



**South
Cambridgeshire**
District Council

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Housing Engagement Board

Quarterly Meeting

22 June 2026 – 2pm to 4pm

Agenda Pack

Housing Engagement Board Quarterly Meeting Agenda

Date: **Monday, 22 June 2026**

Time: **2pm – 4pm**

Venue: **Monkfield Meeting Room, SCDC Offices, Cambourne**

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1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair will welcome all present and apologies will be noted.

2. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of 50% of members.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings – 15 January 2026 and 26 March 2026

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 January 2026 and 26 March 2026 are included for approval.

Housing Engagement Board
Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting
held on Thursday, 15 January 2026
from 2pm to 4pm
Online – Teams Meeting

- Attendees:** Cllr John Batchelor – Chair
Cllr Eileen Wilson
Cllr Heather Williams
Peter Campbell (SCDC – Head of Housing)
Amy Stock (Elected Tenant Representative)
Jim Watson (Elected Tenant Representative)
Margaret Wilson (Elected Tenant Representative)
Michael Luffman (Elected Tenant Representative)
Patti Hall (Elected Residential Leaseholder Representative)
- By Invitation:** Ivor Grant (Tenant Volunteer)
Julie Fletcher (SCDC – Service Manager – Housing Strategy)
Geoff Clark (SCDC – Service Manager – Tenancy and Estates)
Eddie Spicer (SCDC – Service Manager – Housing Assets)
Dave Armitage (SCDC – Resident Involvement Team Leader)
Bronwen Taylor (SCDC – Resident Involvement Officer) – Minute taker
- Apologies:** Vivienne Till (Elected Tenant Representative) – Vice-Chair
Laura Nelson (Elected Tenant Representative)

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting at 2.02pm.

2. Quorum

The meeting was quorate.

3. Minutes of previous Meetings – 25 September 2025 and 27 October 2025

The Chair referred to the minutes of the meetings held on 25 September 2025 and 27 October 2025. He thanked Vivienne Till for chairing the meeting on 27 October 2025.

Margaret Wilson referred to the use of the word “void” and said that it was previously agreed that it would not be used in documents.

Peter Campell explained that we would avoid using the word when it was a document produced by the council, however, when documents were produced by other parties, we would have to use the words used by them.

The minutes were approved by the Board as true reflections of the meetings, subject to the following minor amendments:

- Minutes of 25 September 2025 – item 4.1 – Water Meter Project – paragraph four – the word “effect” should read “affect”
- Minutes of 27 October 2025 – item 3 – Endorsement of Policies – paragraph two – the word “Councillor” be added before the word “Overview”

Action: Bronwen Taylor

3.1 Matters Arising from previous Meeting – 25 September 2025

The matters arising from the previous meeting are below for noting.

Item 4.4 – Special HEB Meeting – 29 October 2025

Action : As the Anti-Racism Charter anniversary event was being held on 29 October 2025, Bronwen Taylor is to look at an alternative date for the Special HEB Meeting.

Report back: The Special HEB meeting was held on 27 October 2025.

Item 4.5 – Annual Report to Tenants and Leaseholders – 2024 – 2025

Action: Gina Manderson to email a copy of last year’s report to the board.

Report back: A link to last year’s report was emailed to the board on 3 October 2025.

Copies of the 2024 – 2025 annual report were posted to all tenants and leaseholders on 9 December 2025.

Item 6.1 – Grounds Maintenance Maps

Action: Geoff Clark to check with the officer on how many grounds maintenance maps had been updated.

Report back: Five grounds maintenance maps had been updated in the last year. Geoff Clark said he would cover this topic in more detail under point 5.2 of the agenda.

4. New Matters

4.1 Endorsement of Policies

Julie Fletcher advised that the following draft policies, included in the agenda pack, had been reviewed by tenant volunteers and were to be endorsed by the Board before being presented to Cabinet for approval on 24 March 2026.

- Electrical Management Policy
- Tenancy Sustainment and Support Policy
- Reaching Every Tenant Policy

Electrical Management Policy

Julie Fletcher advised that due to new regulations, the policy had previously been postponed to take into account any new changes.

Margaret Wilson asked if a copy of the Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) would be given to tenants as was done with the gas safety report.

Eddie Spicer advised that under the new regulations a copy of the EICR report would be given to all new tenants, and from May 2026 all existing tenants would receive a copy of the most recent EICR.

Margaret Wilson referred to page 27 of the agenda pack, item 4.1, third bullet point in the policy and said that she thought the word “compliant” should read “compliance”.

Eddie Spicer clarified that the wording “compliant report” was quoted in regulations and therefore could not be changed.

Margaret Wilson also referred to the seventh bullet point and said that the wording “competent, skilled and well-trained staff internally” appeared a bit vague and thought it should read what their expertise covered, for example, “competent, skilled electrical staff”.

Julie Fletcher explained that it meant that any officer that went into a council home should be competent enough to identify an issue and report it accordingly but may not necessarily need the same skills / qualifications as other staff.

Margaret Wilson referred to page 28 of the agenda pack, item 6.2, and page 29 of the agenda pack, item 7.2 and suggested that the document remain in the third person, that is, change the word “you” to “tenants”. This was agreed.

As no further questions or issues were raised, the policy will be presented to Cabinet on 24 March 2026 for approval.

Tenancy Sustainment and Support Policy

Julie Fletcher advised that this was a new policy which combined all the additional support we provided as a service, in terms of helping tenants to remain in their property and to sustain their tenancies and covered all existing practices by including them into one comprehensive policy.

Margaret Wilson referred to page 38 of the agenda pack, the first bullet point and asked if “Visiting Support Service – for residents aged 65+” applied to all tenants or just sheltered tenants.

Geoff Clark confirmed that it applied to all tenants and that the policy would provide further clarity.

Margaret Wilson referred to page 43 of the agenda pack, item 1.1 and suggested using language that avoided stigma about tenants support needs.

Peter Campbell said he disagreed with her suggestion as the language used was to make it as inclusive as possible.

As no further questions or issues were raised, the policy will be presented to Cabinet on 24 March 2026 for approval.

Reaching Every Tenant Policy

Julie Fletcher advised that this was a new policy and that we were gathering information on the demographics of our tenants. She said that the policy aimed to track this data against service data we hold, identifying tenants with whom the service had had no contact with. She said the aim was to avoid missing vulnerable or isolated tenants.

As no further questions or issues were raised, the policy will be presented to Cabinet on 24 March 2026 for approval.

4.2 HQN Mock Inspection – Feedback

Peter Campbell gave a summary of the presentation which was given to members and tenants on 18 November 2025. He reminded the Board that the reason for the mock inspection by HQN was to prepare us for a real inspection from the Regulator of Social Housing and to check how well landlords met their standards and how this impacted on tenants. He reported as follows:

Strengths

- Tenants satisfied with SCDC as a landlord
- Housing stock generally good and compliant with Decent Homes Standard
- Repair satisfaction at 79%
- Strong partnership work on anti-social behaviour

Areas for Improvement

- Some policies still awaiting approval
- Need more detailed performance information for tenants
- Improve communication
- Improve household data collection
- Improve complaint handling systems

Peter Campbell said that we were developing an action plan and we had set up an internal working group to monitor progress in order to prepare for the real inspection which could be sprung on us with very little notice.

The Chair said that Cambridge City Council had had their inspection and asked if we had received feedback from them.

Peter Campbell said that the City were pleased to get a pass mark of C2 and we had met with them to understand what they did following their inspection, and we were learning from their approach. He added that we were sharing information with them and that they were learning from some of the things that we did well.

Jim Watson referred to a course on inspecting empty properties that he had attended and passed in 2010 and he asked if tenant volunteers would be called on to look at empty properties from a tenants perspective.

Peter Campbell said that the world had moved on a lot in the last 15 years and with the increase in regulation, it was unlikely that we would be using tenant representatives for

that purpose. He added that there was also a risk of people getting hurt or injured when unsupervised in empty properties.

Eddie Spicer said that Dave Armitage would be arranging for a small project group to look at the empty properties relet standards, however, due to the current shortage of staff in his team it had been delayed.

4.3 Adaptations

Margaret Wilson referred to a bungalow on her estate that had been adapted for a prospective disabled tenant however it was not suitable for the tenant so they did not move into the property. She added that she felt that an awful lot of money was being wasted and asked who recommended what adaptations were needed and paid for them for tenants with physical disabilities. She said she had raised this issue as she would like it on the agenda in order to have a proper look at adaptations.

Peter Campbell said that the Board could request a scrutiny of the adaptations process and then report back to this Board. He confirmed that they were paid through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). He added that qualified Occupational Therapists (OTs) advised on what adaptations needed to be made.

Margaret Wilson asked if the OTs were provided by the NHS or SCDC.

Peter Campbell said that they could be either NHS or SCDC or both.

Cllr Heather Williams agreed that it would be helpful having a report on adaptations to see what the demand was and how the demands were being met.

Action: Service Managers

4.4 Tpas Scrutiny Conference – 7 October 2025 – Feedback Report

The Chair referred to the Tpas Scrutiny Conference feedback report from Margaret Wilson who attended the conference and thanked her for an interesting and informative read.

Jim Watson said that he was disappointed that he did not attend as by the time the tenant representatives had been advised of the conference, there had been no spaces available.

Margaret Wilson said that the conference tickets had been sold out very quickly and that they had been placed on a waiting list.

Dave Armitage explained that we did not get much notice from Tpas and by the time the tenant representatives had confirmed their interest in the conference, tickets had sold out. He said that we were placed on a waiting list and that only one ticket had been available, and as Margaret Wilson was the first tenant representative to respond, she was booked on the conference. He added that notification by training providers of conferences varied.

5. New Matters

5.1 Forward Plan 2025 / 2026

Julie Fletcher referred to the Forward Plan included in the pack and went through the items planned for the coming months. She said that a special Budget Meeting would be arranged to go through the budget for 2026 / 2027 and that the following policies would be presented to Cabinet for approval in March 2026.

- Electrical Management Policy
- Tenancy Sustainment and Support Policy
- Reaching Every Tenant Policy

Julie Fletcher said that a Special HEB Policy Meeting may be arranged for February 2026 to endorse the following policies before they were presented to Cabinet for approval in March 2026.

- Fire Safety Policy
- Asbestos Policy
- Lift Safety Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy

Julie Fletcher advised that the Pets Policy review had been delayed as it was not a high priority policy. She added that she would add the Adaptations Report to the Forward Plan as requested earlier in the meeting.

Jim Watson asked how many pets a tenant could have before it was deemed too many pets.

Julie Fletcher said that the Pets Policy would include this information however it would probably be based on individual circumstances, size and location of properties, etcetera.

Cllr Heather Williams suggested the Housing Engagement Board provide a feedback report to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Full Council as she did not think that Council members would know about the work of this Board.

The Chair said he thought it was a good idea.

Peter Campbell agreed and said that this board had only been elected in April 2025. He suggested feedback be given at next year's AGM, which was half-way through their four-year term on the Board and then again at the AGM at the end of their term.

Cllr Heather Williams said that her reason for raising it here was that the AGM was quite prescriptive and if we were going to bring it to the AGM at full Council, the Constitution would need to be amended to include a report from this group. She suggested speaking to democratic services, or the monitoring officer, or it could be a part of this Board's rules that a report would go to Full Council annually and not necessarily the AGM. She added that she felt that this was something that would be beneficial for members as a whole, and therefore the tenants across the district.

Margaret Wilson said that she agreed that it was a good idea and suggested reporting back every year, except the first year after tenant representative elections.

The Chair said that we would look at options on how to report back to council.

Action: Dave Armitage

5.2 Contracts Review Panel

Geoff Clark advised that regular meetings to discuss the landscapes contract were held with tenant volunteers and a representative from SP Landscapes, the last one being on 17 December 2025. He reported that they had had good discussions with SP Landscapes who confirmed that they were up to date in terms of the completed grass cuts for this current growing season and advised where they were in terms of the grass cutting schedule. He said as soon as the minutes from the meeting were completed, he would share them with the group and post them on the website.

Geoff Clark advised that Paul Bowman suggested conducting an estate inspection in the winter months as the feeling was that there could be different issues compared to the summer months. He added that the weather could be a challenge and there may not be an appetite to get together in the winter weather. He said that the contractor was prepared to join us on some of the estate inspections this year which would be helpful.

Margaret Wilson agreed that a winter inspection would be helpful as a lot of people park on grass which damages the grass and creates puddles.

Geoff Clark reported that they discussed adding the possibility of identifying wildflower and wild grass sites on the standard questionnaire sheets that were used for the inspections. He said that we had several across the district at the moment that we maintain, however, he thought that there was potential to add to them which would support some of the corporate measure we had around biodiversity and doubling nature.

Geoff Clark said they had a discussion on the grounds maintenance maps and that they were making alterations to them as and when they were identified. He said that they had had a more in-depth discussion about reviewing the maps on a whole, as the last time they were reviewed was several years ago, and that they would look at bringing in resources to review them to ensure they were accurate and up to date.

Jim Watson referred to report under item 3.1 of the agenda pack about the five maps that had been updated and said that he and the other tenant volunteer inspectors felt that there were a lot more maps that were not up to date.

Geoff Clark said that there were predominantly accurate, however things changed over time, and the maps were being altered as and when inconsistencies were identified.

5.3 Policy and Procedure Panel

The Chair referred to the notes from the policy meetings held on 7 October, 4 November and 6 November 2025.

Ivor Grant said a large number of policies had been reviewed in the second half of last year and that some actions required evidence of being completed. He said he would email his list to Dave Armitage.

Action: Julie Fletcher

5.4 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Review Panel

Margaret Wilson referred to the notes for Quarter 2 included in the pack and said that she had not attended the meeting due to a hospital appointment. She referred to point six of the notes, Communication Improvements, and said that she had met some tenants from another estate who shared the same concerns about communication received from SCDC.

The Chair thanked Margaret Wilson for her feedback.

6. Any Other Business

6.1 Collection of Information from Tenants

Patti Hall said that sheltered tenants had complained about receiving emails from SCDC asking for personal information and were concerned that it was a scam. She added that she advised them to ignore the emails as the sheltered officer had been contacting them for this information and asked why we were doubling up on requesting information.

Peter Campbell said that the results of HQN's mock inspection showed that we did not hold sufficient information on our tenants and that we had discussed this at a previous meeting.

The Chair suggested that we made it clearer to tenants that this was an official communication and not a scam.

Julie Fletcher said that it was publicised in newsletters and magazine however she would investigate why both email and in-person collections happened simultaneously.

Eddie Spicer reported that we do not publicise too much as this could be an "open door" to scammers. He added that Patti Hall should not have told tenants to disregard the email but to rather contact the council to confirm it was a valid survey.

Patti Hall said that she had advised them to disregard the email as the sheltered officer would be getting the information from them.

Cllr Eileen Wilson suggested that local councillors were informed when communication such as this was sent to tenants.

Action: Julie Fletcher

6.2 Empty Properties Scrutiny

Margaret Wilson asked when the Empty Properties Scrutiny would be taking place.

Eddie Spicer said that as mentioned earlier, this project had been delayed to later in year due to staffing issues.

Margaret Wilson said that it would be helpful to new tenants to receive an information pack when moving into a property. She added that some tenants did not return all the keys of a property when moving out and it would be helpful for new tenants to receive a full set of keys when moving into a property.

Eddie Spicer said that he was developing detailed property specific packs which included information such as gas and electrical certificates, safety information, heating type, etcetera. He reported that when a tenant moved out of a property, all locks were changed and the incoming tenant would have new locks with a full set of keys, which was usually two or three keys per lock.

6.3 Communal Hall Accounts

Margaret Wilson said that the tenants that she saw the day before were specifically asking for communal hall accounts as they wanted to know where their service charges went. She added that they did not ask about the general service charge, however, that would also be helpful. She said that she would continue raising this issue until a proper resolution was reached.

Cllr Heather Williams said as this issue had been repetitively raised, could it be added to the next meeting agenda until the issue was resolved.

Geoff Clark said he would set up a meeting with the accountant, tenant representatives and councillors to discuss this issue.

Peter Campbell said that a report back would be provided to this Board to close this issue.

Action: Geoff Clark

7. Meeting Date for 2025 / 2026

The Chair referred to the meeting date for 2025 / 2026 as follows:

- 26 March 2026 (venue to be confirmed)

The Chair said that a special meeting may be held earlier to endorse some policies.

8. Closing

There being no further business to discuss, the Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting ended at 3.35pm.

Housing Engagement Board

Minutes of the Special Meeting
held on Thursday, 26 March 2026
from 2pm to 4pm

in the Monkfield Room, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne

Attendees: Cllr John Batchelor – Chair
Vivienne Till (Elected Tenant Representative) – Vice-Chair
Cllr Heather Williams
Peter Campbell (SCDC – Head of Housing) – Online
Amy Stock (Elected Tenant Representative)
Jim Watson (Elected Tenant Representative)
Michael Luffman (Elected Tenant Representative)
Patti Hall (Elected Residential Leaseholder Representative)

By Invitation: Ivor Grant (Tenant Volunteer)
Julie Fletcher (SCDC – Service Manager – Housing Strategy)
Geoff Clark (SCDC – Service Manager – Tenancy and Estates)
Eddie Spicer (SCDC – Service Manager – Housing Assets) (on-line)
Dave Armitage (SCDC – Resident Involvement Team Leader) – Online
Bronwen Taylor (SCDC – Resident Involvement Officer) – Minute taker

Apologies: Cllr Eileen Wilson
Laura Nelson (Elected Tenant Representative)
Margaret Wilson (Elected Tenant Representative)

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting at 2pm advised that this was a special meeting dedicated solely to policy review and approval.

2. Quorum

The meeting was quorate.

3. Endorsement of Policies

The Chair advised that the following documents were included in the pack.

- Compensation Policy – Report to the HEB
- Appendix A – Draft Compensation Policy
- Appendix B – Policy Panel Feedback (Compensation Policy)
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy – Report to the HEB
- Appendix A – Draft Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Appendix B – Policy Panel Feedback (Repairs and Maintenance Policy)
- Housing Safety Policies – Report to the HEB
- Appendix A – Draft Fire Risk Management Strategy
- Appendix B – Policy Panel Feedback (Fire Risk Management Strategy)
- Appendix C – Draft Lifts and Lifting Equipment Safety Policy
- Appendix D – Policy Panel Feedback (Lifts and Lifting Equipment Safety Policy)
- Appendix E – Draft Asbestos Management Policy
- Appendix F – Policy Panel Feedback (Asbestos Management Policy)

Julie Fletcher advised that the policies were updated to ensure that they aligned with legislation and had been reviewed by the Policy and Procedure Panel. She said they had been presented to and approved by Cabinet on 24 March 2026.

3.1 Compensation Policy

Julie Fletcher referred to the draft Compensation Policy included in the pack and advised that it been updated in terms of new guidance from the Housing Ombudsman in that the parameters in terms of the financial side of compensation matched or mirrored the recommendations. She added that the panel feedback was included however the track changes version of the document was not distributed as there were so many changes and it would have been difficult to understand. She said it was not included in the pack as the tracked changes were not visible in the pdf format included in the agenda pack, however, she would send the document to everyone.

As no concerns or objections were raised, the policy was endorsed by the Board.

3.2 Repairs and Maintenance Policy

Eddie Spicer referred to the draft Repairs and Maintenance Policy included in the pack and advised that the policy consolidated existing practices into one document for clarity.

Julie Fletcher advised that the M&Me repairs reporting application had recently been launched.

As no concerns or objections were raised, the policy was endorsed by the Board.

3.3 Housing Safety Policies

Julie Fletcher referred to the following draft Housing Safety Policies included in the pack and said these policies updated the Council's approach to safety compliance in line with recent legislation and consumer standards. She added that further updates may be required as regulations evolved.

- Fire Risk Management Strategy
- Lifts and Lifting Equipment Safety Policy
- Asbestos Management Policy

Cllr Williams referred to the Asbestos Management Policy and asked how many properties had asbestos and if tenants were aware of it in their properties, as a tenant in her Ward wanted to do bathroom alterations and was not able to due to asbestos in the building.

Eddie Spicer advised that most properties built before 2000 would have asbestos in them and that tenants were made aware of the asbestos when moving into a property. He said that contractors should request an asbestos survey before work was done to a property. He added that a new two-year full survey programme would be starting in April 2026 to update our asbestos data and that annual visual inspections would be reinstated.

As no concerns or objections were raised, the policies were endorsed by the Board.

4. Closing

There being no further business to discuss, the Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting ended at 2.20pm.

3.1 Matters Arising from previous Meeting – 15 January 2026

Item 3 – Minutes of Meetings – 25 September 2025 and 27 October 2025

Action : Bronwen Taylor to amend the minutes as follows:

- **Minutes of 25 September 2025** – item 4.1 – Water Meter Project – paragraph four – the word “effect” should read “affect”
- **Minutes of 27 October 2025** – item 3 – Endorsement of Policies – paragraph two – the word “Councillor” be added before the word “Overview”

Report back: The minutes have been amended accordingly.

Item 4.3 – Adaptations

Action: The Service Managers are to provide a report on adaptations to see what the demand was and how the demands were being met.

Report back: Added to the agenda as item 4.1.

Item 5.1 – Forward Plan

Action: Dave Armitage to discuss including a feedback report from the HEB to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Full Council in the constitution with Democratic Services.

Report back: Suggested that an annual report is taken through to the Scrutiny and Review Committee and Cabinet, possibly in October 2026, outlining the work that tenant representatives have been involved in.

Item 5.3 – Policy and Procedure Panel

Action: Ivor Grant to send Julie Fletcher a list of actions that require evidence of being completed.

Report back: Julie Fletcher advised that the actions on the list had been included in the appendices which were included in the agenda pack and amended where appropriate in the policies.

Item 6.1 – Collection of Information from Tenants

Action: Julie Fletcher to investigate why both email and in-person collections of information from tenants happened simultaneously.

Report back: Added to the agenda as item 4.2.

Item 6.3 – Communal Hall Accounts

Action: Geoff Clark to set up a meeting with the accountant, tenant representatives and councillors to discuss the communal hall accounts.

Report back: Added to the agenda as item 4.3.

4. New Matters

4.1 Disabled Adaptations in Council Properties Report

Included in the pack is the Disabled Adaptations in Council Properties Report to the HEB.

Julie Fletcher to report.



Report to:	Housing Engagement Board 22 June 2026
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Batchelor – Lead Member for Housing
Lead Officer:	Peter Campbell – Head of Housing

Disabled Adaptations in Council Properties

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the Housing Engagement Board notes this report as an explanation and update to the Council's position with regards to disabled adaptations in council properties; and notes the performance information and proposed future monitoring measures.

Introduction

2. This report is provided in response to a request from the Housing Engagement Board for further information on how the Council manages disabled adaptations within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). It sets out:
 - The policy and legal context.
 - How adaptations requests are assessed and delivered.
 - The approach to significant and high-cost adaptations.
 - Expected timescales for delivery; and
 - An overview of recent activity and proposals for improved performance monitoring.
3. This report is informed by the Council's [Disabled Adaptations Policy](#), approved in September 2023 and published on the website.

Details

Policy and Legal Context

4. The Council's Disabled Adaptations Policy sets out how adaptations are provided to enable tenants with disabilities or long-term health conditions to live safely, independently and with dignity in their homes. The policy applies to Council tenants and their households and is aligned with relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

5. The Council also has a duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure disabled tenants are not placed at a substantial disadvantage.
6. Key principles include:
 - Supporting independence and preventing avoidable moves into institutional care.
 - Ensuring adaptations are reasonable, proportionate and represent best value for money.
 - Working in partnership with Occupational Therapists (OTs) and other agencies to assess need.

Types of Adaptations

7. Adaptations are categorised broadly as:
 - **Minor adaptations** (under £900): simple works such as grab rails, lever taps, half steps and additional banister rails.
 - **Major adaptations** (£900 – £5,000 or specialist specification): example, level-access showers, ramps, stairlifts, adapted kitchens.
 - **Significant adaptations** (£5,000+ or requiring planning permission): example, structural changes, extensions, door widening or multiple major works.
8. For minor adaptations, tenants can apply directly to the Council for works and generally will not need a referral from Social Care.
9. For major and significant adaptations tenants must request an Occupational Therapy assessment via Cambridgeshire County Council Social Care. A formal recommendation is required before the Council can proceed.

Assessment and Decision-making

10. The Council, working with Social Care, assesses whether adaptations are:
 - Necessary and appropriate for the disabled person's needs; and
 - Reasonable and practicable given the property's layout and condition.
11. Rehousing to more suitable accommodation may be considered as an alternative with financial support for moving costs where appropriate. We have successfully re-allocated adapted properties to disabled tenants. We work alongside the Occupational Therapy Team to ensure the property is suitable and adequate for a

tenant's long-term needs. This enables us to best utilise our adapted stock and recycle our adaptations.

12. Approval is subject to policy criteria, budget availability and value-for-money considerations.

Delivery and Funding

13. All approved works and ongoing servicing (where required) are funded by the Council through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Tenants are not means tested or expected to financially contribute for any works required following an assessment. All works are either carried out by the Council's main repairs contractors, or an alternative external contractor appointed by the Council where works are of a specialist nature or require major / significant works.
14. An annual budget of £1.2m has been allocated for disabled adaptation works in 2026 / 2027. In 2025 / 2026, expenditure totalled £0.714m against a budget of £1.2m. At present, demand for disabled adaptations remains manageable and is being accommodated within existing HRA budget provision.
15. In 2025 / 2026 we completed 202 minor adaptations, all being completed by our Repairs Contractor, Mears. A further 96 major adaptations were completed, consisting of adapted kitchens, level access showers, hoist and stairlift installations, automatic door / window openers, ramps and modular half steps, hardstanding's, over bath showers and specialist toilets.
16. We also completed 3 significant adaptations, which included level access shower conversions.
17. We work in conjunction with the OTs to ensure adaptations are completed to a satisfactory standard. We aim to complete post inspections within 12 weeks.

Timescales (from completed referral)

- **Minor adaptations:** order within 10 working days; work starts within 28 working days.
- **Major adaptations:** work to start within 4 months.
- **Significant adaptations:** work to start within 6 months (subject to planning permission or specialist lead-in times).

Performance Monitoring

18. Minor adaptations are delivered by Mears as part of the Repairs Contract, with performance and timescales tracked through the Repairs Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Major and significant works are monitored on a case-by-case basis, with an average completion time around four months.
19. Overall performance relating to disabled adaptations is overseen by the Operational Housing Stock Group, comprising senior housing officers, as part of its wider oversight for the Council's housing stock. Delivery of disabled adaptations within Council properties is also a Strategic Indicator, reported quarterly to Cabinet, and will be incorporated into the revised performance reporting framework to be considered by the Performance Panel and Housing Engagement Board from April 2026 onwards.
20. Further work will be undertaken to improve the quality and consistency of information reported on the number and types of disabled adaptations delivered. This will include enhanced reporting through the Tenants' Annual Report to provide greater transparency for tenants.

Refusal of Significant Adaptations

21. Significant disabled adaptations may be refused where they are not considered a reasonable or effective use of the Council's housing stock, including where a household is likely to be rehoused, suitable adapted accommodation is available, the property is unsuitable or earmarked for disposal, or the works would create safety, management or future letting issues. Requests may also be refused where there is a live Right to Buy application, ongoing tenancy enforcement action, or where similar adaptations have been provided recently in a tenant's previous home. Each request is assessed on its individual merits, with alternative solutions considered where appropriate.

Allocation of Adapted Properties

22. Where a property has been adapted, particularly through major or significant disabled adaptations, the Council seeks to maximise the effective use of housing stock by prioritising allocation to households with an assessed need for those adaptations. Adapted properties are normally advertised with details of the works undertaken and may be allocated directly to a suitable household. Where adaptations remain in good condition, they are generally retained on re-let to ensure continued availability of accessible housing for disabled residents.

23. Minor adaptations may be removed where they are no longer required and would restrict general use of the property. Decisions on retention or removal are made on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the condition of the adaptation, demand for adapted housing, and effective use of the Council's housing stock.
24. All adapted properties are recorded within the 'MRI' Housing System.

Conclusion

25. Disabled adaptations play a critical role in supporting tenants with disabilities to live safely and independently. By following a clear assessment process and making best use of adapted properties through thoughtful allocation, the Council aims to maximise the benefit of its housing stock while meeting its legal and moral responsibilities. Ongoing monitoring and review will ensure the service continues to meet the needs of residents now and in the future.

Report Author:

Julie Fletcher – Service Manager – Housing Strategy

Telephone: (01954) 713 352

4.2 Tenant Census Report

Included in the pack is the Tenant Census Project Report to the HEB.

Julie Fletcher to report.

Report to:	Housing Engagement Board 22 June 2026
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Batchelor – Lead Member for Housing
Lead Officer:	Peter Campbell – Head of Housing

Tenant Census Project

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the Housing Engagement Board notes this report as an explanation and update relating to the tenant census project.

Introduction

2. The tenant census project commenced in December 2025, with the aim to collect tenant data on household composition, including details of any disabilities, language needs and preferred methods of contact. This initiative is an important step in meeting our responsibilities under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the enhanced requirements set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).
3. This report explains what the tenant census involves, why it is necessary, how the information is used and progress to date.

Policy and Legal Context

4. The regulatory framework for social housing has strengthened significantly in recent years under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. Registered providers are now expected to:
 - Have accurate, up-to-date information about tenants and household members
 - Demonstrate a clear understanding of tenants' needs, characteristics and vulnerabilities
 - Use this information to deliver safe, effective, and tailored services

Progress

5. Phase 1 of the tenant census is now complete. All tenants have been sent an initial form to complete, with a further 3,334 reminders sent. For those tenants living in

general council housing, forms were either posted to them or emailed where we had their email address. For sheltered housing tenants, the Housing Estate Officers hand delivered the forms and collected them on the following visits. During the early stages of the project, some forms were inadvertently also sent to sheltered housing tenants, meaning some may have received them twice.

6. So far, we have received 2,503 responses, representing a 45.4% overall response rate. This is broken down by 1,639 responses from tenants living in general needs housing (39%) and 864 responses from tenants in sheltered housing (65.8%).
7. Phase 2 of the project will focus on tenants who have not yet responded, using targeted telephone reminders and individual home visits. This work will be delivered through existing planned activity, with support from Officers undertaking visits related to the water saving project, planned maintenance, stock condition surveys, sheltered estates and routine housing management. Multiple contact channels are being used to ensure every tenant is reached and aware of the request to update their data.
8. The project aims to reach 95% participation in sheltered housing and 85% in general needs housing by April 2027, ahead of transitioning to an ongoing business as usual approach for maintaining tenant information, with a review cycle of two years.

Information Collected and how we will use it

9. The information collected through the tenant census includes:
 - Household members and occupancy details
 - Contact information and preferred communication methods
 - Employment status and support needs (where relevant)
 - Health or vulnerability information
 - Equality and diversity data
10. All information collected is managed in accordance with our Privacy Policy, in line with data protection legislation.
11. While tenants are encouraged to complete all sections of the census to help us build a comprehensive understanding, providing all information is not mandatory, and they may choose to skip any questions if they prefer.
12. Improved tenant data will enable more targeted and responsive service delivery by bringing together household and property information to better identify need,

prioritise interventions, and inform service planning. For example, by linking information about tenant vulnerabilities, such as age, mobility issues, or existing health conditions, with property condition data (example, damp and mould reports, insulation levels, or heating systems), we can proactively identify households who may be most at risk. This will allow us to prioritise works, such as heating upgrades, for those residents where the impact on health and wellbeing is likely to be greatest.

Equality and Diversity

13. The tenant census supports the Council's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion by enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the characteristics and needs of our residents. By collecting data on factors such as age, disability, ethnicity, language, and other protected characteristics, we are better able to identify inequalities, remove barriers to access, and ensure services are fair, inclusive and responsive.

Conclusion

14. In summary, having accurate and up-to-date tenant information is essential to ensuring we can keep residents safe, respond effectively to risks, and deliver services that meet the diverse needs of our communities. By improving our understanding of who lives in our homes, we can provide more tailored support, enhance communication, and ensure that no groups are overlooked or disadvantaged. This data will also enable us to meet our equality obligations and demonstrate that our services are fair, inclusive, and responsive, ultimately supporting better outcomes for all tenants.

Report Author:

Julie Fletcher – Service Manager – Housing Strategy

Telephone: (01954) 713 352

4.3 Communal Room Service Charges

Geoff Clark to report.

4.4 Endorsement of Policies

The following policies, included in the agenda pack, are to be endorsed by the HEB.

- Pets Policy
- Estate Services and Communal Areas Policy
- Management of Housing Health and Safety Rating System Policy incorporating Awaab's Law

Julie Fletcher to report.

Report to:	Housing Engagement Board 22 June 2026
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Batchelor – Lead Member for Housing
Lead Officer:	Peter Campbell – Head of Housing

Pets Policy (Council Housing Stock)

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the Housing Engagement Board endorses the Draft Pets Policy (Council Housing Stock), as outlined in Appendix A, ahead of its submission to Cabinet for approval on 23 June 2026.
2. It should be noted that whilst this is a new policy, it does not change existing practice. It brings together current approaches into a clear and transparent framework, supporting consistent and fair decision-making rather than introducing new requirements or restrictions.

Details

3. South Cambridgeshire District Council recognises the positive role that pets can play in supporting wellbeing, mental health and tenancy sustainment. At the same time, the Council must balance responsible pet ownership with the welfare of animals, the safety of residents and the effective management of its housing stock.
4. The Pets Policy provides a clear, fair and consistent framework for managing requests to keep pets in Council-owned homes. It brings together and clarifies existing guidance, improving transparency for tenants and supporting consistent decision-making by officers.
5. The policy explains when tenants need permission to keep a pet, how requests will be considered fairly, and the timescales and review arrangements for decisions. It also sets clear expectations around tenant responsibilities, compliance with relevant legislation, preventing nuisance and antisocial behaviour, and arrangements for assistance animals, as well as restrictions on prohibited animals and certain animal-related activities.
6. While the statutory provisions of the Renters' Rights Act relating to pets apply to the private rented sector, the Pets Policy has been deliberately developed to align with

the same underlying principles of fairness, transparency and reasonableness. In particular, it avoids blanket bans, commits to individual consideration of requests, introduces clear decision timescales and review arrangements, and supports a positive approach to accommodating pets where appropriate. This reflects emerging best practice and supports consistency across the wider housing sector.

7. The policy includes specific provisions relating to dangerous dogs and public safety. It reflects the requirements of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and makes clear that dogs prohibited under legislation, including XL Bully dogs, must not be kept in Council properties unless a valid court-issued Certificate of Exemption is in place and all legal conditions are complied with. The policy also supports the use of an internal register of known dangerous dogs associated with Council properties to help manage risks and ensure the safety of residents, Council officers and contractors.
8. The policy is not intended to deter tenants from keeping dogs or other pets. On the contrary, it recognises the significant benefits that responsible pet ownership can bring, including improved mental health, reduced loneliness and increased wellbeing. The policy is designed to accommodate requests to keep pets wherever possible, while setting clear and proportionate expectations to ensure animal welfare, community safety and responsible behaviour, thereby supporting tenancy sustainment and healthier, more stable communities.

Reasons for Recommendations

9. The policy is recommended for approval as it provides a clear and up-to-date framework for managing pets in Council housing, supporting responsible pet ownership while protecting animal welfare and neighbouring residents. It promotes fair and consistent decision-making, helps prevent complaints and disputes, supports tenancy sustainment and wellbeing, and ensures compliance with statutory duties and regulatory expectations.

Options

10. The alternative option would be to reject the policy in its presented form. However, without an approved and up-to-date policy, the Council risks inconsistent practice, increased complaints, reduced clarity for tenants, and difficulty evidencing fair and proportionate decision-making.

Implications

11. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

Legal

12. The policy supports compliance with relevant legislation, including the Animal Welfare Act 2006, Equality Act 2010 and Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. It also supports fair decision-making and proportionate enforcement, reducing legal and Ombudsman risk.

Risks / Opportunities

13. The Council maintains a 'Customers who pose a risk' register to support proportionate risk management across the housing service. As of April 2026, the register identifies 20 properties where dangerous dogs are known to be present. Of these, nine properties have registered XL Bully dogs with Certificates of Exemption, while the remaining 11 properties have been recorded following reported incidents involving aggressive or dangerous behaviour by dogs. The Pets Policy supports consistent identification, engagement and risk management in these cases, ensuring public and officer safety while maintaining a fair and lawful approach to enforcement.

Equality and Diversity

14. This policy promotes equality and inclusion by:
- Recognising assistance animals and reasonable adjustments.
 - Committing to fair, case-by-case decision-making.
 - Using clear language and accessible processes.

Health and Wellbeing

15. Pets can play a significant role in improving mental health, reducing loneliness and supporting wellbeing. A clear and fair policy supports these benefits while managing risks appropriately.

Consultation responses

16. The draft Pets Policy has been developed with input from officers and reviews by tenant representatives, as well as consulting on a larger scale with tenants through

the website. Feedback has informed refinements to tone, clarity and fairness. A copy of the amendments made following the consultation is attached at Appendix B.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Healthy and Supported Communities

17. The policy supports healthy, inclusive communities by recognising the role pets can play in wellbeing, while ensuring responsible ownership and protecting neighbours from nuisance or harm.

Following consideration of this report by the Housing Engagement Board, any amendments arising from that discussion will be reported to Cabinet verbally.

Appendices

Appendix A: Pets Policy (Council Housing Stock)

Appendix B: Consultation Feedback

Report Author:

Geoff Clark – Service Manager – Housing Tenancy and Estates

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Appendix A

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Pets Policy (SCDC Council Housing Stock)

Version	Draft v0.3
Ownership	Head of Housing
Approved by	Cabinet
Policy Contact	Service Manager – Housing Services
Approval date	23 June 2026
Publication date	1 July 2026
Date of next review	June 2031



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DRAFT

1. Introduction

- 1.1 South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) recognises the benefits that keeping a pet can have.
- 1.2 With this in mind, we feel it is important to promote responsible pet ownership and to provide an overview of the duties that pet owners must consider when deciding to add a pet to their household.
- 1.3 This policy will outline the permission request process, the conditions that are implied when permission has been granted and SCDC's overall policy on keeping animals.
- 1.4 This policy reflects current best practice and supports responsible pet ownership while balancing the needs of tenants, neighbours, and the wider community.

2. Scope and Purpose

- 2.1 This policy applies to all tenants that hold any tenancy or licence agreement with SCDC. It does not extend to people in temporary accommodation, or properties that are not owned and / or managed by SCDC.
- 2.2 The pet permission request process does not apply to leaseholders; however, they must adhere to any lease conditions, not allow their animals to cause a nuisance or any anti-social behaviour (ASB) to the community and ensure any legal duties are satisfied.

Assistance animals

- 2.3 Assistance dogs are permitted and are not subject to the pet permission process. We recognise our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will make reasonable adjustments where required. Tenants are encouraged to inform us if they have an assistance animal so that we can maintain accurate records and ensure appropriate support.

3. Pets and Permission

- 3.1 Our tenancy agreement states that tenants may keep one suitable domestic pet without obtaining permission from SCDC. A domestic pet is defined as an animal commonly kept in the home for companionship, which is suitable for the type of accommodation and does not pose a risk to health, safety, or the wellbeing of others.

- 3.2 If a household wishes to keep more than one pet, a [‘Pet Permission Request Form’](#) must be completed. This can be submitted [online](#), or requested in paper format. This requirement does not apply to small animals that are kept indoors in appropriate cages or tanks and are unlikely to cause disturbance, such as fish, hamsters or gerbils. If you are unsure as to whether permission is required, please contact the Housing Services Officer (HSO) for advice.
- 3.3 Where permission is required to keep a pet, the application must be made by the tenant of the property, even if the pet is owned by another member of the household.
- 3.4 Permission to keep a pet must be obtained in advance. Where a pet has been introduced without the required consent, any request for retrospective permission will be considered on a case-by-case basis but cannot be guaranteed and may be refused.
- 3.5 As part of the tenancy agreement, all pet owners are required to ensure that their pet(s) do not cause nuisance or any anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- 3.6 Tenants must be aware of their responsibilities under the [Animal Welfare Act \(2006\)](#) (see [section 6](#) for more information). By submitting the [‘Pet Permission Request Form’](#) tenants are confirming that they understand their duties under this Act, and any other rules and regulations that are applicable to the type of pet that they wish to keep.
- 3.7 Tenants will be in breach of their tenancy agreement if they do not follow the permission process, take on a type of animal that is prohibited, allow a pet to cause ASB or do not meet their responsibilities under the [Animal Welfare Act \(2006\)](#). Where a breach occurs, SCDC will take appropriate action in line with the tenancy agreement, which could include enforcement action and, in serious or persistent cases, seeking possession of the property.
- 3.8 To support public safety, proportionate risk management and compliance with legal duties, the Council maintains an internal register of known dangerous dogs associated with Council-owned properties. This includes dogs that are required to be registered under relevant legislation, such as those subject to the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, as well as cases where incidents involving aggressive or dangerous behaviour have been reported to the Council. The register is used to help ensure the safety of Council officers, contractors and others carrying out their duties, and to

inform appropriate housing management, engagement and enforcement actions. Information is held and processed in accordance with data protection legislation.

Additional Works

- 3.9 Where keeping a pet requires additional works to be carried out, for example to ensure fencing is suitable and secure (such as preventing escape, digging under or jumping over, or intimidation of other residents), it will be the tenant's responsibility to arrange and pay for these works. The tenant may also be required to obtain our permission before carrying out any such works.
- 3.10 Where a pet requires outside housing or accommodation, for example a chicken coop, aviary or kennel, tenants must inform us in advance. Permission may be required before any such structure is installed or constructed and tenants will be responsible for keeping it in good repair and for removing it when they vacate the property.

Fair consideration of requests

- 3.11 We will not unreasonably withhold permission, but we will need to consider a number of relevant factors before approval can be given. These will depend on the type of pet and may include (but are not limited to):
- The size of the property
 - The type of the property
 - The location of the property
 - The type / breed of animal
 - Access to a safe and secure garden area, that is adequate for the type of pet
 - Any other requirements that would be needed for a pet's wellbeing

Decision timescales

- 3.12 Once we receive a completed Pet Permission Form, we will aim to make a decision and provide a response in writing within 28 calendar days. In some circumstances, we may need to request further information to properly assess the request. Where this happens, the 28-day period will normally begin once the additional information has been provided. We will keep tenants informed if there is any delay and explain the reasons for this.
- 3.13 All requests to keep a pet will be considered on their individual merits. We will not apply a blanket ban on pets and will not refuse permission without good reason.

Decisions will be based on relevant factors such as the suitability of the property, the type of pet, animal welfare considerations and the potential impact on other residents. Any refusal of permission will be explained clearly in writing.

Conditional permission and withdrawal

3.14 Permission to keep a pet may be granted subject to conditions. Where concerns arise (for example relating to nuisance, anti-social behaviour, property damage or animal welfare), we will normally:

- Explain the concern to the tenant in writing; and
- Give the tenant an opportunity to take reasonable steps to address within an agreed timeframe.

3.15 Permission may be withdrawn where serious concerns arise or where reasonable steps to resolve issues have not been taken.

3.16 Any decision to withdraw permission will be proportionate and explained in writing.

Review of decisions

3.17 Where permission to keep a pet is refused or withdrawn, tenants may ask for the decision to be reviewed by a senior officer not previously involved in the decision. Requests for review should be made in writing within a reasonable period and should set out any additional information the tenant would like us to consider.

Types of pets unlikely to be permitted

3.18 Whilst each application will be assessed individually, permission is unlikely to be granted for the following types of pets, unless there are exceptional circumstances and the risks can be appropriately managed:

- Horses / ponies
- Farmyard animals
- Venomous / poisonous animals
- Wild or exotic animals
- Banned animals (unless a court order has exempted the animal)
- Animals which are too large for the property or available space

3.19 Any decision will take account of legal requirements, animal welfare considerations, and the impact on neighbouring residents.

3.20 A tenant, anyone living at the property, or any visitors, must not keep or bring into the area any breed of dog specified as dangerous in the '[Dangerous Dogs Act 1991](#)' or any animals registered under the '[Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976](#)' (unless a court order has exempted them). It is important for tenants to keep up to date with related legislation, as there may be new changes or restrictions that are introduced over time which they must also comply with.

XL Bully dogs

3.21 Following a rise in serious incidents involving XL Bully dogs, the Government has added this breed to the list of dogs banned under the [Dangerous Dogs Act 1991](#).

3.22 It is now a criminal offence to own or possess an XL Bully dog (in England and Wales) unless you have a valid Certificate of Exemption.

3.23 It is also against the law to:

- sell an XL Bully dog
- abandon an XL Bully dog or let it stray
- give away an XL Bully dog
- breed from an XL Bully dog
- have an XL Bully in public without a lead and muzzle

3.24 If you have a Certificate of Exemption for your XL Bully dog, you must have third party public liability insurance for your dog.

3.25 Any owners must comply with the legislation introduced by the UK Government, full information (including the conditions that are required to be met to obtain a Certificate of Exemption) can be found on their [website](#).

3.26 A copy of the Certificate of Exemption must be provided to SCDC.

3.27 Where we become aware that an XL Bully dog is being kept in breach of legal requirements, we will seek to engage with the tenant to understand the circumstances and compliance status. Where necessary, and in line with our legal obligations, we may need to refer the matter to the appropriate authorities. Continued non-compliance may affect a tenant's tenancy.

3.28 Tenants must not keep any animal listed under the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#), including those in Schedule 9, without appropriate licensing and controls. The keeping of wild or exotic animals is subject to legal restrictions and may be refused on environmental or welfare grounds.

Commercial Use, Breeding and Animal-Related Activities

- 3.29 No SCDC property is to be used for the organised breeding or sale of animals.
- 3.30 Boarding kennels, catteries etcetera, may not be run or operated from an SCDC property.
- 3.31 Running a dog sitting business from home at one of our properties may be considered, but tenants must always ask SCDC for permission. More information about requesting permission to run a small business from home can be found on our [website](#).

4. Agreement

- 4.1 By SCDC granting permission, tenants are agreeing that the following conditions will be adhered to:
- Tenants will only keep the numbers of pets that SCDC have been informed of.
 - Tenants must keep up to date with, and adhere to, all legislation (existing or new) concerning the care and registration of pets.
 - Tenants should ensure that animals are well behaved and do not cause a nuisance or any ASB to the community.
 - All cats and dogs must be appropriately microchipped as outlined in [The Microchipping of Cats and Dogs \(England\) Regulations 2023](#).
 - All dogs must be microchipped by the time they are 8-weeks old, and cats must be microchipped by the time they are 20-weeks old (even if they usually stay indoors), and their details recorded on an approved UK database. See [GOV.UK](#) for more information.
 - All dogs in a public place must wear a collar that displays their owner's address and postcode as outlined in the Control of Dogs Order 1992.
 - Dogs will be walked on a lead whilst in residential or built-up areas.
 - No breeding or sale of animals from an SCDC property is permitted.
 - Boarding kennels may not be run or operated from an SCDC property.
 - Tenants must register any poultry, or other captive birds, within the first month of keeping them (this includes any birds kept as pets). There are some exceptions, more information and how to register can be found on the [GOV.UK website](#).

- Tenants will be responsible for their pet's behaviour and ensure that their pets do not cause damage to anyone's property, including their own home.
- Any damage caused by pets will be rectified and paid for by the pet owner.
- Ensuring any litter trays etcetera, are regularly cleared and cleaned.
- Pets and any litter trays will not be left or housed in communal areas (example, hutches etcetera, in stairwells)
- Pets must not be left alone for long periods of time without adequate care arrangements in place.
- Any fouling by a pet will be cleared up straight away and properly disposed of.
- Animals will not be allowed to roam freely around communal / public areas.
- Tenants and leaseholders will be required to source and pay for any additional items that may be required to keep their pet safe and under control (example, additional fencing etcetera).
- Pets should not be chained up, nor should they be left outside, unattended for long periods of time (especially in unsuitable weather conditions or an insecure environment).

5. Animal Welfare Act (2006)

- 5.1 [Section 9](#) of the [Animal Welfare Act \(2006\)](#) contains provisions to safeguard the welfare of animals. The duty of care outlined means pet owners must take reasonable steps to meet the needs and ensure the welfare of their animals.
- 5.2 The act outlines five welfare need areas that those responsible for an animal must ensure are met. They are:
- Need for suitable environment
 - Need for suitable diet
 - Need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
 - Need to be housed with, or apart, from other animals
 - Need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury or disease
- 5.3 More information on caring for pets can be found on the GOV.UK [website](#).

6. Pets and Temporary Accommodation

- 6.1 There may be occasions when the Council needs to provide temporary accommodation for a tenant, for example where we need to carry out major works.

- 6.2 Wherever possible, SCDC will try to provide temporary accommodation that can accommodate a household's pet(s). However, this is not always possible, which means that it may be necessary for tenants to make arrangements for someone else to care for their pet for a period of time. For example, this may be required if temporary accommodation is provided in a hostel building with shared areas.
- 6.3 We appreciate that this can be difficult and can provide information on local animal charities that may be able to assist.

7. Animal Cruelty, Neglect, Hoarding or Abandonment

- 7.1 SCDC take the neglect of animals very seriously and will work with the relevant authorities to ensure that action is taken against any offenders.

8. Nuisance Being Caused by a Pet

- 8.1 Residents are responsible for their pets and should ensure that their animals are well behaved and do not cause a nuisance to the surrounding community.
- 8.2 Some of the things that may be considered as causing a nuisance may include (although not limited to):
- Pets fouling in communal areas (and not being cleared up) or other people's gardens
 - Animals making excessive noise
 - Aggressive animals
 - Leaving food outside that is attracting vermin
 - Foul smells
- 8.3 We reserve the right to withdraw permission if the animal is causing unacceptable nuisance. In some cases, this unacceptable nuisance can also be a breach of tenancy, please see [3.6](#).
- 8.4 Our Housing Enforcement Team (HET) will predominately deal with any anti-social behaviour relating to animals.
- 8.5 Owners are responsible for the behaviour of their animals and are expected to keep their pets under control.

9. Accessibility and Inclusion

9.1 SCDC is committed to engaging with tenants and residents in line with the [Equality Act 2010](#). Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure services are accessible to all. This may include:

- Contact preferences
- Offering home visits
- Use of advocates or interpreters
- Alternative communication formats, such as large print or translated materials
- Adjusting appointment times or locations to accommodate mobility or health needs

10. About this Policy

10.1 This policy will be reviewed in one year, to assess its effectiveness and ensure that it is not unduly onerous. However, earlier reassessment may be required following tenant feedback, further guidance or where there are changes in operations and / or legislation.

10.2 This policy has been produced in consultation with tenant representatives. If a tenant is interested in getting involved in shaping the housing service, further information is available on the [website](#), or contact resident.involvement@scambs.gov.uk.



11. Service Requests and Complaints Process

11.1 A tenant should report initial service requests through the designated channels.

General Queries: Telephone: 01954 713 000 or

E-mail: duty.housing@scambs.gov.uk.

The [Communications Charter for tenants and leaseholders](#) sets out detailed guidance on how to contact the Council and the service standards that can be expected in relation to communication and responsiveness.

11.2 SCDC aims to provide excellent customer service but recognise that mistakes can happen. If a tenant is dissatisfied with the service received following a service request, they can make a complaint in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy. To make a complaint, visit our [website](#) or telephone 01954 713000 or email housing.complaints@scambs.gov.uk.

12. Our Values

Ambitious

We are proactive and take a forward-thinking approach to addressing challenges.

We create smart solutions and reach our goals with determination and a clear vision.

Collaborative

We foster a culture of teamwork and open communication.

We work with and involve stakeholders, to improve how the organisation works and serves the public.

Compassionate

We prioritise empathy and understanding in decision-making and service delivery.

We consider the wellbeing of people and communities in everything we do and we replicate this when we talk to our colleagues because we know that when we support each other, we all do better.

Accountable

We take responsibility for our actions and decisions.

We own up to mistakes and make sure we fulfil our commitments.

Pets Policy Feedback Notes

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Policy Panel Feedback				-
Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
3.7	<i>"...if a tenant breaches any conditions, we may withdraw permission..."</i> Do you mean tenancy conditions such as If they don't pay rent? Or do you mean, if the pet causes nuisance / pet care concerns then it may need to go.	Y	We've amended 3.7 to clarify, which now reads, "...this means that if a tenant breaches any of the conditions of keeping a pet, we may withdraw our permission".	3.7
General	As a tenant, I would likely not read part 3 our values, etcetera... they are in the middle of the info that matters to the pet owner... can these be moved to the back? Or after the nitty gritty details?	Y	We have moved the 'Our values' section to the back of the document.	12.0
General	It's good and I think it covers everything I would want to see very comprehensively.	N / A	N / A	N / A
General	At the start we say only for Secure tenancies – does that not disadvantage FTT's then?	Y	We've amended 2.1 to provide clarity, which now reads "...all tenants that hold any tenancy or license agreement with SCDC".	2.1
3.9	3.1 mentions about the need for permission for some of the adaptations possibly needed but not in 3.9 – may be worth saying it then too as certain fencing / location of fencing will also need permission.	Y	We have amended 3.9 with reference to permission for improvements.	3.9
4.9	Comms to mimic this declaration of the animal welfare act in the e-form declaration? Just to tie it up and make it clear on the form too?	Y	Request submitted to add to e-form.	N / A

Pets Policy Feedback Notes

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
3.25	XL Bully's – would it be worth asking for us to see / hold a copy of the certificate?	C	We do take a copy of the certificate of exemption and have added some clarity to 4.10.	3.25
General	I assume that people that have been tenants for sometime that have dogs and cats that are cared for in good condition will not be expected to put animals down, some people have 3 dogs and others having 4 cats that are pets and nothing else <i>[example of scenario from feedback responders locality]</i> I am guessing you would just say when one dies that they would not replace the 3rd dog.	C	No, responsible pet owners would not have to give up any animals they currently have. The aim of the policy is to promote responsible pet ownership and to ensure that the property is suitable for the number of animals being kept.	N / A
General	You do not need to keep a register of every pet owned, even ones where permission is not required. This is overkill and a waste of resources, and I suspect that it extremely inaccurate as most tenants do not notify the council when having a pet, as they are not aware they have to.	C	We won't be actively keeping a register of pets, but we utilise the permission process to assess and ensure the property is suitable for the type / number of animals and that responsible pet ownership is promoted. We will record permission requests on our document management system for reference.	N / A

Pets Policy Feedback Notes

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

General	The policy is far too restrictive and wide reaching. Why a blanket ban on breeding or selling pets? This could be done without harming anyone, say breeding a litter of gerbils / hamsters and selling some.	Y	Guidance provided by animal welfare charities states that the breeding and sale of animals should be prohibited on premises that housing providers manage. This is to limit indiscriminate breeding and accidental ownership. Amended wording as 3.29.	
3.1	Why can you have a dog / cat without permission but not a budgie / hamster / tortoise etcetera?	P	We have amended 3.1 and 3.2 to clarify this better. Permission is not required.	
General	Why can you have one pet only without permission? Surely it depends on the species. One dog or cat is much more likely to cause a problem than two or more fish / gerbils / hamsters / budgies etcetera.	C	Updated 3.1 to provide more clarity and following comments from Informal Cabinet.	
3.5	3.5 Is just needlessly stating the obvious.	C	3.5 is needed to ensure that people are informed of their responsibilities in this regard.	

Pets Policy Feedback Notes

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
General	Overall, a more general policy, similar to that applying to leaseholders would be more appropriate, i.e. "They must, not allow their animals to cause a nuisance or any anti-social behaviour (ASB) to the community and ensure any legal duties are satisfied."	C	We believe the draft policy we've developed reflects sector best practice by promoting responsible pet ownership, and feel it is clearer for tenants, rather than adopting a minimal general approach.	N / A
General	The assumption should be that people can responsibly own pets without involving the council, as long as they have reasonable space, create no nuisances and the pets are looked after properly.	C	We agree that most pet owners are responsible and take fantastic care of their pets, but we must recognise that unfortunately that is not always the case. We must ensure that responsible pet ownership is promoted, and the suitability of the property is considered as part of a permission process. We wouldn't unreasonably withhold permission. In-line with sector best practice, we believe the policy is needed to promote responsible pet ownership, and the permission process helps to achieve this goal.	N / A

Pets Policy Feedback Notes

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
General	Add on NECESSARY exceptions such as no Cockerels, no dogs without outdoor space (that is, flats) no dangerous dogs, poisonous / venomous pets and an upper limit on the number of cats and dogs (3 of each per property with a garden?)	C	The permission process enables us to assess each circumstance individually.	N / A
General	Exemption should be made if one has a litter where the limit is set aside for a period to allow for the re-homing of the litter.	C	We have amended the wording to say organised breeding.	3.29
General	It is demeaning and over-controlling to require tenants to fill out forms to ask permission for simply keeping a pet. (and denying the right to breed or sell ANY pet). Homeowners (or leaseholders) certainly do not have these kind of restrictions! My advice would be to tear up the policy and start from scratch incorporating the above approach.	C	We are certainly not trying to make the process of adding a pet to a tenant's household more difficult. However, we must ensure that responsible pet ownership is promoted, and the suitability of the property is taken into account as part of a permission process. We wouldn't unreasonably withhold permission. We believe the draft policy reflects best practice in the sector by promoting responsible pet ownership and feel the permission process helps to achieve this goal. Permission processes are seen as a way to:	N / A

Pets Policy Feedback Notes

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
			• Ensure pets are kept in suitable environments. • Prevent nuisance and anti-social behaviour. • Support tenants in meeting their legal duties under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. • Enable housing officers to manage risks and provide support where needed. The policy content also reflects the guidance provided by various animal welfare charities, such as the RSPCA and the Dogs Trust. The RSPCA's 'Housing: A guide to good practice', states that <i>"The breeding and sale of animals should be prohibited on premises that housing providers manage, including the dwelling and other areas such as garages. This will help encourage responsible pet ownership and reduce the number of 'accidental owners', i.e. those who acquire pets from</i>	

Pets Policy Feedback Notes

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
			<i>friends and neighbours without being aware of the animal's basic welfare needs. It will also help avoid environmental nuisance and health and safety problems for neighbours".</i> In addition to this, we must also consider the upkeep and condition of our properties, ensuring that pet ownership does not lead to damage or increased maintenance requirements.	

Pets Policy Feedback Notes

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

MS Form Responses				
Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
General	It is unfair that people have to practically beg to be able to keep pets, as long as they are kept well it is not anyone else's business.	C	We agree and are certainly not trying to make the process of adding a pet to a tenant's household more difficult. Most pet owners are responsible and take fantastic care of their pets, but we must recognise that unfortunately that is not always the case. We must ensure that responsible pet ownership is promoted, and the suitability of the property is taken into account as part of a permission process. We wouldn't unreasonably withhold permission.	N / A

Pets Policy Feedback Notes

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
General	The policy is unnecessarily restrictive and intrusive	C	It is best practice in the sector to have a pets policy, which can help to provide guidance, promote responsible pet ownership and ensure the suitability of the property is considered. We also need a document to refer to on the occasions whereby there are issues that relate to pets. For example, if there is a property that is causing disruption due to noise, mess etcetera, the policy is something we can refer to when trying to resolve the situation. We won't unreasonably withhold permission.	N / A
3.1	Unclear about being able to keep a type of animal: 3.1 – I think add small, caged animals such as rabbits, ferrets and guinea pigs	Y	This section has been updated, which is now located at 3.1 and 3.2	3.1

Pets Policy Feedback Notes

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
	Unclear about being able to keep a type of animal: Rare exotic animals that people may obtain illegally, and all animals included in The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.		Below added in as 3.11. <i>“Tenants must not keep any animal listed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, including those in Schedule 9, without appropriate licensing and controls. The keeping of wild or exotic animals is subject to legal restrictions and may be refused on environmental or welfare grounds”.</i>	3.11
	Unclear about being able to keep a type of animal: Fish (both internal and external), Birds (such as budgies / parrots), rabbits, guinea pigs and hamsters etcetera.	Y	3.1 updated for clarification	3.1
	Unclear about being able to keep a type of animal: Fish, Hamster, Gerbil, Rats, Mice, birds, Guinea pigs, Rabbits, Tortoise etcetera. Cambridge Housing Society have this in their policy: "You must get permission from us before you get a pet. You do not need permission if the animal is small, quiet and caged, and kept indoors, such as hamsters and gerbils, fish in tanks, non-poisonous insects and reptiles (in suitable containers) and single caged birds, unless you live in supported housing, when you must get permission to keep any pet."	Y	We have amended 3.1 to clarify this better. Further updates have been made to 3.1 and 3.2 following comments from Informal Cabinet.	3.1 & 3.2

Pets Policy Feedback Notes

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
	Other comments I'm not sure if appropriate to have in here, but could there be a line in (to mirror the communal room policy) about pets not being allowed in communal rooms owned by the council? I like the info included about not allowing pets to roam freely in communal areas, that will give the team something clear to be able to tackle tenants / areas where this is an issue.	C	This policy relates to individual homes only.	N / A
	Other comments 2.1 add the different types of tenancy, that is, flexible, starter 4.1 can we insist on a collar and tag? and what's classed as chained up? can they be on a lunge lead in the garden?	C	2.1 – Yes, this had now been amended. 4.1 – Bringing attention to it, but we cannot enforce.	N / A
	Other comments I welcome this with open arms and applaud its implementation , however , as so often happens with this type of ruling it's only as good as its implementation and experience dictates that the recipient should signs for it on receipt, and is instructed to read it asap and to give written response to the compliance of these terms of allowing for pets to be kept in council dwellings ,and proof that they are microchipped !. All too often the tenant nods in agreement and then bins the conditions to which they may keep a pet in a council property As a former pet holder myself I understand the points raised and totally agree with them, but where I currently live I am surrounded by just about every breach of this document One in particular has three cats in a one bed bungalow the" tom" of which actively regenerates the head count of the estate, and	C	Providing guidance and outlining our policy. We unfortunately don't have the resource to monitor things such as microchipping.	N / A

Pets Policy Feedback Notes

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
	none of these are microchipped! whilst the rest are to the best of my knowledge compliant. You may think my views harsh , but the amount of complaints I get weekly in the community centre about dogs fouling the footpaths and gardens by both residents dogs and other dog owners who transit our site , and one lady in particular who's gardens are used by cats daily as a latrine beggars belief and whilst this document is a guidance for pet owners the implementation is conspicuous by its absence!			
	Other comments yes what about people who have 2 or 3 dogs and have done for some years before a requirement of a form from SCDC	C	See earlier response.	N / A
	Other comments 3.21 Whilst XL Bullies are a new addition to the dangerous dogs, list I think it would be clearer if ALL dogs on the list are named. 3.18 Why are cockerels forbidden? They make lovely pets and hens are happier with them around. 3.29 & I quite understand about not allowing breeding but accidents do happen. What would be the consequences for a tenant whose bitch or queen cat has an unintended litter? 4.18 & 5.1 When considering ASB who is the arbiter? What about tenants that make nuisance or malicious complaints?	C	Can't list everyone, as is better for the policy to refer people to the legislation / Government website to ensure they receive the most up to date information. Reference to cockerels has been removed but farmyard animals has been left in at 3.18. 3.29 – We do understand circumstances such as this. Guidance provided by animal welfare charities states that the breeding and sale of animals should be prohibited on premises that housing providers	C

Pets Policy Feedback Notes

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
	5.1 Is a communal area considered to be a public place – if not please clarify / specify		manage. This is to limit indiscriminate breeding and accidental ownership. Again, this point really focuses on planned / organised breeding. We would look at each scenario individually and would happily provide signposting to anyone that needed support with re-homing and advice.	
	Other comments Under section 4.1 "Dogs should not be chained up" should also include or housed / left outside especially unattended for long periods of time.	Y	Amended last bullet point in 5.1.	4.1
	Other comments I think it is very fair and compassionate, and I thank you for that	N / A	N / A	N / A
	Other comments You need to not be so militant about people's animals.	C	We believe the draft policy reflects sector best practice by promoting responsible pet ownership.	N / A
3.3	Unsure on wording and whether it contradicts 3.1?	Y	Updated for clarity to show that it is the lead / joint tenant that needs to make the application is permission to keep a pet is required.	3.1

Pets Policy Feedback Notes

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Stats from Microsoft Forms Feedback

Numbers only are outlined below, free text responses to the 'if no' / 'if yes', questions are included in the feedback section above.

13 Responses

Is the policy written in a clear language that is easy to understand?

11 – Yes

1 – No

1 – Other ('There are some ambiguities')

After reading the policy, do feel you understand SCDC's approach to keeping pets in council homes and its reasons for this approach?

11 – Yes

2 – No

Are there any types of animal you are unsure would be allowed to be kept after reading the policy?

8 – No, the policy is clear enough

5 – Yes, I am still unclear about a type of animal

How would you prefer to read the policy?

4 – As it has been sent in this format (Microsoft Sway)

5 – As a PDF document

4 – Both formats

Report to:	Cabinet 23 June 2026
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Batchelor – Lead Member for Housing
Lead Officer:	Peter Campbell – Head of Housing
Key Decision:	Yes The key decision was first published in the September 2025 Forward Plan.

Estate Services and Communal Areas Policy (Housing)

Executive Summary

1. This Policy formalises existing estate management practices while strengthening how actions are recorded and monitored, improving transparency, consistency and accountability across housing services. It supports the Council's wider policy review programme to ensure alignment with current regulatory expectations.
2. The Policy provides a comprehensive framework covering all council housing and land, setting out clear service standards, tenant responsibilities, inspection regimes and enforcement processes. Key elements include structured estate inspections (with resident involvement), a zero-tolerance approach to risk in internal communal areas, and defined expectations for grounds maintenance, environmental management and the upkeep of outdoor spaces.
3. Adoption of the Policy will enable the Council to demonstrate compliance with statutory duties, reduce legal and regulatory risk, and support safe, well-maintained environments that promote resident wellbeing. Developed in consultation with tenants and aligned with council priorities, it strengthens governance and service delivery while contributing to sustainable, well-managed neighbourhoods and improved resident satisfaction.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that the Housing Engagement Board endorses the Draft Estate Services and Communal Areas Policy (Housing), as outlined in Appendix A, ahead of its submission to Cabinet for approval on 23 June 2026.

5. Although this is a new Policy, it does not result in any change to existing operational practices; however, arrangements for the recording and monitoring of actions have been strengthened as part of the Policy development.

Details

6. The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 introduced strengthened Consumer Standards, placing greater emphasis on the safety, quality and management of communal and estate areas. In particular, landlords must ensure such areas are safe, well-maintained and effectively managed, and work with residents to support safe and attractive neighbourhoods.
7. The Regulator of Social Housing now has enhanced inspection and enforcement powers where standards are not met.
8. The Council must also comply with its duties under the Housing Act 2004, Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), health and safety and fire safety legislation, and Awaab's Law where hazards in communal or estate areas present a risk.
9. Adoption of this Policy supports the Council's wider programme of policy review to ensure alignment with the strengthened regulatory framework.

Purpose and Scope of the Policy

10. The Policy applies to all council housing and land managed by the Council, including sheltered and leasehold properties. It defines communal and tenant-exclusive areas, sets out service standards and tenant responsibilities, and explains arrangements for inspections, enforcement and resident engagement.
11. The Policy aims to ensure clarity, consistency and transparency in estate management, while promoting safety, wellbeing, accessibility and environmental sustainability.

Estate Inspections and Management

12. The Policy establishes a structured inspection framework, including routine checks, annual resident-involved estate inspections and enhanced, risk-based inspections within sheltered housing schemes.
13. All findings and actions will be recorded and addressed in line with statutory requirements and internal timescales.

Communal Areas and Outdoor Spaces

14. Clear standards are in place for managing communal areas, including a zero-tolerance approach to items that pose fire, access or trip risks in internal communal spaces. Limited, managed exceptions may be permitted where supported by Fire Risk Assessments.
15. Tenant responsibilities for gardens and exclusive-use outdoor spaces are clarified, with expectations for upkeep and safety and appropriate support for vulnerable residents.

Grounds Maintenance and Governance

16. The Policy outlines the Council's approach to grounds maintenance, tree management and biodiversity, aligned with environmental objectives.
17. Delivery will be overseen through existing governance arrangements, with performance monitored through Tenant Satisfaction Measures and engagement feedback.

Reasons for Recommendations

18. Adopting a clear and comprehensive Estate Services Policy enables the Council to demonstrate how it meets its statutory duties under the Social Housing Regulatory Framework and wider health and safety legislation. It provides transparency for residents and Members, supports consistent service delivery, and strengthens the Council's ability to evidence compliance with the Consumer Standards.

Options

19. The alternative option would be to reject the Policy in its current form. However, without an approved Policy the Council would be unable to demonstrate a clear and consistent approach to estate services, communal area management and tenant responsibilities, increasing regulatory, legal and reputational risk.

Implications

20. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial and Fraud Impact

21. None identified. The Policy formalises existing practices and inspection regimes within current resources.

Legal

22. The Policy supports compliance with housing, health and safety, fire safety and regulatory requirements, and provides a clear framework for enforcement where necessary.

Staffing

23. No direct implications. The Policy provides clarity for officers and supports consistent operational practice.

Risks / Opportunities

24. Failure to manage communal areas and estates effectively could lead to non-compliance with Consumer Standards. The Policy mitigates this risk and supports improved resident satisfaction and neighbourhood outcomes.

Health and Wellbeing

25. The Policy promotes safe, accessible and well-maintained environments, supporting residents' physical and mental wellbeing.

Consultation Responses

26. The Policy has been developed in consultation with tenant representatives through the Policy and Procedure Panel. Feedback has been incorporated into the draft where appropriate. A copy of the Panel's feedback is attached at Appendix B.

Following consideration of this report by the Housing Engagement Board, any amendments arising from that discussion will be reported to Cabinet verbally.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Healthy and Supported Communities

27. The Policy supports safe, inclusive, well-managed estates that promote resident wellbeing.

Sustainable Homes and Vibrant Places

28. The Policy supports long-term sustainability of estates through clear standards, environmental stewardship and resident involvement.

Appendices

Appendix A: Estate Services and Communal Areas Policy (Housing)

Appendix B: Policy and Procedure Panel Feedback

Report Author:

Julie Fletcher – Service Manager – Housing Strategy

Geoff Clark – Service Manager – Housing Tenancy and Estates

Telephone: (01954) 713 352 / 713 336



Appendix A

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Estate Services and Communal Areas Policy (Housing)

[Including Tenant-Exclusive Outdoor Space, such as gardens, yards and balconies]

Version	Draft (v0.7)
Ownership	Head of Housing
Approved by	Cabinet
Policy Contact	Service Manager – Tenancy and Estates
Approval date	23 June 2026
Publication date	30 June 2026
Date of next review	May 2031



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) aims to deliver safe, clean, accessible and well-managed estates across all housing stock. This policy provides a comprehensive framework for managing communal areas, external environments and resident responsibilities, strengthening clarity and alignment with regulatory requirements.

2. Scope and Purpose

- 2.1 This policy applies to all council housing, including sheltered housing and land owned and managed by SCDC. It includes leasehold properties but excludes homes managed by Ermine Street Housing or Shire Homes Lettings, land managed by external management companies as part of wider housing developments, and council-owned graveyards and allotments.
- 2.2 It sets out the estate management services provided by SCDC and defines the respective responsibilities for maintaining internal communal areas, external communal spaces, and external areas designated for the exclusive use of individual households. It establishes clear expectations for inspections, supports compliance with relevant legislation, and promotes the development of safe, well-maintained, and sustainable neighbourhoods.
- 2.3 This policy aims to:
- Ensure clarity in roles and responsibilities.
 - Maintain robust inspection regimes
 - Support resident involvement.
 - Provide transparent enforcement approaches.
 - Ensure safeguarding health, safety and wellbeing within communal environments.
- 2.4 The purpose of this policy is to ensure tenants live in safe, well-maintained environments.

3. Regulatory Requirements

- 3.1 The Council is required to manage and maintain estate services, communal areas and associated land in accordance with relevant housing, health and safety and regulatory legislation.

- 3.2 This includes compliance with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards, particularly the Safety and Quality Standard and the Neighbourhood and Community Standard, which require shared spaces to be safe, well-maintained and properly managed.
- 3.3 Where conditions in communal areas, estate land or tenant gardens present a risk to residents' health or safety, the Council must act in line with the Housing Act 2004 and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). In certain circumstances, Awaab's Law may also apply where hazards for which the Council is responsible pose a risk of harm to residents.
- 3.4 The Council must also meet its duties under wider health and safety, fire safety and occupiers' liability legislation, taking reasonable steps to prevent harm to residents, visitors and others using shared and external spaces.
- 3.5 The Council must also comply with wider health, safety and building safety legislation, including the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Fire Safety Act 2021 and the Building Safety Act 2022, where applicable. These requirements apply to communal areas, estate land and external spaces under the Council's control and require the Council to take reasonable and proportionate steps to identify, manage and reduce risks, including fire, structural and access-related hazards, to protect residents, visitors, staff and others lawfully using those areas.

4. **Definitions of Communal Areas and Tenant-Exclusive Outdoor Space**

- a) **Public Areas** – external spaces owned by SCDC and accessible to all, including public footpaths, verges and grassed areas.
- b) **Communal Areas (External)** – shared external spaces accessed only by residents, such as drying areas, shared gardens or courtyards in sheltered schemes.
- c) **Communal Areas (Internal)** – indoor shared circulation spaces including corridors, stairways, lifts, communal entrances, meter cupboards and bin chutes.
- d) **Tenant-Exclusive Outdoor Space** – gardens, yards and external spaces, such as balconies, for exclusive use by individual tenants included within the tenancy.

- e) **Communal Rooms** – sheltered housing communal rooms designated for resident activities, meetings, wellbeing events and social programmes; usage is restricted to residents unless authorised.
- f) **Parking Areas** – designated bays, communal car parks and forecourts.

5. Public Areas (External) – Estate Inspections

- 5.1 SCDC manages a structured inspection framework that includes general visual checks, formal resident inspections of public areas and targeted risk-led inspections for high-risk areas.
- 5.2 Estate inspections are designed to identify and address a wide range of issues, including:
 - Repairs and maintenance needs
 - Condition and cleanliness of external communal areas
 - Grounds maintenance standards
 - Health and safety hazards, Fly-tipping, graffiti and environmental concerns
 - Anti-social behaviour indicators

General Visual Checks

- 5.3 Housing Services Officers carry out regular visual checks within their allocated areas as part of their day-to-day duties. Any issues identified are recorded, actioned, and followed up as appropriate. Where higher safety risks or operational concerns are identified, the frequency of visits will be increased. Contractors carrying out grounds maintenance work will also report any issues identified during routine maintenance visits as part of a planned programme, which will be recorded and followed up by Housing Services Officers.
- 5.4 SCDC footpaths are checked as part of the visual checks outlined as 5.3 and are included as criteria within the formal inspection process.

Any hazards, including trip hazards, are recorded and are to be reported within 48 hours.

Formal Resident Inspections

- 5.5 In addition to the routine visits, formal resident-involved inspections will be conducted annually in each housing area patch. A minimum of two formal estate inspections will be conducted each month, typically between April and October and consisting of 14 inspections in total, together with tenant / leaseholder

volunteers. These inspections provide an opportunity for residents to raise concerns, suggest improvements and collaborate with officers to enhance their local environment. Formal inspections will count toward the routine visual checks.

- 5.6 To encourage transparency and resident involvement, the Council publish an annual calendar of formal resident inspections, including dates and locations. This calendar is made available through the Council's website and tenant newsletters.

Reporting and Follow Up

- 5.7 SCDC will ensure that concerns relating to estate services, communal areas and tenant-exclusive external spaces can be reported easily and are responded to proportionately. All reported issues will be assessed having regard to risk, the Council's responsibilities and any potential impact on residents' health or safety, with hazards addressed in line with relevant statutory duties, including Awaab's Law where applicable. The Council will keep appropriate records of issues raised and actions taken, implement interim measures where necessary, and provide updates where issues affect safety or take time to resolve. Tenant satisfaction with the upkeep of communal areas will be monitored through the annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) reports, with performance and trends subject to scrutiny and oversight through the Housing Engagement Board and reported to Cabinet as part of the Council's housing governance arrangements.

6. Communal Areas (Internal)

- 6.1 SCDC enforces a zero-tolerance approach to storing personal belongings in internal communal areas due to fire, trip and access risks, aligning with fire safety legislation.
- 6.2 Communal areas must always remain unobstructed to enable safe evacuation and unimpeded access by emergency services. Only items provided by SCDC for specific functions are permitted.
- 6.3 Elm Court operates under a managed-use approach due to its layout and Fire Risk Assessment, permitting limited items such as door mats and plants in strict compliance with guidance.
- 6.4 Examples of items that are not allowed to be stored or left in internal communal areas are shown in the Appendix 1.

- 6.5 The Council may remove any item which, in the Council's opinion, poses a safety, fire, access or environmental risk. Items may be removed immediately if high-risk or following reasonable notice where appropriate.
- 6.6 As a minimum, internal communal areas will be formally inspected on a quarterly basis by Housing Services Officers (HSOs). In sheltered housing schemes, inspections will be carried out weekly by Sheltered Estate Officers (SEOs) to reflect the increased vulnerability of residents, higher levels of use of communal facilities, and the need for closer oversight to manage health, safety and wellbeing risks. In addition to formal inspections, officers will undertake routine, informal observations during day-to-day activities. Where issues are identified, these will be recorded, supported by evidence where appropriate, and the area revisited to confirm that remedial action has been completed. All inspections, observations and follow-up actions will be recorded, and any hazards identified will be reported and escalated within 24 hours.
- 6.7 Please also reference our [Fire Risk Policy](#).

7. Communal Rooms in Sheltered Housing

- 7.1 SCDC owns and maintains 40 communal rooms across the district. These buildings can be used by all sheltered housing residents and are often used for community activities such as coffee mornings, bingo and other social activities which can include other members of the public.
- 7.2 Items that are available for use, or are being stored at a communal room, should only be those that have been provided by SCDC. Residents are not permitted to store any items at the building.
- Any items brought in for specific activities should be removed after the event has finished, unless written permission has been given by SCDC.
- 7.3 All Items located within communal rooms, including furniture, soft furnishings and electrical equipment, will comply with safety regulations, such as fire safety standards. Electrical items will be Portable Appliance Tested (PAT) in accordance with statutory requirements to ensure compliance and maintain safety standards.
- 7.4 Residents are not permitted to use appliances (for example deep fat fryers, air fryers) in the communal areas other than those provided by SCDC.

- 7.5 SCDC also provide and maintain bulletin / notice boards at communal rooms; residents can speak with their Sheltered Estate Officer (SEO) if they would like to add anything to it.
- 7.6 Residents must behave respectfully and not engage in harassment, aggression, or behaviour that puts others at risk. SCDC operate a zero-tolerance approach. SCDC reserves the right to withdraw access (temporarily or permanently) to communal rooms in cases of persistent ASB or where safety is compromised.
- 7.7 The Council may remove any item which, in the Council's opinion, poses a safety, fire, access or environmental risk. Items may be removed immediately if high-risk or following reasonable notice where appropriate.
- 7.8 Communal rooms will be inspected weekly by Sheltered Estate Officers (SEOs). All inspections will be recorded and hazards reported within 24 hours.
- 7.9 Please also see the Council's [Anti-Social Behaviour Policy](#).

8. Communal Areas (External)

- 8.1 Communal gardens, paths and parking areas that are the responsibility of SCDC must remain clear, with disabled bays reserved for Blue Badge holders. EV charging cables must not be trailed across communal paths and require formal approval for installation of charging solutions.
- 8.2 Barbeques are not permitted in any of SCDC's communal garden areas. The use of BBQs for community events may be approved following submission of an event risk assessment to the Housing Services Team.
- 8.3 Camping and campfires are prohibited on any of SCDC's communal areas.
- 8.4 The Council may remove any item which, in the Council's opinion, poses a safety, fire, access or environmental risk. Items may be removed immediately if high-risk or following reasonable notice where appropriate.
- 8.5 Regular visual checks will be carried out on communal areas within general needs housing by Housing Officers as part of their day-to-day duties. Any issues identified will be recorded, actioned, and followed up as appropriate. Where higher safety risks or operational concerns are identified, the frequency of visits will be increased. Contractors carrying out grounds maintenance work will also report any issues identified during routine maintenance visits as part of a planned programme, which will be recorded and followed up by Housing Services Officers.

- 8.6 Sheltered housing schemes receive additional oversight from the Sheltered Estate Officers (SEO's) who undertake weekly visits, monthly compliance checks and continuous engagement with residents to identify emerging issues.
- 8.7 In both General Needs and Sheltered Accommodation, all inspections, observations and follow-up actions will be recorded, and any hazards identified will be reported and escalated within 24 hours.

9. Parking Areas

- 9.1 Car parks are intended for residents and their visitors, and are provided on a first come, first served basis. Residents must park responsibly and considerately and not block emergency access.
- 9.2 Parking is not allowed on grassed areas, whether this be within the curtilage of a property or on the verge outside. Vehicles must be parked on hardstanding (a driveway or paved area that is intended for parking).
- 9.3 Standard work vans used for employment by residents are permitted where they do not cause nuisance, obstruction, or safety concerns. Larger commercial vehicles (HGVs, coaches, oversized vans) require written permission from SCDC.
- 9.4 Caravans or motor homes must not be parked on the garden, driveway, paved or grassed area around a property or on any communal parking areas without the council's agreement in writing.
- 9.5 Other parking limitations include:
- Residents and visitors must not park anywhere that would obstruct emergency services.
 - No illegal, unroadworthy, uninsured or untaxed vehicles should be parked or repaired in parking areas, unless SCDC have provided permission and the timescales involved in making the vehicle roadworthy are agreed.
 - No hard standing should be made, or vehicular access created without the council's written permission. Planning Permission may also be required.
 - Vehicles must not be abandoned on council property.
- 9.6 Any instances where the above requirements are not being met must be recorded during estate inspections and followed up by the Housing Services Officer (HSO). Suspected abandoned vehicles must be reported to the Housing Enforcement Team (HET), who will liaise with the relevant authorities or departments to confirm

whether the vehicle is abandoned and take appropriate action to resolve the matter.

- 9.7 Residents are not permitted to trail charging cables across footpaths or communal land due to trip and electrical hazards. Permission for EV charging solutions must be requested in writing.
- 9.8 Only minor car maintenance tasks such as changing a wheel, topping up oil or water are permitted.
- 9.9 Barbeques are not permitted in any of SCDC's parking areas.
- 9.10 Camping and campfires are prohibited on any of SCDC's parking areas.
- 9.11 The Council may remove any item which, in the Council's opinion, poses a safety, fire, access or environmental risk. Items may be removed immediately if high-risk, or following reasonable notice where appropriate
- 9.12 Parking areas will be inspected quarterly by HSOs / SEOs. All inspections will be recorded and hazards reported within 24 hours.

10. Tenant-Exclusive Outdoor Space

- 10.1 This section covers external spaces that are for the exclusive use of individual households, such as individual gardens, yards, patios, sheds, and any outdoor space that forms part of an individual tenancy and is not shared with other residents. Tenants are responsible for maintaining these areas in a clean, safe and tidy condition in accordance with their tenancy agreement.

Standards for Maintenance

- 10.2 Tenants must ensure that exclusive-use external areas are maintained to a reasonable standard, including:
- Keeping grass, hedges, and plants trimmed so they do not become overgrown or encroach onto footpaths, neighbouring properties, or communal land.
 - Removing litter, household waste, bulky waste and unwanted items promptly,
 - Ensuring waste is not stored in gardens or left where it can cause nuisance, harbour pests, or present a fire or safety hazard.
 - Keeping areas free from hazards including loose paving, exposed nails, sharp objects, or unsafe structures.

- Maintaining boundaries, such as small fences and gates, where these are the tenant's responsibility under the tenancy agreement.

10.3 Where the condition of a garden falls below acceptable standards, SCDC may issue warnings, request improvements within a set timeframe, or take enforcement action where necessary.

Restrictions in Tenant- Exclusive Outdoor Spaces

10.4 To ensure safety, visual standards and neighbourhood cohesion, the following restrictions apply:

- Barbecues are permitted only in individual gardens of houses and bungalows and must be used and stored safely in accordance with manufacturer guidance. Gas cylinders must be stored outdoors at least five metres from the property.
- EV charging cables must not be trailed across public footpaths or communal land. Installation of home charging solutions requires written permission from SCDC.
- Bonfires and burning of waste are not permitted due to nuisance, air quality concerns, and risk of fire.
- Storage of flammable liquids, gas cylinders (other than BBQ use), or hazardous chemicals is not permitted unless stored safely and in small domestic quantities.
- Large structures, including sheds, greenhouses, and summerhouses, require written permission before installation and may require planning consent.

Trees and Hedges in Individual Gardens

10.5 Tenants are responsible for routine maintenance of trees and hedges within their garden. SCDC will only consider undertaking works where:

- The tree presents a significant health and safety risk; and
- The tenant is unable to carry out the work due to disability, age, or vulnerability, and
- There is no family or informal support available.
- Requests will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by relevant officers.

Pets and Animals

10.6 Where tenants are permitted to keep pets under the tenancy agreement, they must ensure:

- Faeces are promptly removed from the garden.
- Animals do not cause unreasonable noise, odour, or hygiene issues.
- Animal housing (hutches, aviaries, runs) are kept clean, safe, and positioned appropriately.

10.7 SCDC may intervene if pet-related issues cause nuisance or health concerns.

10.8 Please see the Council Pet Policy for further details [\(insert link\)](#).

Items Not Permitted in Individual Gardens

10.9 The following items must not be kept in gardens:

- Household furniture not designed for outdoor use
- White goods (fridges, freezers, washing machines)
- Car parts, scrap metal, builders' waste or trade materials
- Flammable or explosive items (other than small domestic quantities)
- Tents, camping equipment left long-term, or temporary living structures

10.10 Where such items are identified, SCDC may serve notice requiring removal or act under tenancy enforcement powers.

Support for Vulnerable Residents

10.11 SCDC recognises that some tenants may be unable to maintain their gardens due to age, disability, or health conditions.

10.12 Eligible tenants may be able to access:

- the Welfare (Assisted) Grass-Cutting Service
- Referrals to support agencies
- Reasonable adjustments where applicable

10.13 Eligibility is assessed in line with the criteria set out in the Assisted Gardening Scheme and listed at Appendix 2.

11. Removal of Items

- 11.1 SCDC aims to take a fair, proportionate and transparent approach when items are found in communal areas that do not comply with this policy. Wherever possible, Housing staff will seek to engage with residents before taking enforcement action.

Removal of items with resident engagement

- 11.2 Where a non-permissible item is identified and Housing staff can contact the owner, the resident will be asked to remove the item immediately. If the resident complies, the removal will take place straight away with no further action required.

Removal of items with Notice

- 11.3 This section applies to communal rooms, Public Areas, Communal Areas (Internal), Communal Areas (External) and Parking Areas.
- 11.4 Where a non-permissible item is identified and presents minimal risk, SCDC will take appropriate action to ensure its removal while maintaining fairness and transparency. This process applies where:
- The owner of the item cannot be identified or contacted at the time of inspection.
 - The owner is unable to remove the item immediately but has agreed to do so within a reasonable timeframe.
 - The owner refuses to remove the item upon request.
- 11.5 In such cases SCDC will issue a Miscellaneous Provisions Notice (MPN), under Section 41 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982. Where the owner is known, the Notice will be issued directly to them. If the owner is unknown, the Notice will be affixed to the item or placed nearby in a clearly visible location.
- 11.6 The Notice will specify a timeframe for removal, which may range from 48 hours to two weeks, depending on the nature of the item and the associated risk. If the item remains in place beyond the stated deadline, SCDC will arrange for its removal to uphold safety standards and ensure communal areas remain accessible to all residents. SCDC may also charge the owner of the item(s) for the costs of the removal where appropriate.
- 11.7 Items assessed as medium or high risk may be removed immediately without prior notice in the interests of safety. These items may be stored temporarily.

Storage of items following removal.

- 11.8 Following the removal of non-compliant items from communal areas, SCDC will determine appropriate storage or disposal actions based on the assessed value and risk associated with each item:
- Items of no apparent value (example, discarded packaging, empty boxes) will be disposed of immediately and will not be retained.
 - Items of low value will be stored for a period of up to one month to allow for potential reclamation by the owner.
 - Items perceived to be of higher value or potential sentimental significance will be stored for a minimum period of six months, during which reasonable efforts will be made to identify and contact the owner.
 - Where the owner of a non-compliant item is identified, SCDC reserves the right to recharge the resident for any costs incurred in the removal, storage, or disposal of the item. SCDC accepts no liability for any damage or loss once the item has been removed from the premises.
- 11.9 In accordance with Section 41 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, if an item remains unclaimed after serving written Notice, legal ownership of the item will transfer to SCDC. Once ownership is transferred, the Council may proceed with disposal through one of the following methods:
- Sale – Donation to a recognised charitable organisation
 - Recycling – Disposal of items through approved recycling facilities or services
 - Destruction – Disposal of items where no other method is suitable
- 11.10 This process ensures that communal areas remain safe and accessible, while providing a fair and legally compliant approach to the handling of abandoned or non-permitted items.

12. Grounds Maintenance and Trees

- 12.1 SCDC fulfils its obligations under the Environment Act 2021 by managing communal land in a way that enhances biodiversity, protects natural habitats, and promotes nature recovery. All grounds maintenance activities are carried out with consideration for ecological impact and the Council's wider environmental objectives.

- 12.2 SCDC delivers grounds maintenance through planned, cyclical and reactive activities. This includes grass cutting, hedge maintenance, rough cuts, weed spraying and ditch management.
- 12.3 Planned grass cutting occurs up to 12 times per year. Rough cuts balance biodiversity objectives with safety considerations. Weed spraying is limited to minimal circumference applications to reduce visual impact.
- 12.4 Trees in communal areas are maintained based on risk and condition. Trees in tenants' gardens are addressed only when presenting a significant hazard and where the tenant cannot manage due to incapacity.
- 12.5 Ditch clearance occurs annually with environmentally responsible disposal. Biodiversity initiatives support the Council's Doubling Nature goals, including wildflower planting and reduced mowing in specific areas.
- 12.6 Further details of the current ground maintenance regime can be found in Appendix 2.

13. Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)

- 13.1 ASB negatively impacts safety, wellbeing and the enjoyment of communal environments. Examples include misuse of communal areas, environmental crimes, deliberate obstruction parking, noise nuisance and vandalism.
- 13.2 SCDC's Enforcement Team applies a professional, proportionate and evidence-based approach to addressing ASB, working with partner agencies, safeguarding leads and community support teams where appropriate.
- 13.3 Persistent misuse of communal rooms or unsafe behaviour may result in restricted access to protect residents.

14. Tenant Community Grants

- 14.1 The Tenant Community Grant scheme supports resident-led initiatives aimed at improving communal areas, promoting wellbeing and strengthening local community cohesion.
- 14.2 Projects may include planting schemes, indoor activity equipment, communal room enhancements or events promoting inclusion. Funding up to £1,000 is available, with support provided by the Resident Involvement Team.

15. Accessibility and Inclusion

15.1 SCDC is committed to engaging with tenants and residents in line with the [Equality Act 2010](#). Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure services are accessible to all. This may include:

- Contact preferences
- Offering home visits
- Use of advocates or interpreters
- Alternative communication formats, such as large print or translated materials
- Adjusting appointment times
- Adjusting locations to accommodate mobility or health needs

16. About this Policy

16.1 This policy will be reviewed every five years. However, earlier reassessment may be required following tenant feedback, further guidance or where there are changes in operations and / or legislation.

16.2 This policy has been produced in consultation with tenant representatives. If a tenant is interested in getting involved in shaping the housing service, further information is available on the [website](#), or contact resident.involvement@scambs.gov.uk.



17. Service Requests and Complaints Process

17.1 A tenant should report initial service requests, such as repairs or safety concerns, through the designated channels:

Repairs: **Online** via the Council's [website](#).

By phone via the Repairs Hotline: 0800 085 1313

Through the **M&Me** Mobile App

General Queries: **Telephone:** 01954 713 000

E-mail: duty.housing@scambs.gov.uk

17.2 The [Communications Charter for tenants and leaseholders](#) sets out detailed guidance on how to contact the Council and the service standards that can be expected in relation to communication and responsiveness.

- 17.3 SCDC aims to provide excellent customer service but recognise that mistakes can happen. If a tenant is dissatisfied with the service received following a service request, they can make a complaint in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy. To make a complaint, visit our [website](#) or telephone 01954 713 000 or email housing.complaints@scambs.gov.uk.

18. Our Values

Ambitious

We are proactive and take a forward-thinking approach to addressing challenges.

We create smart solutions and reach our goals with determination and a clear vision.

Collaborative

We foster a culture of teamwork and open communication.

We work with and involve stakeholders, to improve how the organisation works and serves the public.

Compassionate

We prioritise empathy and understanding in decision-making and service delivery.

We consider the wellbeing of people and communities in everything we do and we replicate this when we talk to our colleagues because we know that when we support each other, we all do better.

Accountable

We take responsibility for our actions and decisions.

We own up to mistakes and make sure we fulfil our commitments.

Glossary of Terms

Abandoned Vehicle

A vehicle left on Council land without valid tax, MOT, insurance or clear ownership, or which has the appearance of permanent neglect. These are managed in accordance with abandoned vehicle legislation.

Accessible Communication

Any communication method adapted to meet individual needs, including large print, Easy Read, audio, Braille, translation, interpretation, or digital formats.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Behaviour capable of causing nuisance, alarm, harassment, distress or annoyance to others. Includes noise, vandalism, misuse of communal areas, intimidation, or environmental offences.

Assisted Gardening Scheme

A scheme providing support such as welfare (assisted) grass-cutting for eligible residents who are unable to maintain gardens due to age, disability or vulnerability.

Car Hardstanding

A paved or concreted area designed and permitted for vehicle parking. Not all paved areas count as authorised hardstanding.

Communal Areas / Spaces (External)

Outdoor shared spaces accessible only to residents, such as communal gardens, drying areas, courtyards, bin stores, and shared access paths.

Communal Areas (Internal)

Indoor shared spaces including corridors, stairwells, foyers, lifts, bin chutes, risers, meter cupboards, and fire escape routes.

Communal Rooms

Sheltered housing rooms used for social activities, meetings, and wellbeing events. Managed and inspected by Sheltered Estate Officers.

Compliance Checks

Scheduled inspections carried out to ensure statutory and safety requirements are met.



Consumer Standards

Regulatory standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing covering: Safety and Quality Standard, Neighbourhood and Community Standard, Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.

Council Land / Council Property

Land, buildings or communal spaces owned or managed by South Cambridgeshire District Council for housing purposes.

Designated Parking Area

A marked or approved parking bay or communal car park where vehicles are permitted to park.

Ditch Clearance

Annual cutting and clearing of estate ditches to ensure water flow and maintain environmental standards.

Doubling Nature

The Council's initiative to enhance biodiversity through wildflower planting, reduced mowing, habitat creation and sustainable grounds maintenance practices.

Estate Inspection (General Term)

Any inspection of public, communal or tenant-exclusive outdoor areas to identify hazards, maintenance needs, safety concerns or tenancy breaches.

Event Risk Assessment

A risk assessment required for certain activities in communal areas, such as community BBQs, to ensure safety and compliance.

EV Charging Cable / EV Charging Solution

Any cable, charger or fitted equipment used for charging an electric vehicle. Trailing cables across communal areas are prohibited; installed chargers require written SCDC approval.

Fire Loading

The amount of combustible material (example, furniture, cardboard, fabrics) stored in an area that increases fire spread risk.



Formal Resident Inspection

A scheduled estate inspection involving residents, officers and (optionally) partner agencies, usually conducted annually.

Footpaths (SCDC owned)

Public or estate pathways inspected at least once per year for defects or hazards.

General Needs Housing

Housing provided by the council, without specialist support or care services.

Grounds Maintenance

Routine care of grass, hedges, trees, ditches and planted areas delivered on cyclical, planned or reactive schedules.

Hazard

A condition that may cause harm, such as a trip hazard, fire risk, obstruction, or defective surface.

Head of Housing

The Senior Officer responsible for policy ownership and oversight of housing operations.

High-Risk Item

Any item that poses a significant safety, fire or access hazard, which may be removed immediately without notice.

Housing Enforcement Team (HET)

The Council team responsible for investigating abandoned vehicles, tenancy breaches and enforcement matters.

Housing Services Officer (HSO)

The officer responsible for estate inspections, tenancy management, and addressing breaches of tenancy or estate standards.

Leaf Clearance

Removal of fallen leaves only where they present a slip hazard or obstruct access.

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 – Section 41

The legal power used by SCDC to issue Notices and remove items from communal areas after a defined period or immediately if they pose a safety risk.



Managed Use Scheme

A scheme (example, Elm Court) where, due to fire risk assessment, a small number of low-risk items may be allowed in communal areas under controlled conditions.

Miscellaneous Provisions Notice (MPN)

A notice issued under Section 41 of the 1982 Act requiring removal of items from communal areas within a set timeframe.

Monthly Compliance Checks

Regular checks at sheltered schemes to verify fire safety, equipment condition and adherence to regulations.

Overgrown Garden / Untidy Garden

A tenant's garden that has become unsafe, unsightly or unmanaged, potentially causing nuisance, pest harbourage, obstruction or breaches of tenancy.

Parking Area

A communal or designated space where residents may park vehicles in accordance with policy, excluding grassed verges or unauthorised paved areas.

Pet Policy

The Council's policy outlining requirements and permissions for keeping animals in Council properties.

Planned, Cyclical and Reactive Work

- *Planned*: Scheduled maintenance tasks
- *Cyclical*: Activities carried out at predictable intervals
- *Reactive*: Responses to reported issues or emerging risks

Tenant-Exclusive Outdoor Space / Area

Gardens, yards, patios, balconies and other outdoor areas solely within an individual tenant's boundary.

Reasonable Adjustments

Changes or support provided to ensure tenants with disabilities or vulnerabilities can access services or meet obligations.



Recharge

A cost recovered from a resident where the Council incurs expenses for removal, storage or disposal of items or damage attributable to that resident.

Reactive Work

Maintenance or safety actions triggered by reports or emerging issues.

Riser / Meter Cupboard

Shared service cupboard containing utilities such as electric meters or pipework. These must remain free from stored items.

Risk-Led Inspection

A targeted inspection prioritising areas with known issues, elevated fire risk, recurrent ASB, or health and safety concerns.

Rough Cuts

Less frequent grass cuts to maintain biodiversity in peripheral areas while preventing overgrowth.

Safety and Quality Standard

A regulatory standard requiring landlords to provide safe, good-quality homes through effective repairs and maintenance.

Service Manager – Tenancy and Estates

The Officer responsible for operational oversight of tenancy and estate management services.

Sheltered Estate Officer (SEO)

Officer responsible for regular inspections, wellbeing monitoring and tenancy support within sheltered housing schemes.

Sheltered Housing

Housing for older people or others requiring additional support, with enhanced management and communal facilities.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

National performance indicators required by the Regulator of Social Housing, covering safety, repairs, neighbourhood management and engagement.



Tree Maintenance

Works carried out by SCDC contractors on communal land based on risk and condition.

Trip Hazard

Any defect or obstruction such as uneven paving, trailing cables, raised slabs or debris that could cause a person to fall.

Untaxed / Unroadworthy Vehicle

A vehicle not meeting legal requirements to be used or kept on public land. These must not be stored or repaired on Council property.

Vehicular Access

Any created or modified access point to enable vehicle parking; requires written SCDC permission and may require planning consent.

Weed Spraying

Annual application of weed control chemicals around street furniture and hardstanding areas, limited to defined perimeters.

Welfare (Assisted) Grass Cuts

Five grass cuts per year for eligible tenants unable to maintain gardens due to age, disability or health conditions.

Wildflower Areas

Designated planting areas promoting biodiversity as part of the Council's environmental commitments.

Appendix 1 – Prohibited Items in Internal Communal Areas

The following items are examples of items that must not be stored, left, or placed in any internal communal area (including corridors, stairwells, lobbies, shared entrances, meter cupboards, risers, and internal bin stores). This list is not exhaustive.

1. Combustible or bulky personal items

- Bicycles (unless a designated indoor cycle store is provided).
- Prams, buggies, pushchairs, children's ride-on toys.
- Plastics such as plastic garden furniture, toys, or storage boxes.
- Clothing, shoes, shoe racks, coat stands.
- Newspapers, cardboard boxes or packaging.
- Furniture of any kind, including decorative items, tables, ornaments, plants or flowers.
- Upholstered furniture or fabrics (chairs, cushions, curtains, wall hangings, rugs, carpets, mats).
- Door mats (including internal or external to the flat entrance).
- Mobility aids left unattended (wheelchairs, walking frames) unless specifically agreed as part of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).

2. Fire-loading or ignition-risk items

- Candles, tea lights, incense sticks, matches or lighters.
- Portable heaters, radiators or heat-producing appliances.
- Electrical appliances not installed by SCDC (example, fridges, tumble dryers, microwaves).
- Extension leads, multi-socket adapters, trailing cables, or unattended charging devices.
- Loose lithium-ion batteries, chargers, power banks, tool batteries.
- E-bike or e-scooter batteries or chargers.

3. Hazardous, flammable or explosive substances

- Chemicals (paints, varnishes, solvents, turpentine, brush cleaner).
- Petrol, oil, diesel or other fuels.
- Fertilisers, weed killer or strong cleaning fluids.
- Gas cylinders (example, camping gas, BBQ gas, helium).
- Aerosols stored in bulk.
- Fireworks or pyrotechnics.

4. Waste or refuse

- Recycling boxes or bins (must be stored externally).
- Household refuse or black bags left outside flat doors.
- Bulky waste awaiting disposal or collection.

5. Vehicles and powered equipment

- Mopeds, scooters, motorcycles or any other fuelled or battery-powered vehicles.
- Mobility scooters (unless a designated storage / charging area is provided).

6. DIY and construction materials

- Wood, timber, doors, panels or other building materials
- Paint, mastics, glues, sealants, adhesives, fillers.
- Tools, ladders or work equipment.

7. BBQs and outdoor equipment

- BBQs (gas, charcoal or electric).
- BBQ fuels including charcoal, briquettes, firelighters or lighter fluid.

8. Laundry equipment

- Tumble dryers.
- Drying racks, airers, washing lines or other laundry equipment (unless provided by SCDC).

9. Seasonal or decorative items

- Christmas trees (real or artificial).
- Decorative lighting (example, fairy lights).
- Seasonal or festival decorations of any type.



10. Obstructions and fire safety compromises

- Items placed in stairwells, escape routes, or obstructing access / egress.
- Items propping open fire doors (including door wedges or “temporary” items).

Any other item which increases fire risk, obstructs access or escape routes, creates trip hazards, impedes emergency services, or interferes with cleaning or maintenance must not be stored in internal communal areas.

Housing Services may instruct removal of any such item at their discretion.

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Appendix 2 – Grounds Maintenance

Grass Cuts

SCDC undertakes grass cutting across communal green spaces up to 12 times per year, in line with seasonal growth patterns. The following standards apply:

- Grassed areas will be cut every 3 – 4 weeks during the growing season to maintain a tidy and safe environment.
- A neat cut will be applied across the whole grassed area.
- Litter will be removed from grassed areas prior to mowing to ensure safety and cleanliness.
- Strimming will be carried out only in areas that are inaccessible to mowing equipment.
- Grass cuttings will not be collected but will be cleared from footpaths and hard surfaces using appropriate 'blowing' equipment to prevent obstruction and maintain visual standards.

Rough Cuts

Rough cuts are carried out primarily on grass areas located at the periphery of some estates. These areas are:

- Subject to an initial cut typically in April.
- Maintained through approximately 4 cuts per year.
- Cut to a longer length to support biodiversity and visual distinction, while avoiding an overgrown appearance.

Doubling Nature

SCDC aims to enhance biodiversity on its land through wildflower areas, reduced mowing where appropriate, habitat creation, and environmentally responsible maintenance.

Weed Spraying

Weed spraying is carried out annually around street furniture and other designated areas. To minimise visual impact and preserve the appearance of grassed areas:

- Spraying is restricted to a maximum circumference of 15cm around each area.
- Application methods are selected to ensure that brown patches are kept to a minimum and do not detract from the overall appearance of communal green spaces.

Hedge Trimming

Hedges are maintained to ensure safety, accessibility and visual standards.

The following practices apply:

- Annual trimming is carried out during the autumn and winter months.
- Hedge sides are trimmed to prevent encroachment onto footpaths.
- The top of the hedge is levelled off to a maximum height of two metres for boundary hedges, and one metre for all other hedges.
- All hedges are maintained to present a neat, tidy and managed appearance.
- Sheltered Housing receive two hedge cuts per year to maintain enhanced standards.

Welfare (assisted) grass cuts

Residents eligible for welfare assistance will receive five grass cuts per year.

Eligibility includes:

- Residents aged over 65 with mobility impairments
- Residents with disabilities or long-term health conditions
- Other exceptional circumstances assessed by officers
- Don't have any relatives or support that could provide assistance locally
- Financial capacity

Reactive work

Any concerns regarding the condition, safety, or maintenance of trees located on communal land owned by SCDC should be reported.

Residents may contact their Housing Services Officer (HSO), Sheltered Estate Officer (SEO), or report issues via email to duty.housing@scambs.gov.uk, or by calling the Council's Contact Centre.

Trees in tenants' gardens

SCDC will only consider undertaking tree maintenance within a tenant's garden where the tree presents a significant health and safety risk or is deemed unmanageable, and the tenant is unable to address the issue due to incapacity, with no family members or informal support available to assist.



Leaf clearance

Leaf clearance will be undertaken only where there is a demonstrable risk to health and safety, such as slip hazards, or blocked access routes.

Ditch clearance

Ditches will be cut and cleared annually, typically during January or February. Vegetation and debris resulting from the clearance will be raked from the ditch and left on the adjacent bank to naturally decompose, in line with environmental management practices.

Weed spray to hardstanding areas

Weed spraying on hardstanding surfaces will be carried out twice per year. Dead weeds will not be manually removed following treatment, unless they pose a safety or access concern.

Additional works

Requests for additional planned grounds maintenance works will be reviewed annually in November and December, with works prioritised based on assessed need and available budget. This ensures that resources are allocated effectively and fairly across estates.

Policy Panel Feedback – Estate Services, Communal Areas and Tenant – Exclusive Outdoor Space Policy

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
5.3	Who carries out the inspection and how many times is this carried out per year? Is this every estate or is it a percentage of estates and if that is the case who decides which ones are inspected? Once inspected are the results available to be seen?	C	A new monitoring system is being implemented to capture informal inspections. System already in place for formal inspections. Regulations state 'regular' inspections but is not quantified. Therefore policy takes a pragmatic approach, where the frequency will be dependent on the risk.	N / A
7.8 and 8.6	Are the results of these inspections and compliance checks available to be seen and if so by whom.	C	Compliance checks are available to the relevant residents; fire information is sent to flat residents as part of the regulatory requirements. Informal inspections with tenant reps are available, more routine inspections are managed internally. System being developed to support better monitoring and follow-up work.	N / A
9.3	Needs to make it clear that work vans must NOT park on any grassed area for any reason but can park in the parking areas only, as the way it's written can be misunderstood.	C	9.2 states clearly that parking on grassed areas is not permitted. Para 9.3 relates to residents' vans not those carrying out repairs and maintenance for the Council.	N / A
9.5	"No illegal, unroadworthy or untaxed vehicles should be parked or repaired in parking areas." Should this not include uninsured vehicles. My reason for saying this is if the particular vehicle should be vandalised, set on light who are other tenants able to make a claim against and likewise the council to claim for any damage to its properties.	Y	Wording amended.	9.5

Policy Panel Feedback – Estate Services, Communal Areas and Tenant – Exclusive Outdoor Space Policy

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
9.12	“All inspections will be recorded” is stated twice in this section.	Y	Amended.	9.12
11.8 (d)	So, prior to the removal of the non-compliant item are SCDC liable to any costs prior to the item being removed.	C	This section is around the owners of the item not being able to claim for any damage or loss because it has been damaged or removed.	N / A



Report to:	Housing Engagement Board 22 June 2026
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Batchelor – Lead Member for Housing
Lead Officer:	Peter Campbell – Head of Housing

Keeping Homes free from Hazards: Management of Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS¹) Policy incorporating Awaab's Law

Executive Summary

1. The Keeping Homes Free from Hazards Policy sets out how South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) will meet its statutory duties to identify, assess and remedy housing hazards in line with Awaab's Law and the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. The legislation introduces prescribed timescales for investigating and resolving hazards, requiring a more structured and accountable approach. The Council already manages risks to health and safety under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS); this Policy consolidates those arrangements into a single, unified framework and incorporates the new statutory timeframes introduced by Awaab's Law.
2. The Policy establishes a clear and consistent approach to hazard management, aligned to HHSRS principles, with defined response standards, strengthened governance and a proactive focus on risk reduction across the housing stock. It supports a person-centred service, ensuring that vulnerability is taken into account and that residents receive timely, clear and transparent communication.
3. The Policy replaces existing hazard-specific policies, including the Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy, bringing all hazards within one framework based on risk to health and safety. Adoption of the Policy will strengthen compliance, improve service consistency and provide assurance to tenants, Members and the Regulator.

¹ The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is a statutory, risk-based assessment framework used to identify and evaluate potential hazards to health and safety in residential properties. It assesses 29 categories of housing hazard based on the likelihood and severity of harm that could result. Hazards are rated as either Category 1 (serious risks) or Category 2 (less serious risks)

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that the Housing Engagement Board endorses the Draft Management of Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Policy incorporating Awaab's Law, as outlined in Appendix A, ahead of its submission to Cabinet for approval on 23 June 2026.

Details

5. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 introduces a strengthened consumer regulatory framework for social housing providers, with increased expectations in relation to safety, quality and responsiveness.
6. Awaab's Law, implemented through the Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025, builds on existing landlord responsibilities by introducing mandatory timescales for investigating and remedying hazards. These requirements are being implemented in phases from October 2025.
7. While the Council has long-standing duties under legislation such as the Housing Act 2004 and the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, Awaab's Law requires a more structured and time-bound approach to hazard management.

Purpose and Scope

8. The Keeping Homes free from Hazards Policy sets out how the Council will meet its statutory responsibilities for identifying, assessing and remedying hazards within its housing stock. It applies to council-owned homes within the Council's repairing responsibility, as well as relevant communal areas where a risk of harm may arise.
9. The Policy establishes a single, unified framework for managing all housing hazards. It replaces previous hazard-specific policies, including the Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy, which is no longer in use. Damp and mould are now managed within this Policy as a hazard type within the wider HHSRS framework.
10. This approach ensures that all hazards are assessed consistently using a risk-based methodology, taking account of the likelihood and severity of harm, as well as the vulnerability of occupants. It removes duplication, reduces the risk of inconsistent decision-making, and strengthens compliance with statutory duties.

Approach to Hazard Management

11. The Policy aligns the Council's housing services with Awaab's Law by introducing clear response times and escalation requirements for different categories of hazard:
 - Emergency hazards will be investigated and made safe within 24 hours
 - Significant hazards (including damp and mould as a hazard type) will be investigated within 10 working days
12. Follow-on works will be commenced and completed within prescribed statutory timescales.
13. Where a property cannot be made safe within the required timeframe, the Council will provide suitable temporary or alternative accommodation where necessary to protect residents from ongoing risk.
14. The Policy also establishes a proactive approach to managing housing conditions, including improved use of stock condition data, targeted inspections, and preventative interventions to reduce the likelihood of hazards arising or worsening.
15. A strong emphasis is placed on a person-centred approach, ensuring that the specific needs and vulnerabilities of residents are taken into account when assessing risk and determining appropriate action.

Resident Focus and Service Approach

16. The Policy reinforces the importance of clear communication with residents throughout the lifecycle of a hazard case. This includes timely updates, transparent decision-making and written summaries of findings and actions.
17. It also promotes a service culture that avoids attributing blame to residents and focuses on resolving underlying causes of hazards. This is particularly relevant in relation to issues such as damp and mould, which will be assessed and managed on the basis of risk to health and wellbeing.

Governance and Performance Management

18. The Policy introduces strengthened governance arrangements to ensure effective oversight and accountability, including:
 - Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
 - A compliance framework for tracking cases and monitoring statutory timescales
 - Escalation procedures where risks of delay or non-compliance arise

- Additional performance monitoring through the quarterly performance reports to Cabinet, with oversight by the Housing Engagement Board.

19. Performance will be reported through established governance structures, including the Housing Stock Group and corporate reporting processes, enabling ongoing scrutiny and continuous improvement.

Reasons for Recommendations

20. Adoption of the Policy will ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations under both existing legislation and Awaab's Law, while establishing a clear and consistent approach to managing risks to tenant health and safety. It will strengthen assurance to Members and the Regulator, support improved service delivery, and reduce the risk of legal or regulatory intervention.

Options

21. The alternative option would be not to approve the Policy in its current form. However, this would leave the Council without a clear and updated framework aligned to Awaab's Law and would increase the risk of non-compliance with statutory requirements.

Implications

22. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial and Fraud Impact

23. No direct financial implications.

Legal

24. The Policy ensures compliance with existing housing and health and safety legislation, alongside the new statutory timeframes introduced by Awaab's Law, reducing the risk of enforcement action.

Staffing

25. There are no direct staffing implications. Existing resources have been strengthened in readiness for Awaab's Law requirements.

Risks / Opportunities

26. Failure to comply with statutory timescales could result in regulatory intervention.

Health and Wellbeing

27. The Policy promotes health and wellbeing by reducing exposure to health hazards, supporting residents' physical and mental wellbeing.

Consultation Responses

28. The Policy has been developed in consultation with tenant representatives through the Policy and Procedure Panel. Feedback has been incorporated into the draft where appropriate. A copy of the Panel's feedback is attached at Appendix B.

Following consideration of this report by the Housing Engagement Board, any amendments arising from that discussion will be reported to Cabinet verbally.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Healthy and Supported Communities

29. The Policy supports the delivery of safe, healthy homes and contributes to sustainable housing provision through improved asset management and proactive intervention.

Sustainable Homes and Vibrant Places

30. The Policy supports long-term asset management, proactive investment and improved housing quality.

Background Papers

Feedback from the Policy and Procedure Panel as part of the consultation process.

Appendices

Appendix A: Keeping Homes free from Hazards: Management of Housing Health and Safety Rating System Policy incorporating Awaab's Law (Housing)

Appendix B: Policy and Procedure Panel Feedback

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Appendix A

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Keeping Homes free from Hazards:

Management of Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS¹) Policy incorporating Awaab's Law

Version	Draft (v0.3)
Ownership	Head of Housing
Approved by	Cabinet
Policy Contact	Service Manager – Housing Assets
Approval date	23 June 2026
Publication date	1 July 2026
Date of next review	June 2031

¹ The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is a statutory, risk-based assessment framework used to identify and evaluate potential hazards to health and safety in residential properties. It assesses 29 categories of housing hazard based on the likelihood and severity of harm that could result. Hazards are rated as either Category 1 (serious risks) or Category 2 (less serious risks)



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Awaab's Law introduces clear legal duties for social landlords to investigate and remedy serious health and safety hazards within fixed timescales. It reflects the importance of prompt, transparent action where housing conditions present risks to residents' health.
- 1.2 This policy sets out how South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) will meet its statutory responsibilities under Awaab's Law, establishing a single, unified framework for the identification, assessment and management of housing hazards. It replaces all previous policies relating to specific hazard types, including the Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy, which is now withdrawn.
- 1.3 The introduction of Awaab's Law requires landlords to take a consistent, risk-based approach to all hazards likely to affect residents' health and safety, supported by legally prescribed timescales and clear accountability. Maintaining separate, hazard-specific policies would create duplication, inconsistency and a risk of non-compliance with statutory duties.
- 1.4 This policy therefore brings all hazards, including damp and mould, within one comprehensive framework aligned to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). This ensures that all cases are assessed and managed consistently based on the risk of harm to residents, rather than by hazard type, and that SCDC can deliver a clear, transparent and legally compliant service.

2. Definitions of a Hazard

- 2.1 For the purposes of this policy, a hazard is defined in Section 2(1) of the Housing Act 2004 as:

'Any risk of harm to the health or safety of an actual or potential occupier of a dwelling arising from a deficiency within the dwelling, or in any building, or land in the vicinity'.

- 2.2 For the purposes of this policy, 'harm' shall be understood in accordance with the principles of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Harm refers to the potential impact of a hazard on the health or safety of an occupier, including both physical and mental health outcomes. In line with HHSRS, harm is assessed on a risk basis and does not require actual injury or illness to have occurred; instead, it reflects the likelihood of an occurrence and the severity of the possible outcome, ranging from minor effects to serious illness or death. This risk-based definition is set out in the [Housing Health and Safety Rating System \(England\)](#)

[Regulations 2005](#) and associated operating guidance, and underpins the Council's assessment of hazards within this policy. While this assessment informs professional judgement, it does not in itself determine whether a hazard meets the thresholds of a 'Significant Risk of Harm' or 'Emergency Hazard' under Awaab's Law, which are applied separately in accordance with statutory definitions.

- 2.3 Hazards are assessed under [HHSRS](#) based on the likelihood of an occurrence that could cause harm and the severity of the outcome, taking into account the vulnerability of the occupant. Under HHSRS hazards are categorised as either:
- Category 1 Hazards – serious risks requiring prompt action
 - Category 2 Hazards – less serious risks that may still require intervention
- 2.4 The HHSRS categorisation of Category 1 and Category 2 hazards is a separate framework from the classification introduced by Awaab's Law. While both assess risk, Awaab's Law introduces distinct legal categories of 'Emergency Hazards' and 'Significant Risk of Harm', (see Section 6 definitions) which determine the statutory response times and duties set out in this policy. The categorisation under HHSRS does not in itself determine whether a hazard meets the threshold for an Emergency Hazard or Significant Risk of Harm.
- 2.5 In practice, SCDC will assess all hazards using HHSRS principles, but will apply the definitions set out under Awaab's Law to determine the appropriate response, prioritisation and statutory timescales.
- 2.6 HHSRS identifies 29 prescribed hazard categories. These are grouped broadly as follows, with links provided to the relevant legislation for each category (with further examples provided within the government's [operational guidance Annex C](#):

Physiological hazards

1. [Damp and mould growth](#)
2. [Excess cold](#)
3. [Excess heat](#)
4. [Asbestos and manufactured mineral fibres \(MMF\)](#)
5. [Biocides](#)
6. [Carbon monoxide and fuel combustion products](#)
7. [Lead](#)
8. [Radiation](#)
9. [Uncombusted fuel gas](#)

10. [Volatile organic compounds](#)

Psychological hazards

11. [Crowding and space](#)
12. [Entry by intruders](#)
13. [Lighting](#)
14. [Noise](#)

Protection against infection

15. [Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse](#)
16. [Food safety](#)
17. [Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage](#)
18. [Water supply](#)

Protection against accidents

19. [Falls associated with baths, etc.](#)
20. [Falling on level surfaces etc](#)
21. [Falling on stairs etc](#)
22. [Falling between levels](#)
23. [Electrical hazards](#)
24. [Fire](#)
25. [Flames, hot surfaces etc](#)
26. [Collision and entrapment](#)
27. [Explosions](#)
28. [Position and operability of amenities etc](#)
29. [Structural collapse and falling elements](#)

2.7 Each hazard represents a potential risk to health or safety and will be assessed and managed in line with the risk-based framework set out in this policy, regardless of type.

2.8 In line with Awaab's Law and emerging regulatory changes, the number and grouping of hazard categories may be revised nationally. This policy will remain aligned with the current statutory definition and structure of HHSRS at the time of application.

3. Scope and Purpose

3.1 This policy applies to council-tenants within their homes and in communal areas or shared facilities, where such hazards present a risk of harm and are the



responsibility of SCDC to maintain. It does not include temporary accommodation occupied under a licence, leasehold, equity share or shared ownership properties (unless stated within the lease agreement regarding property maintenance / repairs). Properties managed by Ermine Street Housing or Shire Homes Lettings are not within the scope of this policy.

- 3.2 For properties in scope, this policy applies to all relevant housing hazards as defined under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) (See Section 2), where they present an Emergency Hazard or a Significant Risk of Harm.
- 3.3 From October 2025, the policy applies to:
- All Emergency Hazards (excluding overcrowding)
 - Hazards relating to damp and mould where they present a Significant Risk of Harm
- 3.4 From 2026 (subject to confirmation), the policy will extend to include additional hazards where they present a Significant Risk of Harm, including:
- Excess cold and excess heat
 - Falls (including on level surfaces, stairs, and between levels)
 - Structural collapse and explosions
 - Fire and electrical hazards
 - Domestic and personal hygiene and food safety
- 3.5 From 2027 (subject to confirmation), this policy will apply to all remaining HHSRS hazards (excluding overcrowding) where they present a Significant Risk of Harm.
- 3.6 No hazard type is subject to separate policies, processes, or assessment criteria.
- 3.7 Issues that do not meet the threshold of an Emergency Hazard or a Significant Risk of Harm, as determined through the risk-based assessment set out in this policy, will be managed as non-hazard repairs, regardless of hazard type. These cases fall outside the statutory requirements of Awaab's Law but will be addressed through standard responsive repair processes.
- 3.8 All reported issues will remain under review, and where there is evidence of increased risk, deterioration, or repeat occurrence, they will be reassessed in line with this policy and escalated where appropriate.

3.9 All cases of damp and mould will be managed under this policy as a housing hazard in accordance with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and Awaab's Law.

3.10 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- All housing hazards, including damp and mould, are identified, assessed and managed through a single consistent framework.
- Emergency hazards and hazards posing a significant risk of harm are investigated and remedied within legally prescribed timescales.
- Residents are protected from risks to health and wellbeing.
- Clear governance, accountability and assurance arrangements are in place.
- Statutory requirements are fully integrated into housing management practices and service delivery.

4. Legislative Context

4.1 [Hazards in Social Housing \(Prescribed Requirements\) \(England\) Regulations 2025](#), known as and referred to in this Policy as Awaab's Law, was introduced through the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and came into force for the social rented sector in phases starting from 27 October 2025.

4.2 The legislation places mandatory duties on social landlords to investigate, communicate and remedy serious health and safety hazards, including damp and mould, within fixed timeframes.

4.3 Whilst Awaab's Law is being implemented in phases, this policy reflects both current and forthcoming statutory requirements. From October 2025, duties apply to emergency hazards and significant damp and mould hazards. In 2026, these requirements will extend to additional hazards where they present a significant risk of harm, and by 2027 will include all remaining Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazards, excluding overcrowding.

4.4 Awaab's Law builds upon existing legal duties and does not replace them. SCDC will continue to meet its wider obligations under:

- [The Housing Act 2004](#) (including the [Housing Health and Safety Rating System](#))
- [The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 \(Section 11 – repairing obligations\)](#)
- [The Homes \(Fitness for Human Habitation\) Act 2018](#)
- [The Environmental Protection Act 1990 \(statutory nuisance\)](#)

- [The Regulator of Social Housing's Safety and Quality Standard](#)

4.5 The phased introduction of Awaab's Law does not reduce SCDC's existing responsibilities to ensure that homes are safe, well maintained, and fit for human habitation.

5. Reducing Housing Hazards

5.1 SCDC will take a pro-active, data-led approach to identifying and reducing hazards across its housing stock. Through the use of periodic stock condition surveys and associated data, we will assess the condition of our properties and identify potential risks at an early stage.

5.2 In addition, the Council will use opportunities arising from all property-related activities, including visits and inspections of homes and communal areas as well as repairs, maintenance and upgrade works and periods when properties become empty, to identify and address potential risks. This proactive approach will support the early identification and mitigation of hazards and reduce the likelihood of future risks arising.

6. Assessing a Hazard and Prescribed Timeframe

6.1 All hazards will be assessed using HHSRS principles, with Awaab's Law determining the Council's statutory response, prioritisation and timescales.

6.2 Definitions

- **Emergency Hazards:** Defined as those posing an imminent and significant risk of harm to the health or safety of an occupier of the social home. An 'imminent and significant risk of harm' is defined in regulations as '*a risk of harm to the occupier's health or safety that a reasonable lessor with the relevant knowledge would take steps to make safe within 24 hours*'
- **Significant risk of harm:** A hazard posing a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of an occupier of the social home. A 'significant risk of harm' is defined in regulations as '*a risk of harm to the occupier's health or safety that a reasonable lessor with the relevant knowledge would take steps to make safe as a matter of urgency*'
- **Working day:** Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays
- **Prescribed timeframe:** A legally mandated deadline under Awaab's Law



- **Making Safe:** Refers to actions taken to remove or reduce an immediate risk of harm.
- **Resolution:** Refers to the completion of all required works to permanently address the hazard and prevent recurrence.

- 6.3 When assessing a hazard, SCDC will consider the tenant and any person who could reasonably be expected to reside within the household as to the impact of the hazard on their health and wellbeing.
- 6.4 In determining whether damp and mould constitute a hazard, SCDC will apply the same risk-based assessment informed by HHSRS principles. Assessment will be based on the likelihood and severity of harm to the occupant, taking into account factors such as vulnerability, duration of exposure, living conditions, and the potential for deterioration.
- 6.5 For the purposes of Awaab's Law, SCDC's legal obligations begin when it becomes aware of a potential hazard, or of a material change to a previously identified hazard. The date SCDC becomes aware of the issue is treated as Day Zero. For statutory timescales expressed in working days, the relevant period will commence on the next working day. However, where a potential Emergency Hazard is identified, the requirement to investigate and make safe within 24 hours applies from the point of awareness and is not subject to working day conventions.
- 6.6 Recurring reports of any hazard, or reoccurrence following previous remedial action, will be treated as a material change in circumstances and will trigger a reset of applicable statutory timescales under Awaab's Law.
- 6.7 Awareness may arise through inspections, investigations, notifications from tenants or third parties (including contractors, regulators or statutory bodies), or issues raised on a tenant's behalf. Where a hazard or material change is reported by a third party, SCDC is considered to have become aware on the date the notification is received, and statutory timescales begin from that date.
- 6.8 SCDC will meet or exceed the following legal minimum timeframes:

6.9 Emergency Hazards – Route One

Step 1 – Identification and initial assessment

Required Action: A potential hazard is reported, or SCDC becomes aware of a potential hazard. SCDC to review available information about the hazard and the resident's circumstances and makes an initial assessment to determine whether



the issue may be a significant hazard, an emergency hazard or is outside of the scope of Awaab's Law. If assessed as an Emergency Hazard, Route One applies.

Timescale / Notes: This point marks Day Zero in the Awaab's Law timeline.

Step 2 – Immediate Investigation

Required Action: The landlord must take urgent action to investigate the emergency hazard and to make the property safe. This may include temporary repairs, safety measures, or emergency works to remove or reduce the immediate risk to the resident.

Timescale / Notes: Action must be taken within **24 hours** of becoming aware of the emergency hazard. This timeframe runs continuously from the point of awareness (Day Zero), including evenings, weekends and public holidays, and does not commence from the next working day. (see note at 6.5 above)

Step 3 – Making Safe or Decent

Required Action: Where the hazard cannot be made safe within 24 hours, SCDC will offer the resident suitable alternative accommodation while further works are carried out to address the hazard.

Timescale / Notes: Alternative accommodation must be offered without delay where required.

Step 4 – Completion of Works

Required Action: SCDC will carry out all necessary works to fully resolve the emergency hazard and ensure the property is safe for occupation.

Timescale / Notes: Works must be completed **as soon as reasonably practicable**.

Step 5 – Resolution

Required Action: The emergency hazard is resolved, and the property is safe for occupation. Any requirement to provide alternative accommodation under Awaab's Law ends once the hazard has been fully addressed.

Timescale / Notes: End of Route One process.

6.10 Significant Risk Hazards (including Damp and Mould) – Route Two

Step 1 – Identification and initial assessment

Required Action: A potential hazard is reported or SCDC becomes aware of a potential hazard. SCDC to review available information about the hazard and the residents' circumstances and makes initial assessment to determine whether the issue may be a significant hazard, an emergency hazard, or is outside of the scope of Awaab's Law.

Timescale / Notes: This point marks Day Zero in the Awaab's Law timeline.

Step 2 – Investigation

Required Action: Where a potential significant hazard is identified, the landlord must carry out an investigation to assess the nature and level of risk. If, during the investigation an emergency hazard is identified the landlord must follow the emergency hazard process (Route One).

Timescale / Notes: Investigation must be completed within **10 working days**.

Step 3 – Confirmation of Significant Hazard

Required Action: If the investigation confirms a significant hazard, the landlord must:

- Provide a written summary of the investigation and its findings to the resident within three working days of the conclusion (unless the property is made safe and works are completed within three working days).
- Complete relevant safety works and begin, or take steps to begin, any further supplementary works to prevent the hazard from reoccurring within five working days of concluding the investigation.
- Where further supplementary works are required and it is not possible to begin them within five working days, the landlord must start these as soon as reasonably practicable and within 12 weeks of the investigation concluding.
- If the investigation finds an emergency hazard SCDC will follow the process for emergency hazards, outlined at Route One.

Timescale / Notes:

- Written summary within **three working days** of investigation conclusion (unless resolved).



- Safety works completed and further works initiated within **five working days**.
- Any additional works to start as soon as practicable and within **12 weeks**.

Step 4 – Alternative Accommodation

Required Action: Where the property cannot be made safe within required timescales, the landlord must offer suitable alternative accommodation until the hazard is fully resolved.

Timescale / Notes: Applies until the significant hazard is resolved

Step 5 – Resolution

Required Action: The significant hazard is resolved and all required safety and preventative works are completed. The obligation to provide temporary or alternative accommodation under Awaab's Law ends.

Timescale / Notes: End of Route Two process.

- 6.11 A record will be created for all reported hazards at the point SCDC becomes aware, including date of awareness (Day Zero), actions taken, communications and outcomes, to ensure compliance with statutory timescales and audit requirements.
- 6.12 If the issue reported is not considered to be an Emergency or Significant hazard it will be treated as a non-hazard repair outside of the statutory requirements of Awaab's Law. The tenant will be advised accordingly as part of the written summary within **three working days** of the conclusion of the investigation, with the issue being addressed through the responsive repair process.

7. Reporting a Hazard

- 7.1 Residents who identify a potential hazard should report this via the Repairs Hotline – **0800 085 1313** which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All reports will be assessed and triaged through a single hazard assessment process in line with this policy.
- 7.2 Residents will be informed promptly upon receipt of a hazard report, including confirmation that the issue is being assessed under this policy.

8. Person-centred Approach

- 8.1 The effect of a hazard will be different for each person, and some people may be more at risk of harm from a hazard than others. Therefore, SCDC will investigate the level of risk the hazard presents to a tenant, and any household members that live in the property, on a case-by-case basis.

To do this, we will use existing data on our tenants, including:

- Who lives in the property
- Disabilities and vulnerabilities
- Medical conditions
- Language barriers
- Additional support needs
- Any protected characteristics
- Vulnerabilities due to age, such as young children and elderly people

- 8.2 Where vulnerabilities are identified, cases will be prioritised accordingly, and this may result in accelerated investigation or intervention timescales where necessary to reduce risk.

9. Exceptions to Required Works

- 9.1 The requirement to conduct works under Awaab's Law is subject to limited statutory exceptions. These include circumstances where:
- The significant or emergency hazard arises from accidental damage or events outside the landlord's control, such as fires, storms, or flooding, for which repairing obligations are already exempt under existing legislation.
 - SCDC is unable to lawfully conduct the required works, including where necessary approvals (such as building control consent or the consent of a freeholder).
 - Responsibility for the works rests with the lessee, due to their obligation to use the property in a tenant-like manner or under an equivalent express covenant.
 - The works relate to items that the tenant is entitled to remove from the property, such as white goods owned by the tenant.



- Cladding-related works, where the remediation of unsafe cladding typically constitutes a longer-term programme of works rather than an emergency repair.

9.2 Where an exception applies, the specific works are not required under Awaab's Law. However, SCDC will still consider how best to support affected residents and will continue to meet its wider responsibilities under existing legislation, policies and procedures, including its duty to keep homes safe and address disrepair where required.

10. Resident Communication

10.1 SCDC will:

- Provide updates at key stages (post-inspection, pre-works, delays)
- Maintain regular contact where works are ongoing (at least every five working days unless otherwise agreed)
- Provide clear written summaries
- Avoid language that implies blame or lifestyle causation

10.2 All communication will be recorded in the case file.

11. Access to the Property

11.1 In order to investigate and make safe hazards, SCDC requires reasonable access to the property. We will work proactively with tenants to agree access arrangements at a time and date that is suitable, taking account of individual circumstances and needs.

11.2 To facilitate access, SCDC will:

- Offer a range of appointment timeslots wherever possible.
- Make multiple attempts to contact tenants at different times of the day using a variety of communication methods, including telephone, email and letters.
- Provide clear information about the work to be undertaken and what is required from the tenant, using accessible and appropriate communication, including translation services where needed.
- Explain who will be attending the property to provide reassurance.
- Take into account any barriers to access, and work with tenants to identify and address these wherever practicable.



- Leave a calling card with contact details where access cannot be gained at a scheduled appointment, to enable alternative arrangements to be made.

11.3 Tenants are expected to engage reasonably in arranging and facilitating access to their home. Where access is refused or repeatedly not provided despite reasonable efforts by SCDC, this may affect the ability to complete works within statutory timescales. In such circumstances, SCDC will keep clear records of access attempts and continue to take proportionate steps to resolve health and safety concerns in line with legal requirements and this policy.

12. Alternative Accommodation

12.1 Where a significant or emergency hazard cannot be made safe within the statutory timescales required under Awaab's Law, SCDC will take reasonable steps to secure suitable alternative accommodation for the tenant and any persons who would normally reside in the property. This duty will apply for as long as is necessary to prevent residents from being exposed to a continued risk of harm.

12.2 SCDC will pay for the alternative accommodation and meet any reasonable costs associated with the move.

12.3 The suitability of alternative accommodation will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the household's needs and circumstances. Tenants may choose whether to accept or decline an offer of alternative accommodation. Where a tenant or any household member remains in the property, SCDC will provide appropriate information on risk mitigation, or confirm where mitigation is not possible, and will continue to progress remedial works as soon as reasonably practicable.

12.3 Where a tenant declines an offer of suitable alternative accommodation, the Council will record the reasons provided (where given) and confirm the decision in writing, including the risks associated with remaining in the property. This does not remove the Council's ongoing duty to take all reasonable steps to mitigate risk and resolve the hazard.

12.4 The requirement to secure alternative accommodation will end in the following circumstances:

- Once the relevant safety works are completed,
- It is determined that no qualifying hazard exists,
- SCDC is lawfully unable to carry out the works, or



- The tenant confirms in writing that they no longer wish to be provided with alternative accommodation.

13. Governance and Accountability

13.1 Roles and Responsibilities

SCDC will appoint a 'Responsible Person' to ensure that the commitments in this policy are carried out as well as the actions identified as part of any hazards reported – see management structure below:

Duty Holder: Head of Housing

Has ultimate accountability for the management of identified hazards.

Responsible Person: Service Manager – Housing Assets

Oversees the overall implementation of this policy.

Deputy Responsible Person: Response and Voids Manager

Supports the responsible person in the day-to-day management of this policy.

13.2 Assurance and Performance Monitoring

SCDC will:

- Maintain a live compliance register to track all reported hazards, actions taken, statutory timescales and outcomes.
- Monitor compliance through the Operational Housing Stock Group, with performance overseen by the tenant performance panel, Housing Engagement Board and Cabinet, in line with the Assurance Framework.
- Report breaches and near-misses, where a failure to meet statutory duties or timescales was narrowly avoided, to the Head of Housing.
- Escalate systemic risks to Cabinet where required as part of the management of strategic risks.

Where statutory timescales are at risk of being breached:

- Cases will be escalated immediately to the Responsible Person
- Corrective actions will be implemented without delay
- Residents will be informed and provided with updated timelines
- All breaches will be logged and reviewed by the Operational Housing Stock Group to prevent recurrence

As a minimum, SCDC will report Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) through its Housing Stock Group, the KPI / TSM Tenant Panel, the Housing Engagement Board and via corporate reporting channels.

These KPIs will include:

- Number of new emergency hazards reported per 1,000 properties
- Number of new significant damp and mould hazards reported per 1,000 properties
- % of emergency hazards resolved within 24 hours
- % of significant damp and mould hazards investigated within 10 working days
- % of significant damp and mould repairs initiated within five working days

14. Accessibility and Inclusion

- 14.1 SCDC will engage with tenants and residents in line with the [Equality Act 2010](#). Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure services are accessible to all.

This may include:

- Contact preferences
- Offering home visits
- Use of advocates or interpreters
- Alternative communication formats, such as large print or translated materials
- Adjusting appointment times
- Adjusting locations to accommodate mobility or health needs

- 14.2 SCDC recognises that certain hazards may have a disproportionate impact on residents due to protected characteristics, health conditions, or vulnerabilities. The Council will take this into account when assessing risk, prioritising works and determining appropriate remedies, ensuring that responses are tailored to individual needs.

15. About this Policy

- 15.1 This policy will be reviewed every five years. However, earlier reassessment may be required following tenant feedback, further guidance or where there are changes in operations and / or legislation.
- 15.2 This policy has been produced in consultation with tenant representatives. If a tenant is interested in getting involved in shaping the housing service, further information is available on the [website](#), or contact resident.involvement@scambs.gov.uk.



16. Service Requests and Complaints Process

- 16.1 Residents should report any safety concerns / hazards by telephone via the Repairs Hotline: 0800 085 1313, which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

For all other repairs or general enquiries, residents can use the following channels:

Repairs: [Online](#) via the Council's [website](#).

By phone via the Repairs Hotline: 0800 085 1313.

Through the **M&Me** Mobile App

General Queries: **Telephone:** 01954 713 000 or

Email: duty.housing@scambs.gov.uk.

The [Communications Charter for tenants and leaseholders](#) sets out detailed guidance on how to contact the Council and the service standards that can be expected in relation to communication and responsiveness.

- 16.2 SCDC aims to provide excellent customer service but recognise that mistakes can happen. If a tenant is dissatisfied with the service received following a service request, they can make a complaint in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy. To make a complaint, visit our [website](#) or telephone 01954 713 000 or email housing.complaints@scambs.gov.uk.

17. Our Values

Ambitious

We are proactive and take a forward-thinking approach to addressing challenges.

We create smart solutions and reach our goals with determination and a clear vision.

Collaborative

We foster a culture of teamwork and open communication.

We work with and involve stakeholders, to improve how the organisation works and serves the public.

Compassionate

We prioritise empathy and understanding in decision-making and service delivery.

We consider the wellbeing of people and communities in everything we do and we replicate this when we talk to our colleagues because we know that when we support each other, we all do better.

Accountable

We take responsibility for our actions and decisions.

We own up to mistakes and make sure we fulfil our commitments.

Appendix B: Policy Panel Feedback

Management of Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS1) Policy incorporating Awaab's Law

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
1.3	“ to all hazards affecting likely to affect residents' health and safety”	Y	Agreed and amended	1.3
2.7	There is no definition of what constitutes 'harm'. There is one: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/3208/schedule/2/made which defines 4 categories.	Y	Agreed and have added 2.2 and linked to the legislation.	2.2
3.3	I think this is far too restrictive plus, we are well into 2026 so is it relevant for just two months?	C	This is what is currently in legislation and therefore we cannot change this. The reference to 'From 2026' requires a change in the legislation and until that happens, we have to go with what is current. Therefore, this cannot be changed at the moment but can be amended once legislation is passed.	N / A
3.8	How will this be recorded and monitored?	C	This will be recorded through a workflow system. Currently we are using a workaround using SharePoint, but we are exploring options for a bespoke system that can run alongside our Asset Management system that will record all elements relating to hazards.	N / A
5.2	I think it would be a very good idea to place some responsibility on Housing and Sheltered Housing Officers to report potential or actual hazards. They are supposed to conduct 'informal' inspections, plus there are formal inspections, and these officers are the ones who are supposed to have coal-face interactions with tenants. Policy should include reporting methods and responsibilities?	Y	In reality this is happening and forms part of the communal areas policy. Agreed this should be clearer in this policy and have included some additional text that references communal areas.	N / A

Appendix B: Policy Panel Feedback

Management of Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS1) Policy incorporating Awaab's Law

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
6.2	This requires a reporting system that includes some kind of sign-off?	C	See comments above regarding systems.	N / A
6.5	"The investigation and the work must both take place within 24 hours of becoming aware of the hazard."	Y	6.5 reworded.	6.5
6.9	"The landlord, <i>or their contractors (include)</i> , must take..."	C	The responsibility sits with the landlord regardless of who does the work. Therefore, we cannot include contractors here.	N / A
6.9	We had a fire here a few years ago and it was very difficult to find a SCDC person to alert and deal with rehousing the family. I think a named person (and deputy?) should have access details available to people like emergency services / other tenants / housing officers / etcetera, as a part of this policy. That would ensure that it actually happens	C	As a Council there are emergency procedures in place. There will always be a member of Leadership Team on call who will have relevant details as to who to contact, with someone also on call for housing issues. The Repairs Line is 24 hours, and they will have contact details as to who to call in an emergency. There is also an emergency helpline in terms of homelessness. These numbers are given out when the Council is closed through our normal contact number. All Sheltered Estate Officers and Housing Officers should be aware of this.	N / A
6.9	(is it worth noting that emergency accommodation is to be kept available if it is?)	C	There is a specific section on Temporary Accommodation further down. Suggest that any additional wording relating to temporary accommodation is placed there.	N / A
6.10	Why different from route 1?	Y	Have reworded route 1 to be the same.	6.10

Appendix B: Policy Panel Feedback

Management of Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS1) Policy incorporating Awaab's Law

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
6.11	<i>"...actions taken, satisfactory resolution (include), communications and outcomes..."</i>	C	Satisfactory resolution can be subjective, i.e. if someone particularly wanted to move even though the property had been made safe, they may not feel that is a satisfactory resolution. Suggest text remains as is with outcomes.	N / A
7.1	Who covers out of hours?	Y	The Repairs Line is available 24 hours, updated wording to include this.	7.1
12.3	Is it anticipated that there will be a waiver of some kind for remaining tenants to sign? Having a nasty suspicious mind, I can see an open door, if not, for some kind of litigation further down the line if harm of any kind happens. Would a tenant have to give reasons for declining? I'm not sure about the last issue as 'suitability' may be subjective. Discussion, perhaps for others' thoughts?	P	The tenant cannot be forced to accept alternative accommodation or have to give reasons for not doing so. Agreed that suitability may be subjective but there is a robust process already in place in terms of suitability when considering temporary accommodation for those facing homelessness, to which we would use the same process. A waiver would carry very limited, if any, legal weight. Additional wording added at 12.3.	12.3
12.3	Not the same as my comment above?	C	This is different. This is where the tenant was given alternative temporary accommodation but for whatever reason, such as deciding to stay with family, they no longer wish to stay there	N / A
13.1	See my comment above at 6.9 Step 2 especially accessibility.	C	The responsible person has overall responsibility, but it is not feasible to always be on call 24 hours every day. Emergency procedures in place as mentioned above. The responsible person is a legal term, it means the person responsible for ensuring the law is upheld	N / A

Appendix B: Policy Panel Feedback

Management of Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS1) Policy incorporating Awaab's Law

Y – Yes, N – No, P – Partial, C – General Comment

Ref.	Notes	Response Y / N / P / C	Place and Notes	Updated Reference
13.1	<i>"Response and Voids (change this to empty property) Manager..."</i>	C	This is the job title of the Manager and therefore cannot be changed. An Empty Property Manager is something different and sits within the Environmental Health Team.	N / A
13.2	<i>"...statutory timescales and outcomes (change this to whether resolved)..."</i>	C	See comment above. Suggest leave at outcomes.	N / A
13.2	Bullet point two – too much like jargon?	Y	Reworded	13.2
13.2	Bullet point three – What constitutes a 'near miss'?	Y	Additional wording added	13.2
13.2	Who is on the Housing Stock Group and should involved tenants be included?	Y	No this is operational only – have added text above to show process.	13.2
13.2	There is a danger here of blinkering responsible people by referring only to damp and mould issues. Vulnerable tenants can be at significant risk from other hazards. "New emergency hazards" does not widen the scope in any meaningful way.	C	These performance indicators are national indicators provided by HouseMark for benchmarking purposes. Therefore, we are unable to change.	N / A
17	"We create smart solutions" – meaningless jargon	C	This is the Corporate Values agreed by Cabinet and cannot be changed.	N / A

4.5 Elected Tenant / Residential Leaseholder Representative Guide

A meeting to review, discuss and approve the enclosed Elected Tenant / Residential Leaseholder Representative Guide was held on 18 May 2026.

Dave Armitage to report.

Elected Tenant / Residential Leaseholder Representative Guide

Role of an Elected Tenant / Residential Leaseholder Representative

Please note: The term “Tenant” is used throughout this report as a generic term and includes both council tenants and council residential leaseholders.

The role of an elected tenant / leaseholder representative is to be an advocate for all tenants. You will focus on general housing issues and tenants’ priorities by making sure that your rent and service charges are being well spent, council homes are maintained, your neighbourhood is a safe and nice place to live. You will think strategically for the longer-term benefit of all tenants.

Expectations

You champion issues from your local tenants. You will raise issues, help us be more responsive to tenants and improve services across all our homes. You will be a voice for the wider tenant community. Board meetings are not an opportunity to discuss your, or another tenants’, individual issues but to address issues that concern a number of tenants, or the whole tenant community.

If you have a concern from an individual tenant, your role in the first instance is to signpost them to the correct channel to report their issue. If they are not satisfied with a response or action from us then advise them to follow the Complaints Process.

You may raise a service request or log a complaint on their behalf, if they ask you. See page 2 for the ways to raise a service request or log a complaint.

See the flow chart on page 3 for the process to follow and to decide the action that needs to be taken.

Officers responsible for Service Areas:

- Tenancy related issues or Leasehold issues – Geoff Clark – geoff.clark@scambs.gov.uk
 - General Needs Housing issues – Debbie Barrett – debbie.barrett@scambs.gov.uk
 - Sheltered Housing issues – Marianne Crozier – marianne.crozier@scambs.gov.uk
 - Repairs and Maintenance – Eddie Spicer – eddie.spicer@scambs.gov.uk
 - Lettings and Housing advice – Heather Wood – heather.wood@scambs.gov.uk
- Sue Carter – susan.carter@scambs.gov.uk

Head of Housing – Peter Campbell – peter.campbell@scambs.gov.uk

Should a tenant ask an Elected Tenant / Residential Leaseholder Representative to raise a service request or log a complaint on their behalf, the tenant must complete the Consent Form giving their representative permission to submit the complaint or raise the service request – see page 4 for the consent form.

Ways for a Tenant or Tenant Representative to Raise a Service Request

Contact the Council through [Communicating with us](#) routes such as:

- **Telephone** – 01954 713 000
- **Letter** – South Cambs Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne CB23 6EA
- **Email** – duty.housing@scambs.gov.uk or operations@scambs.gov.uk or resident.involvement@scambs.gov.uk. (Please do not contact officers directly as they may be on leave or unavailable. These shared inboxes are monitored regularly.)
- **Contact your Sheltered Estate Officer** – Sheltered tenants only – details will be on the notice board of the communal room
- **Repairs** – [Report your repair](#) online or call 0800 085 1313

Ways for a Tenant or Tenant Representative to Log a Complaint

- **Telephone** – 01954 713 000
- **Letter** – South Cambs Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne CB23 6EA
- **Submit online** through [mysouthcambs](#) portal (register an account)
- **Website** – [Complaints](#)
- **Email** – housing.complaints@scambs.gov.uk

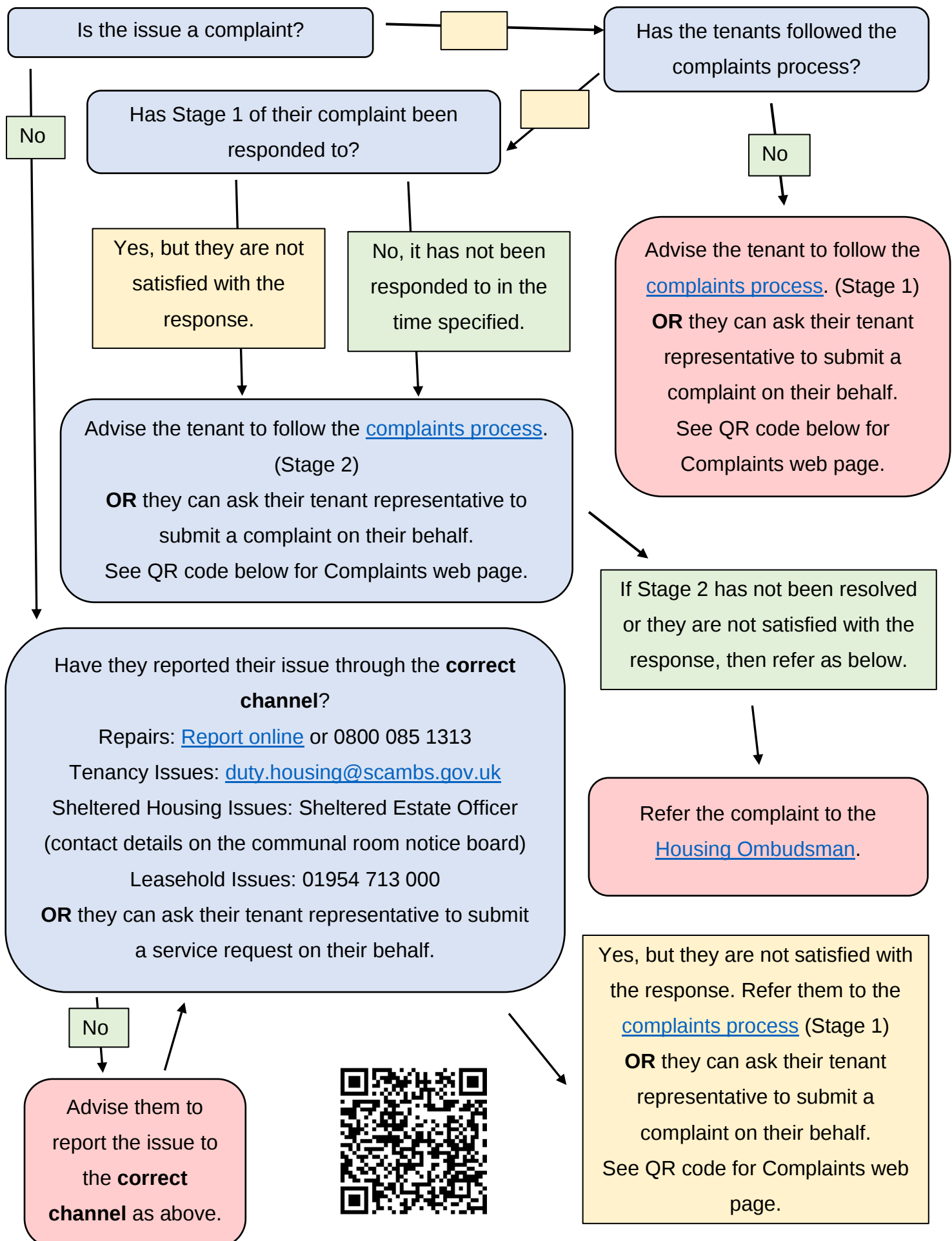


- **QR Code** –

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response to their complaint, they can approach **The Housing Ombudsman** for tenant related complaints, as follows:

- **Website** – <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk>
- **Email** – info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- **Letter** – Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET

Advocating for a Tenant on their Specific Issue – Flowchart



Permission for an Elected Tenant / Residential Leaseholder Representative to submit a Service Request or Log a Complaint on behalf of a Tenant

Consent Form (to be completed by the Tenant)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Email address: _____

I, give permission for _____ to submit the following: ☐ Service Request / ☐ Complaint on my behalf.

Reason for Service Request / Complaint (include any supporting documents / photographs):

To be completed for Complaints only

How would you like your Complaint to be resolved – what do you see as a satisfactory outcome

Signature: _____

4.6 Annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Submission to the Social Housing Regulator

Julie Fletcher to report on the Annual TSM Submission to the Social Housing Regulator which is included in the pack.

Report to:	Housing Engagement Board 22 June 2026
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Batchelor – Lead Member for Housing
Lead Officer:	Peter Campbell – Head of Housing

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) Annual Report 2025 / 2026

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is for the Housing Engagement Board to note the 2025 / 2026 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), set out at Appendix A, which are required to be submitted annually to the Regulator of Social Housing and published by the Council.
2. This is the third year of TSM reporting, enabling robust trend analysis and comparison against established targets and national benchmarks. The annual survey, undertaken by MEL Research Ltd between February and March 2026 and issued to all tenants, presents a positive overall position, with several areas of strong performance alongside some areas requiring further improvement.
3. Overall satisfaction remains high at 76%. While this represents a modest decrease from 78.6% in 2024 / 2025, the proportion of tenants who are 'very' or 'fairly dissatisfied' has reduced slightly. Performance remains particularly strong across core landlord services, including repairs, building safety and fair treatment, all of which meet or exceed expectations and continue to underpin tenant confidence.
4. Satisfaction remains lower in communication and engagement, complaints handling and neighbourhood management, in line with national trends; however, these areas show clear evidence of improvement over time. Complaints handling, in particular, has improved significantly, increasing by 17.6% over the past two years. While satisfaction with communal areas has declined, the proportion of tenants reporting dissatisfaction has remained stable and this is now a priority area for improvement. Overall performance remains consistent with national benchmarks, and it is recognised that wider social and economic factors may also be influencing tenant perceptions and contributing to fluctuations in satisfaction levels.

Recommendations

5. It is recommended that the Housing Engagement Board notes the tenant satisfaction measures set out at Appendix A, to be submitted to the Regulator by the end of June 2026.

Details

6. The Regulator of Social Housing monitors social housing providers through a combination of annual data returns and periodic inspections. Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) form a key part of this framework, providing insight into tenant experience and enabling benchmarking across the sector.
7. This is the third year of reporting, allowing for more informed trend analysis and comparison against targets agreed by Cabinet. Performance continues to be reported internally, shared with tenants through the Housing Engagement Board, and published on the Council's website to ensure transparency.

8. **Housing Performance and Tenant Satisfaction Measures**

There are 22 TSMs across five themes, with 12 based on tenant perception collected through an independent survey.

The 2025 / 2026 survey was undertaken between February and April 2026, achieving 1,641 responses, representing a 29% response rate, an improvement on the previous year. Results are accurate to $\pm 2\%$ at the 95% confidence level, providing a robust and representative dataset.

9. **Overall Performance**

Overall, results demonstrate a stable and improving position over time, with the majority of measures remaining consistent or showing gradual improvement.

Core landlord services continue to perform strongly:

- Satisfaction with repairs (77.6%) remains above target
- Satisfaction that the home is safe (84.1%) continues to be one of the highest scoring measures
- Satisfaction with fair treatment and respect (77.8%) has increased and exceeds target

These results indicate that the Council continues to deliver well in its core service offer, maintaining strong tenant confidence in key areas.

10. **Customer Experience and Engagement**

Performance across communication and engagement measures shows sustained improvement over time, particularly when compared to the lower baseline in 2023 / 2024:

- Satisfaction with listening to tenants (61.1%) remains significantly improved
- Keeping tenants informed (68.3%) continues to increase incrementally
- Fair treatment (77.8%) has improved year-on-year

While some measures have stabilised in the short term, the overall trajectory remains positive, reflecting continued focus on strengthening communication and engagement with tenants.

11. **Complaints Handling**

Complaints handling has seen the most significant improvement across all measures. Satisfaction has increased to 46.8%, a substantial rise from 29.2% in 2023 / 2024. This progress reflects the positive impact of a series of targeted enhancements, including staff training, process reviews, strengthened early triage and case ownership, the introduction of template responses to improve consistency and quality, and increased oversight.

Although this remains a relatively lower-scoring area, clear progress has been made. Further improvement is required, particularly in relation to the timeliness of responses and consistency of communication and resolution.

Performance against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales for responses remains below target, with 73.4% responded to in time for Stage 1 and 86.9% for Stage 2. This is largely attributable to the significant increase in complaints received during the year, which have doubled, alongside the growing complexity of some cases, both reflecting a broader national trend. The timeliness of responding to complaints continues to be a priority area, and a dedicated Complaints Officer post is being recruited to strengthen oversight, coordination and response quality.

A separate complaints report will be presented to both the Housing Engagement Board and Cabinet in June, providing further detail.

12. Neighbourhood Management

Neighbourhood services continue to show steady improvement, although they remain among the lower-scoring areas overall:

- Satisfaction with neighbourhood contribution has increased to 56.2%, continuing an upward trend
- Satisfaction with ASB handling (57.6%) remains significantly improved compared to earlier years
- Satisfaction with communal areas has declined to 63.6%

While these services have not improved at the same pace as core landlord services, the overall trend remains positive.

In respect of communal areas, a new policy will be introduced from June 2026 to strengthen inspection regimes and service standards. While satisfaction with communal areas has declined, satisfaction with grounds maintenance remains strong at 72% (up 12% since 2023 / 2024), suggesting variation in experience rather than widespread deterioration.

Further analysis is underway to better understand the drivers of dissatisfaction with communal areas and to identify targeted improvements, including whether concerns are more prevalent in sheltered or general needs housing, relate to internal or external spaces, or are concentrated in specific locations.

13. Landlord Performance Measures

Operational performance provides important context to tenant perception results:

- The number of non-decent homes has increased in 2025 / 2026; however this reflects the expected life cycle of properties, with components naturally falling below standard as they reach the point where renewal or replacement is required. A proactive investment programme is being implemented to replace key elements in advance of failure, helping to minimise future increases.
- Repairs performance remains strong, with high levels of completion within target timescales.
- 100% compliance continues to be achieved across all building safety measures.
- Complaint volumes have increased, which aligns with national trends and may reflect improved accessibility and tenant confidence in raising concerns.

- The number of anti-social behaviour cases remains broadly stable, with a reduction in hate-related incidents compared to the previous year.

14. **Benchmarking**

The Council's results remain broadly aligned with national performance (based on 2024 / 2025 data) where:

- Overall satisfaction typically sits at 70 – 75%
- Strongest performance is seen in repairs and safety
- Lower scores are common in complaints handling and engagement

At the time of reporting, HouseMark benchmarking data for 2025 / 2026 is not yet available. However, it is anticipated that there may be a national downward trend in tenant satisfaction, reflecting the wider socio-economic climate, including cost of living pressures and increased demand on services. As part of in-year quarterly TSM performance monitoring, updated benchmarking information will be incorporated as it becomes available to support ongoing comparison and performance assessment.

15. **Key Insights and Areas of Focus**

Key insights from the TSM results indicate that:

- Older tenants tend to report higher satisfaction levels across most measures.
- Tenants on fixed-term tenancies report lower satisfaction, although this may improve as tenancies transition to secure arrangements.
- Tenants on introductory tenancies report more positive experiences, likely reflecting enhanced support during the initial tenancy period.

Priority areas for 2026 / 2027 will focus on:

- Improving the quality and maintenance of communal areas and neighbourhood services
- Strengthening communication and increasing meaningful tenant engagement
- Continuing to enhance complaints handling processes and responsiveness
- Building on progress to further improve the overall customer experience
- Addressing variations in satisfaction across different tenant groups to ensure equitable service delivery

Overall, the results demonstrate a stable and improving service, with strong performance in core areas and clear, targeted actions in place to address areas for further development.

Reasons for Recommendations

16. This report is recommended to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, provide transparency on housing service performance, and enable Cabinet oversight of results while ensuring tenant feedback informs service delivery.

Options

17. The performance measures are prescribed by the Social Housing Regulator and must be published. Therefore, no alternative options are put forward.

Implications

18. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial and Fraud Impact

19. The Social Housing Regulator may impose financial penalties if the Council cannot demonstrate that it is meeting the requirements set out in the Consumer Standards, which includes measuring performance against the standard Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

Legal

20. There are no legal implications to produce targets to measure ourselves against. However, it is considered good practice to set targets to provide a focused approach to service improvement against the best performing organisations within our peer group.

Staffing

21. No staffing implications identified.

Risks / Opportunities

22. The Regulator of Social Housing has introduced a programme of proactive inspections, with all large landlords subject to inspection within a four-year cycle. The Council is therefore likely to be inspected between now and 2028.
23. This presents both a risk and an opportunity to demonstrate strong service performance. Maintaining robust performance monitoring and self-assessment arrangements will ensure the Council is well prepared and able to evidence continuous improvement.

Equality and Diversity

24. The Consumer Standards promote equality by ensuring that tenants are safe in their homes, are listened to and that social landlords are accountable to tenants and treat them with fairness and respect.

Consultation responses

25. The results have been presented to the Scrutiny and Review Committee at their meeting on 4 June 2026, where additional narrative has been provided at Section 11 of this report. The report will also be presented to the Housing Engagement Board on 22 June 2026. Due to the short timescale between the Housing Engagement Board meeting and Cabinet, any amendments arising from that discussion will be reported to Cabinet verbally.
26. A further briefing session will be held for staff, Members and tenant representatives, delivered by MEL Research Ltd, providing a more detailed analysis of the survey findings.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Healthy and Supported Communities

27. Tenant Satisfaction Measures support healthy and supported communities by capturing tenant feedback on wellbeing, safety and service quality, helping to ensure residents feel listened to, treated fairly, and supported within their homes and neighbourhoods.

Sustainable Homes and Vibrant Places

28. Tenant Satisfaction Measures support sustainable homes and vibrant places by providing a structured way to capture tenant feedback on housing quality, safety, and neighbourhood services, helping to ensure that homes are well maintained and communities are safe, responsive and well managed.

Appendices

Appendix A: Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) Annual Report 2025 / 2026

Report Author:

Julie Fletcher – Service Manager – Housing Strategy

Telephone: (01954) 713 352

Appendix A – Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Annual Report 2025 / 2026

Key	
Target	Set by Cabinet November 2024 based on benchmarking from similar social housing landlords and / or where previous targets have been set by the Council
Upward Arrow	Increase in satisfaction / performance in comparison to last year
Downward Arrow	Dip in satisfaction / performance in comparison to last year
Horizontal Arrow	Satisfaction / performance remains the same in comparison to last year
Arrow Colour	Green – Exceeding Council target Amber – Meeting Council target Red – Not meeting Council target

Tenant Perception Measures

[Note: The 'very or fairly satisfied' figures are unrounded, reflecting the exact values reported to the Regulator]

TSM measure	2023 / 2024	2024 / 2025	2025 / 2026	Target
TP01: Overall satisfaction	77.7% very or fairly satisfied 11% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 12% very or fairly dissatisfied	78.6% very or fairly satisfied 9% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 12% very or fairly dissatisfied	76.0% very or fairly satisfied 13% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 11% very or fairly dissatisfied	 78%
TP02: Satisfaction with repairs	77.1% very or fairly satisfied 8% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 16% fairly or very dissatisfied	79.4% very or fairly satisfied 9% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 13% fairly or very dissatisfied	77.6% very or fairly satisfied 8% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 14% very or fairly dissatisfied	 77%
TP03: Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair	74.3% very or fairly satisfied 8% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 18% very or fairly dissatisfied	74.3% very or fairly satisfied 9% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 18% very or fairly dissatisfied	74.4% very or fairly satisfied 9% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 16% very or fairly dissatisfied	 74%
TP04: Satisfaction that the home is well maintained	72.4% very or fairly satisfied 11% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 16% very or fairly dissatisfied	74.7% very or fairly satisfied 11% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 14% very or fairly dissatisfied	73.6% very or fairly satisfied 14% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 12% very or fairly dissatisfied	 74%
TP05: Satisfaction that the home is safe	81.5% very or fairly satisfied 10% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 9% very or fairly dissatisfied	82.8% very or fairly satisfied 13% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 4% very or fairly dissatisfied	84.1% very or fairly satisfied 8% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 8% very or fairly dissatisfied	 82%

TSM measure	2023 / 2024	2024 / 2025	2025 / 2026	Target
TP06: Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them	53.8% very or fairly satisfied 26% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 21% very or fairly dissatisfied	63.5% very or fairly satisfied 23% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 14% very or fairly dissatisfied	61.1% very or fairly satisfied 24% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 15% very or fairly dissatisfied	 57%
TP07: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them	63.5% strongly agree or agree 25% neither agree nor disagree 12% disagree or strongly disagree	67.2% strongly agree or agree 26% neither agree nor disagree 7% disagree or strongly disagree	68.3% very or fairly satisfied 24% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 8% very or fairly dissatisfied	 66%
TP08: Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect	73.0% very or fairly satisfied 19% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 8% very or fairly dissatisfied	74.3% very or fairly satisfied 20% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 7% very or fairly dissatisfied	77.8% very or fairly satisfied 16% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 7% very or fairly dissatisfied	 75%
TP09: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints	29.2% very or fairly satisfied 21% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 51% very or fairly dissatisfied	39.8% very or fairly satisfied 10% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 51% very or fairly dissatisfied	46.8% very or fairly satisfied 30% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 24% very or fairly dissatisfied	 31%
TP10: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained	68.3% very or fairly satisfied 10% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 21% very or fairly dissatisfied	67.2% very or fairly satisfied 16% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 17% very or fairly dissatisfied	63.6% very or fairly satisfied 19% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 17% very or fairly dissatisfied	 70%

TSM measure	2023 / 2024	2024 / 2025	2025 / 2026	Target
TP11: Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods	49.0% very or fairly satisfied 37% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 14% very or fairly dissatisfied	55.1% very or fairly satisfied 35% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 10% very or fairly dissatisfied	56.2% very or fairly satisfied 34% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 10% very or fairly dissatisfied	 52%
TP12: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour	44.2% very or fairly satisfied 39% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 17% very or fairly dissatisfied	58.4% very or fairly satisfied 29% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 13% very or fairly dissatisfied	57.6% very or fairly satisfied 29% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 14% very or fairly dissatisfied	47% 

Landlord Performance Measures

TSM measure	2023 / 2024	2024 / 2025	2025 / 2026	Target
RP01: Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	3.4% [Representing 183 non decent homes out of 5,498 homes] Reported year-end 2023 / 2024	1.1% [Representing 59 non decent homes out of 5,521 homes] Reported year-end 2024 / 2025	3.9% [Representing 220 non decent homes out of 5,605 homes] Reported year-end 2025 / 2026	2.5% 
RP02 (1): Proportion of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale	92.8%	94.7%	98%	92.8% 
RP02 (2): Proportion of emergency responsive repairs, completed within the landlord's target timescale	100%	100%	100%	100% 
BS01: Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out	100%	100%	100%	100% 
BS02: Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out	100%	100%	100%	100% 

TSM measure	2023 / 2024	2024 / 2025	2025 / 2026	Target
BS03: Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out	100%	100%	100%	100% 
BS04: Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out	100%	100%	100%	100% 
BS05: Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out	100%	100%	100%	100% 
CH01 (1): Number of Stage 1 Complaints received per 1,000 homes	18.9 [Representing 104 complaints]	17.0 [Representing 94 complaints]	32.6 [Representing 183 complaints]	N / A
CH01 (2): Number of Stage 2 Complaints received per 1,000 homes	3.8 Representing 21 complaints]	2.9 [Representing 16 complaints]	4.6 [Representing 26 complaints]	N / A

TSM measure	2023 / 2024	2024 / 2025	2025 / 2026	Target
CH02 (1): Proportion of Stage 1 Complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales	73.0% [Representing 76 responses out of 104 complaints received]	62.8% [Representing 59 responses out of 94 complaints received] Of which, 8 included the use of the 10-day extension for complex complaints permitted in the code.	73.4% [Representing 130 responses out of 177 complaints received] Of which, 25 included the use of the 10-day extension for complex complaints permitted in the code.	 95%
CH02 (2): Proportion of Stage 2 Complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales	80.9% [Representing 17 responses out of 21 complaints received]	93.8% [Representing 15 responses out of 16 complaints received] Of which, 2 included the use of the 20-day extension for complex complaints permitted by the code.	86.9% (20 / 23) [Representing 20 responses out of 23 complaints received] Of which, 3 included the use of the 20-day extension for complex complaints permitted by the code.	 95%
NM01 (1): Number of anti-social behaviour cases, opened per 1,000 homes	38.1 [Representing 210 cases]	32.8 [Representing 189 cases]	37.8 [Representing 222 cases]	N / A
NM01 (2): Number of anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents, opened per 1,000 homes	0.7 [Representing 4 cases]	0.9 [Representing 5 cases]	0.5 [Representing 3 cases]	N / A

4.7 Annual Complaints Report and Self-Assessment of the Complaints Code

Julie Fletcher to report on the Annual Complaints Report and Self-Assessment of the Complaints Code which is included in the pack.

Report to:	Housing Engagement Board 22 June 2026
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Batchelor – Lead Member for Housing
Lead Officer:	Peter Campbell – Head of Housing

Annual Complaints Report 2025 / 2026 and Self-Assessment of the Complaints Handling Code (Housing Landlord Services)

Recommendations

1. The Housing Engagement Board is recommended to:
 - a) Endorse the Annual Complaints Report 2025 / 2026 (Appendix A) and the Self-Assessment of the Complaints Handling Code (Appendix B); and
 - b) Agree a formal response to the Annual Complaints Report as part of the Council's submission to the Housing Ombudsman.

Details

2. The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code became a statutory requirement on 1 April 2024, setting clear expectations for how social landlords manage complaints.
3. In accordance with this requirement, the Council must:
 - Undertake an annual self-assessment against the Code;
 - Produce an annual complaints performance report; and
 - Obtain governing body approval (Cabinet) prior to publication and submission to the Housing Ombudsman.
4. The Council's Complaints Policy was updated in December 2025 to ensure full compliance with the Code and alignment with Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman guidance. The accompanying self-assessment confirms that appropriate governance, processes and oversight arrangements are in place.

5. Performance Overview

During 2025 / 2026:

- A total of 215 landlord complaints were received, representing approximately 4% of the tenant population.
- Complaint volumes have continued to rise, reflecting national sector trends, increased regulatory expectations, and improved accessibility of complaints processes.

6. Complaint Themes

The profile of complaints locally aligns with sector-wide trends, with the majority relating to:

- Repairs and maintenance
- Communication
- Responsiveness of services

Repairs-related complaints remain the largest category, reflecting both the volume and complexity of repair interactions. Increased complaints regarding communication mirror national trends, where regulatory pressures and service changes have heightened resident expectations around responsiveness and clarity.

Overall, this consistency with national patterns indicates that the Council is experiencing similar operational pressures while providing clear direction for targeted service improvements.

7. Complaint Handling Performance

Performance against response times shows continued improvement:

- Stage 1 responses within target timeframes increased from 67% to 73% but remain below the 80% target.
- Stage 2 responses achieved 86% within timescales, remaining above target despite a slight decrease from 88%.

To address timeliness and quality, the service has implemented:

- Improved triage processes
- Clearer case ownership
- Enhanced staff training
- Recruitment of a dedicated Complaints and Case Officer (from 2026)

8. Housing Ombudsman Outcomes

During the year, two cases were determined by the Housing Ombudsman:

- One case found no maladministration
- One case identified maladministration relating to damp and mould and complaint handling failures

All orders and recommendations were fully complied with within required timescales, demonstrating a commitment to learning and accountability.

9. Learning and Service Improvement

Complaints continue to play a key role in driving service improvements. Actions implemented during 2025 / 2026 include:

- Strengthened contractor management arrangements
- Targeted training for repairs contact centre staff
- Enhanced digital access, including introduction of the *M&Me app*
- Improvements to leasehold charging processes

These changes demonstrate a clear organisational commitment to using resident feedback to improve services and outcomes.

Reasons for Recommendations

10. The recommendations in this report ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations under the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code, provides appropriate governance and oversight of complaints performance, and demonstrates a clear commitment to transparency, accountability and continuous service improvement.

Options

11. It is a requirement by the Housing Ombudsman to publish both the Annual Report and self-assessment. Therefore, no alternative options are put forward.

Implications

12. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial and Fraud Impact

13. A new Compensation Policy was introduced in December 2025, aligned with Housing Ombudsman guidance, ensuring a consistent, transparent and fair approach to compensation as part of our complaints handling process.

Legal

14. Compliance is required under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and associated Ombudsman and regulatory standards.

Staffing

15. A dedicated Complaints Officer post has been approved within existing budgets, strengthening oversight, coordination and response quality.

Risks / Opportunities

16. The Regulator of Social Housing is undertaking a programme of inspections over a four-year cycle. This presents an opportunity to demonstrate strong performance, supported by robust complaint handling and self-assessment processes.

Equality and Diversity

17. The Consumer Standards under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act support fairness, accessibility and accountability, ensuring that all tenants are treated with respect and have their voices heard.

Consultation responses

18. The report will be presented to the Housing Engagement Board on 22 June 2026, comprising tenant representatives, councillors and officers. Due to the short timescale between the Housing Engagement Board meeting and Cabinet, any amendments arising from that discussion will be reported to Cabinet verbally.
19. Ongoing scrutiny is provided through the Tenant Performance Panel on a quarterly basis.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Healthy and Supported Communities

20. Supports safe, well-managed homes and promotes resident wellbeing through effective complaint resolution.

Sustainable Homes and Vibrant Places

21. Strengthens service delivery standards and accountability in line with regulatory requirements.

Appendices

Appendix A: Annual Complaints Report 2025 / 2026

Appendix B: Self-Assessment of the Complaints Handling Code

Report Author:

Julie Fletcher – Service Manager – Housing Strategy

Telephone: (01954) 713 352

Appendix A

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Housing Landlord Services

Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report 2025 / 2026

1. Reporting Period

- 1.1 This report covers housing landlord complaints, in line with the Council's responsibilities as a landlord and the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. Complaints relating to other Council services are excluded and are managed through separate monitoring arrangements.
- 1.2 The report includes housing complaints received and responded to between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, including complaints carried forward from the previous year where responses were issued during this reporting period.
- 1.3 It demonstrates a well-established and increasingly effective complaints framework, where rising engagement reflects resident confidence in the process and supports a strong focus on service improvement and transparency.

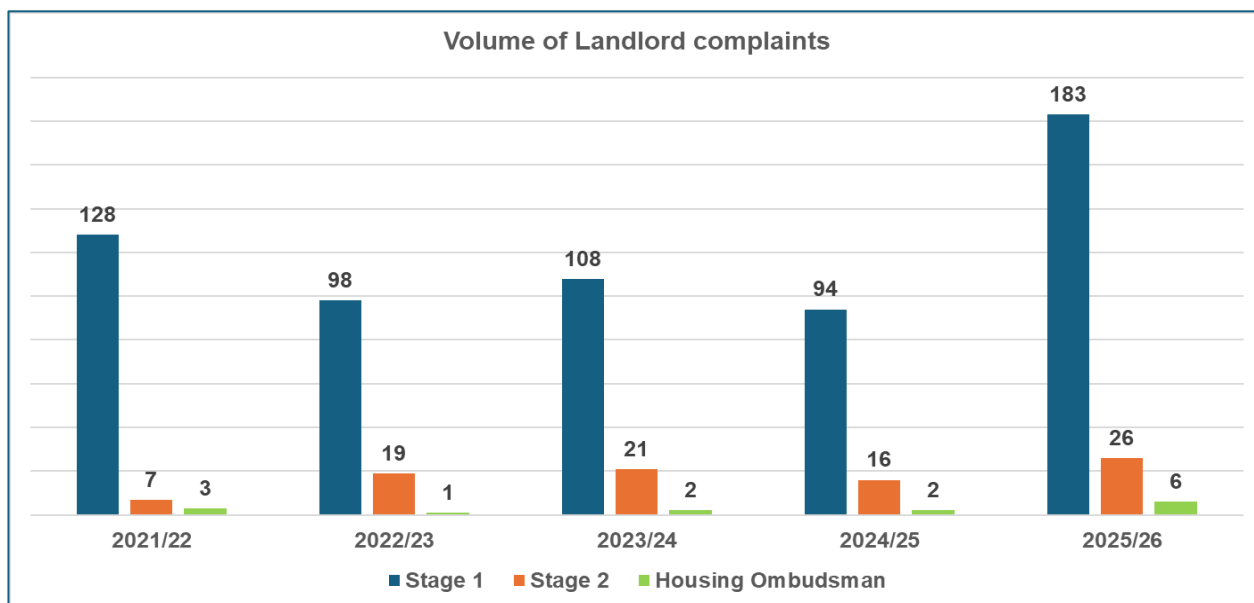
2. The Complaints Process

- 2.1 Complaints are defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation / landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual / resident or group of individuals / residents'*.
- 2.2 There are two stages to the complaints process:
 - Stage 1** – is the first step to make a complaint. At stage 1, a manager / team leader will review, investigate and respond to the complaint. We aim to reply within 10 working days of acknowledgement.
 - Stage 2** – Where the complainant is not happy with the outcome at stage 1, the complaint can be looked at again by the Head of Service or Service Manager. We aim to reply within 20 working days.
- 2.3 Where the complainant remains unhappy after the Stage 2 response, they may refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman for an independent and impartial investigation.

3. Complaint Volumes

Volumes Looking back at previous years

- 3.1 High complaint volumes should not be viewed in isolation as an indicator of poor performance, as they may also reflect residents' awareness of, and confidence in, a clear and accessible complaints process.



[Graph 1: Complaint Volumes]

Complaint volumes for the current year, 2025 / 2026

Complaint stage	What this means	Number of complaints 2025 / 2026
Stage 1	Matters that could not be resolved straight away and required investigation by a manager / team leader	183 Of which 25 had an agreed *extension of time
Stage 2	Complaints escalated for further review by a Service Manager or Head of Housing	26 Of which three had an agreed *extension of time
Housing Ombudsman	Complaints referred to the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS)	6
Total landlord complaints	Stage 1 + Stage 2 + HOS	215

[Table 1: Complaint Volumes]

- 3.2 *Extensions were used only for complex complaints. Residents were notified in advance, given reasons, and a revised date agreed. Extensions were limited to up to 10 working days at Stage 1 and 20 at Stage 2, in line with the Code and with resident agreement. Compared to the previous year, a higher number of extensions

were required reflecting the increasing complexity of cases and the service's commitment to thorough and high-quality investigations.

- 3.3 A further three cases were initially recorded as complaints but were subsequently withdrawn by the resident or closed due to an inability to progress them because of a lack of contact.
- 3.4 Complaints relating to landlord services represent approximately 4% of the total tenant population, demonstrating a proportionate level of formal dissatisfaction and supporting confidence in an accessible and trusted complaints process.
- 3.5 This data relates solely to cases received through the Council's formal complaints system and does not represent the total volume of feedback, enquiries, or service requests handled across the wider Housing service. No complaints were refused during the reporting period.
- 3.6 Feedback received through the complaints system was recorded and followed through; however, some matters were not treated as formal complaints where they did not relate to dissatisfaction with the Housing Service or its contractors' actions. These included:
 - **Service requests**, where the feedback related to the need for a service rather than dissatisfaction with how a service was delivered. All service requests were actioned appropriately. Where ongoing dissatisfaction with the actions of the Council or its contractors became evident, the matter was logged and progressed as a formal complaint in line with the Complaints Policy and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.
 - **Enquiries received in error**, which required redirection to another landlord or an appropriate support service.
 - **Reports of nuisance or anti-social behaviour** about another resident, where the complaint did not relate to the way the Council handled the case.
 - **MP and Councillor enquiries**,

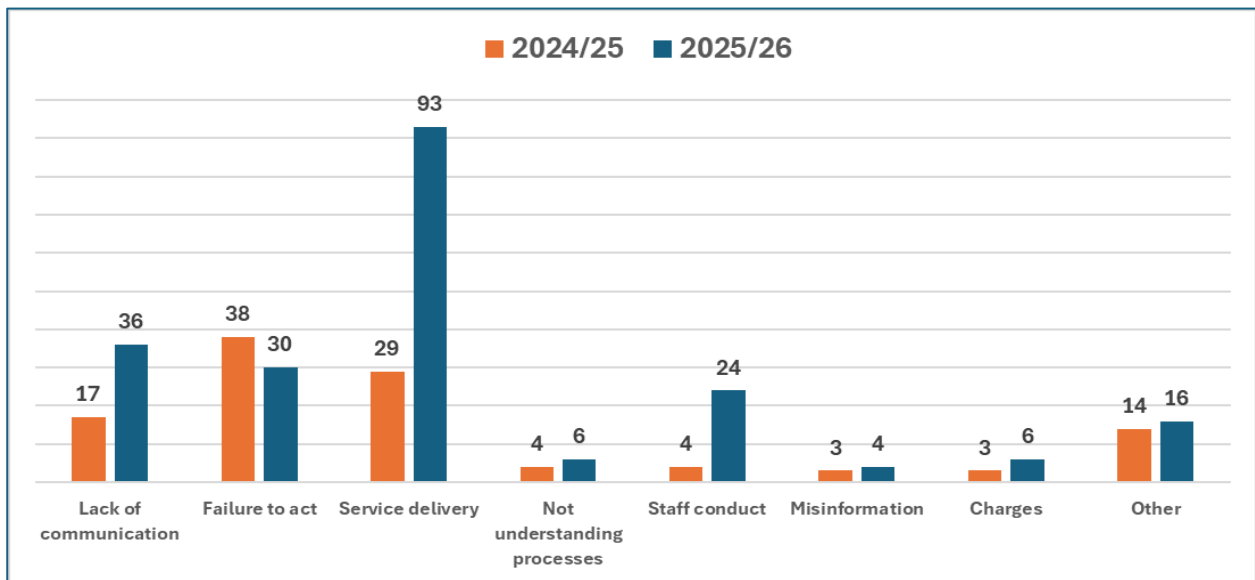
4. Complaint Themes

- 4.1 When a complaint is received, we record it in two different ways to help us understand what went wrong and how we can improve our services.
- 4.2 **Council (SCDC) themes** describe the nature of the matter, such as poor communication, delays, or service issues. This helps us identify recurring problems and areas where change is required.

4.3 **HouseMark themes** group complaints by housing service areas, such as repairs, tenancy management, or customer service. HouseMark is a national benchmarking system used by housing providers to compare performance and support regulatory reporting.

Council (SCDC) themes

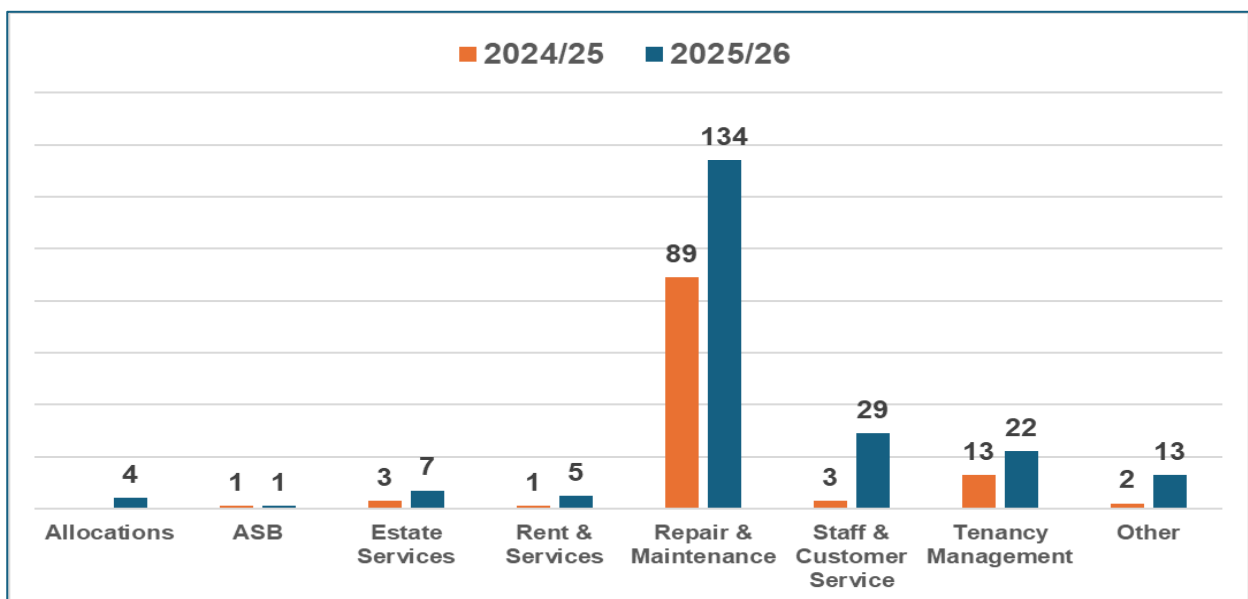
Note: Figures represent total complaints across all stages.



[Graph 2: Complaint themes (SCDC)]

HouseMark themes

Note: Figures represent total complaints across all stages.



[Graph 3: Complaint themes (HouseMark)]

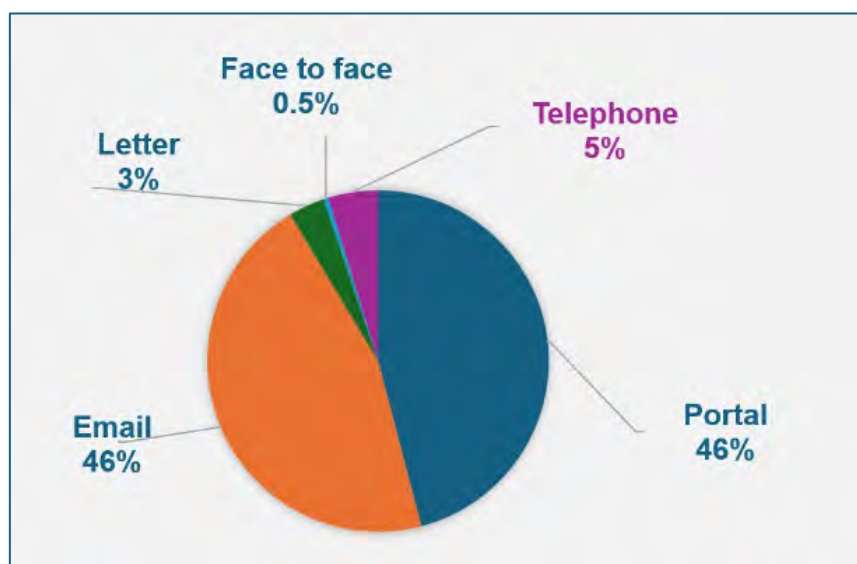
What the above themes show

4.4 The data shows an increase in recorded complaints, particularly in service delivery and communication, provides clearer insight into resident expectations and

highlights where improvements are being successfully identified and addressed.

- 4.5 It is important to consider this within the wider national context. Complaint volumes have increased across the social housing sector, with recent HouseMark data indicating a rise of around 50% between January 2024 and January 2026. This trend reflects a sector-wide shift towards greater transparency, improved access to complaints processes, and stronger compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.
- 4.6 HouseMark also notes that organisations with stronger complaint handling and higher satisfaction levels often report higher complaint volumes, as residents have greater confidence that their concerns will be heard and addressed. This supports the Housing Ombudsman's position that complaint volumes should not be viewed in isolation as a measure of performance, but alongside outcomes, themes, and organisational learning.
- 4.7 Locally, while failure to act remains a significant complaint theme, volumes reduced from 38 to 30, indicating some improvement in this area. Complaints relating to understanding processes, misinformation, charges, and other issues remained relatively low and stable year on year.
- 4.8 Overall, the data demonstrates that service delivery, communication, and staff conduct were the primary drivers of complaints in 2025 / 2026. While this reflects wider sector trends linked to increased scrutiny and transparency, it also provides a strong evidence base for targeted service improvements, helping to prioritise resources and drive continuous improvement.

5. How complaints are made



[Graph 4: Method of complaints reported]

- 5.1 The pattern remains consistent with previous years, with email and the customer portal being the most commonly used methods for submitting complaints.

6. Complaints Responses and Timescales

Complaints Responses

Stage	2025 / 2026	2024 / 2025	Trend
Stage 1	179	99	▲ Increase
Stage 2	22	17	▲ Slight increase

[Table 2: Complaint Responses]

Note: Table 2 relates to complaints responded to during the reporting year and includes cases carried forward from the previous year where responses were issued during this period. As such, the figures are not directly comparable to the number of complaints received in 2025 / 2026.

Responding on Time

Measure	Corporate target	2025 / 2026	2024 / 2025	Status
Stage 1 – within 10 working days	80%	73%	67%	▲ Improved
Stage 2 – within 20 working days	80%	86%	88%	▼ Slight Decline

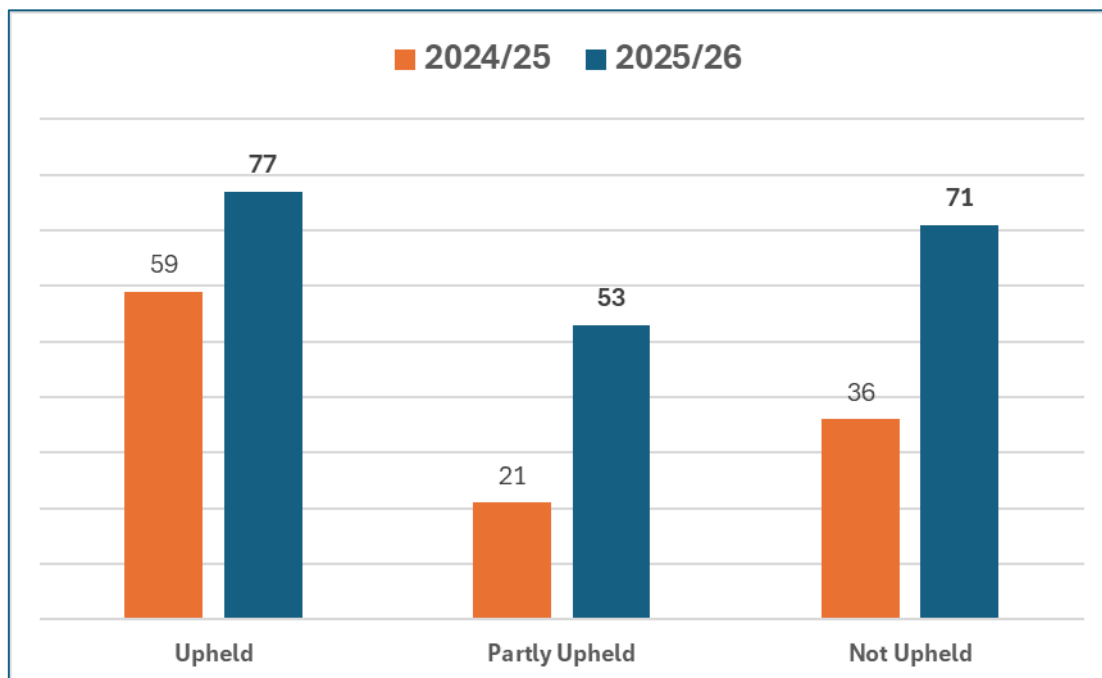
[Table 3: Response Times]

- 6.1 Performance against complaint response times has improved overall compared to last year. Stage 1 responses within timescales increased from 67% to 73%, demonstrating progress, representing continued progress towards the 80% target. Stage 2 performance in response times declined slightly from 88% to 86% but continues to exceed the target.
- 6.2 Where response times were not met, these have been reviewed to identify learning and inform targeted improvements. During 2025 / 2026, response times were occasionally impacted by increased case complexity and external dependencies; however, these have been proactively addressed through a range of improvement actions. These included: enhanced staff training, process reviews, strengthening early triage and case ownership, and the introduction of template responses to improve consistency and quality. The appointment of a dedicated Complaints and Case Officer in 2026 will further strengthen capacity and support ongoing improvements in both timeliness and the quality of responses.

- 6.3 These actions place the service in a strong position to continue improving both timeliness and consistency in 2026 / 2027.

7. Outcomes from Complaint Responses

Note: Figures represent total outcomes across all stages.



[Graph 5: Outcomes]

- 7.1 The chart illustrates the outcomes of complaints concluded in 2025 / 2026 compared with 2024 / 2025, broken down into upheld, partly upheld and not upheld decisions.
- 7.2 An upheld complaint is one where the investigation found that the Council or its contractors had failed to deliver a service in line with policy, procedure or expected standards. In 2025 / 2026, the increase in upheld complaints demonstrates a transparent and accountable approach to complaints handling, where service issues are openly recognised and addressed.
- 7.3 A partly upheld complaint is recorded where some elements of the complaint were substantiated, while others were not. This outcome often indicates that aspects of the service fell short, but not all concerns raised were supported by the evidence. The rise in partly upheld complaints reflects the increasing complexity of cases, with more nuanced investigations leading to balanced and evidence-based outcomes.
- 7.4 A not upheld decision is reached where the investigation concludes that services were delivered in accordance with relevant policies, procedures and timescales, or where no evidence of service failure is found. Not upheld complaints increased from

36 to 71, reflecting the overall rise in complaints and demonstrating that a proportion of concerns relate to matters where the Council's actions were appropriate.

7.5 Taken together, the data demonstrates a mature and robust complaints process, where concerns are thoroughly investigated, outcomes are evidence-based and learning is actively captured to drive service improvement.

7.6 This analysis supports a learning-focused approach to complaints handling, using outcomes to inform service improvements, strengthen communication, and ensure accountability, in line with the Complaints Policy and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

8. Housing Ombudsman Cases and Outcomes

8.1 The outcomes of Ombudsman cases during the year reflect both effective handling in complex cases and a strong commitment to learning where improvements are identified. During the reporting period, two complaints were determined by the Housing Ombudsman Service, as set out below, while a further four cases remained under investigation and were awaiting a decision.

Ombudsman determinations

8.2 Case One – No maladministration

The complaint related to how the Council handled the resident's queries concerning the accuracy of an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) assessment carried out to the property.

The Ombudsman confirmed that the Council took appropriate action, acting fairly and appropriately throughout the process, and took appropriate steps to ensure an up-to-date EPC assessment was completed in a timely manner by instructing professional, qualified experts. No further action was required.

8.3 Case Two – Maladministration and service failure

The complaint concerned delays in addressing a damp and mould issue, alongside a poor experience in how the resident's complaint was handled.

The Ombudsman found maladministration in the handling of damp and mould reports and service failure in complaint handling. Orders and a recommendation were issued.

Orders and compliance

All required actions were implemented promptly and in full, demonstrating commitment to accountability and continuous improvement, including:

- A written apology that was meaningful and in line with Ombudsman guidance
- Payment of £680 compensation, comprising:
 - £600 for distress and inconvenience relating to damp and mould
 - £80 for complaint handling failures
- A qualified surveyor inspection, with a written report and photographic evidence provided to the resident

9. Compliments and Positive Feedback

9.1 The number of compliments received by the Housing Service remains consistent year on year, demonstrating sustained positive resident experiences alongside increased engagement through the complaints process., with 34 compliments recorded in both 2024 / 2025 and 2025 / 2026. This stability indicates that, alongside an increase in complaint volumes, residents continued to take the time to provide positive feedback where services met or exceeded expectations. Compliments most commonly reflect appreciation for staff professionalism, support and responsiveness, and provide important balance to complaint data by highlighting areas of good practice. All compliments are shared with relevant teams and used to recognise staff efforts and reinforce positive service behaviours.

9.2 Below are some of the compliments received during 2025 – 2026: -

- *“Thank you so much for all the efforts you have made, also to make time to come and visit us”*
- *“Thank you for all that you do, your support has been invaluable!”*
- *“Thanks very much. This will be life changing for me, Thank you.”*
- *“I would like to send you another Thank you. I know you may feel this is not necessary, but it has been a pleasure working with you and has made a real difference to my quality of life, so I think it's really important to recognize how helpful you have been from day one.”*
- *“I can't thank you enough for your hard work and effort to help me”*
- *“Thank you for coming round to give me the support, May God bless you abundantly that was very nice of you”*
- *“You do an amazing job supporting people in South Cambs”*

- *“A quick note to say thank you very very much for this morning. You’re an absolute godsend to me and other people you help thank you thank you”.*
- *“Just want to say how pleased we are for the refitted kitchen, the men who worked on our kitchen have done a great job”*
- *“It’s probably not often you get a thank you, but I feel I must say a big thank you”*

10. Learning and Service Improvement

10.1 Learning from complaints continues to inform service delivery, with a clear focus on strengthening performance, transparency and the overall resident experience. During 2025 / 2026, this has led to improved oversight and resourcing of complaints handling, more consistent communication with residents, and stronger coordination with contractors to support timely and effective service delivery.

10.2 Key improvements include:

- Contractor management and service delivery
 - o Strengthened coordination between internal teams and contractors to improve accountability and oversight
 - o Enhancements to the repairs contractor contact centre, including targeted staff training to strengthen call handling.
 - o Improved coordination of roof repairs involving third-party solar PV panels by sequencing of works more effectively, reducing scaffolding duration, minimising disruption to residents and lowering associated costs.
- Digital access and service visibility
 - o Introduction of the M&Me App to improve real-time job management, communication and visibility of repair appointments and progress
 - o Improvements to the housing portal to provide clearer, more accessible information for residents, supporting them to independently review and update their personal details.
 - o Improving assurance and transparency for leaseholders through monthly internal checks on block repair charges, ensuring greater confidence in the information provided.

- Resident-focused communication
 - o Strengthened approach to recognising and meeting individual communication needs, using data collected from the initial tenant census to inform service delivery.
 - o More consistent use of clear, accessible language in correspondence
 - o Implementation of a Compensation Policy aligned to updated guidance provided by the Housing Ombudsman
 - o Review and publication of policies, improving transparency and accessibility, including housing safety policies and tenancy sustainment
 - o Additional support through advice and signposting for tenants experiencing financial hardship

10.3 Learning from complaints is also considered alongside wider housing performance information, including relevant Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), to provide a broader understanding of resident experience and inform service improvement priorities. The latest TSMs results identify resident satisfaction with complaint handling has significantly improved to 56%, representing a 7% increase from 2023 / 2024, while dissatisfaction has more than halved from 51% to 24%. This reflects the service changes and process improvements implemented over the last two years.

10.4 The full results of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures are reported separately and published on our website, where further information is available. Link to website: [Housing performance and tenant satisfaction measures - South Cambs District Council](#).

11. Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments

11.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that the complaints process is accessible and fair to all residents. Where required, reasonable adjustments are made to support residents in making and pursuing a complaint, including residents with disabilities, health conditions, language needs, or other vulnerabilities.

11.2 Information about how to make a complaint, the support available, and the Council's approach to reasonable adjustments is set out in the Council's Complaints Policy, which is published on the Council's website and is available in alternative formats on request. Link to website page: [Complaints - South Cambs District Council](#). In addition, all reviewed housing-related policies include a clear statement explaining how tenants can make a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the service they have received, ensuring consistent signposting across Council documentation.

- 11.3 Complaints may be submitted through a range of channels to ensure that residents can access the complaints process in a way that meets their individual needs.

12. Resident and Governance Oversight

- 12.1 Complaint performance, compliance with the Complaints Policy, and learning from complaints are overseen through a structured governance framework that provides assurance at officer, tenant, and elected Member level, (see the Assurance Framework [\(insert link\)](#) for further information),
- 12.2 Actions arising from complaints and Housing Ombudsman determinations are monitored quarterly through internal Service Manager performance meetings and the KPI / TSM Tenant Performance Panel, prior to reporting to the Housing Engagement Board. Key performance indicators, including response times and the number of complaints relative to the size of the landlord, are reported quarterly as part of the wider suite of performance measures overseen by Cabinet.
- 12.3 From 2026, the Council will introduce a Complaints Quality and Assurance Tenant Panel to provide additional independent oversight of complaints handling. The panel will review the quality of complaint responses and contribute resident insight to identify opportunities for service improvement.

13. Compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code

- 13.1 The Council has undertaken its annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, which sets out the standards landlords are required to meet when managing and handling complaints. This assessment confirms that the Council's complaints process is operating in accordance with the Code, including requirements relating to response timescales, escalation arrangements, learning from complaints, and effective engagement with the Housing Ombudsman Service.
- 13.2 The Council's Complaint Handling Code self-assessment is published on the Council's website and is available for residents to access. Link to website page: [Complaints - South Cambs District Council](#)

14. Looking Ahead

14.1 During the next reporting year, the Council will continue to focus on:

- Improving repair performance and contractor management
- Strengthening communication with residents
- Embedding learning from complaints consistently across services
- Maintaining compliance with the Complaint Handling Code

14.2 Complaints and resident feedback will continue to play a vital role in shaping service improvements.

Appendix B: Self-assessment of the Complaints Handling Code 2026 – 2027 (Housing)

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer, and it must be reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body at least annually.

Once approved, landlords must publish the self-assessment as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on their website. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.

Landlords are required to complete the self-assessment in full and support all statements with evidence, with additional commentary as necessary.

We recognise that there may be a small number of circumstances where landlords are unable to meet the requirements, for example, if they do not have a website. In these circumstances, we expect landlords to deliver the intentions of the Code in an alternative way, for example by publishing information in a public area so that it is easily accessible.

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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 landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'</i>	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 4, Section 4.1	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
1.3	A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 4, Section 4.2	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 3, Section 3	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 3, Section 3.3	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 4, Section 6.1	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 8, Section 12.1	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
2.2	A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include: • The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. • Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. • Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 8, Section 12.2	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 7, Section 11	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an 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. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 8, Section 12.1	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 8, Section 12 Page 11, Section 16	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 4, Section 6 Page 10, Section 15	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 4, Section 6	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Pages 13, Section 18.1	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two-stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Pages 5, Section 7	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 4, Section 6 Page 9, Section 13.7	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
3.6	Landlords must 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.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 10, Section 15.1	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Pages 9, Section 13	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 12, Section 17	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 12, Section 17	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 13, Section 18	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Pages 5 – 7	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Pages 5 – 7	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (example, a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 4, Section 5	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 4, Section 5.1	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as “the complaint definition”. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 5, Section 7.3	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 5, Section 7.2	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Pages 3 – 14	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.			
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 7, Section 9.3	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 10, Section 15	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 8, Section 12	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, 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 relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 7, Section, 8.1	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Pages 6-13 Page 7, Section 10.1	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and / or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 11, Section 16	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 11, Section 16	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council pages 3-14	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u>	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 5, Section 7.1	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 5, Section 7.8	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 7, Section 9.3	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 7, Section 9.4	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
6.6	A complaint response must be provided 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 promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 7, Section 9.1	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 3, Section 2.1	Aligned with Ombudsman Code We have template letters to help staff ensure all relevant wording and points are covered.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 5, Section 7.6	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Pages 3 – 14	Aligned with Ombudsman Code We have template letters to help staff ensure all relevant wording and points are covered.

Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Pages 5 – 6, Section 7	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Pages 5 – 6, Section 7	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 6, Section 7.10	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 6, Sections 7.11 and 7.12	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 6, Section 7.14	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 7, Section 9.3	Aligned with Ombudsman Code Our Complaints Policy sets a more ambitious limit of 10 working days for extensions, in line with the Complaint Handling Code, which allows up to 20 working days where justified.
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 7, Section 9.4	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
6.17	A complaint response must be provided 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 promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 7, Section 9.1	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Pages 7 – 8	Aligned with Ombudsman Code We have template letters to help staff ensure all relevant wording and points are covered.
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Pages 3-14	Aligned with Ombudsman Code We have template letters to help staff ensure all relevant wording and points are covered.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 6, Section 7.10 – 7.13	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	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. These can include: • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons; • Taking action if there has been delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy; • Changing policies, procedures or practices.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 7, Section 10.1	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 7, Section 10	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
7.3	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	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 7, Section 10	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 7, Section 14	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include: a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept; c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 13, Section 18.3	Aligned with Ombudsman Code See dropdown 'self-assessment and Annual report' on website page

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.			
8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 13, Section 18	Aligned with Ombudsman Code See dropdown 'self-assessment and Annual report' on website page
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and / or change in procedures.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 13, Section 18 Page 14, Section 20	Aligned with Ombudsman Code See dropdown 'self-assessment and Annual report' on website page
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 13, Section 18	Aligned with Ombudsman Code See dropdown 'self-assessment and Annual report' on website page

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council	Aligned with Ombudsman Code See dropdown 'self-assessment and Annual report' on website page

Section 9: Scrutiny and oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 13, Section 18	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
9.2	A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 3, Section 17 and 18	Aligned with Ombudsman Code
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 13, Section 18	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 12, Section 17	Aligned with Ombudsman Code See dropdown 'self-assessment and Annual report' on website page Head of Housing has been appointed
9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 12, Section 17	Aligned with Ombudsman Code See dropdown 'self-assessment and Annual report' on website page Lead Cabinet member for Housing has been appointed as MRC
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 12, Section 17	Aligned with Ombudsman Code See dropdown 'self-assessment and Annual report' on website page Lead Cabinet member for Housing has been appointed as MRC, and will receive / have access to all suitable performance information

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
				quarterly and annually for review and reporting of findings at Housing Engagement Board and Cabinet meetings
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 13, Section 18	Aligned with Ombudsman Code See dropdown ' self-assessment and Annual report ' on website page Lead Cabinet member for Housing has been appointed as MRC, and will receive / have access to all suitable performance information quarterly and annually for review and reporting of findings at Housing Engagement Board and Cabinet meetings

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to: a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.	Yes	Complaints - South Cambs District Council Page 3, Sections 1 and 2 Page 14, Section 21	Aligned with Ombudsman Code

4.8 Approval of Service Plan

Julie Fletcher to report on the Approval of the Service Plan which is included in the pack.

Report to:	Housing Engagement Board 22 June 2026
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Batchelor – Lead Member for Housing
Lead Officer:	Peter Campbell – Head of Housing

Housing Service Plan for 2026 – 2027

Recommendations

1. That the Housing Engagement Board (HEB) note the Housing Service Plan for 2026-2027, as set out at Appendix A, identifying any additional key priorities / challenges to be included for this year and / or to support the development of next years' Service Plan and budget priorities.

Reasons for Recommendations

2. Final sign-off of the Service Plan is the responsibility of the Head of Service, Peter Campbell, before publication to the Corporate Management Team. Whilst this is primarily an internal document that each service area completes annually, it is important that the Housing Engagement Board feed into its development relating to the landlord services and have oversight of progress. It should be noted that the Service Plan covers all functions of the Housing Service, not just those relating to our responsibilities as a housing landlord.

Purpose

3. The purpose of the report is to acknowledge the current service plan and to discuss what key priorities and challenges the housing service faces over the next year. This will form initial discussions for the preparation of the development for the next Service Plan and budget setting for 2027 / 2028. Many of the priorities will remain the same as for this year based on the approved Asset Management Strategy, with a key focus on the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis, working towards net zero carbon targets and energy efficiency of our homes and meeting new regulatory requirements.
4. At a strategic level, the Housing Engagement Board are asked to consider whether there are any further key priorities that the service should take into account and whether there are any key actions not already identified.

5. Any additional priorities will need to be considered in the context of budgetary constraints.

Details

6. The [Corporate Plan](#) sets out the overall objectives for the Council, which in turn have an influence on the priorities and actions within the Housing Service Plan. Service Plans are also an opportunity to highlight the key projects and challenges for each service area and the relationship between departmental inter-dependencies.
7. The Service Plan is a standard template used for all services. The document is internally focussed and may therefore be of a technical nature, the detail of which is not presented in a way for general publication. The Service Plan is split into four sections.
8. Section 1 sets out the service vision, mission and background. The vision has been taken from the approved Housing Asset Management Strategy, which is also relevant to the whole Housing Service, demonstrating how it aligns with our corporate values. This section also defines the five primary functions of the Housing Service.
9. Section 2 gives a brief transformation statement as to how we are moving towards the target operating model to improve digital interaction with the public via self-service. It also includes a summary of the current housing financial position, alongside statements outlining how the service supports the Council's objectives in relation to environmental sustainability and equality and inclusion.
10. Section 3 highlights some of the main accomplishments over the last year and what lessons have been learnt.
11. Section 4 sets out the delivery plan, detailing how the Housing Service will contribute to Corporate Plan priorities. It also includes additional non-corporate actions, such as service improvements, and provides an overview of the top three housing risks identified in the Housing Risk Register.

Appendices

Appendix A: Housing Service Plan for 2026 – 2027

Report Author:

Julie Fletcher : Service Manager – Housing Strategy

Telephone: (01954) 713 352

Housing Service Plan for 2026 – 2027

Start of Year Approval Details:

Head of Service Approval	Peter Campbell
Service Area Manager(s) Contributions	Sue Carter Geoff Clark Kirstin Donaldson Julie Fletcher Eddie Spicer Heather Wood

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Section 1: Service Vision, Mission and Background

Service Vision

Homes should be so much more than just bricks and mortar. Places to feel safe and secure, where communities thrive and grow.

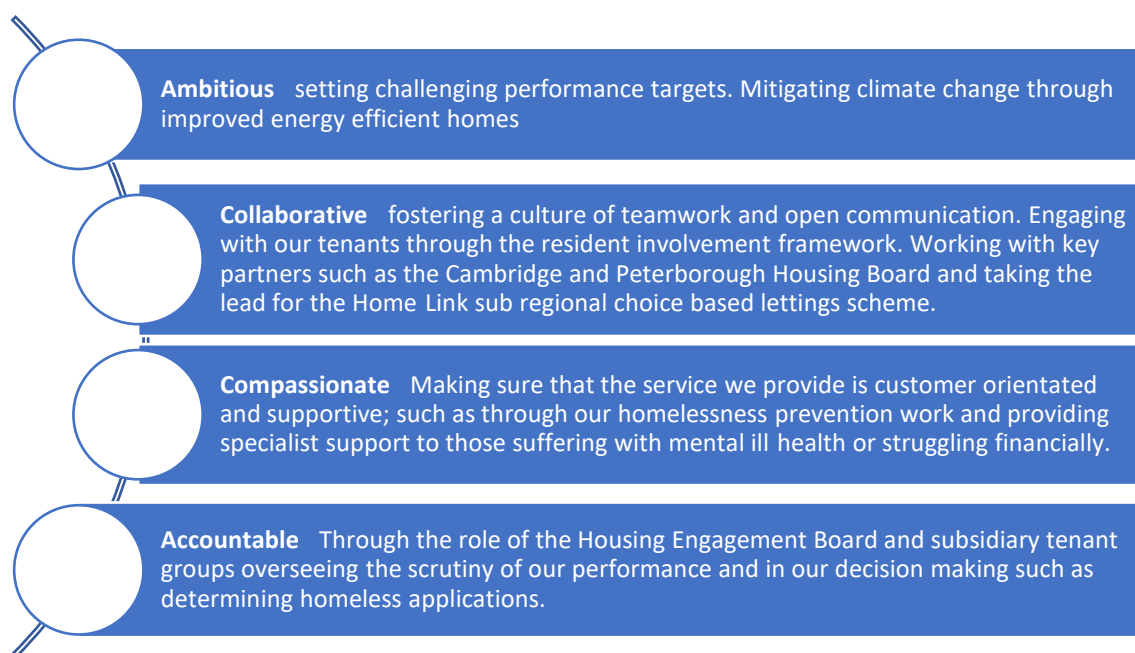


Our vision is supported by having a future-proofed data driven service that enable informed and robust decisions to be taken.

Service Mission Statement

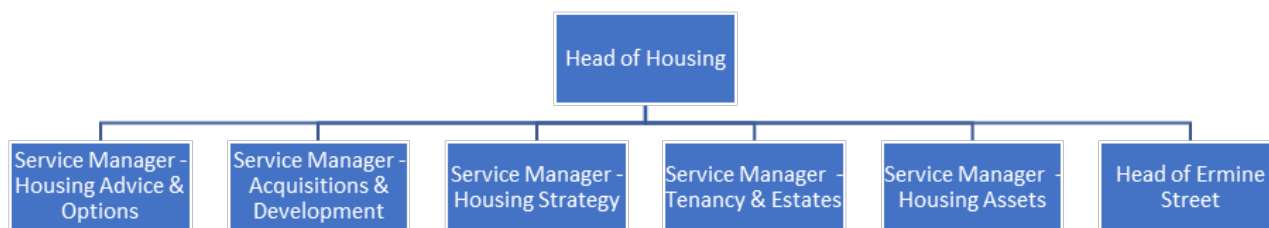
To provide good quality, sustainable homes that are affordable to live in and where people choose to live.

Our vision and mission statement aligns closely with our corporate values:



Background

The Housing Service has five primary functions:



This service plan covers both strategic housing functions of the Council and its landlord role. The service plan for Affordable Homes should be read in conjunction with the [Greater Cambridgeshire Housing Strategy \(2024-2029\)](#), the [Homeless Strategy 2023–2028](#) and the [Housing Revenue Account \(HRA\) Asset Management Strategy 2021-2026](#).

Ermine Street Housing is a limited company and is wholly owned by South Cambs District Council. The company sits within Housing to take advantage of the synergies and expertise in terms of maintenance and housing management. Governance is provided by an independent Board of Directors and a Business Plan is produced annually. The Board considers the performance of the company in relation to the previous year's trading period, updates the financial assumptions and revises key risks and key business sensitivities. All risks are regularly reviewed by the Board.

Monitoring of the Service Plan is completed by our Housing Services Management Team and progress reported in our [Annual Report to Tenants and Leaseholder](#) published in Autumn, as well as up to date information contained in our [Tenant and Leasehold news](#)

Section 2: Cross-Cutting Themes

Transformation Statement

- We will continue to develop the customer housing portal within the MRI system to enable tenants to see their rent accounts, tenancy details, etcetera, working alongside the corporate transformation team.
- The tenant census will improve our understanding of tenants and their vulnerabilities, while encouraging greater uptake of the housing portal to support better engagement and data accuracy.
- We will build on the well-established self-service functions in the Home-Link choice-based lettings system by embedding the updated Lettings Platform. This will increase the options for customers and staff members to self-serve.
- We will continue to complete the roll out of the repairs app to all tenants to allow direct reporting and tracking of repairs and on the day tracking and communication direct to the operative.
- We will continue to move to direct repairs booking from site for all staff.
- We will fully implement mobile working for all site staff.
- We are transitioning away from reliance on standalone spreadsheets toward modern, integrated digital systems that provide greater consistency, reliability, and transparency across our service.

Financial Statement

Finance: (approved by Council in February 2026)

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – is a ring-fenced account containing the income and expenditure on running the councils housing stock / social housing.

Capital*	Budget 2025 / 2026	Budget 2026 / 2027
Planned Improvements to Existing Stock	£14,443,000	£19,881,000
Other Improvement Costs	£75,000	£75,000
Council New Homes Programme	£62,611,000	£55,542,000
LAHF Acquisitions	£2,332,000	£0
Other, i.e. Shared Ownership Repurchase	£530,000	£150,000
Total HRA Costs (Capital)	£79,991,000	£75,648,000
Revenue	Budget 2025 / 2026	Budget 2026 / 2027
Cyclical Maintenance (Revenue)	£2,292,410	£2,503,250
Responsive Repairs (Revenue)	£6,232,590	£6,680,750
Staffing Costs	£5,201,770	£5,376,450

Capital*	Budget 2025 / 2026	Budget 2026 / 2027
Service Costs	£2,411,160	£5,919,640
Recharges	£2,276,600	£2,416,930
Interest payment on PWB Loans	£8,308,310	£10,795,920
Contribution to capital financing**	£17,453,000	£4,695,000
Depreciation***	£7,867,100	£8,094,400
Total HRA Costs (Revenue)	£52,042,940	£46,482,340
Income received – from rents and other funding sources	-£51,422,930	-£46,493,450
Deficit / Surplus (-) for Year	£620,010	-£11,110

* Capital costs are financed from right to buy receipts, government grant funding, PWLB (Public Works Loan Board) borrowing and other capital receipts (such as shared ownership receipts, sale of land and money received in lieu of affordable housing on developments)

** Contribution to capital financing is the amount of capital expenditure (in this case the new homes programme) financed from rental income in year.

*** The amount charged as depreciation within the revenue account can be used to finance the improvements to existing stock and to repay debt.

The proposed budgets show an HRA deficit of £0.6 million in 2025 / 2026 and a small surplus of £0.01 million in 2026 / 2027. The cost of repairs and maintenance has risen more than anticipated, driven by both inflation and higher demand. The survey program introduced in 2023 / 2024 to address damp, mould, and condensation issues in our homes has required significant additional investment, with rising compliance requirements further contributing to increased expenditure. A retail unit located beneath the new build flats in Northstowe is expected to start generating commercial rental income from the second half of 2026 / 2027. A consultancy budget of £100,000 has been added to the budget for 2026 / 2027 to support preparatory work for Local Government Reorganisation, including the potential merger of the two HRAs (SCDC and Cambridge City Council) into the new authority.

Housing General Fund (GF) is the main revenue account of which includes day-to-day income and expenditure on the provision of services other than the landlord services covered by the HRA (see above)

Service Area	Budget 2025 / 2026	Budget 2026 / 2027
Housing Strategy, Enabling and Development	£278,140	£265,600
Homelessness	£1,961,000	£1,894,050
Housing Allocations	£166,850	£174,660
Private Sector Leasing Scheme	£795,210	£784,700
Sub Regional Home-link Service	£153,060	£167,190
Traveller Sites – Whaddon and Milton	£172,250	£168,110
Improvement Grants (Disabled Facility Grants and Repairs)	£807,020	£1,043,220
Visiting Support	£338,940	£361,830
Housing Company (Ermine Street Housing)	£960,350	£960,710
Footway Lighting	£45,130	£44,660
Grounds Maintenance	£262,980	£284,270
General Fund equity-share properties	£255,720	£257,720
New Build Programme	£3,460	£2,250
Housing Administration	£14,810	£15,460
Total General Fund Costs – Housing	£6,214,920	£6,424,430
Income received – from grants and other funding sources	-£4,982,710	-£4,600,200

Bids and Savings

The 2026 / 2027 Budget includes a £5,000 saving to be achieved through a review of transport duties and statutory obligations relating to homeless households within the Housing Advice and Options service.

Environmental Statement

- Through our council new build programme, we will provide energy efficient homes. Through the direct delivery on council own-land, homes will be built to a higher energy efficient standard that will realise carbon reduction and making homes more affordable in terms of energy costs.
- Our new build community facilities at Northstowe will achieve Net Zero in operation. Sustainability in construction and operation will be the cornerstone of these projects, using green technologies to ensure our buildings are environmentally responsible and fit for the future.
- Continue to identify and deliver opportunities for tree planting, habitat piles, loggers and bat boxes along with establishing wildflower strips on our own estates and on HRA land

- Continue the work of adding bird and bat boxes to our homes as part of the re-roofing projects and ad hoc installations in area where benefits can be gained to improve the local habitat that may be affected by modern products used on building preventing nesting areas.
- Explore energy efficiency opportunities to make homes more affordable and prevent homelessness.
- Continue to mobilise and deliver on Wave 3 (Warm Homes) grant funding works to further decarbonise our housing stock, £19m project over four years to 610 properties by 2029.
- Our Main contractor Mears are dedicated to introducing Hybrid and or electric vehicles across their fleet to reduce fuel usage and emissions.
- We are continually working with our contractors to source more locally and use products that have reduced fabrication mileage,

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

- Provision of inclusive housing advice that acknowledges the specific needs of people with different protected characteristics – completed in 2025 with recommendations taken forward for action in 2026 / 2027.
- The tenant census project will enable us to identify tenants with different protected characteristics and therefore target services as appropriate.
- We will incorporate information about tenant vulnerabilities and disabilities into our risk management approach to ensure risks are identified earlier and support needs are better understood.
- Via our joint venture partnership we will deliver specially adapted affordable rent homes for wheelchair users M4(3) at Cambourne
- Increase the amount of wheelchair accessible accommodation within our temporary accommodation
- All of our community buildings at Northstowe will be inclusive to all users. They will benefit from Changing Places facilities, hearing loops, and will be designed in order that all users can access all parts of the building.
- Recognising the high level of refugees for whom English is not their first language and providing additional support.
- Ensure all staff have equality and diversity training
- We will continue to provide disabled adaptations for our tenants and promote the Disabled Facilities Grants to home-owners and those in the private sector housing,

working closely with the Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency, to support residents' independence and wellbeing.

Section 3: Review of the Previous Year

Accomplishments in 2025 / 2026

- Delivered 99 new build council homes for affordable rent
- Delivered 30 new build homes for shared ownership
- Delivered two new build houses for refugees
- Delivered five new homes for temporary accommodation
- Completed Northstowe Unity Centre (Phase 1)
- Awarded design contract for Northstowe Town Hub which will deliver health, library and community centre
- Awarded design contract to deliver more small-scale affordable housing schemes on council-owned land in villages
- Supported the delivery of around 596 (estimated) affordable homes across the district, working with housing providers and developers.
- Provided 45 mandatory disabled facility grants and 10 discretionary grants in 2025 / 2026.
- Elections for tenant representatives held, with all three areas contested. Four new tenant reps elected and two existing, as well as one leaseholder rep.
- In consultation with tenant reps, approved 11 policies: Gas Safety, Water Hygiene, Electrical Management, Lift Safety, Fire Safety, Asbestos Management, Repairs and Maintenance, Assignment and Succession, Tenancy Sustainment and Support, Reaching every Tenant and Compensation.
- Transferred around 95 tenants with fixed term tenancies to secure tenancies.
- Commenced a new tree survey to ensure we have a detailed understanding of the condition of all the tree we have responsibility for on HRA Land.
- Set up an agreement with Virgin Media to rollout an improved broadband service to our sheltered housing communal rooms. This also included the removal of redundant analogue telephone lines.
- Achieved a success rate of 61% for homeless prevention, representing 403 cases during 2025 / 2026.
- Supporting 258 clients via the Visiting Support Service during 2025 / 2026 at the end of Q4.
- Housed 750 applicants in South Cambridgeshire via the Housing Register and Direct lets.
- Successfully implemented an upgrade to the Lettings Platform.

- Supported Cambridge Womens Aid to establish a Law Project to support survivors of domestic abuse access specialist legal advice.
- Helped 155 households gain income, with an average gain for each household of £693 per calendar month
- Introduced systems to manage Awaab's Law cases.
- Secured a community grant to improve the thermal efficiency at four sheltered communal rooms, these include windows and doors replacements and insulation upgrades.

Lessons

What went well / could have gone better?	What led to this?	How will this learning be incorporated into the new year?
Preparation for the HQN Regulatory Mock Inspection of the Landlord Services. We had under-estimated the amount of work and evidenced documentation that was required prior to the mock inspection taking place.	The introduction of the new regulatory inspection regime represents a significant shift for local authorities that manage their own housing stock. Although guidance exists on what an inspection is expected to cover, findings from the recent mock inspection highlighted that we need to strengthen the overall narrative of the service and improve how we evidence our activities and performance.	The Mock Inspection was undertaken to help officers clearly understand where improvements are required. The learning from this exercise will be embedded into the year ahead through a dedicated Action Plan and a newly established Task and Finish Group, which will drive forward the recommendations made by the Mock Inspectors. This structured approach will ensure that learning informs our priorities, strengthens our service delivery, and positions us to be significantly better prepared for the formal regulatory inspection.
Poor response times relating to complaints, quality of responses and lack of governance and oversight – as identified by the HQN Mock Inspection.	The amount of complaints and their complexity has increased, at a time where there were resource issues within the service and competing priorities with the new Regulations, especially with compliance.	We have continued to strengthen the process for monitoring complaints and have implemented a new workflow system on SharePoint to provide timely reminders. We will look to improve this system during 2026 / 2027 through the system development; alongside the recruitment of a dedicated Complaints Officer, fortnightly review of complaints by service managers and bi-annual scrutiny of complaints with tenant representatives.
Quality of customer contact through Mears Contact Centre	This was identified as an area for improvement as part of the HQN Mock Inspection and often raised as an issue by the tenant reps.	Additional training has been provided for Mears Contact Centre, including staff visiting the Council's Contact Centre. The M&Me App has been launched which will enhance the customer experience to report and track repairs.
We delivered W2.1 of the SHDF project to decarbonise 238 of our homes.	This was a co funded project, with SHDF funding provided by DESNZ and co funding from our planned works capital budget. The initial stages started prior to completing the stock condition surveys on all homes, this led to some data validation works being required to confirm data accuracy.	Data validation and continual verification for accuracy is a key part of our Asset Management. Methods for keeping data accurate and the ability to report clearly will be defined into the new year and improved to ensure efficient and constructive use of data and data analytics.
Challenges with recruitment to some roles	There is a very competitive market for skilled and knowledgeable staff in the housing repairs and maintenance field, led by national demand and shortages.	Exploring alternative methods for recruitment, including utilising specialist agencies for recruitment.
Huge demand for Awaab's law cases	The expansion from just Damp and Mould hazards to include a number of additional HHSRS hazards and the ongoing phases 2 and 3 is having very high impact of the service and delivery. We underestimated the impact this would have as a result of the strict timeframes and high volumes of reports.	Further developing the case management system to cope with increased demand for triage and categorisation of cases in and out of scope and the emergency actions required.
Increased disrepair claims	Data inaccuracy makes us vulnerable to claims	Improving data accuracy.
Managing our empty homes process to ensure empty properties are inspected, have repairs and maintenance completed and are let to a new tenant as swiftly as possible.	Corporate KPI has shown periods where performance has been poor.	We asked the transformation team to complete a review of the process for us. The results of this report will help inform area's where improvement is required.

Section 4: Delivery Plan and Progress Reporting

Table 1 – Corporate Action Plan Outputs to be Led by the Service

This table details the Corporate Action Plan outputs that the service is responsible for delivering during the financial year. It is also where Lead Officers will provide position updates at the end of each quarter, detailing progress towards the delivery of each output. These updates go on to inform our [quarterly performance reports](#).

Output Details			Quarterly Updates			
Corporate Action Plan Output	Lead Officer and Deputy	What aspects of the output support Equality, Diversity and Inclusion? (complete before start of year)	Position at end Q1 (for completion by Lead / Deputy by end June)	Position at end Q2 (for completion by Lead / Deputy by end September)	Position at end Q3 (for completion by Lead / Deputy by end December)	End of year Summary detailing progress during the year (for completion by Lead / Deputy by end March)
O1ai) Updates relating to support provided to clients through the Housing team's visiting support service	Susan Hinawski Sarah Thomson	Support to older residents, enabling them to maintain their homes and remain independent.	-	-	-	-
O1ci) Compliance with required landlord safety checks, including reference to the different categories of compliance	Eddie Spicer Chris Brown	-	-	-	-	-
O1ei) Undertake annual tenant satisfaction survey and tenant engagement activities throughout the year	Julie Fletcher Dave Armitage	-	-	-	-	-
O1fi) Updates on action to ensure safeguarding measures remain robust and aligned with best practice, including steps towards Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance reaccreditation	Heather Wood	-	-	-	-	-
O4aiii) Updates on the analysis and use of tenant census data to identify tenants flagged as vulnerable for targeted interventions	Julie Fletcher Zoe Cox	-	-	-	-	-
O4bi) Provide targeted support for households at risk of homelessness through the Income Maximisation Service	Susan Tuffnell Susan Hinawski	Support to those on low income, struggling with affordability and at risk of homelessness	-	-	-	-

Output Details			Quarterly Updates			
Corporate Action Plan Output	Lead Officer and Deputy	What aspects of the output support Equality, Diversity and Inclusion? (complete before start of year)	Position at end Q1 (for completion by Lead / Deputy by end June)	Position at end Q2 (for completion by Lead / Deputy by end September)	Position at end Q3 (for completion by Lead / Deputy by end December)	End of year Summary detailing progress during the year (for completion by Lead / Deputy by end March)
O4bii) Refresh the Council's Homelessness Action Plan in line with the Government Homelessness Strategy to ensure outputs reflect the national Outcomes Framework	Sue Carter Heather Wood	Support and actions to help those at risk of homelessness including from vulnerable groups	-	-	-	-
O4ci) Updates on the continued provision of support for Homes for Ukraine guests, including help with rental payments and deposits, furniture scheme packages, a landlord incentive scheme and further wellbeing support	Susan Hinawski Dan Toussaint	-	-	-	-	-
O4cii) Respond to further government requests to aid refugees within the district where this is required	Susan Hinawski Dan Toussaint	-	-	-	-	-
O5bi) Updates detailing progress of the SCIP development, to deliver 256 low-carbon homes in Cambourne (of which 102 will be affordable)	Kirstin Donaldson	-	-	-	-	-
O7ai) Updates relating to the upgrade of properties below Energy Performance Certificate Band C, supported by Wave 3 Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, with the aim to complete 200 upgrades to C level or above each year	Eddie Spicer Elizabeth Roberts	-	-	-	-	-
O7aii) Fit water flow reduction measures across 4,200 council properties identified with water meters	Zoe Cox Eddie Spicer	-	-	-	-	-

Output Details			Quarterly Updates			
Corporate Action Plan Output	Lead Officer and Deputy	What aspects of the output support Equality, Diversity and Inclusion? (complete before start of year)	Position at end Q1 (for completion by Lead / Deputy by end June)	Position at end Q2 (for completion by Lead / Deputy by end September)	Position at end Q3 (for completion by Lead / Deputy by end December)	End of year Summary detailing progress during the year (for completion by Lead / Deputy by end March)
O10diii) Updates on action to reduce the carbon impact of our Housing stock renovation processes, including through reuse and recycling of materials where appropriate	Eddie Spicer	-	-	-	-	-
O10bi) Continue assessments of sheltered housing communal rooms, including identification of decarbonisation improvements and a costed delivery plan (to take place alongside the refurbishment review)	Geoff Clark Eddie Spicer	-	-	-	-	-
O17bii) Promote and roll out the “M&Me” Repairs App for Council tenants, designed to streamline how tenants can book, track and manage repairs to their homes	Eddie Spicer	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2 – Other (non-Corporate Action Plan) Actions – including Service Improvement / Mission Critical Actions / Risk Mitigation Actions / Support for other services:

This table is to allow the monitoring of progress on non-business plan actions within the service area (rather than corporately). The contents of this table are not published.

Service Reference (tbd by service)	Action Description	Lead Officer	Deputy	Position at end Q1 (for completion by Lead / Deputy by end June 2026)	Position at end Q2 (for completion by Lead / Deputy by end September 2026)	Position at end Q3 (for completion by Lead / Deputy by end December 2026)	Position at end Q4 (for completion by Lead / Deputy by end March 2027)
H1	Review Allocations Policy with Sub Regional Home-Link Board and Operations Group	Heather Wood / Susan Carter	Sharon Lock / Lyn Claydon	-	-	-	-
H2	Continue working with DAHA to achieve Gold Accreditation	Heather Wood / Sue Carter		-	-	-	-
H3	Publish Supported Accommodation Strategy by 27 March 2027	Julie Fletcher		-	-	-	-
H4	Implementation of the HQN Mock Inspection action plan	Peter Campbell	Julie Fletcher	-	-	-	-
H5	Roll out of mobile working app for Housing Officers	Geoff Clark	Zoe Cox	-	-	-	-
H6	Improvements to Landlord Complaints Process, including annual submission to Ombudsman and additional quality assurance	Julie Fletcher	Grace Andrews	-	-	-	-
H7	Submit TSM report to Social Housing Regulator by 30 June 2026	Julie Fletcher	Grace Andrews	-	-	-	-
H8	Undertake a Scrutiny Review with tenant reps of the Relet Process	Geoff Clark	Dave Armitage	-	-	-	-
H9	Create management dashboards across all areas of Asset Management and Compliance.	Eddie Spicer	Zoe Cox	-	-	-	-
H10	Appraisal of garage sites with a view to determining levels of investment to maintain / improve / demolish / look for development opportunities	Eddie Spicer	Geoff Clark	-	-	-	-
H11	Introduce revised Asset Management strategy alongside 5-year property management plan.	Eddie Spicer	Peter Campbell	-	-	-	-
H12	Introduce digital switch efficiencies within the Assets section to promote efficient mobile working and integrated transparent management systems.	Eddie Spicer	Zoe Cox	-	-	-	-
H13	Transfer of Fixed term tenancies to Secure	Geoff Clark	Debbie Barrett	-	-	-	-

Table 3 – Risk Position:

This table is to allow a summary to be provided describing the service area risk position at the end of each quarter.

Please Address Each Questions Below:	Start of year Update (complete prior to Service Plan finalisation)	Mid-year update (complete by 15th November)
What are the highest scoring risks (include risk title and reference number) for the service and their residual risk scores?	HOU 09: Housing Assets – Skills Shortage Residual Score: 16 HOU10: Housing Assets – Record Keeping and data storage Residual Score: 15 HOU 18: Housing Advice / Options – Increase in homelessness and temporary accommodation Residual Score: 15	-
What are the key control measures being taken to address these risks?	HOU 09: 1. Upskilling staff in construction methodology 2. Utilising specialist functions of the new repairs contract to support decarbonisation 3. Utilising specialist agencies for recruitment HOU10: 1. Suitable risk assessments and regular reviews undertaken. 2. Introduction of MRI Asset software, to provide ‘one version of the truth’. 3. Ongoing monitoring and enforcement of procedures and policies. HOU18: 4. Use of government grant money for 1) additional staff in key areas such as money advice support and 2) Use of LAFH funding to purchase additional properties for use as temporary accommodation. 5. Increasing the availability of homes available via the private rented sector that is, via Shire Homes Lettings and also via partnership working with Ermine Street Housing to acquire single person temporary accommodation options. 6. Monitor joint pathways with key agencies, that is, criminal justice service, social services. Homeless prevention – advice, support and financial assistance.	-
Are there any emerging risks or risks that have changed?	HOU 09: Housing Assets – Skills Shortage Residual Score has increased as the impacts of not being able to recruit is having an impact on service delivery.	-
-	SHDF Wave 3, delays in the initial funding agreement from MHCLG has caused delays in delivery, potential funding claw back in year 1, potential back fill with funding in years 3 and 4.	-

4.9 Review of Performance Reports

Julie Fletcher to report on the Review of Performance Reports which is included in the pack.

Report to:	Housing Engagement Board 22 June 2026
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Batchelor – Lead Member for Housing
Lead Officer:	Peter Campbell – Head of Housing

Performance Review and Assurance Framework

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the Housing Engagement Board approves the revised Housing Landlord Service performance reporting framework, to be implemented from 1 April 2026 for Q1 reporting (Appendix 1), and notes the associated Assurance Framework (Appendix 1).
2. These proposals do not change the Council's established governance arrangements. Instead, they strengthen how performance, compliance and assurance information is aligned and presented within existing governance and tenant oversight structures.

Details

3. The HQN (Housing Quality Network) Mock Inspection relating to the Housing Landlord Service undertaken in October 2025 recognised the strong foundations being put in place, with positive performance trends and committed leadership. However, opportunities were identified to strengthen governance by improving how performance and assurance are brought together, making better use of performance data, and providing clearer assurance that services are compliant and risks are managed.
4. Following the outcome of the mock inspection, officers have reviewed the Council's performance reporting structure and how assurance is demonstrated across the Housing Landlord Service.

5. Generally, our performance framework is good, with tenant oversight through the KPI / TSM¹ Tenant Panel and quarterly updates of key performance and tenant satisfaction measures (TSMs) through Scrutiny and Overview Committee and Cabinet. However, it was identified that the way performance information was structured could be streamlined to improve clarity, as some indicators were being monitored by the Tenant Panel whilst others reported corporately which limited the visibility of the full range of landlord performance for the Housing Engagement Board. HQN noted that the presentation of performance made it difficult to clearly demonstrate lines of oversight across the different forums.
6. It is therefore recommended that existing performance measures relating to the housing landlord service are brought together into a single reporting framework, as set out in Appendix 1. This will ensure consistency, strengthen oversight of compliance with the Consumer Standards and provide transparency so that tenants, officers and Members have clear and shared oversight of performance.
7. While the reporting style differs in some areas from that previously presented to the KPI / TSM Panel, the underlying information remains unchanged and is now presented in a clearer and more accessible format, building on the positive feedback recently received from TPAS on existing performance reports. Adopting a consistent reporting format across all audiences will also reduce duplication and save officer time by removing the need to reformat reports for different audiences.
8. In reviewing the new template set out at Appendix 1, the following revisions have been made:
 - The report structure now clearly separates Corporate Key Performance Indicators at Appendix A, the Corporate Strategic Indicators at Appendix B, the Corporate Action Plan Report at Appendix C and the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and Consumer Standards Regulatory Requirements at Appendix D.
 - New measures have been added to Appendix D to strengthen compliance and assurance and to meet the Regulator's expectations. Appendices A – C cannot be amended as they are drawn directly from the Council's Corporate Plan.

¹ Key Performance Indicators and Tenant Satisfaction Measures Tenant Panel – comprising tenant volunteers and officers, providing detailed scrutiny of the Housing Landlord Service performance and highlighting any areas requiring further review or assurance.

- Benchmarking information will be included within the narrative commentary to clearly demonstrate how performance compares with peer organisations. Detailed benchmarking analysis and graphs will be retained as background information, available on request, to ensure transparency while keeping the core report concise and focused on assurance.
- The Housing Engagement Board will also receive the quarterly report as well as a short summary report to highlight overall compliance and any areas of concern identified by officers or through the KPI / TSM Tenant Panel, strengthening the Board's role in providing tenant-led oversight and assurance.
- A quarterly 'Your Housing Service Update' will be produced as an easy-to-read summary for use in tenant newsletters and on the Council's website, supporting transparency and accessible communication with residents.

9. The diagram below illustrates the clear line of accountability and governance for performance oversight and assurance.

Performance Framework for compliance with the Consumer Standards



Legend

	Internal Officer meetings
	Tenant Rep meeting
	Member meetings

10. This framework demonstrates a clear pathway from operational performance management through tenant scrutiny and Member oversight, providing assurance that risks are identified, managed and escalated appropriately.
11. The HQN Mock Inspection also highlighted the importance of being able to demonstrate how assurance is provided in relation to compliance with regulatory requirements. While performance reporting is a key element of assurance, it does not, in isolation provide a complete picture. Therefore, an Assurance Framework relating to Housing Landlord Services has been developed and is included at Appendix 2. The framework brings together performance reporting, compliance activity, risk management and governance arrangements into a single, coherent document to support regulatory readiness.

Reasons for Recommendations

12. The revised performance reporting framework and governance structure, alongside the Assurance Framework, demonstrates that the recommendations identified through the HQN Mock Inspection have been addressed. Together, these arrangements strengthen oversight, clarify accountability and provide confidence that the Council is well-prepared for a future Regulator of Social Housing inspection.

Options

13. The alternative option would be to continue with the current performance reporting arrangements; however, this would not align with the principles of continuous improvement where areas for improvement have been identified.

Implications

14. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

Financial and Fraud Impact

15. None.

Legal

16. A comprehensive and structured approach to performance reporting, oversight and governance of the Housing Landlord Service supports compliance with regulatory requirements and demonstrates how the Council meets its legal obligations as a social landlord.

Staffing

17. The introduction of a single consistent reporting framework will reduce duplication and improve efficiency, requiring less officer time to prepare multiple versions of similar reports.

Risks / Opportunities

18. Non-compliance of housing stock in relation to health and safety following the introduction of the Social Housing Regulations 2023 and associated standards, is monitored through the Council's risk management framework and recorded on the corporate risk register.

Consultation responses

19. The proposed changes to the reporting structure have been discussed with the KPI / TSM panel, and feedback from tenant representatives has been incorporated into the final proposed framework. This included additional commentary at CS3 on what constitutes a hazard, an additional measure at CS2 and a review of the repair satisfaction survey to capture recurring repairs.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Sustainable Homes and Vibrant Places

20. The revised reporting and assurance arrangements strengthen governance, improve transparency and ensure tenants have meaningful opportunities to scrutinise and challenge service performance, supporting delivery of safe, sustainable homes and resilient communities.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Housing Landlord Services Performance Report Template

Appendix A: Corporate Key Performance Indicators

Appendix B: Corporate Strategic Indicator Report

Appendix C: Corporate Action Plan Report

Appendix D: Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and Consumer Standards Regulatory Requirements

Appendix 2: Assurance Framework relating to Housing Landlord Services

Report Author:

Julie Fletcher – Service Manager – Housing Strategy

Telephone: (01954) 713 352

Appendix 1: Housing Landlord Services Performance Report Template

Appendix A: Corporate Key Performance Indicators – Housing (Landlord Services)

The following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are reported quarterly to Cabinet as part of the Council’s corporate operational performance suite. Those relating specifically to the Council’s landlord services have been extracted from the overall report for oversight by the Housing Engagement Board. These KPIs support assurance against the Consumer Standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing, which define the required outcomes for tenant safety, service quality, transparency, neighbourhood management and tenancy services.

Benchmarking: Performance is benchmarked, where data is available, through Housemark (the UK housing benchmarking service), enabling comparison with a peer group of local authorities and Arm’s Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) managing fewer than 10,000 homes. This ensures performance is assessed against organisations of a similar scale and operating context. Targets are approved by Cabent and are informed by top-quartile performance within the sector, while remaining realistic and achievable in light of local conditions and service delivery pressures.

Rag Rating: A ‘traffic light’ system denotes performance, using the following definitions.

Green	Target has been met or surpassed
Amber	Performance is below target but remains above the intervention level; service managers are expected to monitor performance closely
Red	Performance is below the intervention level – representing underperformance of concern

KPI04: % of current tenant rent arrears as a proportion of current chargeable rent (previously SH368)

[Tenancy Standard]

Month	Actual	Target	Intervention	Outlook RAG
-	-	2	2.5	-
-	-	2	2.5	-



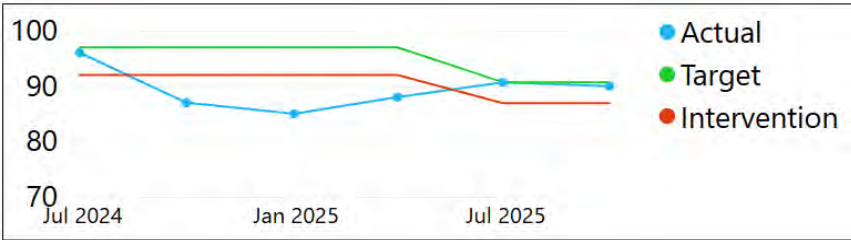
Comments: This relates to the percentage of rent that hasn’t been paid yet, compared to the total rent that should have been paid during the quarter.

[Add update commentary]

KPI14: % tenants satisfied with responsive repairs (Independent Survey) (previously AH204)

[Safety & Quality Standard]

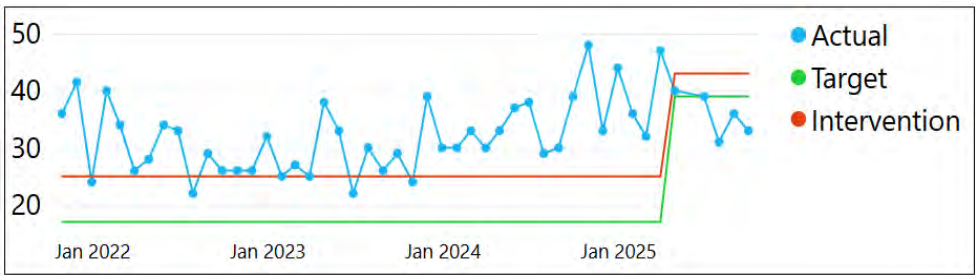
Month	Actual	Target	Intervention	Outlook RAG
-	-	90.69	86.90	-
-	-	90.69	86.90	-



Comments: This relates to all contractors who carry out responsive repairs on our behalf. [Add update commentary]

KPI15: Average days to re-let all housing stock (standard re-lets) (previously AH211) (See additional Questions on re-lets / empty properties at Appendix D)
[Tenancy Standard]

Month	Actual	Target	Intervention	Outlook RAG
-	-	39	43	-
-	-	39	43	-
-	-	39	43	-



This is the nationally recognised Housemark indicator (derived from a Best Value Performance Indicator BVPI 68) used for benchmarking across the social housing sector. It measures the average number of days between a tenancy ending and a new tenant moving in, where only routine maintenance and redecoration are required. The time it takes to re-let a home can vary depending on different factors, such as the condition of the property and the work needed to prepare it for a new tenant. Properties requiring major works are excluded in line with the Housemark definition, although major works activity can indirectly impact overall re-let times and resources.

Comments: *[Add update commentary]*

KPI16: % of damp and mould cases dealt with within statutory timescale (previously AH246)
[Safety & Quality Standard]

Month	Actual	Target	Intervention	Outlook RAG
-	-	100	95	-
-	-	100	95	-

From October 2025, social landlords are legally required to deal with reports of damp and mould, and emergency repairs, within set time limits.

Comments: *[Add update commentary]*

KPI17: % emergency/urgent repairs within timescales (4 and 24 hours) (previously SH332)
[Safety and Quality Standard]

Month	Actual	Target	Intervention	Outlook RAG
-	-	100	98	-
-	-	100	98	-
-	-	100	98	-



Comments: During xxx a total of xxx emergency repairs were completed.

Emergency repairs must be carried out within 4 hours to make safe, with any follow-up work completed within 24 hours)

An emergency / urgent repair is classed as one or more of the following:

- A total loss of electric power or water supply
- An uncontrollable water leak
- A blocked, leaking or non-flushing toilet (when there is only one in the home)
- A water mains leak
- Insecure ground floor windows, doors or locks

Appendix B: Corporate Strategic Indicator Report

In addition to the suite of Operational KPIs set out in Appendix A, the Council’s Corporate Action Plan introduces an additional set of measures known as Strategic Indicators (SIs). Strategic Indicators are designed to directly measure progress against the actions and objectives contained within the Corporate Action Plan. The indicators listed below relate specifically to the Council’s Housing Landlord Service and demonstrate how these align with the Consumer Standards.

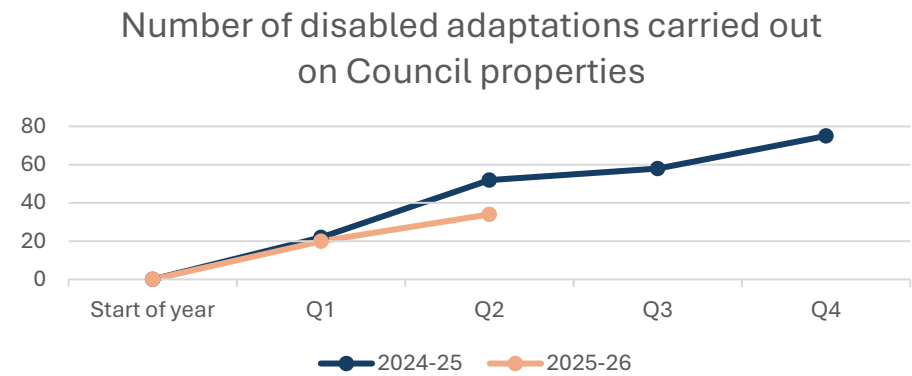
Healthy and Supported Communities

SI bii) Number of disabled adaptations carried out on Council properties from HRA (Housing Revenue Account) Funds (New)

[Safety & Quality Standard]

Latest Result: [Add update]

Context and Long-Term Trend: [Add update commentary]



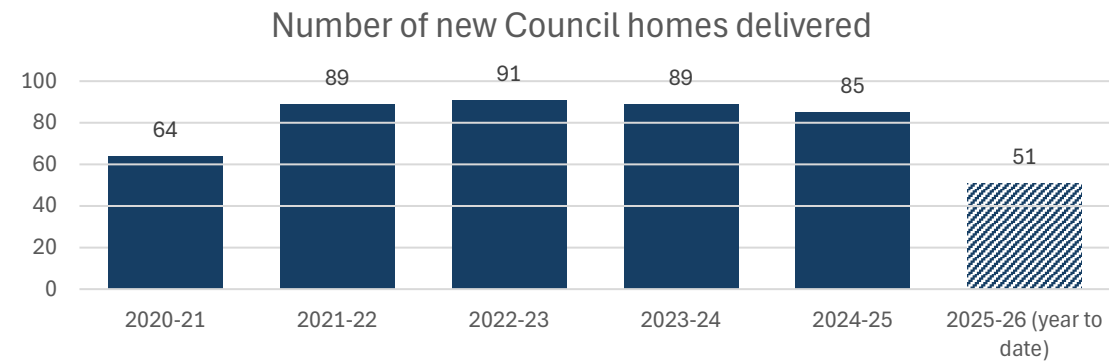
Additional Strategic Indicator (SI) Details: This SI measures the number of disabled adaptations carried out on Council properties from HRA funds. These adaptations are separate to the adaptations carried out through Disabled Facilities Grant funding. Adaptations that are carried out on Council properties from HRA funds are done so to help eligible disabled and elderly people to live independently in their homes.

Sustainable homes and vibrant places

SI 5ai) Number of new Council homes delivered (year to date) (previously AH224)

Latest Result: [Add update]

Context and Long-Term Trend: [Add update commentary]

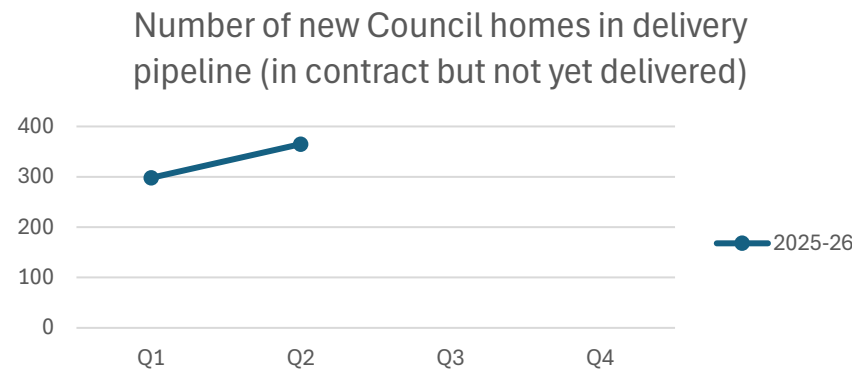


Additional Strategic Indicator (SI) Details: This SI measures the delivery of new Council homes. This includes new build homes that are built for affordable rent, shared ownership, LAHF (Local Authority Housing Fund) funded temporary accommodation and LAHF funded refugee housing.

SI5aii) Number of new Council homes in delivery pipeline (in contract but not yet delivered) (previously reported – no ref)

Latest Result: [Add text]

Context and Long-Term Trend: [Add text]



Additional Strategic Indicator (SI) Details:
This SI measures the number new Council homes in the delivery pipeline at the end of each quarter. The delivery pipeline includes properties that will be delivered through schemes that have been approved by Cabinet.

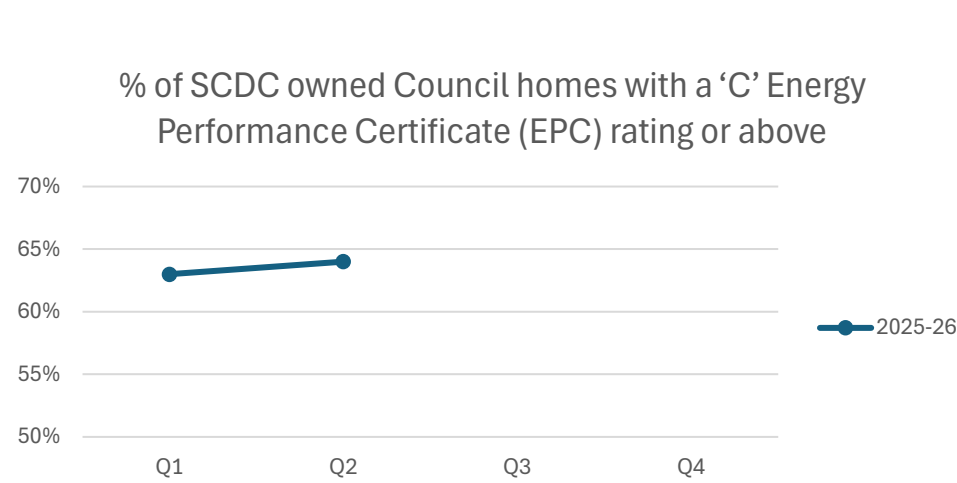
Historic data in relation to this SI is not currently held – as further quarterly data becomes available, this will be added to the graph.

SI7ai) % of SCDC owned Council homes with a ‘C’ Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating or above (previously SH375)

(EPC ratings range from A-G, with A being the best.)

Latest Result: [Add update commentary]

Context and Long-Term Trend: EPC ratings range from A-G, with A being the best. [Add update commentary]



Additional Strategic Indicator (SI) Details:
This SI shows the % of SCDC owned Council homes with a ‘C’ Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating or above. As of 16 June 2025, the rating rules changed. A new methodology (SAP 10) will now be followed when renewals or new EPCs are carried out.

Historic data in relation to this SI is not currently held – as further quarterly data becomes available; this will be added to the graph.

Appendix C: Corporate Action Plan Report

The Corporate Action Plan provides a narrative update in relation to non-numeric Corporate Action Plan outputs. Those listed below relate to the Council's Housing Landlord Service and how they align with the Consumer Standards.

A colour-coding system is applied to this element of the report as follows:

- Purple – the output has been delivered.
- Green – the output is on target for completion within target timescale or tolerance.
- Amber – the output has been delayed beyond target timescale but is on track to be delivered by a revised delivery date.
- Red – the output will not be delivered, or a delivery plan is needed.

What we will do (Key Objectives)	How we will achieve the objective	Monitoring Arrangements – Outputs (O) and Strategic Indicators (Sis)	Position at end of Q1	Q1 RAG
1) We will help our residents, including older, disabled and vulnerable people, to live safely in their own homes	1c) By complying with landlord safety and compliance checks to council housing	O1ci) Updates detailing compliance with required landlord safety checks, including reference to the different categories of compliance [Safety & Quality Standard]	-	
1) As above	1e) By listening to our Council tenants to make sure they have a voice and can help to influence policy and improvements for the housing service.	Q1ei) Undertake annual tenant satisfaction survey and tenant engagement activities throughout the year [Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard]	-	
4) We will support the most vulnerable people in our communities to ensure they have access to the resources and opportunities needed to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives	4a) By targeting support to help residents through the cost-of-living crisis	O4aiii) Updates on the analysis and use of tenant census data to identify tenants flagged as vulnerable for targeted interventions [Tenancy Standard]	-	
7) We will invest in our housing stock and improve the energy efficiency of housing across the district – ensuring homes meet modern standards	7a) By continuing to develop and implement plans to improve the efficiency of our council housing stock, including work to ensure our properties achieve Energy Performance Certificate rating of 'C' or above by 2028 (in line with government targets	O7ai) Updates relating to the upgrade of properties below EPC Band C, supported by Wave 3 Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, with the aim to complete 200 upgrades to C level or above each year. [Safety & Quality Standard]	-	
7) As Above	7a) As Above	O7 aii) Fit water flow reduction measures across 4,200 council properties identified with water meters [Safety & Quality Standard]	-	

What we will do (Key Objectives)	How we will achieve the objective	Monitoring Arrangements – Outputs (O) and Strategic Indicators (Sis)	Position at end of Q1	Q1 RAG
10) By 2030 we will reduce emissions from the Council's estate and operations by 75% from 2018-19 levels	10b) By increasing the energy performance of buildings owned and operated by the Council (including through on-site renewable energy generation)	O10bi) Complete assessments of sheltered housing communal rooms, including identification of decarbonisation improvements and a costed delivery plan (to take place alongside the refurbishment review) [Safety & Quality Standard]	-	
10) As Above.	10d) By building carbon reduction, climate adaptation and the protection and enhancement of nature into decision making across the Council	O10diii) Updates on action to reduce the carbon impact of our Housing stock renovation processes, including through reuse and recycling of materials where appropriate. [Safety & Quality Standard]	-	
12) We will support others (including parish councils, local communities and businesses) to respond to the climate and ecological emergencies, with the ambition of halving emissions by 2030, putting us on the path to net zero by 2050	12b) By identifying new opportunities to plant trees, establish wildflower strips and in other ways enhance nature in our communities, in consultation with residents	O12bi) Continue to identify and deliver opportunities for tree planting and delivery of other biodiversity enhancements on SCDC-owned land, including Housing Revenue Account land [Neighbourhood & Community Standard]	-	
17) We will ensure our services are delivered smoothly, focussing on ease of access for our customers, making it easier to engage with decision-making, and making best use of technology to provide 24 / 7 services	17b) By making it easier for customers to find information and access services online and engage with us (Including through consultations)	O17bii) Promote and roll out the 'M&Me' Repairs App for council tenants, designed to streamline how tenants can book, track and manage repairs to their homes [Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard]	-	

Appendix D: Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and Consumer Standards Regulatory Requirements

1. Background

The Regulator of Social Housing monitors housing providers through a combination of performance indicators and periodic inspections. Providers submit indicator data annually, and each organisation is subject to an in-depth inspection on a four-year cycle. Since 2023, Cabinet has received an annual report on Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) submitted to the Regulator. These measures comprise both tenant perception data, gathered through an annual survey, and a suite of management information and performance indicators calculated in accordance with the Regulator’s prescribed methodology.

The annual TSM report and its supporting appendix are presented to Cabinet each June. The most recent report is available here [\[add link\]](#), with the accompanying appendix available here [\[add link\]](#).

The performance indicators outlined below reflect quarterly landlord performance relating to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) prescribed by the Regulator, as well as additional performance indicators that demonstrate how we are meeting the requirements of the Consumer Standards. These are presented to Cabinet and the Housing Engagement Board on a quarterly basis to ensure that there is consistent oversight of regulatory compliance throughout the year. This approach supports a proactive governance framework, enabling timely identification of emerging issues and ensuring that service delivery remains aligned with both statutory obligations and tenant expectations.

Data included in this report is subject to internal validation, management review and quality assurance processes, with TSM data prepared in accordance with the Regulator’s prescribed methodology.

By integrating these indicators into the quarterly reporting cycle, the Council reinforces its commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in the housing service. This also aligns with the Social Housing Regulator’s expectations for providers to demonstrate strong governance and provide assurance around safety and compliance.

2. Consumer Standards Compliance Summary (Quarter xx)

- Safety and Quality Standard – **Compliant**
- Transparency, Influence & Accountability – **Compliant with improvement actions in progress**
- Tenancy Standard – **Generally compliant; risks identified in void performance**
- Neighbourhood & Community Standard – **Compliant**

Rag Rating: A ‘traffic light’ system denotes performance, using the following definitions.

Green	Target has been met or surpassed
Amber	Performance is below target but remains above the intervention level; service managers are expected to monitor performance closely
Red	Performance is below the intervention level – representing underperformance of concern

3. Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) – Overview

Q Months / Year Results

Regulator's Code	Measure / Performance Indicator	Target	Quarter 1 April – June	Quarter 2 July – September	Quarter 3 October – December	Quarter 4 January – March	RAG Output	Comments
CHO1(A) [Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard] [Previously reported but now split into A Stage 1 Complaints) and B Stage 2 complaints]	Complaints relative to the size of the landlord Stage 1 Complaints (Number of stage 1 complaints per 1,000 homes – only includes landlord-related complaints)	N / A	Calculation (representing xx complaints received)	Calculation (representing xx complaints received)	Calculation (representing xx complaints received)	Calculation (representing xx complaints received)	N / A	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison
CHO1(B) [Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard] [Previously reported but now split into A Stage 1 Complaints) and B Stage 2 complaints]	Complaints relative to the size of the landlord Stage 2 Complaints Number of stage 2 complaints per 1,000 homes – only includes landlord-related complaints)	N / A	Calculation (representing xx complaints received)	Calculation (representing xx complaints received)	Calculation (representing xx complaints received)	Calculation (representing xx complaints received)	N / A	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison
CH02 (A) [Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard] [Previously reported but now split into CH02A Stage 1 Complaints and B Stage 2 complaints)	Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales Stage 1 complaints responded to (within 10 working days or within 20 working days for complex complaints) (Only includes landlord-related complaints)	95%	% (Of the xxx complaints received, xxx were responded to within the required timescales)	% (Of the xxx complaints received, xxx were responded to within the required timescales)	% (Of the xxx complaints received, xxx were responded to within the required timescales)	% (Of the xxx complaints received, xxx were responded to within the required timescales)	-	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison
CH02 (B) [Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard]	Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales	95%	% (Of the xxx complaints received, xxx were responded to within the required timescales)	% (Of the xxx complaints received, xxx were responded to within the required timescales)	% (Of the xxx complaints received, xxx were responded to within the required timescales)	% (Of the xxx complaints received, xxx were responded to within the required timescales)	-	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison

Regulator's Code	Measure / Performance Indicator	Target	Quarter 1 April – June	Quarter 2 July – September	Quarter 3 October – December	Quarter 4 January – March	RAG Output	Comments
[Previously reported but now split into CH02A Stage 1 Complaints and B Stage 2 complaints]	Stage 2 complaints responded to (within 20 working days or within 40 working days of acknowledgement for complex complaints) (Only includes landlord-related complaints)							
NM01 (A) [Neighbourhood & Community Standard]	Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord (Total opened including hate incidents per 1,000 homes)	N / A	Calculation (representing xxx cases)	Calculation (representing xxx cases)	Calculation (representing xxx cases)	Calculation (representing xxx cases)	N / A	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison
NM01 (B) [Neighbourhood & Community Standard] [New]	Anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents (subset of NM01 (A) relating to hate incidents only)	N / A	Number	Number	Number	Number	N / A	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison
RP01 [Safety & Quality Standard] [To replace SH274 - % of dwellings that are non-decent at the end of the year]	Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard The Decent Homes Standard sets a minimum requirement around safety, energy efficiency and tenant wellbeing. A Home must be free from serious hazards, in a reasonable state of repair, provides reasonably modern facilities and a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.	2.5%	% (representing xx homes that are currently considered non-decent)	% (representing xx homes that are currently considered non-decent)	% (representing xx homes that are currently considered non-decent)	% (representing xx homes that are currently considered non-decent)	-	Quarterly performance can fluctuate as homes naturally move in and out of the Decent Homes Standard when components reach the end of their life. We are working towards programming works at least one year in advance of homes becoming non-decent, including preventative and energy efficiency improvements, to improve long-term stock condition. While addressing existing backlog and legislative change, some short-term variation in this KPI is expected.
RP02 [Safety & Quality Standard]	% Repairs completed within target timescale	92.8% (routine repairs)	% (xx routine repairs) %	% (xx routine repairs) %	% (xx routine repairs) %	% (xx routine repairs) %	-	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison

Regulator's Code	Measure / Performance Indicator	Target	Quarter 1 April – June	Quarter 2 July – September	Quarter 3 October – December	Quarter 4 January – March	RAG Output	Comments
[To replace SH330 - % routine repairs within target timescales]	[Routine Repairs within 20 working days] [Emergency Repairs within 24 hours]	100% (emergency repairs)	(xx emergency repairs)	(xx emergency repairs)	(xx emergency repairs)	(xx emergency repairs)		
BS01 [Safety & Quality Standard] [To replace SH336 – Gas safety checks % successfully completed]	Gas safety checks (Number carried out as a proportion of those required to be carried out)	100%	% (representing xxx gas safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx gas safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx gas safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx gas safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	-	In some quarters, there may be fewer or no gas safety checks due; where this occurs, full compliance is maintained as no inspections are required in that period.
BS02 [Safety & Quality Standard]	Fire safety checks (Number carried out as a proportion of those required to be carried out)	100%	% (representing xxx fire safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx fire safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx fire safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx fire safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	-	In some quarters, there may be fewer or no fire safety checks due; where this occurs, full compliance is maintained as no inspections are required in that period.
BS03 [Safety & Quality Standard]	Asbestos safety checks Communal Buildings / Public Access areas (Number carried out as a proportion of those required to be carried out – homes requiring asbestos management surveys or re-inspections in line with the Control of Asbestos Regulations)	100%	% (representing xxx asbestos safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx asbestos safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx asbestos safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx asbestos safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	-	In some quarters, there may be fewer or no asbestos safety checks due; where this occurs, full compliance is maintained as no inspections are required in that period. While domestic rented homes are not fully within the scope of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, landlords retain a duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. A full asbestos survey will be completed for all properties starting in 2026, followed by annual management re-inspections and full re-surveys every eight years - See CS 11 below)
BS04 [Safety & Quality Standard]	Water safety checks (Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out)	100%	% (representing xxx water safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx water safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx water safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx water safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	-	In some quarters, there may be fewer or no water safety checks due; where this occurs, full compliance is maintained as no inspections are required in that period.
BS05 [Safety & Quality Standard]	Lift safety checks	100%	% (representing xxx lift safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx lift safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx lift safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx lift safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	-	In some quarters, there may be fewer or no lift safety checks due; where this occurs, full compliance is maintained as no inspections are required in that period.

Regulator's Code	Measure / Performance Indicator	Target	Quarter 1 April – June	Quarter 2 July – September	Quarter 3 October – December	Quarter 4 January – March	RAG Output	Comments
	(Number of dwelling units owned within properties with communal passenger lifts for which all Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) inspection reports were carried out and recorded during the reporting period)							

4. Consumer Standards: Additional Performance Indicators

Ref No.	Measure / Performance Indicator	Target	Quarter 1 April – June	Quarter 2 July – September	Quarter 3 October – December	Quarter 4 January – March	RAG Output	Comments
CS1 [Safety & Quality Standard] [Previously SH327]	Percentage of repair appointments kept (urgent & routine) [Monthly]	95% [Intervention 90% or lower]	April – % May – % June – % (Average for the quarter = %)	July – % August – % Sept – % (Average for the quarter = %)	Oct – % Nov - % Dec - % (Average for the quarter = %)	Jan – % Feb - % March - % (Average for the quarter = %)	-	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison
CS2 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New as requested by tenant rep]	Percentage of total repairs reported that require a recall for the same issue within 28 days of the original repair, where the tenant reports that the fault is a recurrence of the previous repair.	12% [Intervention 15% or higher]	-	-	-	-	-	-
CS3 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	Number of new emergency hazards reported per 1,000 properties [aligned with Awaab's Law requirements]	N / A	Calculation (representing xx cases)	Calculation (representing xx cases)	Calculation (representing xx cases)	Calculation (representing xx cases)	N / A	An emergency hazard is something that needs to be fixed right away because it is causing or could cause serious harm to health or safety. The assessment of the hazard's severity will take into account any vulnerabilities of the tenant or their household. Examples of hazards include: Gas or carbon monoxide leaks, broken boilers, no water supply at all, dangerous electrical problems, major leaks, broken external doors or windows that make the home unsafe, very serious damp or mould, major structural problems.
CS4 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	Number of new significant damp and mould hazards reported per 1,000 properties [aligned with Awaab's Law requirements]	N / A	Calculation (representing xx cases)	Calculation (representing xx cases)	Calculation (representing xx cases)	Calculation (representing xx cases)	N / A	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison
CS5 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	% of emergency hazards resolved within 24 hours [aligned with Awaab's Law requirements]	100%	% (representing xx cases)	% (representing xx cases)	% (representing xx cases)	% (representing xx cases)	-	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison
CS6 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	% of significant damp and mould hazards investigated within 10 working days [aligned with Awaab's Law requirements]	100%	% (representing xx cases)	% (representing xx cases)	% (representing xx cases)	% (representing xx cases)	-	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison

Ref No.	Measure / Performance Indicator	Target	Quarter 1 April – June	Quarter 2 July – September	Quarter 3 October – December	Quarter 4 January – March	RAG Output	Comments
CS7 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	% of significant damp and mould repairs initiated within 5 working days [aligned with Awaab's Law requirements]	100%	% (representing xx cases)	% (representing xx cases)	% (representing xx cases)	% (representing xx cases)	-	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison
CS8 [Safety & Quality Standard] [Previously reported but no ref]	Percentage of domestic properties with Electrical Installation Condition Report certificate (EICR) up to five years old [Monthly]	100% [Intervention 95% or lower]	April – % May – % June – %	July – % August – % Sept – %	Oct – % Nov – % Dec – %	Jan – % Feb – % March – %	-	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison
CS9 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	Gas Safety – Number of outstanding actions following gas safety checks	N / A	Xxx Actions (Across xxx properties Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Across xxx properties Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Across xxx properties Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Across xxx properties Xxx Overdue)	N / A	-
CS10 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	Fire Safety – Number of outstanding actions following fire safety checks	N / A	Xxx Actions (Across xxx properties Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Across xxx properties Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Across xxx properties Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Across xxx properties Xxx Overdue)	N / A	-
CS11 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	Asbestos Safety – Communal Buildings/ Public Access areas Number of outstanding actions following asbestos safety checks	N / A	Xxx Actions (Across xxx properties Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Across xxx properties Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Across xxx properties Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Across xxx properties Xxx Overdue)	N / A	-
CS12 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	Asbestos Safety – Residential Dwellings Number carried out as a proportion of all properties pre year-2000 to be inspected	100%	% (representing xxx inspections completed against xxx properties in the rolling plan)	% (representing xxx inspections completed against xxx properties in the rolling plan)	% (representing xxx inspections completed against xxx properties in the rolling plan)-	% (representing xxx inspections completed against xxx properties in the rolling plan)	-	While domestic rented homes are not fully within the scope of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, landlords retain a duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. A full asbestos survey will be completed for all properties starting in 2026, followed by annual management re-inspections and full re-surveys every six years.
CS13 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	Asbestos Safety – Residential Dwellings Number of outstanding actions following asbestos safety checks	N / A	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	N / A	From 2026, a two-year rolling programme will inspect all pre-2000 homes. Properties with asbestos-containing materials will follow a two-yearly re-inspection cycle until removal, with increased frequency where damage is identified.
CS14 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	Water Safety – Number of outstanding actions following water safety checks	N / A	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	N / A	-

Ref No.	Measure / Performance Indicator	Target	Quarter 1 April – June	Quarter 2 July – September	Quarter 3 October – December	Quarter 4 January – March	RAG Output	Comments
CS15 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	Lift Safety – Number of outstanding actions following lift safety checks (communal passenger lifts in line with the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER))	N / A	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	N / A	-
CS16 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	Lift Safety – Number of outstanding actions following lift safety checks (exclusive-use lifts in individual homes, including hoists and stairlifts)	N / A	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	N / A	-
CS17 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	Oil safety checks (Proportion of homes for which all required oil safety checks and servicing have been carried out)	100%	% (representing xxx oil safety checks undertaken out of xxx required) -	% (representing xxx oil safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx oil safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx oil safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	-	In some quarters, there may be fewer or no water safety checks due; where this occurs, full compliance is maintained as no inspections are required in that period.
CS18 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	Oil Safety – Number of outstanding actions following oil safety checks	N / A	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	N / A	-
CS19 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	Solid Fuel Heating safety checks (Proportion of homes for which all required solid fuel safety checks and servicing have been carried out)	100%	% (representing xxx solid fuel safety checks undertaken out of xxx required) -	% (representing xxx solid fuel safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx solid fuel safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx solid fuel safety checks undertaken out of xxx required)	-	In some quarters, there may be fewer or no water safety checks due; where this occurs, full compliance is maintained as no inspections are required in that period.
CS20 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	Solid Fuel Heating – Number of outstanding actions following solid fuel safety checks	N / A	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	Xxx Actions (Xxx Overdue)	N / A	-
CS21 [Safety & Quality Standard] [New]	Percentage of safety checks carried out on smoke alarms in individual properties	100%	% (representing xxx checks out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx checks out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx checks out of xxx required)	% (representing xxx checks out of xxx required)	-	-
CS22 [Tenancy Standard] [Reported - No previous ref]	Number of lettings within our Housing Stock (including all re-lets and newbuilds)	N / A	April - May - June -	July - August - Sept -	Oct - Nov – Dec -	Jan – Feb – March -	N / A	May want to comment where there are a lot of newbuilds coming through.

Ref No.	Measure / Performance Indicator	Target	Quarter 1 April – June	Quarter 2 July – September	Quarter 3 October – December	Quarter 4 January – March	RAG Output	Comments
CS23 [Tenancy Standard] [Previously SH363]	Percentage of Vacant dwellings (empty properties) that will be available to be re-let. end of Quarter snapshot. [Stock that has been handed over to our contractor for completion for normal maintenance and redecoration and will be ready to let once works are finished]	0.5% [Intervention 0.75% or higher]	% (representing xxx dwellings)	% (representing xxx dwellings)	% (representing xxx dwellings)	% (representing xxx dwellings)	-	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison
CS24 [Tenancy Standard] [New]	Average number of calendar days that homes requiring major works were empty prior to relet [This indicator includes works typically exceeding the standard re-let specification, such as structural repairs, full electrical rewires or heating replacement, fire safety works, EPC or decarbonisation upgrades, extensive kitchen or bathroom replacements – it does not include properties awaiting redevelopment or sale]	N / A	Xxx days (representing xxx dwellings)	Xxx days (representing xxx dwellings)	Xxx days (representing xxx dwellings)	Xxx days (representing xxx dwellings)	N / A	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison May also want to indicate how many properties are identified for redevelopment / sale if there are any.
CS25 [Tenancy Standard] [Previously AH223 but changed from 4 months to 6 months, as collected by Government]	Number of HRA council properties that have been empty for over 6 months [This excludes properties awaiting redevelopment or sale]	N / A	Number	Number	Number	Number	N / A	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison
CS26 [Tenancy Standard] [Previously SH369]	Percentage of rent loss from vacant dwellings (empty properties) [This shows how much rental income we are unable to collect when homes are empty and not being lived in].	4% [Intervention 5% or higher]	% (representing £ rent loss)	% (representing £ rent loss cumulative)	% (representing £ rent loss cumulative)	-	-	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison

Ref No.	Measure / Performance Indicator	Target	Quarter 1 April – June	Quarter 2 July – September	Quarter 3 October – December	Quarter 4 January – March	RAG Output	Comments
CS27 [Tenancy Standard] [Previously SH376]	Percentage of tenants satisfied with the re-let service.	85% [Intervention 80% or lower]	% (representing xxx responses)	% (representing xxx responses)	% (representing xxx responses)	% (representing xxx responses)	-	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison
CS28 [Tenancy Standard] [Previously SH344]	Percentage of tenants satisfied with the condition of their new home	85% [Intervention 80% or lower]	% (representing xxx responses)	% (representing xxx responses)	% (representing xxx responses)	% (representing xxx responses)	-	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison
CS29 [Tenancy Standard] [New]	Percentage of mutual exchange applications responded to within timescales [written decision within 42 days]	100%	% (representing xx applications out of xxx received)	% (representing xx applications out of xxx received)	% (representing xx applications out of xxx received)	% (representing xx applications out of xxx received)	-	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison
CS30 [Tenancy Standard] [New]	Number of mutual exchange applications approved.	N / A	Number (with xx refusals and xx awaiting a decision)	Number (with xx refusals and xx awaiting a decision)	Number (with xx refusals and xx awaiting a decision)	Number (with xx refusals and xx awaiting a decision))	N / A	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison
CS31 [Neighbourhood & Community Standard] [New]	Average number of calendar days taken to investigate and close anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases [measured from the date the case is opened to the date formal case closure is recorded]	N / A	Xxx Days (representing xxx cases)	Xxx Days (representing xxx cases)	Xxx Days (representing xxx cases)	Xxx Days (representing xxx cases)	N / A	-
CS32 [Neighbourhood & Community Standard] [New]	Number of enforcement actions taken in response to reported ASB during the period	N / A	Number (breakdown of actions)	Number (breakdown of actions)	Number (breakdown of actions)	Number (breakdown of actions)	N / A	•
CS33 [Neighbourhood & Community Standard] [New]	Number and type of safeguarding actions undertaken during the reporting period.	N / A	Number (breakdown of actions)	Number (breakdown of actions)	Number (breakdown of actions)	Number (breakdown of actions)	N / A	•

Ref No.	Measure / Performance Indicator	Target	Quarter 1 April – June	Quarter 2 July – September	Quarter 3 October – December	Quarter 4 January – March	RAG Output	Comments
CS34 [Tenancy Standard] [New – to be confirmed]	Total number of housing fraud referrals reviewed during the reporting period, broken down by source	N / A	Number (insert nos by source, i.e. internal, external)	Number (insert nos by source, i.e. internal, external)	Number (insert nos by source, i.e. internal, external)	Number (insert nos by source, i.e. internal, external)	N / A	-
CS35 [Tenancy Standard] [New – to be confirmed]	Number of preventative housing fraud checks completed and closed during the reporting period) [Includes a review of Band A housing applications, RTB applications, and mutual exchange applications]	N / A	Number (insert outcomes, such as no issue identified, further investigation, Application amended / refused, etc)	Number (insert outcomes, such as no issue identified, further investigation, Application amended / refused, etc)	Number (insert outcomes, such as no issue identified, further investigation, Application amended / refused, etc)	Number (Number (insert outcomes, such as no issue identified, further investigation, Application amended / refused, etc)	N / A	-
CS36 [Tenancy Standard] [New – to be confirmed]	Number of housing fraud investigations closed within the reporting period, broken down by outcome.	N / A	Number (breakdown of outcome)	Number (breakdown of outcome)	Number (breakdown of outcome)	Number (breakdown of outcome)	N / A	- Reasons if higher or lower than previous quarter - Whether performance is improving or declining - Any improvements identified - Benchmarking comparison



South Cambridgeshire District Council

Assurance Framework relating to Housing Landlord Services

1. Purpose and Scope

This Assurance Framework sets out how the Council gains, maintains and demonstrates assurance that its Housing Landlord Services are meeting statutory, regulatory and corporate requirements, and deliver safe, good-quality homes and services for tenants. It is designed to support compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards and Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), and to provide clear oversight for Members, senior officers and tenants.

The framework applies to all landlord functions delivered through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), including housing management, repairs and maintenance, building safety, asset management, tenant engagement and complaints handling.

2. Regulatory and Policy Context

The framework reflects the strengthened regulatory environment introduced through the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, including:

- Proactive regulation by the Regulator of Social Housing
- Compliance with the four Consumer Standards:
 - o Safety and Quality
 - o Transparency, Influence and Accountability
 - o Tenancy
 - o Neighbourhood and Community
- Annual submission and Member scrutiny of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and complaints handling
- Increased expectations on data quality, transparency and governance

It also aligns with the Corporate Plan and Performance Framework, including key performance indicators (KPIs), ensuring landlord assurance is integrated into wider corporate governance.



3. Assurance Model – Three Lines of Defence

The Housing Service adopts a Three Lines of Defence model, which is recognised by the Regulator as good practice, and is commonly referenced in regulatory engagement and inspection feedback.

Line of Defence	Primary Role	Key Assurances Sources
First Line – Service Delivery and Management	Deliver services and manage risks at source	Statutory compliance checks, KPIs, TSMs, complaints handling, data quality controls
Second Line – Oversight, Challenge and Support	Provide governance, scrutiny and tenant-led challenge	Cabinet reports, Scrutiny Committees, Housing Engagement Board, tenant panels, Risk Registers, policy reviews
Third Line – Independent Assurance	Independently validate controls and governance	Internal Audit, external audits, mock inspections / peer reviews, Regulatory inspections, Housing Ombudsman findings

First Line – Service Delivery and Management

Operational teams are responsible for:

- Day-to-day delivery of landlord services
- Compliance with statutory safety requirements (gas, fire, electrical, water, lifts, asbestos)
- Performance management against KPIs and TSM-related indicators
- Accurate and timely record-keeping within housing and asset management systems
- Quality assurance of data, including validation of TSM calculations
- Identifying and managing risks, issues and service failures at an early stage

Day-to-day management of the housing service is delivered through five Service Managers covering Tenancy and Estates, Housing Assets, Housing Strategy, Acquisitions & Development, and Housing Advice & Options, with overall accountability held by the Head of Housing.

Internal oversight and assurance are provided through a structured programme of meetings, including, but not limited to:

- Monthly Service Manager's meetings – covering risk management, service planning, budgets, complaints and workforce matters
- Monthly service-level complaint meetings – monitoring individual complaints



- Quarterly Performance Management meetings – reviewing all performance indicators, as the first stage in the reporting cycle.
- Monthly Improvement Plan Task and Finish Group following HQN (Housing Quality Network) Mock Inspection
- Monthly Housing Stock Group – overseeing repairs, maintenance, compliance and investment in the Council's social housing stock
- Quarterly Housing Systems Strategic Oversight Group – oversight of the development of housing landlord systems and data accuracy

Significant performance, compliance or risk issues that cannot be addressed through routine management arrangements are escalated by exception outside the normal reporting cycle to ensure timely oversight and intervention.

Second Line – Oversight, Challenge and Support

Governance, Accountability and Oversight

Cabinet is the governing body of the Council and holds ultimate accountability for services. It comprises the Leader, Deputy Leader and six Cabinet Members, including the Lead Member for Housing. Cabinet is responsible for ensuring effective governance arrangements are in place and that Members receive clear, accurate and timely information to enable informed decision-making and assurance in line with the Regulator's expectations.

Cabinet provides strategic oversight and assurance through:

- Quarterly performance reporting, including scrutiny of key performance and strategic indicators, progress against the Corporate Action Plan, and compliance with Tenant Satisfaction Measures and the Consumer Standards.
- Annual sign-off for the Housing Complaints Annual Report, statutory self-assessment and Tenant Satisfaction Measures submission.
- Oversight of strategic risk registers, emerging risks and mitigation plans.
- Policy compliance reviews and scheduled policy updates to ensure regulatory alignment.
- Budgetary approvals for the acquisition, development and investment in council housing stock

Scrutiny, Challenge and Independent Oversight

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee provides independent Member challenge and scrutiny, holding Cabinet and the Housing Service to account. This supports the

Regulator's expectation that governing bodies demonstrate active challenge and evidence-based decision-making, particularly in relation to service weaknesses, risk and improvement actions.

Tenant Voice and Transparency

Tenant influence and accountability are embedded through the Resident Involvement Framework, ensuring residents have meaningful opportunities to scrutinise performance, influence policy development and hold the landlord to account. This directly supports the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Consumer Standard.

Key mechanisms include:

- Housing Engagement Board, meeting quarterly, comprising elected tenant representatives, Members and the Head of Housing - providing structured scrutiny of performance, policy proposals and raising areas of concern.
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures and KPI Panel, meeting quarterly to undertake detailed tenant-led scrutiny of performance data and trends.
- Policy and Procedure Panels convened as required to support co-production and review of landlord policies.
- Contracts Panel, meeting quarterly to scrutinise contract performance, procurement decisions and value for money.
- Complaints Review Panel, meeting six monthly to review quality of complaints and recommendations for improvement.

Third Line – Independent Assurance

Independent assurance is provided through:

- Internal Audit reviews of key landlord risks (example, building safety, data quality, complaints)
- External audit and inspection activity
- Third-party verification
- Regulatory engagement and inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing
- Findings and determinations from the Housing Ombudsman

4. Performance, KPIs and Tenant Satisfaction Measures

The Council uses a structured performance framework as set out below to evidence compliance.



Legend

-	Internal Officer meetings
-	Tenant Rep meetings
-	Member meetings

The Performance Report includes:

- Core landlord KPIs (e.g. rent arrears, re-lets, repairs performance, damp and mould response).
- Full suite of TSM management measures.
- Additional Consumer Standard indicators (example, Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) compliance, empty homes, fraud investigations and Anti-social behaviour outcomes).
- Exception reports arising from Housing Stock Group
- Benchmarking through HouseMark against peer local authorities and ALMOs.

Performance is RAG-rated with clear targets, intervention thresholds and improvement actions where required.

In addition to routine performance reporting, matters of significant concern or emerging risk may be reported by exception at any point between reporting cycles, where earlier visibility or assurance is required.

5. Risk Management and Improvement Planning

Key landlord risks are identified and managed through:

- A dedicated Housing Risk Register that feeds into the Corporate Strategic Risk Register.
- Service improvement plans where performance falls below target or risk tolerance.



- Thematic focus on high-risk areas such as building safety, damp and mould, complaints handling and data quality.

6. Tenant Voice, Transparency and Accountability

The framework places tenants at its core by:

- Using TSM perception measures and independent surveys to understand tenant experience, including monthly repairs surveys
- Supporting tenant scrutiny and engagement arrangements
- Publishing clear, accessible performance information
- Learning from complaints, Ombudsman findings and tenant feedback to drive service improvement

7. Data Quality and Information Management

Robust assurance depends on high-quality data. The Council ensures this through:

- Rolling programme for stock condition surveys
- Tenant census project to collect household data
- Standardised methodologies for KPI and TSM reporting
- Routine data validation
- System improvements to strengthen compliance and record-keeping

8. Conclusion

The Assurance Framework provides a clear, structured and transparent approach to assuring Housing Landlord Services. It enables Members, senior leaders and tenants to understand performance, manage risk and demonstrate compliance, while ensuring tenants live in safe, well-managed homes and receive services that meet regulatory expectations and local priorities.

5. Standing Items

5.1 Forward Plan

Julie Fletcher to provide an update on the Forward Plan included in the pack.

Housing Engagement Board – Forward Plan – 2025 / 2026 (updated June 2026)

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route	Outcomes
January 2026 Separate session outside of HEB for tenant representatives [Completed]	Budget Update	To review the budget position for 2026 / 2027	Peter Campbell	Cabinet to approve budget February 2026	For Information – no specific outcomes
March 2026 - Special HEB Policy Meeting [Completed]	Reaching Every Tenant Policy	To note / provide further comments on the Reaching Every Tenant Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Geoff Clark	Cabinet	Policy Endorsed
March 2026 – Special HEB Policy Meeting [Completed]	Compliance Safety Policies : Fire Safety Asbestos Lift Safety	To note / provide further comments on the compliance safety policies following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Eddie Spicer	Cabinet – March 2026	Policy Endorsed
March 2026 – Special HEB Policy Meeting [Completed]	Compensation Policy	To note / provide further comments on the Compensation Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Peter Campbell	Cabinet – March 2026	Policy Endorsed
March 2026 – Special HEB Policy Meeting [Completed]	Repairs and Maintenance Policy	To note / provide further comments on the Compensation Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Eddie Spicer	Cabinet – March 2026	Policy Endorsed

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route	Outcomes
September 2025 June 2026 [Revised]	Pets Policy	To note / provide further comments on the Pets Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Geoff Clark	Cabinet – June 2026	-
September 2025 June 2026 [Revised]	Estate Services and Communal Areas Policy (new policy)	To note / provide further comments on the Communal Areas Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Geoff Clark	Cabinet – June 2026	-
June 2026 [New]	Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Submission	To note / provide further comments on the TSM submission to be sent to the Social Housing Regulator by the end of June 2026.	Julie Fletcher	TSM submission to Cabinet June 2026	-
June / July 2026 Separate briefing session March 2026 [Revised]	Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results	Review the outcome of the 2025 / 2026 tenant satisfaction survey results. Results to be presented by MEL Research Ltd.	Julie Fletcher	N / A	-
June 2026	Performance Monitoring	Agree performance indicators and oversight and scrutiny procedures	Julie Fletcher	Housing Engagement Board / Lead Member for Housing	-
June 2026	Complaints Annual Report and Self-Assessment	Endorse the Complaints Annual Report and Self-Assessment for 2025 / 2026 prior to submission to the Housing Ombudsman	Julie Fletcher	Cabinet – June 2026	-

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route	Outcomes
June 2026	Compliance Safety Policies: Hazards (incl. Damp and Mould) [Renamed HHSRS]	To note / provide further comments on the compliance safety policies following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Eddie Spicer	Cabinet – June 2026	-
June 2026 [New]	Tenant Census Report	Report requested by HEB at the last meeting as to an update on the tenant census	Julie Fletcher	HEB	-
June 2026 [New]	Disabled Adaptations Report	Report requested by HEB at the last meeting	Julie Fletcher	HEB	-
June 2026 [New]	Service Charges / Communal Rooms	Report requested by HEB at the last meeting;	Geoff Clark	HEB	-
June 2026 [New]	Service Plan 2026 / 2027	To note the service plan for 2026 / 2027, identifying any additional key priorities / challenges to be included for this year and / or to support the development of next years' Service Plan.	Julie Fletcher	HEB	-
September 2025 September 2026 [Revised]	Asset Management Strategy (existing)	Review and update of the existing Asset Management Strategy	Eddie Spicer	Cabinet – September 2026	-

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route	Outcomes
September 2026	Rent Setting and Service Charges Policy	To note / provide further comments on the Rent Setting and Service Charges Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Geoff Clark	Cabinet	-
September 2026	No Access Policy	To note / provide further comments on the 'No Access' Policy – setting how we respond when tenants do not allow access for essential inspections or repairs.	Eddie Spicer	Cabinet	-
September 2026 [New]	LGR	Update on Local Government Review (LGR)	Peter Campbell	N / A	-
September 2026 [New]	Recruitment Protocol	To establish a recruitment protocol for tenant involvement.	Julie Fletcher	HEB	-
December 2025 (delayed due to further work required on policy) TBC [Revised]	Communal Room Charging Policy (new policy)	To note / provide further comments on the Communal Room Charging Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Geoff Clark	Cabinet	-

Date of Meeting	Topic	Description	Lead Officer	Decision Route	Outcomes
December 2025 TBC [Revised]	Empty Property Re-let Standards	Scrutiny Project Group being set up with tenant representatives to look at the standard of empty properties when they are let. Outcome: Group to provide a report / suggestions of what they feel should be changed which will be considered as part of the new Standard	Eddie Spicer	Housing Engagement Board / Lead Member for Housing	-
TBC	Relet Management Policy	Following outcome of scrutiny project	Eddie Spicer / Dave Armitage	Cabinet	-
TBC	Rent Arrears Management Policy	To note / provide further comments on the Rent Arrears Management Policy following tenant consultation through the policy panel	Geoff Clark	Cabinet	-
TBC	Right-sizing Policy	To note / provide further comments on the Right Sizing Policy – supporting tenants to move to more suitable accommodation	Geoff Clark	Cabinet	-

5.2 Contracts Review Panel

Meetings to review and discuss the ground's maintenance contract were held on 17 December 2025 and 17 March 2026.

Copies of the notes from the meeting held on 17 December 2025 are included in the pack.

Geoff Clark to report.

SP Landscapes Contract Review Meeting – 17 December 2025

Present: Paul Bowman (PB) – Independent

Patti Hall (PH) – Leaseholder Representative

Simon Luckings (SL) – Operations Manager SP Landscapes

Geoff Clark (GC) – Service Manager Tenancy and Estates

Scheduled Work – Update from SL

- All 12 high frequency grass cuts have been completed, the last day of cutting taking place on 18 November 2025
- The plan for next year is to carry out the first cut in the last week of February / first week of March 2026 but this will be subject to weather conditions. The first cut will be combined with an obstacle spray.
- All four low frequency cuts have been completed with the last cut taking place in November 2025.
- The first low frequency cut for next year is scheduled for May 2026.
- All five welfare cuts have been completed. The fourth cut was completed in September and the fifth cut in late October 2025.
- Wildflower cut and collect exercise was completed in October 2025 and all arisings were moved from site.
- The annual ditch clearance is scheduled for late January / early February next year.
- Approximately 90% of the annual hedge cut has been completed, with only larger hedges remaining. This work should be completed before Christmas.
- Hardstanding's weed spray – visit one planned for May / June 2026 and visit two in August / September 2026.
- Sheltered scheme site shrub / hedge maintenance – summer cut has been completed. Winter cut scheduled to start in January and be completed by the end of February 2026.

Estate Inspections

We discussed the possibility of carrying out a couple of inspections during the winter months so that the impact of different seasons could be measured. GC agreed to add at least one winter inspection to next year's schedule. Also, SL to join a couple of inspections again if possible.

We also agreed that concerns around moss growth should be added to the estate inspection form and the identification of additional wildflower sites. GC to discuss with Bronwen Taylor.

Site Maps

We discussed the discrepancies that are sometimes seen when estate inspections are carried out. The master plans were created in 2008 following a district wide survey. Ad-hoc changes have been made over the years but we all agreed that a new survey would be helpful. GC to discuss with colleagues and agree a way forward.

Any other Business

- Moss clearance – Simon to message Marianne
- Wildflower / Wild grass sites – add details to future newsletters to encourage residents to come forward with new sites.
- Grounds Maintenance plans – are these being updated when discrepancies are being identified through estate inspections (formal and informal) – GC to check with colleagues.

Geoff Clark

6 January 2026

5.3 Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Key Performance Indicators Panel – Annual Report

Notes from the meeting held on 26 May 2026 are included for noting.

Margaret Wilson to report.

TSMs and KPIs Annual Reports – Panel Meeting

26 May 2026 – 2pm – 4pm (Online)

Attendees: Margaret Wilson (Elected Tenant Representative) – Chair
Vivienne Till (Elected Tenant Representative)
Mike Luffman (Elected Tenant Representative)
Ivor Grant (Tenant Volunteer)
Grace Andrews (SCDC)
Peter Campbell (SCDC)
David Armitage (SCDC)

Apologies: Jim Watson (Elected Tenant Representative)
Geoff Clark (SCDC)

1. Overview of Performance (Grace Andrews)

Strong Performance Areas (Green)

- **Rent arrears:** Improved to **1.54%** (close to best benchmark 1.33%).
- **Rent loss:** Slight improvement.
- **Compliance (Gas and Electrical / TSM):** 100% compliance achieved.
- **Re-let satisfaction and property condition:** Positive feedback (low response volume).

Areas of Concern (Red / Declining)

- **Average re-let time:**
 - o 55 days vs target of 39 days.
- **Vacant properties:**
 - o 56 properties not re-let promptly (often complex cases).
- **Repairs satisfaction:**
 - o Dropped to 90% (below best 94%).
- **Appointments kept:**
 - o Declined to 90% due to missed time slots.
- **Complaint response performance:**
 - o Declining response rates.

2. Key Discussion Points

2.1 Re-lets and Vacant Properties

- Delays often due to:
 - o Major repairs (example, fire damage, subsidence)
 - o Properties pending sale
 - o Extensive refurbishment needs
- Vacant performance still slightly improved vs previous year.

2.2 Repairs and Satisfaction

- Satisfaction declining but still broadly in line with sector trends.
 - o Satisfaction is independently monitored by MEL, whose surveys are used as the “gold standard” measure.
 - o The contractor will continue to collect its own satisfaction data, in line with contractual requirements.
 - o Changes to Mears call handling (first point of contact for tenants reporting a repair) – Service change currently being managed through Jade Slater, Mears Customer Success Co-ordinator

Concern Raised:

- Tenants may report satisfaction before issues fully resolved (example, recurring faults).

Action Underway:

- Independent expert reviewing repairs contract performance (Richard Medley).

2.3 Repair Quality and Oversight Concerns

- Tenant feedback suggests:
 - o Perceived lack of supervision
 - o Repeat visits for unresolved issues
- Acknowledged as perception rather than evidenced trend.
- Ongoing review to assess:
 - o Repeat jobs / callbacks
 - o Quality assurance gaps

2.4 Appointment Performance

- Drop due to:
 - Missed timing tolerances (slots)
- Further detail to be requested if needed.

2.5 Complaints (TSM and KPI Reports)

Trends

- Landlord Complaints increased significantly:
 - 112 in 2024 / 2025 → **215 in 2025 / 2026 formal complaints**
- Stage 1 complaints rose from 29 received in quarter 1 → 57 in quarter 4 (quarter comparison).

Main Complaint Themes

- Repairs and maintenance (largest category)
- Customer service
- Communication failures (notably increased)
- Service delivery issues

Drivers of Increase

- Easier reporting / greater visibility
- Increased tenant awareness
- More complex complaints (including AI-generated submissions)

2.6 Complaint Handling Improvements

- Recruitment of **temporary (12-month) Complaints Case Officer**:
 - Admin support role (not customer-facing)
 - Aims to:
 - Help officers manage workload
 - Improve response times
- Internal actions:
 - Training on complaint handling
 - Strengthened customer service standards

Discussion:

- Tenant involvement in recruitment suggested.
- Decision: **To consider criteria for when tenant involvement is appropriate.**

2.7 Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

- Cases fluctuate monthly (not cumulative).
- New cases each month:
 - o January = 17, February = 26, March = 17
- Performance broadly mid-range compared to peers.

2.8 Compliance and Safety

- 100% compliance across:
 - o Gas, fire, asbestos, water, lifts
- Independent verification in place (best practice).

Positive feedback:

- Gas servicing process praised by tenants.

2.9 Data and Reporting Changes

- KPI reports to be **streamlined / merged** going forward.
- Complaint report will remain separate.
- Potential expansion of safety metrics in reporting.

3. Key Issues Identified

- Increasing complaint volumes and complexity
- Decline in repairs satisfaction and appointments kept
- Delays in re-letting and vacant property turnaround
- Communication failures driving dissatisfaction

4. Actions and Next Steps

- Repairs contract review (external expert)
- Introduce complaints case officer (12-month trial)
- Improve complaint response processes and training
- Explore tracking repeat repairs / callbacks
- Consider tenant involvement in recruitment (policy basis)
- Monitor impact of Mears operational changes
- Review and enhance KPI reporting format

6. Any other Business

Any additional issues to be raised.

7. Proposed Meeting Dates for 2026 / 2027

- 24 September 2026 – Thursday (Teams meeting / venue to be confirmed)
- 10 December 2026 – Thursday (Teams meeting / venue to be confirmed)
- 23 March 2027 – Tuesday (Teams meeting / venue to be confirmed)

8. Closing