 2 bedroom bungalow on a site in Felstead. Plans are being worked up for the other site with a view to submitting planning applications in the near future.

Housing Board agreed that these sites will be developed by the council to deliver new affordable homes using up RTB receipts and HRA borrowing.

13. Section 106 Opportunities

The council is in contract with Barratts Homes for 18 one bedroom and one 2 bedroom apartments on their site in Great Dunmow. This purchase is being funded from HRA borrowing and Right to Buy receipts. These dwellings will be delivered in March 2023 and March 2024.

Risk Analysis

21.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Not achieving planning permission on re-development sites	1 Planners supportive	4 Development not possible	Pre-planning discussions with planners
Underground services identified	2 Investigations to be carried out	3 Diversions possible but cost implications	Investigations to be undertaken at the earliest stage
Further "abnormal costs" identified.	2. Surveys being undertaken	3 Potential cost implications	Contingency already included with cost estimate
Not meeting RTB receipts expenditure as per government agreement	3 Failure to achieve planning approval	3 RTB proceeds would have to be returned to government with interest	Investment strategy agreed by council to enable purchase of market sites. Single plot sites held back for council redevelopment

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Committee: Housing Board
Date: 27 September 2022
Title: Allocations Policy Rural Exception Sites – Options Discussion Paper
Author: Judith Snares – Housing Strategy and Operations Manager

Summary

1. Officers were requested to look at that part of the Allocations Policy that refers to the allocation of Rural Exceptions Sites and whether the policy needs to be amended following a Parish Council's recent concerns over who had priority for properties on a scheme in their Parish.

Recommendation

2. To endorse one of the five Options appended to this report relating to the Allocations Policy (Rural Exceptions Sites) for wider public consultation. Following consultation, the Allocations Policy (Rural Exception Sites) will be brought before the Housing Board to approve and recommend to Cabinet – if a policy change is decided upon.

Financial Implications

3. N/A

Impact

- 4.

Communication/Consultation	Members, tenants, all partner agencies and public consultation via the website
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	Equality impact assessment to be completed on any changes to policy
Health and Safety	N/A

Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	Housing, Planning,

Situation

5. Included with this report are 4 examples of how the Allocation Policy could be altered in relation to Rural Exception Sites to allow for more opportunities for people from the Parish in which the scheme is being built to be successful in being allocated a property.
6. The consequences of these changes would be to give a greater prominence to the use of under occupation when allocating properties, which although may be desirable in keeping local people in the parish may exclude a household in greater housing need from a neighbouring village from being allocated a property.
7. The options provided give members the opportunity to discuss how the policy could be changed or if they are satisfied that the current policy best meets housing need.
8. When considering the options below Members need to consider that where people will be relying on benefits to help towards their rent the spare room subsidy (bedroom tax) will apply. This means that tenants would be subject to a 14% reduction in their housing costs benefits if under-occupying by one bedroom. This could make sustaining their tenancy more difficult. It also need to be remembered that just because someone is not on benefits when they take up a tenancy their circumstances may change to a position where they do need to claim benefits.
9. Any agreed amendment to the policy will need to be consulted on and then brought back to Housing Board to recommend to Cabinet.

OPTION 1

Rural Housing – Exception site – CURRENT POLICY

When vacancies arise in properties that have been built in rural localities (rural exception sites) and a planning obligation specifies a local connection requirement, this takes precedence over the local connection eligibility in 5.2. This means that households wishing to apply for housing on an exception site who fulfil the local connection requirement set out in a planning obligation, but not the eligibility criteria

in 5.2, will be eligible to join the housing register but **only** for this specific development site.

The local connection criteria for rural exception sites will be as follows and in the following order of priority

1. Persons who have been permanently resident in the specified parish for at least two years
2. Persons who are no longer resident in the specified parish but who have been resident for at least three years during the past five years
3. Persons who meet either of the following criteria
 - i. in permanent employment in the specified parish for a minimum of 2 years and working at least 24 hours per week
 - ii. having close relatives (i.e. parents, grandparents, children, brother or sister) living in the specified parish or parishes who have lived there for at least five years
4. If there are no persons meeting the criteria in 1 to 3 then the cascade above will be applied to any neighbouring parishes identified in relevant clauses in the planning agreement
5. In the event that it is still not possible to allocate a property to applicants who meet criteria 1 to 4 above then the property may be allocated to applicants who meet the local connection requirements who will under-occupy the property, providing that the under-occupancy created does not exceed one bedroom
6. In the event that it is still not possible to allocate a property to applicants who meet criteria 1 to 5 above then the property may be allocated to applicants who meet the Uttlesford eligibility criteria set out in Section 5.2.1
7. In the exceptional event that the council is unable to nominate any persons from its Housing Register who comply with 1 to 6 above, the Registered Provider would offer tenancies to Eligible Persons, the definition of which would be consistent with both the council's local connection criteria and the occupancy requirements. The priority when offering tenancies to Eligible Persons would mirror the council's policies on Allocation of Properties.

OPTION 2

Rural Housing – Exception site – FULL UNDEROCCUPATION

When vacancies arise in properties that have been built in rural localities (rural exception sites) and a planning obligation specifies a local connection requirement, this takes precedence over the local connection eligibility in 5.2. This means that households wishing to apply for housing on an exception site who fulfil the local connection requirement set out in a planning obligation, but not the eligibility criteria in 5.2, will be eligible to join the housing register but **only** for this specific development site.

The local connection criteria for rural exception sites will be as follows and in the following order of priority

1. Persons who have been permanently resident in the specified parish for at least two years
2. Persons who are no longer resident in the specified parish but who have been resident for at least three years during the past five years
3. Persons who meet either of the following criteria
 - i. in permanent employment in the specified parish for a minimum of 2 years and working at least 24 hours per week
 - ii. having close relatives (i.e. parents, grandparents, children, brother or sister) living in the specified parish or parishes who have lived there for at least five years
4. *In the event that there are no persons meeting criteria 1 to 3 above then the property may be allocated to applicants who meet the local connection requirements in 1 to 3 who will under-occupy the property, providing that the under-occupancy created does not exceed one bedroom.*
5. If there are no persons meeting the criteria in 1 to 4 then the cascade above will be applied to any neighbouring parishes identified in relevant clauses in the planning agreement

6. In the event that it is still not possible to allocate a property to applicants who meet criteria 1 to 5 above then the property may be allocated to applicants who meet the Uttlesford eligibility criteria set out in Section 5.2.1
7. In the exceptional event that the council is unable to nominate any persons from its Housing Register who comply with 1 to 6 above, the Registered Provider would offer tenancies to Eligible Persons, the definition of which would be consistent with both the council's local connection criteria and the occupancy requirements. The priority when offering tenancies to Eligible Persons would mirror the council's policies on Allocation of Properties.

OPTION 3

Rural Housing – Exception site FULL UNDEROCCUPATION EXCEPT SINGLE PERSON HOUSEHOLDS

When vacancies arise in properties that have been built in rural localities (rural exception sites) and a planning obligation specifies a local connection requirement, this takes precedence over the local connection eligibility in 5.2. This means that households wishing to apply for housing on an exception site who fulfil the local connection requirement set out in a planning obligation, but not the eligibility criteria in 5.2, will be eligible to join the housing register but **only** for this specific development site.

The local connection criteria for rural exception sites will be as follows and in the following order of priority

1. Persons who have been permanently resident in the specified parish for at least two years
2. Persons who are no longer resident in the specified parish but who have been resident for at least three years during the past five years
3. Persons who meet either of the following criteria
 - i. in permanent employment in the specified parish for a minimum of 2 years and working at least 24 hours per week
 - ii. having close relatives (i.e. parents, grandparents, children, brother or sister) living in the specified parish or parishes who have lived there for at least five years
4. *In the event that there are no persons meeting criteria 1 to 3 above then the property may be allocated to applicants who meet the local connection*

requirements in 1 to 3 who will under-occupy the property, providing that the under-occupancy created does not exceed one bedroom. This will not apply to single person households who will only be eligible for 1 bedroom properties

5. If there are no persons meeting the criteria in 1 to 4 then the cascade above will be applied to any neighbouring parishes identified in relevant clauses in the planning agreement
6. In the event that it is still not possible to allocate a property to applicants who meet criteria 1 to 5 above then the property may be allocated to applicants who meet the Uttlesford eligibility criteria set out in Section 5.2.1
7. In the exceptional event that the council is unable to nominate any persons from its Housing Register who comply with 1 to 6 above, the Registered Provider would offer tenancies to Eligible Persons, the definition of which would be consistent with both the council's local connection criteria and the occupancy requirements. The priority when offering tenancies to Eligible Persons would mirror the council's policies on Allocation of Properties.

OPTION 4

Rural Housing – Exception site UNDEROCCUPATION 3/4 BED HOUSES ONLY NO TIME LIMIT

When vacancies arise in properties that have been built in rural localities (rural exception sites) and a planning obligation specifies a local connection requirement, this takes precedence over the local connection eligibility in 5.2. This means that households wishing to apply for housing on an exception site who fulfil the local connection requirement set out in a planning obligation, but not the eligibility criteria in 5.2, will be eligible to join the housing register but **only** for this specific development site.

The local connection criteria for rural exception sites will be as follows and in the following order of priority

1. Persons who have been permanently resident in the specified parish for at least two years
2. Persons who are no longer resident in the specified parish but who have been resident for at least three years during the past five years
3. Persons who meet either of the following criteria
 - i. in permanent employment in the specified parish for a minimum of 2 years and working at least 24 hours per week

- ii. having close relatives (i.e. parents, grandparents, children, brother or sister) living in the specified parish or parishes who have lived there for at least five years
4. *In the event that there are no persons meeting criteria 1 to 3 above then the property may be allocated to applicants who meet the local connection requirements in 1 to 3 who will under-occupy the property. This will only apply to 3 or 4 bedroom houses where for a 3 bedroom house there are at least 2 children within the household or for a 4 bedroom house there are at least 3 children within the household*
 5. If there are no persons meeting the criteria in 1 to 4 then the cascade above will be applied to any neighbouring parishes identified in relevant clauses in the planning agreement
 6. In the event that it is still not possible to allocate a property to applicants who meet criteria 1 to 5 above then the property may be allocated to applicants who meet the Uttlesford eligibility criteria set out in Section 5.2.1
 7. In the exceptional event that the council is unable to nominate any persons from its Housing Register who comply with 1 to 6 above, the Registered Provider would offer tenancies to Eligible Persons, the definition of which would be consistent with both the council's local connection criteria and the occupancy requirements. The priority when offering tenancies to Eligible Persons would mirror the council's policies on Allocation of Properties.

OPTION 5

Rural Housing – Exception site UNDEROCCUPATION 3/4 BED HOUSES ONLY WITH TIME LIMIT

When vacancies arise in properties that have been built in rural localities (rural exception sites) and a planning obligation specifies a local connection requirement, this takes precedence over the local connection eligibility in 5.2. This means that households wishing to apply for housing on an exception site who fulfil the local connection requirement set out in a planning obligation, but not the eligibility criteria in 5.2, will be eligible to join the housing register but **only** for this specific development site.

The local connection criteria for rural exception sites will be as follows and in the following order of priority

1. Persons who have been permanently resident in the specified parish for at least two years

2. Persons who are no longer resident in the specified parish but who have been resident for at least three years during the past five years
3. Persons who meet either of the following criteria
 - i. in permanent employment in the specified parish for a minimum of 2 years and working at least 24 hours per week
 - ii. having close relatives (i.e. parents, grandparents, children, brother or sister) living in the specified parish or parishes who have lived there for at least five years
4. *In the event that there are no persons meeting criteria 1 to 3 above then the property may be allocated to applicants who meet the local connection requirements in 1 to 3 who will under-occupy the property. This will only apply to 3 or 4 bedroom houses where the underoccupancy will only be within 3 years of meeting normal occupancy rules as set out in Appendix 1 of the Allocations policy.*
5. If there are no persons meeting the criteria in 1 to 4 then the cascade above will be applied to any neighbouring parishes identified in relevant clauses in the planning agreement
6. In the event that it is still not possible to allocate a property to applicants who meet criteria 1 to 5 above then the property may be allocated to applicants who meet the Uttlesford eligibility criteria set out in Section 5.2.1
7. In the exceptional event that the council is unable to nominate any persons from its Housing Register who comply with 1 to 6 above, the Registered Provider would offer tenancies to Eligible Persons, the definition of which would be consistent with both the council's local connection criteria and the occupancy requirements. The priority when offering tenancies to Eligible Persons would mirror the council's policies on Allocation of Properties.

Tenant and Leaseholder Panel Report - September 2022

The following are some examples of things the tenant and leaseholder panel have been involved in since lockdown.

1. During lockdown our members were in contact with many tenants, by phone and virtual means.
2. The Chair had lots of enquiries via phone.
3. Members have had many meetings via zoom as meeting in person wasn't an option this was more difficult for some than others, due to a lack of wifi, equipment and digital skills. The Chair spoke to them by telephone to ensure they were kept up to date and to engage their views on a variety of matters.
4. We have visited the Newport offices of Norse to see how complaints and repairs are received from tenants and were given a tour and chat from Tracey Chappell and Lorraine Davis.
5. It was disappointing that the trailer could no longer be used for our events as Norse did not have a vehicle to pull it, however we were provided with a handyman at each event and we used the gazebo instead, which worked well as the weather has been good this summer.
6. The multi-agency trailer with a number of different organisations visited the different areas below:

Tuesday 17 May 11am – Beech Close, Takeley CM22 6RQ

Thursday 23 June 11am -Reynolds Court, Gaces Acre, Newport CB11 3JR

Tuesday 26 July – 11am Holloway Crescent, Leaden Roding, Dunmow, Essex CM6 1QD

Thursday 18 August 11am– Barnfield, Hatfield Broad Oak, Bishop Stortford, Herts CM22 7JR

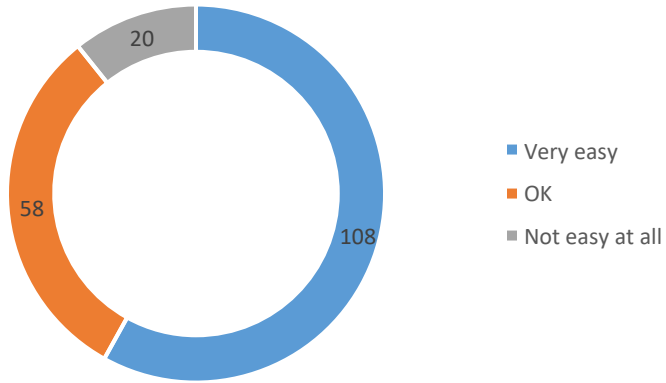
Tuesday 13 September 11am – Watts Close, Barnston, Dunmow CM6 1LT

Included in the list of agencies who joined us to give advice: Uttlesford housing team, Essex Police, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, Peabody (floating support), United in Kind, Active Essex, VAEF Services, Foodbank, Spangles Family hub, community agents, NhW and a variety

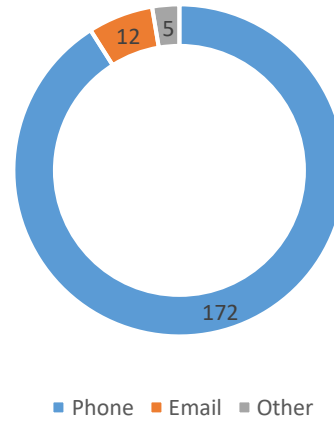
of agencies that support people to live, securely and safely in their homes. We also door knock all our tenants and giveaway a free material shopping bag with helpful information inside.

7. Some members went to Parkside, the old sheltered scheme in Saffron Walden that is soon to be redeveloped; to volunteer as a casualties for a fire service practice drill. It was a great way for us to give back to ECFRS for the support they give us at our trailer events and the talks they carry out in all our sheltered schemes.
8. One of our members sits on the Uttlesford Norse Liaison Board, which allows us to have a voice and ears at the meetings, which is very helpful.
9. We also carried out a scrutiny project on reporting repairs, every tenant was sent a prepaid card with 6 questions about how they found reporting a repair. The results were shared with UNSL. We would like to carryout more scrutiny on other areas of repairs in the future.
10. The Chair and Vice-Chair liaise regularly with tenant liaison officer, both on the phone, virtually and in person.
11. We are looking forward to having our first face to face meeting since lockdown this month.
12. We have now got a leaseholder representative a role that has been empty for a long time; we are also doing a recruitment drive in the next edition of Housing News.

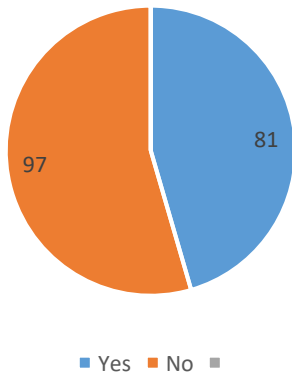
How easy was it to report your repair?



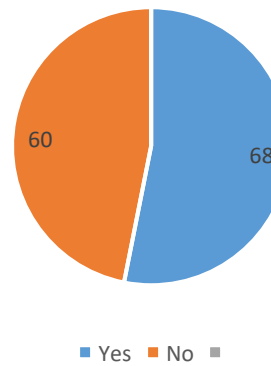
How did you report your repair?



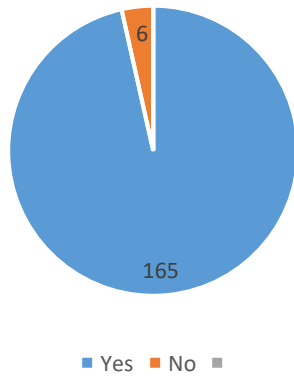
Was an appointment made for you while you were on the phone?



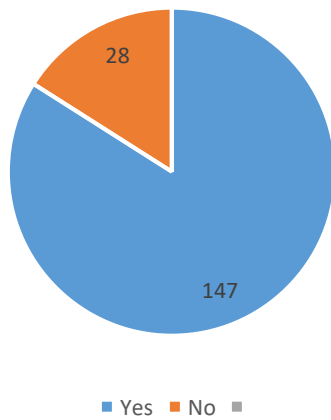
If no, did you get a call back later that same day?



Was the receptionist polite, helpful and courteous?



Was your appointment kept?



Committee: Housing Board
Title: Self Assessment Independent Housing Ombudsman Scheme Complaints Code
Report Author: Paul Kingston – Interim Deputy Director Of Housing, Health, and Communities

Date: 27
September 2022

Summary

1. The Independent Housing Ombudsman Schemes (IHOS) Complaints Code was introduced in July 2020. The Code sets out good practice that the Ombudsman expects social landlords to follow. The Code has been updated and takes effect on 1 April 2022 and Landlords have until 1 October 2022 to become compliant.
2. Landlords must carry out an annual assessment against the Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with the Ombudsman's requirements and publish the results. There is no longer a requirement to send the self assessment to the IHOS.
3. The Code is also a useful guide for tenants to understand what they can and should expect from their landlord.
4. The Self Assessment will be considered at the Tenants Panel meeting on the 22 September 2022.
5. Members will note there are a number of both mandatory (must comply) and best practice (should comply) requirements that either the Council do not comply or partially comply with currently.
6. Officers are working to achieve full compliance by the end of the calendar year when a further update will be provided to Housing Board.

Recommendations

7. To recommend to Cabinet the approval of the Self Assessment of the Independent Housing Ombudsman's Scheme Complaints Handling Code.

Financial Implications

8. The Council will need to undertake a review of resources in order to comply with IHOS Complaints Code.

Background Papers

The self assessment of the IHOS Complaints Code is attached to the report as Appendix 1.

9. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report:
- The IHOS Complaints Code

Impact

10.

Communication/Consultation	Tenant Panel on 22 September 2022
Community Safety	Not applicable
Equalities	Accessibility and awareness has been assessed as part of the self assessment
Health and Safety	Compliance with the Code will enable more openness, transparency and learning, encouraging tenants to come forward with any health and safety concerns
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Compliance with the complaints code will become a regulatory requirement
Sustainability	Not applicable
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	Review of resources to oversee and lead complaints and training to complaint responders in IHOS good practice

Situation

11. Ideally the Council should have achieved full compliance with the IHOS Complaints Code by 1 October 2022. This will not be possible and the earliest we could achieve that goal will be 30 December 2022.

Risk Analysis

12.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Compliance with the IHOS Complaints Code will become a Regulator for Social Housing	2 - the Council will not be compliant by 1 October 2022, and officers have	2 - There is some risk of challenge but the impact is low as long as Council is	Officers are working to achieve full compliance by the end of the calendar year when a further update will be provided to

<p>requirement when the new consumer regulations become mandatory next year. In the meantime Social Landlords are being encouraged to follow the proposed consumer regulations.</p>	<p>earmarked the 30 December 2022 as the earliest date for full compliance.</p>	<p>working towards full compliance with the Code by the end of the calendar year.</p>	<p>Housing Board.</p>
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- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Complaints Self-Assessment Form

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and discussed at the landlord's governing body annually.

Evidence should be included to support all statements with additional commentary as necessary.

Explanations must also be provided where a mandatory 'must' requirement is not met to set out the rationale for the alternative approach adopted and why this delivers a better outcome.

Section 1 - Definition of a complaint

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.'</i>	Yes	Published on website: https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs Corporate complaints policy will need to be changed to recognise the Independent Housing Ombudsman Scheme (IHOS) Complaints Code and definition.
1.3	The resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must still be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	Yes	With tenant's consent we have in the past and will continue to accept legitimate third-party representation.
1.6	... if further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, or if the resident requests it, the issue must be logged as a complaint.	Partial	This matter will be covered in training to ensure complaints are dealt with in this way.
1.7	A landlord must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so.	Yes	We will treat any matter as a complaint if it falls within the definition of 1.2. unless the complaint is considered to be: Abusive, persistent or vexatious complaints policy - Uttlesford District Council

1.8	A complaints policy must clearly set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered, and these circumstances should be fair and reasonable to residents.	Yes	https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs
1.9	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.	Yes	No examples of this to date.

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.4	Landlords should recognise the difference between a service request , where a resident may be unhappy with a situation that they wish to have rectified, and a complaint about the service they have/have not received.	Yes	It is stated in the complaints policy.
1.5	Survey feedback may not necessarily need to be treated as a complaint, though, where possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue their dissatisfaction as a complaint if they wish to.	No	We will be incorporating in, in all surveys including the next tenant satisfaction survey featuring the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

Section 2 - Accessibility and awareness

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which residents can make a complaint such as in person, over the telephone, in writing, by email and digitally. While the Ombudsman recognises that it may not be feasible for a landlord to use all of the potential channels, there must be more than one route of access into the complaints system.	Yes	Tenants can complain face to face, with an online form via website, complain by phone, email or write a letter. Sheltered tenants can use feedback boxes in the schemes (this assists residents who work or don't have daily visits) or directly to their Sheltered Housing Officer. Complaints are also accepted via social media, through a Councillor, Tenant and Leaseholder rep, MP or other recognised third party with tenant's consent.
2.3	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the number of stages involved, what will happen at each stage and the timeframes for responding.	Yes	Website and leaflet, tenant panel has reviewed the complaints page on the website.
2.4	Landlord websites, if they exist, must include information on how to raise a complaint. The complaints policy and process must be easy to find on the website.	Partial	https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs The Corporate complaints policy will need to change to recognise the Independent Housing Ombudsman Scheme (IHOS) Complaints Code and definition.
2.5	Landlords must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, or processes to accommodate an individual's needs. Landlords must satisfy themselves that their policy sets out how they will respond to reasonable adjustments requests in line with the Equality Act and that complaints handlers have had appropriate training to deal with such requests.	Partial	Uttlesford District Council believes that no person should be treated unfairly and is committed to eliminate all forms of discrimination. We do this by complying with our Equality Policy (PDF) [1MB] which sets out the council's aims and objectives for treating everyone equally. The council's approach to Equality Impact Assessments is being reviewed by the Communities team.

2.6	Landlords must publicise the complaints policy and process, the Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme in leaflets, posters, newsletters, online and as part of regular correspondence with residents.	Yes	Housing News – will signpost to complaints policy and process, complaints handling code and the Housing ombudsman scheme in every issue paper and virtual, website and add leaflet to the annual rent changes letter.
2.7	Landlords must provide residents with contact information for the Ombudsman as part of its regular correspondence with residents.	Partial	Contact details are included on the website currently. See 2.6 we will add to the sign-up pack for new tenants with effect from 1 October. We will also include information regularly in the Tenants Housing newsletter starting from October 2022 edition.
2.8	Landlords must provide early advice to residents regarding their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service throughout their complaint, not only when the landlord's complaints process is exhausted.	Yes	In acknowledgement letters the Housing Officer who oversees complaints, will quality assure that advice is given.

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.2	Where a landlord has set up channels to communicate with its residents via social media, then it should expect to receive complaints via those channels. Policies should contain details of the steps that will be taken when a complaint is received via social media and how confidentiality and privacy will be maintained.	Partial	The complaints policy will need to be reviewed in the light of this code requirement. We encourage tenants to directly message e.g. email or letter as this is a more confidential method of communicating.

Section 3 - Complaint handling personnel

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling to ensure complaints receive the necessary attention, and that these are reported to the governing body. This Code will refer to that person or team as the "complaints officer".	Yes	We do not have an officer who is dedicated to complaints as we have limited staff resources. However we do have an officer who oversees the complaints process. Resources will be reviewed with a view to ensuring full compliance with the IHOS Complaints code.
3.2	...the complaint handler appointed must have appropriate complaint handling skills and no conflicts of interest.	Yes	Although we acknowledge that we are a small team, we do our utmost to ensure impartiality. This matter will be considered as part of the review of resources and training objectives.

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.3	Complaint handlers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be able to act sensitively and fairly • be trained to handle complaints and deal with distressed and upset residents • have access to staff at all levels to facilitate quick resolution of complaints • have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes quickly and fairly. 	Yes	Experienced officers deal with complaints and an independent officer oversees the process.

Section 4 - Complaint handling principles

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.1	Any decision to try and resolve a concern must be taken in agreement with the resident and a landlord's audit trail/records should be able to demonstrate this. Landlords must ensure that efforts to resolve a resident's concerns do not obstruct access to the complaints procedure or result in any unreasonable delay. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'pre-complaint stage') as this causes unnecessary confusion for residents. When a complaint is made, it must be acknowledged and logged at stage one of the complaints procedure within five days of receipt .	Partial	Two stage process – see website. This will need to be quality assured by a suitably qualified and empowered complaints lead and will form part of the resources review and training objectives. We will also consider in the review of the complaints policy.
4.2	Within the complaint acknowledgement, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	Partial	Template letter has been updated incorporating this requirement awaiting Senior Management sign off.
4.6	A complaint investigation must be conducted in an impartial manner.	Partial	We will use case studies as part of the training to highlight the need for impartiality. There is a need to integrate Uttlesford Norse complaints practice into the corporate policy and for a system of assurance to be put in place.

4.7	<p>The complaint handler must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deal with complaints on their merits • act independently and have an open mind • take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest • consider all information and evidence carefully • keep the complaint confidential as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter. 	Partial	<p>Should a conflict of interest arise the complaint will be passed to another member of the team.</p> <p>We will undertake to train all complaint handlers in quality complaint resolution by the end of 2022.</p>
4.11	Landlords must adhere to any reasonable arrangements agreed with residents in terms of frequency and method of communication.	Partial	This requirement will also be included in training and review of corporate policy.

4.12	<p>The resident, and if applicable any staff member who is the subject of the complaint, must also be given a fair chance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out their position • comment on any adverse findings before a final decision is made. 	Yes	The complaint handler or an appropriate line management would listen to both parties before concluding any findings. This will be reinforced in training.
4.13	A landlord must include in its complaints policy its timescales for a resident to request escalation of a complaint.	Yes	Included in the policy.
4.14	A landlord must not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure and must have clear and valid reasons for taking that course of action. Reasons for declining to escalate a complaint must be clearly set out in a landlord's complaints policy and must be the same as the reasons for not accepting a complaint.	Yes	<p>This requirement will be considered in both training and as part of the review of complaints policy. We consider through the monitoring of complaints that we comply with this requirement. There is a need to ensure that if a complaint is refused escalation that the reasons why are clearly and reasonably specified.</p> <p>Also see: Abusive, persistent or vexatious complaints policy - Uttlesford District Council</p>
4.15	A full record must be kept of the complaint, any review and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties and any reports or surveys prepared.	Yes	Recorded on the house file and on the complaints spreadsheet.
4.18	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives when pursuing a complaint.	Yes	Abusive, persistent or vexatious complaints policy - Uttlesford District Council

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.3	Landlords should manage residents' expectations from the outset, being clear where a desired outcome is unreasonable or unrealistic.	Yes	Complaints handlers are comfortable feeding back to residents when the request is unreasonable or unrealistic.
4.4	A complaint should be resolved at the earliest possible opportunity, having assessed what evidence is needed to fully consider the issues, what outcome would resolve the matter for the resident and whether there are any urgent actions required.	Yes	It is the responsibility of the officer dealing with the complaint to assess if it can be resolved quickly or urgent actions are required. This best practice will also be included in the review of the corporate policy.
4.5	Landlords should give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord where this is reasonable.	Yes	This is accepted as long as clear consent has been provided and will be considered for inclusion in the review of policy.
4.8	Where a key issue of a complaint relates to the parties' legal obligations landlords should clearly set out their understanding of the obligations of both parties.	Yes	The obligations contained within the tenancy agreement will be referred to as necessary with advice from the Legal team where appropriate.
4.9	Communication with the resident should not generally identify individual members of staff or contractors.	No	To be reviewed and covered in training.
4.10	Landlords should keep residents regularly updated about the progress of the investigation.	Yes	The aim is to meet deadlines and if more time is required that tenants are notified. The lead officer on complaints quality assures this. This best practice will be covered in training.

4.16	Landlords should seek feedback from residents in relation to the landlord's complaint handling as part of the drive to encourage a positive complaint and learning culture.	Yes	The Tenants Panel and another group of tenants will be given a selection of anonymised complaints to look at the way in which it was handled to give their feedback on results.
4.17	Landlords should recognise the impact that being complained about can have on future service delivery. Landlords should ensure that staff are supported and engaged in the complaints process, including the learning that can be gained	Yes	Team members will have input into complaints in their area in terms of the response and lesson learned from outcomes.
4.19	Any restrictions placed on a resident's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be appropriate to their needs and should demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	Abusive, persistent or vexatious complaints policy - Uttlesford District Council

Section 5 - Complaint stages

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Stage 1

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.1	Landlords must respond to the complaint <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being logged. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	Compliments, suggestions and complaints policy - Uttlesford District Council
5.5	A complaint response must be sent to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue, are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned expeditiously with regular updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Uttlesford Norse used to send a closing letter once works are completed and correspond by telephone/email during the process. Following the self-assessment, the new process has now been adopted. A full response should be sent within 10 working days.

5.6	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	This will be covered in training and the Lead Officer on complaints will ensure this will happen in practice.
5.8	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage one in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint stage • the decision on the complaint • the reasons for any decisions made • the details of any remedy offered to put things right • details of any outstanding actions • details of how to escalate the matter to stage two if the resident is not satisfied with the answer 	Yes	All specified in template letters.

Stage 2

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.9	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage one it must be progressed to stage two of the landlord's procedure, unless an exclusion ground now applies. In instances where a landlord declines to escalate a complaint it must clearly communicate in writing its reasons for not escalating as well as the resident's right to approach the Ombudsman about its decision.	Yes	States in stage 1 response letter how to escalate if not satisfied.
5.10	On receipt of the escalation request, landlords must set out their understanding of issues outstanding and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	No	We will cover in training and quality assurance.
5.11	Landlords must only escalate a complaint to stage two once it has completed stage one and at the request of the resident.	Yes	This will be monitored by the complaints lead.

5.12	The person considering the complaint at stage two, must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage one.	Yes	The complaint is then escalated to the Assistant Director Housing Health and Communities in their absence another director in the Council
5.13	Landlords must respond to the stage two complaint <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being escalated. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	We aim to respond within 10 working days.
5.16	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage two in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint stage • the complaint definition • the decision on the complaint • the reasons for any decisions made • the details of any remedy offered to put things right • details of any outstanding actions and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the landlord has a third stage, details of how to escalate the matter to stage three • if this was the final stage, details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied. 	Yes	No stage 3

Stage 3

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.17	Two stage landlord complaint procedures are ideal. This ensures that the complaint process is not unduly long. If landlords strongly believe a third stage is necessary, they must set out their reasons for this as part of their self-assessment. A process with more than three stages is not acceptable under any circumstances.	No stage 3	N/A

5.20	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage three in clear, plain language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint stage • the complaint definition • the decision on the complaint • the reasons for any decisions made • the details of any remedy offered to put things right • details of any outstanding actions • details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied 	No stage 3	N/A
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Best practice 'should' requirements

Stage 1

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.2	If an extension beyond 20 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.	Yes	A letter/email etc would be sent asking if an extension can be agreed
5.3	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response.	Yes	Standard to provide this on complaints correspondence
5.4	Where the problem is a recurring issue, the landlord should consider any older reports as part of the background to the complaint if this will help to resolve the issue for the resident.	Yes	Check house file etc for previous correspondence
5.7	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these should be incorporated into the stage one response if they are relevant and the stage one response has not been issued. Where the stage one response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the complaint should be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	This would be done if relevant to original complaint

Stage 2

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.14	If an extension beyond 10 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.	Yes	A letter/email etc would be sent asking if an extension can be agreed
5.15	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response	Yes	Standard to provide this on complaints correspondence

Stage 3

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.18	Complaints should only go to a third stage if the resident has actively requested a third stage review of their complaint. Where a third stage is in place and has been requested, landlords must respond to the stage three complaint <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being escalated. Additional time will only be justified if related to convening a panel. An explanation and a date for when the stage three response will be received should be provided to the resident.	No stage 3	N/A
5.19	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response.	No stage 3	N/A

Section 6 - Putting things right

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.1	Effective dispute resolution requires a process designed to resolve complaints. Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right.	Yes	Example of a change we have made: following contacting deceased tenants in error a new process involving several departments has now been set up to ensure all relevant parties are aware when a tenant dies to avoid this occurring in the future. Family notified of the changes made.
6.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the extent of any service failures and the level of detriment caused to the resident as a result. A landlord must carefully manage the expectations of residents and not promise anything that cannot be delivered or would cause unfairness to other residents.	Yes	Any remedies offered are inline with existing Council policies.
6.5	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	Responses will state if action to be taken and by when.
6.6	In awarding compensation, a landlord must consider whether any statutory payments are due, if any quantifiable losses have been incurred, the time and trouble a resident has been put to as well as any distress and inconvenience caused.	Yes	Compensation considered on an individual basis where there has been clear financial detriment. Take legal advice.

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.3	Landlords should look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether anything needs to be 'put right' in terms of process or systems to the benefit of all residents.	Yes	See 6.1.
6.7	In some cases, a resident may have a legal entitlement to redress. The landlord should still offer a resolution where possible, obtaining legal advice as to how any offer of resolution should be worded.	Yes	Standard practice to take legal advice.

Section 7 - Continuous learning and improvement

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.2	Accountability and transparency are integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints in their annual report and more frequently to their residents, staff and scrutiny panels.	No	Capture learning, share with tenant panel and add to annual report and share via Housing News. Learning will be shared with staff.

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.3	A member of the governing body should be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This role will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight to the governing body on the landlord's complaint handling performance.	No	Governance Audit Performance Committee – oversee all complaints to the Council including housing.
7.4	As a minimum, governing bodies should receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular updates on the volume, categories and outcome of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance including compliance with the Ombudsman's orders Regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling, The annual performance report produced by the Ombudsman, where applicable Individual complaint outcomes where necessary, including where the Ombudsman made findings of severe maladministration or referrals to regulatory bodies. The implementation of management responses should be tracked to ensure they are delivered to agreed timescales. The annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code for scrutiny and challenge. 	Partial	This will form part of the new practice as defined in the code.

7.5	Any themes or trends should be assessed by senior management to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks or policies and procedures that require revision. They should also be used to inform staff and contractor training.	Yes	Assistant Director will periodically examine learning arising from complaints with a view to reviewing risks and policies and procedures and training requirements.
7.6	Landlords should have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all employees that reflects the need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments • take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints rather than blaming others • act within the Professional Standards for engaging with complaints as set by the Chartered Institute of Housing. 	Partial	Currently working on improvement practices with UNSL.

Section 8 - Self-assessment and compliance

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary, and any explanations
8.1	Landlords must carry out an annual self-assessment against the Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with its requirements.	Yes	Completed Sept 22
8.2	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure and/or change in procedures.	Yes	Following updated Code
8.3	Following each self-assessment, a landlord must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report the outcome of their self-assessment to their governing body. In the case of local authorities, self-assessment outcomes should be reported to elected members • publish the outcome of their assessment on their website if they have one, or otherwise make accessible to residents • include the self-assessment in their annual report section on complaints handling performance 	Yes	Tenants Panel 22/9/22 Housing Board 27/9/22

Committee: Housing Board

Date: 27
September 2022

Title: Timetable for the development of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2023-53

Report Author: Paul Kingston, Interim Deputy Director of Housing, Health and Communities

Summary

1. This report sets out a 'first phase' timetable, in relation to the development of the Council's updated HRA Business Plan 2023-2053. The timetable sets out the actions which the Council, supported by Savills, will take between September and November 2022. A key element of the timetable is the consideration by Housing Board Members of spending priorities in relation to new housing provision and the maintenance of existing council homes.

Recommendations

2. Housing Board is asked to note this report and the attached 'first phase' timetable for the development of the HRA Business Plan 2023-53.
3. Housing Board is asked to agree an additional meeting to be held mid-November 2022, for the purpose of receiving a report and presentation on the various business planning scenarios, so that Members can make informed decisions on the priorities for the housing service in terms of the supply of new housing and maintenance of existing housing. This will inform the next 'second phase' of the development of the HRA Business Plan.

Financial Implications

4. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
5. Members may wish to note that the cost of the work to be carried out by Savills for modelling the business plan this financial year is £6450 plus VAT.

Background Papers

Uttlesford District Council Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2016-2046.

6. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report. The report can also be accessed by clicking here: [HRA Business Plan 2016-2046](#)

Impact

7.

Communication/Consultation	A key element of the first phase of the business planning process is consultation with Members.
Community Safety	No direct impact arising from this report.
Equalities	No direct impact arising from this report.
Health and Safety	No direct impact arising from this report.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	No direct impact arising from this report
Sustainability	No direct impact arising from this report
Ward-specific impacts	No direct impact arising from this report
Workforce/Workplace	No direct impact arising from this report

Situation

8. The Council's HRA Business Plan 2016-2046 sets out the ambitions for council housing in Uttlesford and its scope for investment in new and improved homes for the benefit of local people. The Business Plan is a key document and is the foundation for other decisions made about how the housing service will be delivered and how capital investment in existing homes will be prioritised and funded. Importantly, it sets out the Council's plans for providing new homes. The Business Plan provides detailed financial modelling information, with a specific focus on the first five-years.
9. More than five years has elapsed since the current Business Plan was developed and it is now a priority that the plan is reviewed, so that the financial modelling is up to date it and reflects the current operating financial and policy environment. A review at this time will also provide Members with the opportunity to restate their priorities for housing in the district.
10. The external operating environment has changed since the last HRA Business Plan was published and the housing sector risk profile is significant. The government has recently published a consultation on capping rent increases, so that rents are affordable to tenants who are feeling the impact of inflationary increases. The consultation on the rent cap will end in the middle of October. At the same time, landlords are facing an increased regulatory burden, and in light of the Grenfell Tower tragedy, this unsurprisingly has placed increased demands onto the Council in relation to building safety. This is all in addition to the increased costs affecting all businesses. These factors will be reflected in the new HRA Business Plan.

11. The Council has appointed Savills consultancy services to provide technical expertise in the financial modelling for the business plan. Savills provided support in development of the current Business Plan 2016-46. The Council does not have the in-house capacity to deliver the technical elements of this work but will support Savills and ensure that the new HRA Business Plan reflects the Council's strategic priorities and the ambitions of its Members in relation to new housing supply. The financial modelling produced by Savills will generate a range of scenarios, considering the Council's current operating environment, including projected rent income and capital spend on council homes, which Members can consider as part of their decision making.
12. Cabinet will review the Business Plan on 9 February 2023 and will consider recommending its approval to Council, so that it can be included in the budget setting process for 2023-2024.
13. A 'first-phase' timetable has been agreed with Savills to accommodate this timeframe. The timetable, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, sets out the key activities which will take place by the end of November. It is important that Members can have input into this phase of business planning, so that their requirements are reflected in the final drafting of the Business Plan. Early in 2023 Housing Board will be asked to review and comment on the final draft and satisfy themselves that it reflects their views.

Risk Analysis

14.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Poor organisation of the business planning process may result in the council's strategic plans for its housing assets being unfulfilled. Member's aspirations for housing development will not be properly planned/budgeted for.	2	3	Ensure Members can contribute to the business planning process. Ensure that appropriate background work is carried out prior to the Housing Board Meeting in November 2022, so that Members can be presented with options on how housing will be delivered in the future.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Appendix 1

REPORT TO HOUSING BOARD: 27 September 2022

Housing Revenue Account Business Planning -

**Uttlesford DC - HRA Business Plan
First Phase Timetable**

Actions to be undertaken by Savills

W/C	19th Sept	26th Sept	3rd Oct	10th Oct	17th Oct	24th Oct	31st Oct	7th Nov	14th Nov
Data Requestments Issued									
Data Requests Received (UDC)									
Data Requests Received (Norse)									
HRA BP Model Populated									
Initial Review of Plan with Officers									
Assistance with Response to Rents Consultation									
Identification and Modelling of Scenarios									
Update Model with Inflation Assumptions									
Finalise Model with outcome of Rents Consultation									
Present Baseline and Scenarios to Housing Board									

Draft
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