

HOUSING OPERATIONS BOARD
WEDNESDAY 12 MARCH, 2025 AT 5.00 PM IN MEETING ROOM 6 - HURTMORE,
MILLMEAD HOUSE, MILLMEAD, GUILDFORD, SURREY GU2 4BB

Members:

Councillor Julia McShane (Chair)
Councillor Bilal Akhtar
Councillor Philip Brooker
Councillor Amanda Creese
Councillor Vanessa King
Councillor Maddy Redpath
Dale Askew - Tenant Engagement Group
Patricia Ayling - Tenant Engagement Group
Pat Conroy - Tenant Engagement Group
Alan Wood - Tenant Engagement Group

A G E N D A

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES**
2. **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**
3. **MINUTES** (Pages 3 - 10)
To confirm, as a correct record, the minutes of the last meeting.
4. **VOIDS MANAGEMENT - PROGRESS REPORT SUMMARY** (Pages 11 - 12)
5. **HOUSING STRATEGIES 2025-2034** (Pages 13 - 74)
6. **PROPOSED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIS) 2025-26** (Pages 75 - 80)
7. **HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE** (Pages 81 - 118)
8. **PROPOSED HOUSING AIDS & ADAPTATIONS POLICY** (Pages 119 - 132)
9. **DRAFT DAMP & MOULD POLICY** (Pages 133 - 148)
10. **DRAFT PLANNED MAINTENANCE POLICY** (Pages 149 - 158)
11. **WORK PROGRAMME - 2025-26** (Pages 159 - 162)
12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
13. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS: 2025-26**
Wednesday 14 May 2025 at 5pm in Meeting Room 6, Millmead House
Wednesday 9 July 2025 at 5pm in Meeting Room 6, Millmead House
Wednesday 24 September 2025 at 5pm in Meeting Room 6, Millmead House
Wednesday 19 November 2025 at 5pm in Meeting Room 6, Millmead House

HOUSING OPERATIONS BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 15 JANUARY 2025

Present:

Councillor Julia McShane (chair)
Councillor Bilal Akhtar
Councillor Amanda Creese
Councillor Vanessa King
Councillor Maddy Redpath
Patricia Ayling, Tenant Engagement Group
Alan Wood, Tenant Engagement Group

Julian Higson – Joint Strategic Director of Housing, Communities & Environment
Annalisa Howson – Joint Assistant Director, Housing Services
Julia Hovells – Savills

Action By

22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

Apologies were received from Councillor Philip Brooker, Dale Askew and Pat Conroy.

23. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

24. MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on 25 September 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

The following update on actions was noted:

Minute 15: Housing Improvement Plan Progress

In response to a question as to progress with the staffing structure, Julian confirmed that the target date of end of December 2024 had slipped because we were not yet in a position to know what a fit-for-purpose structure looked like

until we received the next version of the improvement plan following receipt of feedback from the Housing Quality Network. Julian reassured the Group that the Council was fortunate to have excellent interims. It was anticipated that a revised target date would be included in the new version of the improvement plan, when that becomes available in March.

Minute 19: Tenant Engagement Group Feedback

It was noted that the further session with councillors had not yet been arranged.

25. FENCING GUIDELINES FOR TENANTS

The Board received and noted the new Fencing Guidelines for Tenants.

26. UPDATE ON HRA BUSINESS PLAN

The Board received a presentation on the new HRA Business Plan from Julia Hovells, Associate Director of Savills Affordable Housing Consultancy.

A copy of the slides would be circulated to the Board members after the meeting.

It was noted that the average capital investment per property over the 30-year period of the Business Plan was £66,000.

In response to a question as to whether the business plan would cover circumstances where developers fail to identify social housing providers willing to build social housing, Julian noted that the stock would decrease if the Council does not continue to build or acquire new homes. The Council was currently being approached by developers inviting the Council to take over the affordable housing element of their developments. The Business Plan would set out criteria to be applied that would determine whether the Council would do this in terms of the right housing at the right price. It was also possible for developers to make commuted payments to the Council in lieu of the provision of social housing in these circumstances.

In response to a question as to whether the Council had conducted condition surveys on all of the housing stock, and why decarbonisation was not part of the business plan, Julian informed the Board that the Council had a continuous rolling programme of stock condition surveys with data validation being undertaken on a sample of surveys. As regards decarbonisation, it was stated that no other authority included this in their business plans because of the huge expense. It was therefore a matter for central government to consider in terms of appropriate funding.

27. HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The Board considered the latest update on the Council's Housing Improvement Plan. It was noted that significant progress was being made in respect of addressing the priorities identified in the SOLACE review and the Independent Assurance Panel recommendations.

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Key achievements included leadership stabilisation, enhanced governance, compliance improvements, and the introduction of performance monitoring mechanisms. A six-month update on the Housing Improvement Plan had been presented to Full Council on 3 December 2024.

A further update report on the Improvement Plan, which would include the HQN recommendations, would be considered at the next Board meeting in March.

The Board

RESOLVED:

- (1) To note the progress made in the Housing Improvement Plan as outlined in the report.
- (2) To note the continued focus on key next steps, including addressing voids backlog, refreshing the plan with HQN recommendations, and completing the housing staffing structure review.

28. TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY REPORT

The Board received a report setting out the results of our first tenant perception surveys conducted in June/July 2024. It was noted that there had been a year's delay in starting the

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process and this formed part of the Council's self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in March 2024.

The RSH had introduced tenant satisfaction measures (TSMs) so tenants could see how their landlord was performing in comparison with others, making it easier for social housing tenants to hold their landlord to account in several key performance areas. The TSMs would also act as a source of information for the RSH to help identify the areas where landlords might need to improve things for tenants.

The TSMs covered five areas:

- Keeping properties in good repair
- Maintaining building safety
- Effective complaints handling
- Respectful and helpful tenant engagement
- Responsible neighbourhood management

The Council had commissioned Acuity Research & Practice, an independent data research company with expertise in the social housing field, to undertake our surveys. By the close of the surveys, 596 responses had been received, 401 by telephone interview and 195 online.

The report also included an action plan setting out how the Council intended to address the feedback raised by tenants.

It was noted that, of the 12 satisfaction measures, the Council's handling of complaints received only 22% satisfaction, which was reflected across the sector. However, the Board noted the action that was proposed to improve performance in this area including the proposed appointment of a Complaints Lead to the Customer Services team who would work closely with the Housing Complaints Co-ordinator. A new process had also been introduced in the housing complaints procedure so that when complaints come through to the Housing service the relevant manager was now required to contact the complainant within 24 hours in respect of emergencies (and 48 hours for other circumstances)

and agree a plan of action to address the complaint.

Management was also looking at all complaints every fortnight to try and understand what the complaints are actually about in terms of service failures rather than just receiving reports about trends of complaints.

Officers had also worked very hard to deal with the backlog of complaints.

It was noted that councillors received complaints from residents regarding the impact of neighbouring void properties.

It was suggested that the Council's performance against the TSMs could be benchmarked in order to understand how the Council was progressing in terms of tenant satisfaction. Annalisa confirmed that although the Regulator had not yet produced a comprehensive suite of results of TSMs for 2024-25, there had been some benchmarking among Surrey councils, which could be reported back to the Board.

In response to a question as to the rationale behind setting the priorities for the different actions, in particular the assessment of improving anti-social behaviour (ASB) as only "medium priority", the Board noted that this was because the Council did not receive a high number of ASB complaints and those that were received were generally of a low-level nature. The ASB policy had recently been updated in line with the Housing Ombudsman's recommendations.

Having considered the report, the Board

RESOLVED:

- (1) To note the contents of the report and to support the approach taken by officers to review the feedback received from the tenant surveys.
- (2) To note the Council's 2024-25 Tenant Perception Survey Results (Appendix 1).
- (3) To receive 6-monthly updates against the TSM action plan.

29. UPDATE ON HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION

Annalisa circulated a flyer which set out details of the current review of, and consultation on, the Council's Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy. The consultation would end on 31 January 2025 and, to date, 348 online responses had been received.

Board members were encouraged to respond to the consultation.

The strategies would be presented to the Board for comments before they are submitted to the Council's Executive for formal approval.

30. ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION (DECANT) POLICY

The Board was informed that there were a number of outdated housing policies which required comprehensive review to ensure that they aligned with current legislation and regulations. The Board considered a report on a proposed new Alternative Accommodation (Decant) Policy which would be referred to the Executive for approval. The Board was invited to consider the policy and pass on any comments to the Executive.

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The Decant policy had set out how the Council would assist tenants who had to move out of their homes on a temporary or permanent basis, either due to an emergency situation, where there are planned major works, or as a result of demolition.

The reviewed policy would ensure that decants were carried out in a clear, consistent, and equitable manner.

It was suggested that paragraph 2.1 of the draft Policy should be amended to read:

"Decanting is a term used to explain the process where residents must move temporarily or permanently from their homes because of health and safety concerns, the property is uninhabitable (*for example*, due to fire or flood), the property is going to be disposed of or works cannot be carried out whilst the tenants are still residing at the property."

In making an offer to a tenant, each case would be considered on its own merits and individual circumstances of a tenant and their families would be taken into account.

31. REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING PROGRESS UPDATE

The Board noted that the Council was continuing with its monthly engagement with the Regulator who were satisfied with the data that the Council was providing, and the progress being made in respect of the various compliance areas.

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32. VOID REPORT UPDATE

The Board considered a written progress report summary on Voids Management as at 31 December 2024, which was circulated at the meeting.

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It was noted that, overall, the total number of voids had reduced since the last report.

It was also noted that during the three-month period from September to December 2024, the Council had let 79 properties, completed works on 48 properties, but had acquired 88 new void properties.

The report had highlighted as one the next key steps, the introduction of a new Voids dashboard and Key Performance Indicators in order to improve the reporting process.

It was suggested that the Voids progress report be included on every Board agenda in future and that it should be one of the first substantive items on each agenda.

33. TENANT ENGAGEMENT GROUP UPDATE

Alan, as chair of TEG, reported that since their last meeting two new members had joined with, potentially seven new members likely to join at this month's TEG meeting.

It was noted that TEG now had two vice-chairs, one covering the tenancy side and the other covering leaseholders. The chair welcomed Conor Stredder, Resident Engagement Officer to his first Board meeting.

34. FORWARD PLAN UPDATE

The Board noted the Forward Plan and were invited to suggest new topics for consideration at future meetings, including projects that arise from the Improvement Plan.

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Annalisa informed the Board that there were a suite of housing related policies that needed to come forward for formal approval by the Council's Executive. Annalisa suggested that two Board members could be appointed to undertake scrutiny of these draft policies, with help from officers, and then bring them back to the Board with their recommendations.

It was noted that the draft policies would also need to be considered by the TEG.

The HRA budget would be presented to the next Board meeting.

Noting the significant business proposed for the agenda for the next Board meeting, officers would see whether any items could be deferred to May or whether an additional meeting should be convened in April.

The chair asked that the format of the Forward Plan be changed so that it was set out in a manner similar to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees' work programme.

35. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS: 2025

The dates and times of future meetings in 2025 were noted as follows:

Wednesday 12 March 2025 at 5.30pm

Wednesday 14 May 2025 at 5.30pm

Wednesday 9 July 2025 at 5.30pm

Wednesday 24 September 2025 at 5.30pm

Wednesday 19 November 2025 at 5.30pm

Venue for each meeting: Meeting Room 6, Millmead House

Voids Management – Progress Report Summary

Agenda item number: 4

As of 31 January 25,

1. Focus Areas: The council's ongoing efforts to reduce the number of empty homes, following an increase in voids during 2024. To target works, minimise turnaround times, and ensure properties are safe and compliant before re-letting.

2. Current Progress since last report:

Metric	31 Aug-24	31 Dec-24	31 Jan 25	Change	Commentary
Total Void Properties (major and minor)	233	215	212*	-3	Reduction shows progress; however, transfers (moving current tenants) create resultant voids, which can impact the total count.
Of these: Works with Repairs Team	165	173	184	+11	Increase due to the reduced working period from the festive period close (2 Weeks).
Of these: Voids Awaiting Occupation	68	42	28	-14	Significant reduction indicates progress in preparing properties for allocation.

***NOTE:** In addition there are 42 structural voids and 18 voids which are subject to a packaged procurement which gives a total voids figure of 272.

Homes Let

Apr 24	11
May 24	17
June 24	10
July 24	15
Aug 24	17
Sept 24	32

Oct 24	15
Nov 24	21
Dec 24	11
Jan 25	17

3. Summary – 1 Sept 24 to 31 Jan 25:

	Sept - Dec	Jan 25	Total
Number of Let Properties	79	17	96
Works Completed	48	28	76
New Voids	88	14	102

4. Progress since last report

- **Procurement Finalisation:** Tendering contracts for day to day voids and a package of 18 long-term voids that require significant levels of work. In progress working towards contracts being let during September 2025.
- **Void Led:** Job description created, evaluated and currently out to advert (closed 19 Feb) 2-year internal secondment. Interviews arranged – verbal update at meeting.
- **Improved Workflow:** Clearer allocation of minor and major works between Repairs and contractors.
- **New Voids Dashboard & KPIs in development:** to improve reporting on the key-to-key process. The Voids Lead will lead this when in post.

5. Next steps

- **Strategic Decision Required** on major voids requiring significant structural work as part of Asset Management Strategy or larger scale investment. There are currently 42 voids that fall within this category. This figure is likely to increase over the coming months.
- **Tenant Engagement:** Development of a new void standard with TEG involvement

Guildford Borough Council

Report to: Housing Operations Board
Date: 12 March 2025
Ward(s) affected: All
Report of Strategic Director of: Housing, Communities & Environment
Report Author: Helen Steward, Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager
Email: helen.steward@guildford.gov.uk
Lead Executive Member: Cllr Julia McShane
Email: Julia.McShane@guildford.gov.uk
Status: Open
Key decision: Yes

Housing Strategies 2025-2034

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 The Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy have been reviewed and updated to ensure they align with current legislation, national policy changes, and local housing priorities. Following a comprehensive consultation process with residents, stakeholders, and partner organisations, the final drafts of both strategies have now been completed and are presented to the Housing Operations Board for comment.

The revised Housing Strategy provides a strategic framework for addressing housing supply, affordability, sustainability, and tenant engagement, ensuring that the council's approach remains responsive to evolving housing needs. The Homelessness Strategy has been strengthened to focus on prevention, early intervention, and multi-agency working, reinforcing the council's commitment to reducing homelessness and improving outcomes for those at risk.

Both strategies incorporate key themes and priorities raised during consultation, ensuring they reflect the views and concerns of residents and stakeholders. The accompanying reports outline the

final strategic priorities, proposed action plans, and implementation measures, as well as the next steps in the approval process.

- 1.2 Findings and recommendations by the SOLACE review identified areas for improvement and identified the need to develop the strategies. These new strategies are part of the framework to give the service direction, set actions for improvement and instigate future policy development.

2.0 Recommendation to Board

That the Board resolves to:

- 2.1 Pass on any comments in respect of the draft Strategies to the officers for consideration by the Council's Executive.
- 2.2 Support the draft Housing Strategy and the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to Council.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 Housing Strategy

While there is no statutory requirement for local authorities to produce a Housing Strategy, it is considered best practice to have a clear strategic framework outlining the council's housing policies, priorities, and objectives. A well-defined strategy ensures a coordinated approach to housing delivery, guiding decision-making, investment, and service improvements across the borough.

3.2 Homelessness Strategy

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to have an up-to-date Homelessness Strategy that sets out how they will prevent and reduce homelessness. Given the changing policy landscape, increasing demand for services, and emerging challenges in homelessness prevention, a revised strategy is necessary to ensure a proactive and effective response.

3.3 Importance of Updated Strategies

Housing strategies provide a structured framework for policy development, ensuring housing services are delivered effectively and in line with local and national priorities. With the previous strategies now outdated and a housing service improvement programme underway, the introduction of updated strategies is essential. These documents will support service transformation, enhance resident outcomes, and align with the council's broader housing ambitions.

4.0 Status of Report

4.1 Open

5.0 Strategic Priorities

5.1 This report and its recommendations relate directly to GBC Corporate Strategy Priority 4: Decent and affordable homes and Priority 5: A Resilient and well-managed council.

6.0 Background

6.1 The Council's last Housing Strategy covered the period 2015-2020 and was adopted in February 2015. The last Homelessness Strategy covered 2018-2020 and was adopted in 2018. Following the adoption of a new Corporate Plan in July 2024, officers began planning a review of our housing strategies and developed new visions and priorities for each strategy.

6.2 In December 2024 a survey was opened asking for feedback on the draft visions and priorities for both housing strategies. The survey asked whether those completing the survey were a resident, worked in the borough, had family/friends in the borough or no connection, to best understand who was responding our survey. The survey was open until the end of January 2025.

6.3 Over 50 local groups and partner organisations were directly notified about the survey, as well as it being publicised on the Council's website and social media channels.

- 6.4 We had a total of 590 responses to the survey; the majority of those responding (90.43%) were residents in the borough, 33.43% of which also worked in the borough (57.02% lived in the borough but worked elsewhere). The remainder worked in the borough and had friends/family living here (1.97%) or were responding as no connection to the borough (2.81%).
- 6.3 The draft visions consulted on were 'Everyone has a home that meets their needs' (Housing Strategy) and 'To provide a high quality, responsive service where we support those at risk of or experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping at the earliest opportunity.' (Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy'. A separate report has been produced on the feedback received (see Appendix 1).
- 6.4 The draft priorities consulted on for the Housing Strategy were:
Priority 1: Deliver decent, sustainable homes people need and can afford,
Priority 2: Improve the quality, standard, safety and accessibility of our homes and housing services,
Priority 3: Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping and
Priority 4: Improving housing options and opportunities.
- 6.5 The draft priorities consulted on for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy were:
Priority 1: Focus on early intervention and prevention,
Priority 2: Maximise options for those ready to move on,
Priority 3: Provide complete support to people who are homeless and dealing with challenging personal issues and
Priority 4: Work collectively with our partners to secure positive and sustained outcomes.

7.0 Options

- 7.1 Support the draft strategies to adoption to enable continued work on policy development and improvements.

This is the recommended option.

- 7.2 Defer the strategies for further review and development.

8.0 Consultation

- 8.1 Briefings with staff held to inform the development of the priorities and vision statements.
- 8.2 Focus group held with Tenant Engagement Group.
- 8.3 Online survey with key stakeholders and general public on vision statements and priorities.
- 8.4 The strategies were reviewed and endorsed by the Portfolio Holder.

9.0 Key Risks

- 9.1 If the strategies are not supported and adopted this could delay the progression of our improvement programme, policy development and other associated projects and work streams.
- 9.2 Fluctuations in the market, economy and policy landscape can influence costs of construction, investment and affordability which could impact our ambitions for the delivery of new homes. This could in turn impact what is available to help those in need of housing.
- 9.3 Delivery of some elements of the strategies are dependent on the continued availability of resources from external funding streams e.g. from Homes England. Future reductions in funding levels could impact upon the ability to deliver some of the targets contained in the Action Plan.

10.0 Legal and Governance Implications

- 10.1 **Housing Strategy:** There are no direct legal implications involved in relation to the housing strategy. It must be borne in mind however, that if a strategy is adopted it will be necessary for the housing authority to adhere to that strategy in order to avoid possible legal challenges should there be a departure from it.
- 10.2 **Homelessness Prevention & Rough Sleeping Strategy:** Under the Homelessness Act 2002, sections 1-4, a local housing authority must regularly undertake a review of homelessness in the Borough and in consultation with social services and other relevant organisations,

formulate and publish a local homelessness strategy. The authority has a duty to publish a new strategy every 5 years.

11.0 Financial Implications

11.1 There are no additional financial implication arising from adoption of the strategy. If the strategy is adopted, any actions arising from it will be funded by the Housing Revenue Account approved budget.

12.0 Human Resources Implications

12.1 No Human Resources implications identified.

13.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

13.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment have been completed during the development of each strategy. While no one area was identified as requiring specific consideration, the team are mindful of the needs of protected groups to provide equality to our communities.

It will also be necessary for the final decision-making body to have carried out PSED (Public Sector Equality Duty) assessment in accordance with Section 149 Equality Act 2010 and was considered in advance of any final decision to adopt the Strategy.

13.2 No Equality and Diversity implications identified.

14.0 Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

14.1 There are Climate Change and Sustainability implications in the report relating to the development of new homes. This is linked in with the council's priority for a more sustainable borough and the strategies support the council's ongoing efforts to mitigate climate change and promote sustainability.

15.0 Next Steps

15.1 The report will be presented to Executive Briefing on 19th March followed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Resources) on 15th April and Executive on 24th April.

15.2 It is anticipated that O&S and HOB will receive an update on progress in 12 months of adoption of the strategies.

16.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: [Housing Strategy 2025-2034](#).

Appendix 2: [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2034](#)

Appendix 3: [Response to the consultation on housing strategies vision and priorities January 2025](#)

Report clearance progress:

Your report will not be published by democratic services unless the below is completed and there is evidence of the correct clearance process.

This box must not be deleted and will be published with the report

Finance	Jo Knight	26.02.2025
Legal & Governance	Norman Joss	17.02.2025
Human Resources	Ali Holman	12.02.2025
Equalities	Ali Holman	12.02.2025
Strategic Director	Julian Higson	Insert date cleared

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Draft Housing Strategy

2025-2034

DRAFT

Index

Introduction	3
Facts about housing in Guildford	4
Our vision & Key Priorities	5
Strategic Context	5
National Policy Context	6
Local Context	7
Managing Council-Owned and Affordable Housing	7
Understanding Housing Needs: Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	8
The Council's Role in Private Sector Housing	8
Our partners and stakeholders	9
How we will deliver this housing strategy	9
What we have achieved since the last strategy	10
Our Priorities	11
Priority 1: Deliver decent, sustainable homes people need and can afford	11
Priority 2: Improve the quality, standard, safety and accessibility of our homes and housing services	12
Priority 3: Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping	13
Priority 4: Improving housing options and opportunities	14
Next Steps	15
Housing Strategy Action Plan	16

Introduction

Housing is a crucial factor of wellbeing. Good quality housing, which meets an individual's or family's needs, provides a sound platform to build a good quality of life. We are committed to ensuring there are homes available that our residents can afford.

This strategy has been developed to support the goals in the council's Corporate Strategy, we aim to deliver decent and affordable homes. This, along with our other priorities, will help us become a more sustainable, prosperous, and inclusive borough. Together, these efforts will make Guildford borough a thriving place to live, work, and do business.

The role of the housing strategy is to:

- Promote a coordinated approach between the council and key partners to housing in Guildford borough.
- Create a framework to deliver key priorities across the council. Support resource allocation to make this happen.
- Highlight how housing contributes to wider goals, such as better health, tackling homelessness, and promoting sustainable economic growth.
- Ensure that the council meets its obligations under relevant legislation.

We want to be more transparent and encourage open dialogue with our residents. We invite your input on the future development of our housing strategy action plan. To learn how to get involved, please visit the housing pages on the council website:

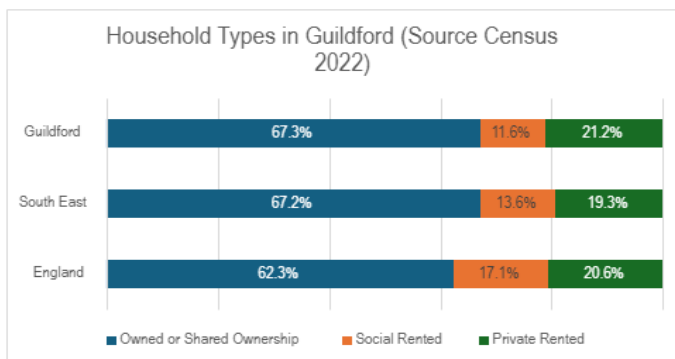
<https://www.guildford.gov.uk/housing>. If you are a tenant or leaseholder of the council, you can join our tenant engagement group by emailing: Tenants.Group@guildford.gov.uk

Facts about housing in Guildford

Households

The 2022 Census shows that Guildford has 55,760 households, an increase of 1,787 since 2011.

Housing Types



- 67.3% of households in Guildford are owner-occupied or shared ownership. There are affordability barriers for new buyers as the average house price for first-time buyers in Guildford was £391,000 in December 2024, up 4.3% from the previous year (source ONS)
- 11.6% of households live in social rented housing, below the national average.
- 21.2% of households rent privately and affordability remains a challenge, with average monthly rents reaching £1,617 as of December 2024

New Homes

In the 2023/24 there were 593 new homes built, 121 of these were Affordable Homes.

Affordable Housing

- There are over 6,500 social rented homes in the Guildford Borough Council area, and of those 5,000 are Council homes
- As of October 2024, 2,365 people were on the housing register, waiting for affordable housing.
- Around 150 socially rented homes become available a year for letting
- In 2023/24, 121 new affordable homes were built:
 - 73 for rent
 - 48 for affordable home ownership

Homelessness

- In 2023/24, 324 homeless applicants were helped into secure accommodation.
- 134 households needed emergency bed & breakfast (B&B) placements.
- The average B&B placement cost was £2,813 per stay.

Our vision & Key Priorities

Everyone has a safe, high quality, sustainable home that meets their needs and that they can afford as part of a thriving and inclusive community.

We have set clear goals and priorities to achieve our vision for housing in the borough. This will help us meet the current and future housing needs of residents. We will tackle key challenges like affordability, homelessness, housing supply, and the need for that different types of homes to meet the varied needs of residents This will help everyone in our community.

Key priorities of this housing strategy:

Deliver homes people need and can afford	Ensuring that all residents of the borough have access to housing that is affordable and meets their needs. Working closely with planning to secure the infrastructure to support new homes and Surrey County Council to deliver specialist housing.
Improve the quality, standard and safety of homes and housing services	Ensuring the homes we provide are of good quality, well maintained and safe for our tenants with effective and efficient planned improvements.
Prevent homelessness and rough sleeping	Implementing targeted programmes to reduce homelessness through prevention, support services and temporary accommodation.
Improve housing options, opportunities, and choice	We will centrally coordinate local services to ensure those seeking help have access to a range of housing options

Together, we can ensure that housing is a cornerstone of economic opportunity, social equity, and environmental sustainability.

Strategic Context

The Council has a number of statutory and key roles in relation to Housing, including:

- Strategic housing authority with responsibilities for homelessness and housing allocations
- Landlord to Council tenants and leaseholders
- Builder of new Council homes
- Local planning authority, with responsibility for setting planning policy and determining planning applications in the borough
- Licensing and Environmental Health authority, with regulatory and enforcement roles in the private sector

National Policy Context

- **The National Planning Policy Framework** A new National Planning Policy Framework was published on 12 December 2024 which includes reforms by the Government which aim to increase the delivery of new homes.
- **Affordable Homes Programme:** Launched in 2020 to deliver 180,000 affordable homes by 2026, with a revised focus on social rent.
- **First Homes Scheme:** Introduced in 2021, offers first-time buyers a 30% discount on new-build homes.
- **Building Safety Act:** Enacted in 2021 to ensure the safety of high-rise buildings through a new regulator and stringent safety standards.
- **Fire Safety:** Following the Grenfell tragedy (2017), new safety regulations were introduced, including the Fire Safety Act (2021), Fire Safety (England) Regulations (2022), and Building Safety Act (2022). These place greater responsibilities on landlords and property owners, particularly for high-rise buildings.
- **Homelessness:** The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) expanded our legal duty to prevent homelessness, leading to a review of services and the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy (2020-2025).
- **Allocation of Social Housing** The Armed Forces Act (2021) requires local authorities to prioritise social housing for serving and former armed forces personnel and their families.
- **The Domestic Abuse Act (2021)** mandates councils to provide safe accommodation and support for victims of domestic abuse.
- **The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act (2023)** aims to improve housing quality for vulnerable adults who need specialist accommodation and support
- **Social Housing (Regulation) Act:** Passed in 2023, enhances tenant protections by holding landlords accountable, addressing hazards, and improving standards.
- **Zero-Carbon Housing by 2050:** Supported by funding for energy-efficient technologies, reducing energy bills, and promoting green jobs.
- **Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023:** changes to planning systems, environmental outcomes, infrastructure, and market reform.

- **Renters' Reform Bill:** Aims to strengthen tenant rights by ending fixed-term tenancies, regulating rent increases, and removing Section 21 evictions

Local Context

- **Guildford Borough Council Corporate Strategy 2024-2034 :** A Greener, Fairer, Thriving Guildford sets out our priorities as a council for the next ten years, and how we plan to make Guildford borough a thriving place to live, work and do business. A key priority within the corporate strategy is decent and affordable homes.
- **The Local Plan:** The foundation for all planning decisions, this plan plays a crucial role in shaping the future development of local communities. This is currently comprised of the Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2019 and the Local Plan: Development Management Policies 2023. A Local Plan update is currently underway. Affordable housing is secured through S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- **Economic Development Strategy:** This strategy shapes a new vision for the local economy with a priority that includes meeting business and worker needs.
- **Economic Regeneration Programme:** The Economic Regeneration Programme includes a specific work programme on housing delivery.
- **Shaping Guildford's Future:** The council's ambition to breathe new life into the town including making the centre a more attractive place to live, work and visit
- In December 2024, the council published its latest **Medium-Term Financial Plan (MFTP)** update. This update reflects the council's dedication to aligning its budget and financial planning with priorities such as providing decent and affordable homes.
- The **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy** focuses on supporting those in need and preventing homelessness.
- The **Asset Management Strategy and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan** guide investment in maintaining and improving council housing.
- **Housing Improvement Plan** On 3 January 2024, the council commissioned the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) to conduct an Independent Governance Review of Guildford Borough Council (GBC), with a specific focus on the housing landlord function. The review feeds into the refreshed Housing Improvement Plan which drives service enhancements and ensures that all council-managed homes meet high standards of safety, quality, and accessibility.

Together, these policies, strategies and plans provide a structured, long-term approach to delivering safe, high-quality, and affordable housing for Guildford residents.

Managing Council-Owned and Affordable Housing

The Council directly manages over 5,000 homes and is responsible for ensuring they are well-maintained, safe, and fit for purpose.

- **Planned Investment:** Through the Asset Management Strategy, we are investing in modernisation, repairs, and sustainability improvements to maintain high standards.
- **Decent Homes Standard:** We are delivering a programme of improvements to ensure all council homes meet or exceed the Decent Homes Standard as soon as possible.
- **Service Delivery Improvements:** The Housing Improvement Plan is streamlining voids, repairs, tenancy management, and resident engagement.
- **Affordable Housing Expansion:** We continue to build and acquire new affordable homes, seeking funding through Homes England's Affordable Homes Programme and other sources.

Understanding Housing Needs: Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) informs planning policy by identifying the types of housing needed across the borough. It highlights the demand for different housing sizes and tenures:

Affordable Housing Needs:

- 40.9% should be one-bedroom homes.
- 31.7% should be two-bedroom homes.
- 23.9% should be three-bedroom homes.

Market (Private) Housing Needs:

- 40.4% should be three-bedroom homes.
- 28.6% should be two-bedroom homes.

This data is currently being updated to help shape the new Local Plan.

The Council's Role in Private Sector Housing

The Council has a legal duty to monitor housing conditions in the private sector, ensuring safe and healthy homes.

- **Inspections:** Conducted in response to tenant concerns, with proactive checks on high-risk properties.
- **Enforcement:** The Private Sector Housing Team enforces housing standards and investigates statutory nuisance cases, harassment, and illegal evictions under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Key Areas of Focus:

- Regulating Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).
- Addressing empty homes and overcrowding.
- Investigating complaints from owner-occupiers, landlords, and tenants.

Our partners and stakeholders

This strategy has been developed with the input and support of a wide range of partners and will be delivered through continued partnership working.

As well as our Parish Councils, we work with a number of local organisations, community groups and private companies. Some of our key partners are shown below.



This strategy also sits within the priorities outlined in the [Housing Strategy For Surrey](#) a county-wide housing strategy, the key priorities are:

1. Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit
2. Tackling health inequalities
3. Enabling a greener future
4. Empowered and thriving communities

Other important strategies that we will consider include:

1. The [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#), an assessment of the current and future health and social care needs of the population of Surrey
2. The Surrey-wide [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

How we will deliver this housing strategy

1. **Clearly communicate our vision and priorities**

Ensure that all stakeholders understand the core objectives of the strategy

2. Engage the community

Ensure that people affected by the strategy are actively involved in the process

3. Partnerships and collaboration

Engage key stakeholders to effectively collaborate and support each other to deliver the strategy's goals

4. Develop a housing strategy action plan.

Break the strategy into smaller, measurable tasks and outline a detailed action plan that has clear goals, timelines, and identifies responsible parties

5. Monitor and evaluate our progress.

Establish Key Performance Indicators to measure the success of the strategy and establish regular reporting on progress, and an annual review. Progress on delivering the Action Plan will be reported annually to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and within our published Annual Strategic Review (ASR).

What we have achieved since the last strategy

The council has continued to take an ambitious approach to housing delivery and service improvement. We take a lead role on a number of large strategic sites, investing in our own new building programme and working closely with Waverley Borough Council on joint senior leadership.

1. We partnered with the **Wates Group at Guildford Park Car Park**. Together, we will build 248 new homes. Of these, 40% will be affordable housing. We're putting £39.7m from our housing revenue account into affordable homes. The new neighbourhood will have a mix of council homes for rent and affordable homes to buy. There is a focus to create a high quality, sustainable development where people are proud to live.

Weyside Urban Village is a major regeneration project bringing new homes, facilities and opportunities to Guildford. It will provide around 1,500 new high-quality homes to help meet our borough's housing needs, including affordable housing. Recognising our approach to free up previously developed land for new homes, the scheme won the 'Best use of publicly owned land and, or property placemaking' in the Planning Awards 2023. Major infrastructure investment is already underway and new healthcare provision, employment and community spaces will enhance the new neighbourhood.

These developments are part of a programme for housing-led regeneration of sites that we own

2. We have worked with developers to deliver new affordable housing. This includes capped rent levels and limited rents on Shared Ownership homes to match local affordability.
3. Building our own homes through making most effective use of our assets to deliver new council homes.
4. Working with partners to deliver new extra care housing for our most vulnerable residents with additional care needs.
5. We are enhancing our housing services with the Housing Improvement Plan. This plan aims to boost performance management, improve communication, foster a professional culture, and support staff health and wellbeing.

Our Priorities

Priority 1: Deliver decent, sustainable homes people need and can afford

Outcome: Increase the supply of quality affordable housing by working in partnership with a range of providers and making the best use of the Council's land assets and resources.

The supply of new homes is central to the economic and social prosperity of any area. It is crucial to offer a variety of housing options. These should meet quality standards, be affordable, and be in locations that serve residents' needs now and in the future. We will encourage the delivery of homes that are more sustainable with cheaper running costs for residents.

How we will do this:

- Secure affordable housing on all qualifying sites seeking planning permission. This includes a mix of home types and tenures. Explore options for social rent and promote discount market sale as the preferred way to achieve home ownership.
- We need sustainable designs for new homes. These houses should be easy to adapt and use technology to lower running costs for residents. This includes features such as air source heat pumps and electric vehicle car charging points.
- Increase grant funding for sites in the borough. This will help with delivery and find new ways to enable it.
- Build new council homes to make best use of our assets.

- Work to deliver a range of housing to enable independence for people in need of care and support.
- Work with Parish Councils and community groups to deliver rural affordable schemes and community led homes for residents.
- Support efforts to bring empty homes back into use to make best use of available homes in the area.

Challenges we face

- High local land values, house prices and market rents.
- Increasing cost of living pressures reducing ability to afford housing costs.
- Impact of legislation changes on the private rented sector impacting availability for affordable accommodation.
- Restrictions on suitable development land through Green Belt/Surrey Hills National Landscape and other planning designations.
- The current Homes England funding structure impacts the delivery of affordable homes being secured through S106 due to providers prioritising non S106 delivery.

How we will measure success

- Monitor the delivery of new affordable homes.

Priority 2: Improve the quality, standard, safety and accessibility of our homes and housing services

Outcome: Ensure all social and privately rented homes meet regulatory standards, providing safe, high-quality, and accessible housing for all residents.

We are committed to high-quality housing services that give residents a voice in their community. With local partners, we will push for better standards in the private sector. As landlords, we will care for and invest in our properties. We will also work together to keep homes safe, well-managed, and sustainable for all residents. How we will do this:

- Follow our policy to fairly allocate social housing and ensure equal access.
- Work closely with housing providers to solve issues quickly and support residents.
- Invest in our council homes to keep them safe and well-managed.
- Make sure all homes meet Decent Homes Standards as soon as possible.
- Hire reliable maintenance partners to keep our council homes in good condition.
- Speed up void turnaround times in council owned properties to get homes ready faster for new tenants.

- Provide effective adaptations to help residents live independently in their homes for as long as possible.

Challenges we face

- An ageing population.
- Performance issues identified within our council housing repairs and maintenance services that we are working to resolve and improve.
- A back log of repairs and improvements.
- Working with a limited and interim workforce.

How we will measure success

- Percentage of homes that do not meet the Decent Home Standard.
- Repairs completed within target timescale.
- Tenant satisfaction measures.
- Complaint monitoring.
- Compliance with safety requirements.

Priority 3: Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping

Outcome: Anyone facing homelessness or at risk of it gets the advice, help, and support they need.

Homelessness is an issue which is high on the national agenda. The “Everyone In” initiative, launched during COVID-19, provided emergency accommodation for rough sleepers, proving that a coordinated approach can make a real impact. We will build on this progress, working with community partners to ensure everyone has a safe and stable place to call home.

How we will do this:

- Processing applications for housing in accordance with housing legislation and the Local Authorities statutory obligations.
- Commissioning temporary accommodation for homeless households.
- Providing outreach services for rough sleepers.
- Working with partners to support people with complex needs, mental health issues or substance abuse.

Challenges we face

- A rise in the number of single people with complex needs.

Commented [SM1]: Can this sentence read: Anyone at risk of or facing homelessness gets the advice, help, and support they need.

- We need to refurbish current facilities. This will help us offer quality accommodation and meet the changing housing needs of those seeking our assistance.
- Pressures on social and health care systems affect the support people can access. This limits our goal of a holistic and person-centred approach.

How we will measure success

- Number of successful homelessness outcomes (prevention and relief)
- Number of rough sleepers

Priority 4: Improving housing options and opportunities

Outcome: Offer a complete service that supports sustainable housing solutions. Provide clear advice and practical help to those in need.

Our service focuses on the individual. It offers high-quality, personalised, and practical advice and support. We follow local pathways to ensure the best fit for each person. We will help people make informed choices about their individual housing needs. This way, they can keep their homes and get support early to avoid crises and homelessness.

How we will do this:

- Focussing on early intervention and prevention.
- Maximising options for accommodation and support to cater for a wide range of needs.
- Providing holistic trauma and psychologically informed approaches.
- Using a multi-agency approach for people with multiple disadvantages.
- Working collectively with our partners to secure positive and sustained outcomes.

Challenges we face

- Expectations on the availability of social housing and rights to access social housing.
- The political landscape is changing, and there's uncertainty about funding for future services. This affects long-term delivery and security.
- We are adapting to changes within the council and with our partners. We will keep aligning our priorities and resources. This way, we can work together to deliver as a unified system.

How we will measure success

- Time taken to assess new applications on the housing register.
- Number of households living in temporary accommodation.

Next Steps

Once in place the strategy will guide everything we do next.

We will consult and involve you in the detailed planning after we adopt this strategy. We will create a housing strategy action plan based on our talks with residents. We'll also share our progress on this plan according to our corporate approach.

More information about this strategy, and the opportunities to get involved are on our website: www.guildford.gov.uk/housingstrategy

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Housing Strategy Action Plan

The Housing Services Team will review the action plan each year. This ensures it stays relevant and effective in meeting the goals set out. During the review, we will assess our progress. Updates will be made where required, feedback added, and new challenges identified. Then, we will create or update plans to tackle these issues.

Priority 1: Deliver Decent, Sustainable Homes People Need and Can Afford

Priority	Action	Target Date	Lead Officer	Measure of Success
Priority 1	Secure affordable housing on all qualifying development sites	Ongoing – Annual Review	Strategy and Enabling Manager	Number of new affordable homes delivered annually
	Work with housing providers and developers to increase affordable home delivery	Annual Review	Strategy and Enabling Manager	Percentage of homes meeting sustainability standards
	Develop a Rural Housing Plan to support rural and community-led housing	September 2025	Strategy and Enabling Manager	Plan adopted and homes delivered
	Explore feasibility of a ‘Guildford Rent’ model for affordability	Local Plan timelines	Strategy and Enabling Manager	Feasibility study completed
	Promote sustainable home designs with energy-efficient features	Ongoing – Annual Review	Strategy and Enabling Manager	Number of homes with sustainable features
	Increase grant funding and explore new financial models for housing development	Annual Review	Strategy and Enabling Manager	Additional funding secured
	Build new council homes to make best use of council assets	Annual Review	Strategy and Enabling Manager	Number of new council homes built
	Bring empty homes back into use	Ongoing – Annual Review	Strategy and Enabling Manager	Number of empty homes brought back into use

Priority 2: Improve the Quality, Standard, Safety, and Accessibility of Homes

Priority	Action	Target Date	Lead Officer	Measure of Success
Priority 2	Ensure all council homes meet Decent Homes Standard	Annual Reporting	Interim Head of Repairs & Property Services	Percentage of homes meeting Decent Homes Standard
	Improve void turnaround times for council properties	Review March 2026	Interim Head of Repairs & Property Services	Average void turnaround time
	Invest in council homes to enhance quality and safety	Annual Review	Interim Head of Neighbourhood Services	Tenant satisfaction measures
	Review maintenance services for council properties to improve efficiency	Review September 2025	Interim Head of Repairs & Property Services	Compliance with service standards
	Complete repairs in council properties within target timescales and reduce backlog	Quarterly Reporting	Interim Head of Repairs & Property Services	Percentage of repairs completed on time
	Strengthen compliance with all safety regulations in our council homes	Annual Reporting	Interim Head of Repairs & Property Services	Compliance with safety requirements
	Provide effective adaptations for independent living	Quarterly Reporting	Interim Head of Repairs & Property Services	Number of adaptations completed

Priority 3: Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Priority	Action	Target Date	Lead Officer	Measure of Success
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Priority 3	Process housing applications in line with statutory requirements	Annual Reporting	Homelessness, Advice & Allocations Lead	Time taken to process housing applications
	Review and update Housing Allocations Policy	March 2026	Homelessness, Advice & Allocations Lead	Updated policy adopted
	Minimise use of emergency accommodation through prevention efforts	Ongoing – Quarterly Reporting	Homelessness, Advice & Allocations Lead	Reduction in emergency accommodation placements
	Expand outreach services for rough sleepers	Annual Reporting	Homelessness, Advice & Allocations Lead	Number of rough sleepers supported
	Strengthen multi-agency partnerships for individuals with complex needs	Annual Reporting	Homelessness, Advice & Allocations Lead	Improved support coordination
	Secure additional self-contained temporary accommodation for families	Annual Reporting	Homelessness, Advice & Allocations Lead	Increase in available temporary accommodation

Priority 4: Improving Housing Options and Opportunities

Priority	Action	Target Date	Lead Officer	Measure of Success
Priority 4	Increase access to private rented accommodation for those in need	Ongoing – Quarterly Reporting	Homelessness, Advice & Allocations Lead	Number of private sector tenancies secured
	Provide tailored housing advice to residents	Ongoing – Quarterly Reporting	Homelessness, Advice & Allocations Lead	Customer satisfaction with advice services

Use trauma-informed and psychologically-informed support approaches	Annual Review	Homelessness, Advice & Allocations Lead	Number of residents receiving tailored support
Strengthen collaboration with partners for sustained housing outcomes	Annual Review	Homelessness, Advice & Allocations Lead	Improved long-term housing stability
Reduce number of households in temporary accommodation	Annual Review	Homelessness, Advice & Allocations Lead	Reduction in households in temporary housing

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Draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2025-2034



1. Contents

2. **Foreword** 3

3. **Introduction**..... 4

4. **Our vision & Principles**..... 5

5. **National and regional context** 6

6. **Our partners and stakeholders**..... 8

7. **How we will deliver this strategy** 8

8. **Funding for Homelessness & Rough Sleeping**..... 9

9. **Achievements since the last strategy** 10

10. **Priorities for Guildford’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy** 12

Priority 1: Focus on early intervention and prevention. 12

Priority 2: Maximise pathways to independent living..... 13

Priority 3: Provide complete support to people who are homeless and dealing with challenging personal issues 14

Priority 4: Work collectively with our partners to secure positive and sustained outcomes 15

11. **Appendix 1. Successful completion of previous Homelessness Strategy targets** 17

12. **Appendix 2 The Guildford Rough Sleeper Pathway** 22

13. **Appendix 3 Action Plan 2025-2030** 23

14. **Appendix 4 Case study**..... 25

Foreword

Homelessness is a powerful reminder of the inequalities that persist in our society. Behind every statistic is a real person with aspirations, challenges, and hopes. Addressing homelessness requires a compassionate, strategic, and well-coordinated response. A response that not only meets immediate needs but also tackles the root causes of housing insecurity.

This strategy reflects our commitment to ensuring that no one has to experience homelessness. We believe that everyone deserves a safe and stable place to call home, and that a society built on dignity, opportunity, and fairness must work to eliminate homelessness.

Our approach focuses on prevention, early intervention, and long-term solutions. By increasing the supply of affordable homes, both for rent and homeownership, and using evidence-based practices, we will provide clear pathways to stability and independence. With a strong emphasis on equity and inclusion, we are committed to reducing homelessness and ensuring that everyone has access to a secure and sustainable future.

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Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their area at least every five years and to develop a strategy that provides direction for the delivery of homelessness services. Our last Strategy was published in 2018 and has now reached its conclusion. Our new strategy is built on the five key priorities listed in our Corporate Strategy:

1. A more sustainable borough
2. A more prosperous borough
3. A more inclusive borough
4. Decent and affordable homes
5. A resilient and well-managed council

Since our last Homelessness Strategy, significant legal, policy, and service delivery changes have shaped how we respond to housing need. These changes require us to adapt our services to ensure they remain effective, inclusive, and responsive.

On 3 January 2024, the council commissioned the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) to conduct an Independent Governance Review of Guildford Borough Council (GBC), with a specific focus on the housing landlord function. This review, alongside wider pressures on housing supply, affordability, and service delivery, reinforces the need to reassess and strengthen our approach to housing and homelessness services.

As we continue to recover from the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we recognize the lasting economic and social effects on housing stability. The pandemic exposed and intensified housing inequalities, making it even more critical to focus on prevention, early intervention, and sustainable housing solutions.

Our strategy is built on a foundation of fairness and inclusion, aligning with the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that our services are accessible, equitable, and responsive to the needs of all residents.

Understanding Homelessness: Causes and Challenges

Homelessness means having no safe, available, or reasonable place to live in the UK or elsewhere. It takes different forms, including sleeping rough, staying in temporary shelters, facing eviction or domestic violence, or living in overcrowded or inadequate housing. People experiencing homelessness may have no permanent address and rely on temporary arrangements like 'sofa surfing' or unsuitable accommodation.

The causes of homelessness are often a mix of structural and individual factors. Structural causes include poverty, housing shortages, unemployment, and limited access to social security, while individual factors can include relationship breakdown, mental or physical health issues, trauma, substance misuse, bereavement, or experiences of care or prison. There is no single solution. Ending homelessness requires a coordinated borough-wide effort alongside national strategies to improve housing access, support services, and prevention measures.

Our vision & Principles

Supporting those at risk of, or experiencing homelessness and/or rough sleeping through providing a high quality, responsive, person-centred service at the earliest opportunity.

Principles behind Guildford's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

1. Reaching and supporting the hidden homeless

Providing safe accommodation for the hidden homeless, which can include those staying with friends, 'sofa surfing', under notice or in unsafe accommodation such as beds in sheds or squats.

2. Collaborating through MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter)

MEAM brings together Guildford Borough Council, Surrey County Council, and Surrey Police to deliver better coordinated services for people experiencing a combination of homelessness, substance misuse and mental health problems.

3. Embedding a trauma and psychologically informed approach

Trauma-informed care is an approach that looks at how trauma affects people. It guides how services are designed and delivered, as well as how practices are shaped. Using a trauma-informed approach, we aim to provide a kinder service. This helps us find the root causes of people's situations and behaviours.

4. The Guildford Housing Pathway: Tailored support for those in need

The council has created special pathways to help residents get the best support and outcomes when using our housing service. The pathway can be accessed at any point, with no need to progress in any order. There are other options for victims of

domestic abuse, gypsies and travellers, offenders, and those leaving hospital. The pathways aim to guide people towards the right outcomes. This should happen at the right time and in a way that lasts for the future.

The pathways include protocols for groups like care leavers, 16–17-year-olds, and people with mental health issues. The protocols outline how agencies in Surrey will work together. They also detail specific actions or considerations for the group.

5. Support for rough sleepers

The Guildford Homeless Outreach and Support Team (HOST) helps people aged 18 and over. It supports those who are experiencing or are at risk of rough sleeping in the Guildford area. It operates 24/7, and residents can get help for three-six month periods, including access to an on-site counsellor. The team work to stabilise and support people into accommodation by providing;

- A personalised support package tailored to meet individual's needs
- Support to access the services people require
- Help to access temporary accommodation/supported housing
- Support to help people exercise their housing and welfare benefit rights
- Support for people sofa surfing or in other short-term housing arrangements

HOST staff can access Guildford Borough Council's housing case management system. They use it to record casework and create personal housing plans with residents. These plans are then reviewed within the Housing Service.

Once settled, support is focussed on a 'supported housing lite model', to prepare people for moving on to more permanent options. There are communal facilities, a living room, dining room, laundry and kitchen provision. No meals are provided by the service, but the kitchen has donated food for residents to use. Residents receive formal support sessions every two weeks.

National and regional context

The rising cost of living, ongoing housing crisis, and long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly increased demand for housing and homelessness services. While we continue to focus on early intervention and prevention, as required by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, we are seeing a rise in homelessness applications, temporary accommodation placements, and rough sleeping cases.

The national Rough Sleeping Strategy (2022) aims to end rough sleeping by 2024, requiring councils to take a multi-agency approach involving housing, health, social care, and voluntary organisations. Funding streams such as the Homelessness Prevention Grant

provide support, but securing long-term housing solutions remains a challenge due to rising rents, limited affordable housing, and increasing demand on local services.

Certain groups remain at higher risk of homelessness, including:

- Young people and care leavers
- Victims of domestic abuse
- People with mental health or substance misuse issues
- Ex-offenders
- Refugees and asylum seekers

In response, there is growing recognition of Housing First approaches, which provide permanent housing alongside tailored support, as a more sustainable way to prevent repeat homelessness.

The Grenfell tragedy and concerns over social housing conditions have also led to major legislative changes. The Fire Safety Act 2021, Building Safety Act 2022, and Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (including Awaab's Law) introduce stricter safety requirements for landlords, aiming to improve building safety and living conditions for social housing tenants. Additionally, the Renters' Rights Bill extends the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector, improving housing conditions for families renting from private landlords and agents.

To meet these challenges, we need a coordinated, long-term approach that focuses on prevention, expands housing options, strengthens partnerships, and ensures the right support is available for those most at risk.

Policy Context

A range of national policies and priorities, alongside legislation, have influenced and helped to shape the direction of the Council's Homelessness Strategy. Ending rough sleeping, reducing overall levels of homelessness and eliminating the use of unsuitable emergency accommodation are national priorities. These are also linked to other strategies and initiatives relating to reducing substance misuse, supporting victims of domestic abuse, reducing delayed hospital discharges, supporting looked-after children and vulnerable families, supporting care leavers and helping to rehabilitate those within the criminal justice system.

Key pieces of legislation and national policies include:

- The Criminal Justice Act 2003
- The Mental Health Act 2007
- The Health and Social Care Act 2012

- The Care Act 2014
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- HM Government Care Leavers Strategy 2014
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- The Homelessness Code Of Guidance for Local Authorities 2018
- The Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Our partners and stakeholders

This strategy has been developed with the input and support of a wide range of partners and will be delivered through continued partnership working.

As well as our Parish Councils, we work with a number of local organisations, community groups and private companies. Some of our key partners are shown below.



How we will deliver this strategy

1. Clearly communicate our vision and priorities.

Ensure that all stakeholders understand the core objectives of the strategy.

2. Engage the community.

Ensure that people affected by the strategy are actively involved in the process.

3. Partnerships and collaboration.

Engage key stakeholders to effectively collaborate and support each other to deliver the strategy's goals.

4. Develop a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy action plan.

Break the strategy into smaller, measurable tasks and outline a detailed action plan that has clear goals, timelines, and identifies responsible parties.

5. Ensure value for money in our all decisions

Through focussing on delivering services efficiently, being transparent and accountable for our decisions while maintaining high quality. This will be evidenced through regular evaluation and data-driven decision-making.

6. Monitor and evaluate our progress.

Establish Key Performance Indicators to measure the success of the strategy and establish regular reporting on progress, and an annual review. Progress on delivering the Action Plan will be reported annually to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and within our published Annual Strategic Review (ASR).

Funding for Homelessness & Rough Sleeping

The Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) is allocated to all local authorities in England to help meet their statutory homelessness duties and support the delivery of local homelessness and rough sleeping strategies. In 2025/26, Guildford Borough Council received £1,341,332 to fund targeted prevention, intervention, and long-term housing solutions.

This funding supports:

- Tailored services for families, single people, and rough sleepers, with a focus on those at risk of repeat and long-term homelessness, including people leaving institutions and vulnerable families.
- Accessible, high-quality services that provide face-to-face support, ensuring people with additional needs receive personalised assistance.
- Early prevention efforts to reduce reliance on temporary accommodation and prevent first-time rough sleeping before people reach crisis point.
- Shorter periods of homelessness and rough sleeping, by reducing:
 - The number of families in unsuitable temporary accommodation or B&Bs.
 - Long stays in temporary accommodation without clear move-on plans.

- The number of people sleeping rough long-term.
- Sustainable housing solutions to prevent people from returning to homelessness or rough sleeping by offering long-term housing and support.

This funding plays a vital role in ensuring that homelessness prevention, intervention, and recovery services are effective, accessible, and long-lasting

Achievements since the last strategy

1. The time taken to assess new housing register applications has steadily decreased throughout 2023/2024, improving efficiency and access to support.

The Council remains committed to tackling homelessness through a proactive and preventative approach within its Housing Options Service. By working closely with statutory and voluntary partners, resources are focused on early intervention, helping people stay in suitable housing whenever possible.

When prevention isn't an option, the Council supports individuals in securing alternative housing solutions, including private rented accommodation and supported housing, ensuring people have access to safe, stable homes

2. **Proactive outreach and prevention in partnership approach**

Riverside Care & Support is the main provider of homelessness services in the borough. They offer five services, ranging from street outreach to settled living. The Salvation Army Housing Association (SAHA) provides supported housing for women experiencing homelessness. Home Group provides shared supported housing for men.

3. **Successful implementation of Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017**

We have changed our services to meet the new 'duty to prevent' and 'duty to relieve' homelessness, as well as other legal needs. This means our Specialist Homelessness and Housing Options Officers now work with more people over a longer period of time. The Act provides applicants with many more rights of review of any decisions the council has made.

4. **Successfully implemented a new software system – MRI Housing Jigsaw**

This system offers a clear framework to manage homelessness services based on the new HRA legislation. It has a guided process for recording interviews, actions, and outcomes. It also provides a customer portal. Here, users can view their personalised housing plans and chat with Housing Officers.

5. Successful interventions to help rough sleepers during the pandemic under 'Everyone In'

At the start of the pandemic in March 2020 the Government launched the 'Everyone In' programme. Local authorities had to provide emergency accommodation for all rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness under this initiative. This aimed to help contain the spread of Covid and protect vulnerable adults in society.

We expanded our programme to:

- Increase emergency bedspaces.
- Offer 24-hour support for those in urgent need.
- Speed up the process to self-contained accommodation.

6. Delivered the Next Steps Accommodation programme (NSAP) and Rough Sleepers Accommodation programme (RSAP)

The NSAP and RSAP initiatives were funding programmes introduced by the government to tackle COVID-19. They aimed to cut rough sleeping and help those in emergency accommodation stay off the streets.

We received funding from these programmes to buy two properties in Guildford Town Centre. We turned them into 9 ensuite rooms, each with dedicated support workers.

7. Delivered floating support in partnership with Surrey County Council

The Council helps fund a shared floating support service. This service has a part-time manager and two officers. They assist vulnerable clients to keep their homes and avoid homelessness.

8. We have retained our face to face services while improving digital accessibility

The pandemic pushed us towards digital solutions and remote work. However, we see the importance of face-to-face services. So, we are adopting a hybrid model. This will help us make the best use of our time while providing the services people need. It also builds resilience into our delivery model. We are working to make our digital access better. We'll keep improving it for residents who like using online systems.

9. Forging new partnerships and developing existing ones through the Guildford Pathway

The Guildford Pathway unites partners to provide a smooth service. This aims to enhance support for rough sleepers and those at risk of it. The council, along with



the Citizens Advice Bureau, has started a new money advice service. This service focuses on money and debt advice. It also helps with issues like benefits, welfare rights, consumer matters, jobs, and housing rights.

10. Ukraine Response – Homes for Ukraine Scheme

The conflict in Ukraine placed new demands on various council departments. A team effort provided safe housing and crucial support for displaced families. This helped many fleeing the war to settle in the Borough. This was made possible in part by the generosity of local residents who opened their homes to those in need.

Priorities for Guildford's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

We will take a broad approach to tackle homelessness. This way, we can make sure that homelessness policies and laws work well. Our service will be based on prevention, support, and accommodation strategies.

Priority 1: Focus on early intervention and prevention.

Early intervention and prevention are key to tackling housing instability. Acting early can stop problems before they lead to crises like homelessness.

Outcome: We will help at-risk individuals and families. Our goal is to provide timely support to tackle the root causes of housing insecurity. We will offer safe shelter, guidance, and promote long-term housing security.

How we will do this:

- To find and manage risks, you can get financial advice, speak with landlords, or support those facing domestic violence.
- Offering advice and support through information. This includes help with benefits, housing options, and legal advice.
- Working with people helps create support plans that maintain their dignity. We also link them to other services. This includes mental health support, substance abuse treatment, and job training when needed.
- Providing short-term housing for the homeless includes options like hostels and temporary shelters. This may include support to help people move towards permanent accommodation.
- Helping people find long-term housing solutions, like affordable housing or private rentals.
- Working together with various agencies helps us offer complete support. We also build partnerships to form a strong support network.

Challenges we face

- Single people with complex needs such as mental health illness, physical health issues, or disability.
- Young people, including care leavers, need extra support. This help is crucial for them to develop skills. They must learn to manage their affairs and prepare for living independently. This includes taking on a tenancy and handling a household budget.
- Victims fleeing domestic abuse and complexities around family relationships and personal safety.
- Supporting ex-offenders to find suitable accommodation and reintegrate back into the community.
- Insecurity of the private rented sector.

How we will measure success

- Monitor reasons for homelessness and identify most prevalent reasons.
- Analyse which activities are most effective.
- Track how many households receive help from prevention and relief activities and what results they achieve.

Priority 2: Maximise pathways to independent living

Outcome: We will keep working to create different ways for individuals and families. This will help them move from temporary or supported housing to stable, long-term homes.

How we will do this:

- We want to expand our choices in the private rented sector. We will explore new chances to work with lettings agents and landlords near the Borough. Also, we aim to strengthen relationships to improve access to options.
- Make the most of our current stock by encouraging mutual exchanges, reciprocal moves, and downsizing.
- Reviewing the current incentives we offer and make improvements if financially viable.
- We are working on our tenancy support package. This aims to help those we assist in finding accommodation. Our goal is to boost their chances of keeping that tenancy long-term.
- Increasing the amount of affordable, self-contained family accommodation.

Challenges we face

- A competitive local rental market with high housing costs.
- Limited opportunities to increase provision locally.
- Uncertain long term revenue funding and securing the capital funds to deliver major projects.

- Cuts to public services are limiting support and options for personal, social care, and mental health.

How we will measure success

- Annual reviews of pathways to ensure they are up to date and effective.
- Annual review of move on opportunities, the number of bedspaces with housing with support and capacity within the patient journey to support movement through the pathway.

Priority 3: Provide complete support to people who are homeless and dealing with challenging personal issues

Outcome: Use a person-centred approach for people who are rough sleeping or at risk. This means involving them in decisions and recognising their strengths and goals.

How we will do this;

- Provide tailored help in our Personal Housing Plans (PHPs) for those leaving the criminal justice system. Include advice on drug and alcohol issues, smoking cessation, and how to register with a GP and dentist. Also, promote access to training, jobs, volunteering, and education.
- We work with local community, charity, and faith groups. This helps us stay aware of any new rough sleeping issues.
- Continuing to work in partnership with our providers of supported housing.
- Maximising appropriate move on options by strengthening our work with local landlords.
- Improving our links with institutions such as hospitals and prison to identify those at risk of leaving with no fixed abode.
- We will refresh and improve our pathways. This will help our intervention meet the goals of our 'Rough Sleeping No Second Night Out' policy.
- Continuing to identify new funding streams to build on all our existing work.
- We will work with our providers and partner with Surrey County Council. This will help us improve access to accommodation for people with complex needs.
- Reviewing our provision to ensure that it is still at the forefront of our approach to tackling rough sleeping.

Challenges we face

- Lack of Affordable Housing - Even when people want to leave the streets, there might not be housing that fits their needs and budget.
- Funding limits, usually from short-term grants or donations, affect long-term planning and staffing. Helping rough sleepers can be tough on staff and volunteers. This often causes burnout and high turnover rates. Organisations may struggle to maintain experienced teams and ensure continuity of care.

- Many rough sleepers face mental health issues and substance use disorders. They need specialised support. Many people have faced serious trauma. This often causes distrust in authority and makes them hesitant to seek help.
- Societal stigma can impact individuals and organisations that support them. This may stop rough sleepers from seeking help and create challenges for community integration.

How we will measure success

- Count the rough sleepers and make sure they get the support they need.
- Carrying out an annual review of people helped through our services.
- Carrying out a full review of services provided as part of future strategy development.

Priority 4: Work collectively with our partners to secure positive and sustained outcomes

- We will start a new Homelessness Forum. This will give our key partners a place to talk about issues and work together to help homeless households.
- Work with foodbanks to help vulnerable people access food. Also, offer support that helps them become independent of foodbanks.
- Hold training sessions for our partners. This will help everyone understand what's needed for smooth and effective referrals. By doing this, we can quickly support homeless households.
- Let's make sure we take part in the County-wide work by Surrey County Council on domestic abuse, mental health, and substance misuse.

Challenges we face

- Different objectives and priorities, like missions and goals, can cause conflicts. They may create inefficiencies and problems with making decisions together.
- Larger or better-resourced organisations might control decision-making. This can make smaller partners feel excluded, which may affect the partnership's long-term success.
- Differences in organisational cultures, terms, or communication styles can lead to confusion about roles and responsibilities.

How we will measure success

- Set clear goals and objectives. Then, check if you've met those ambitions.
- Measure the impact on services by sharing across the partnership how many people are being helped at different stages of the pathway. For example, look at how many rough sleepers moved into stable housing. Also, consider individual well-being, job outcomes, and the number of people who go back through the pathway.
- Constraints on time, staffing, and resources to the partnership.



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Appendix 1. Successful completion of previous Homelessness Strategy targets

Action	Target date	Progress update
Prevention of homelessness		
Homelessness Reduction Act		
Develop service delivery against evolving good practice guidance from the National Practitioner Support Service	2019	Completed, now disbanded so no longer relevant. Replaced by Shelter's new action plan.
Implement new data recording and reporting requirements of MHCLG Develop new performance monitoring systems using Jigsaw [the new HRA case management software]	Ongoing March 2019	Complete. Reporting via Jigsaw system and Hclick returns used for annual reporting.
Review use of Jigsaw in longer term pending wider Housing register software update	2019	Complete. Implementation of housing register now on Jigsaw alongside homelessness and allocations modules.
Monitor and review the impact of the HRA on use of Bed and Breakfast, and ensure resources are utilised effectively	Quarterly	Complete. As part of our service plan we record B&B statistics and review placements to reduce use and ensure families are not placed in shared accommodation for more than 6 weeks.
Work with public bodies to ensure they are aware of their duty to refer people at risk of homelessness	October 2018	Ongoing. We work closely with alcohol liaison, probation, DWP and other local organisations and promote the duty to refer with these organisations through the Alert function within the Jigsaw system. Webpages have been updated to inform professionals how to refer.
Evaluate the effectiveness of existing pathways for different client groups in consultation with referring organisations and other B&D's	2019	Complete. Pathways were developed along with protocols for specific groups (care leavers, 16-17 year olds, offenders, domestic abuse).



Make effective use of MHCLG Flexible Homeless and New Burdens Grants for prevention activity	2019/2020	All funds have been utilised and included provision of emergency accommodation, wrap around support and continued to support of upstream prevention work such as citizens advice, money advice services, art therapy and counselling. Funded trauma informed response training for local providers.
Early Intervention		
Use data gathered by new case management software to identify opportunities for early interaction with customers	2019	Software in place to enable data reporting which feeds into annual report. To take forward new initiatives for early intervention working with community groups in the new action plan.
Work with partners to identify early intervention opportunities when agreeing new procedures and through adaption of existing protocols	2019	Ongoing. We have established relationships with local providers and work together on developing procedures and protocols. Capacity for proactive activity is impacted since the change to the Council's operating model.
Ensure that all organisations who may come into contact with homeless people know how and when to access help to prevent homelessness and identify new ways to engage with people at the earliest opportunity	Ongoing	Information has been made available on the Council website. Changes to the Jigsaw system promote an alert function. We also make use of digital communication channels and social media. Training provided to partners.
Develop a housing fact sheet for customers and partners to help inform and manage expectations. Update biannually and publicise on website	December 2018	Partially completed. A fact sheet created and shared with partners. To be brought forward for update as part of new strategy.
Commissioning		
Develop a plan for future procurement and commissioning of services both directly and in partnership with SCC Adult Social Care and Families Services	2019	Complete. We jointly commission floating support services.
Support		
Welfare reform		
Prepare for the introduction of Universal Credit, support our partners	October 2018	Complete. Training sessions were provided for partners.

in managing change and customers in making change		
Maximise the use of Discretionary Housing Payments to ensure that the funding supports those most in need	Ongoing	The Housing Team work closely with Benefits Team to provide support to identified vulnerable clients.
Promote money advice and Court Desk services aiming to maximise access to such services	Ongoing	The Council supports the provision of both money advice and court desk services locally.
Evaluate existing service delivery and feasibility of future tendering for service	2019	The team has been included in a corporate restructure and are working under a new operating model.
Promote the ETHOS service aiming to maximise access Evaluate existing service delivery and options for future service delivery	Ongoing June 2018	Complete. The service was decommissioned as part of the Future Guildford programme.
Rough sleeping		
HOST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and review pathways to interface with the HRA and support clients comply with Personal Housing Plans Support and monitor HOST contract Re-commission service 	December 2018 Ongoing 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete. Embedded new legislation and ways of working with HOST. Service continues to be monitored and has been since recommissioned.
Review the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) annually and ensure that arrangements are in place and agreed with partners	September 2018	Complete and continuing.
Develop Indigo project and evaluate impact to share learning with Health and Social Care	2019	Complete. Project ran until March 2023 when SCC ended the secondment arrangements to resource the project.
Work in partnership with Public Health to undertake the Homelessness Health Needs Audit biannually	2019	Started and in progress when this was interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. This work is now taken forward by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
Service delivery		
Work with partners to improve the customer journey, avoid duplication and identify opportunities to streamline processes and procedures	2019	This has been reviewed and changes made as part of the Future Guildford programme.

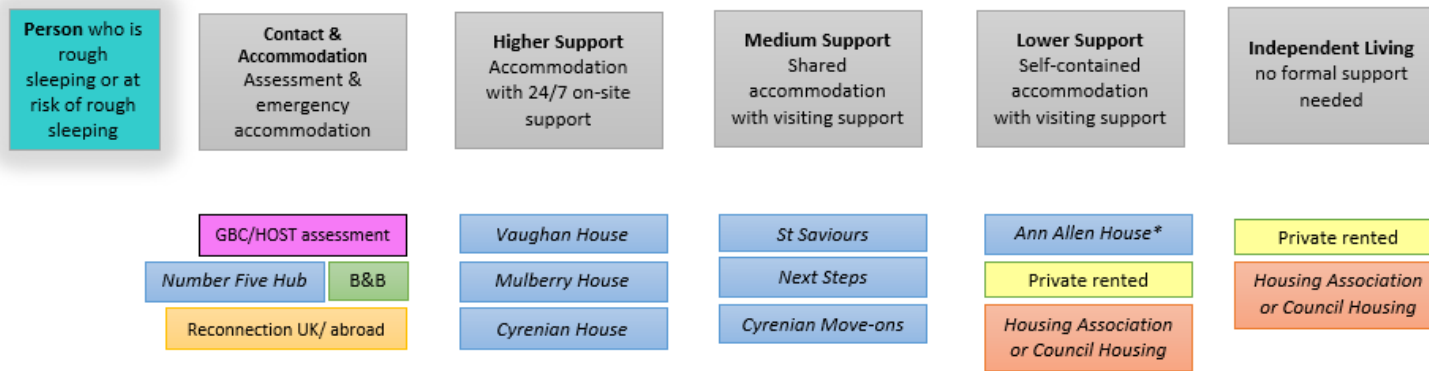


Investigate the viability of implementing Housing First	2019	Implemented a 2-year pilot with Riverside. Moving forward we will be using the Surrey Adult Matters with support from Bridging The Gap.
Commissioning		
Review service provision for rough sleepers and prepare recommendations for future commissioning of services	July 2019	Complete. We identified the benefits of a single Guildford rough sleepers service and met with trustees to bring about a 24-hour single service hub service (delivered in April 2020).
Supply		
Private Rented Sector (PRS)		
Review the use of landlord incentives and seek to improve the offer to increase the number of letting agents and landlords willing to work with us.	2019	Complete. Landlords requested additional support with managing tenants. An additional Accommodation Officer post has been recruited to, funded by the Homelessness Prevention Grant.
Review the Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO) policy	2019	The policy has been reviewed annually.
Leased to Housing Associations		
Review the use of existing premises leased to Housing Associations that re used to prevent homelessness [e.g Rosebery, Riverside leased accommodation] and explore potential for alternative use to meet identified need	2019	Review was carried out but no further action due to Covid-19 pandemic. To be picked up in new strategy action plan.
Seek to identify and acquire additional accommodation suitable to be leased to housing associations	2019	During the pandemic the council obtained funding to provide additional premises for 9 ensuite bedspace. Ongoing provision.
Hostels and Supported Housing		
<p>Work with providers to increase supply of short-term accommodation units in existing schemes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for relief accommodation for 56 days • Assessment beds for single homeless and those at risk of rough sleeping 	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have introduced sit up space to increase the options and flexibility for rough sleepers. • Through the 24-hour hub the council have been able to provide increased assessments.

Explore opportunities to procure accommodation for customers with high support requirements	2019	Everyone in and subsequent funding streams were utilised to support people with high support requirements.
Work in partnership with Surrey County Council Adult Social Care to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the performance of hostels and supported housing providers • Seek to ensure that we maximise access to such provision • Identifying opportunities for future service development and joint commissioning 	Quarterly	A county wide review was completed for housing related support. We continue to attend meetings for ongoing collaboration.
Work with SCC, the hostels and supported housing providers to prepare for the implementation of the Government's new funding regime from April 2020	Ongoing	The council has complied with all changing requirements.
Work with Number Five night shelter to review model of service delivery to meet local needs and in anticipation of Government future funding arrangements post 2020		Complete. Ongoing funded has been secured to provide the service.
Social Rented Housing		
Maximise stock by encouraging under occupying households to downsize (promote mutual exchanges, incentives to downsize.)	Ongoing	Complete. Following the Future Guildford Programme this function moved to another team within the Council who continue the work.
Monitor and review the impact of the HRA on use of Bed and Breakfast, and ensure resources are utilised effectively	April 2019	This is complete via the annual reporting within the service.
Implement Fraud investigation arrangements for housing and homeless applicants	September 2018	This has been centralised as part of the Future Guildford programme. A contract is in place with Reigate and Banstead Council fraud team.

Appendix 2 The Guildford Rough Sleeper Pathway

Guildford Borough Council Pathway for single people & couples who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping



This is not intended to be a linear pathway but is representative of the accommodation available and accompanying support (decreasing in intensity). The Council's Homeless Prevention Team and/or the Homeless Outreach and Support Team (HOST) will work with individuals to agree a bespoke pathway to settled accommodation in line with personal circumstances.

People need to be willing to work in partnership with GBC and/or HOST and, where able, participate actively in the resolution of their housing problem.

The bed and breakfast accommodation used by the Council's Homeless Prevention Team is often situated outside of Guildford borough. HOST will assist through provision of a travel warrant, food and toiletries, visiting and telephone support and ongoing help to find longer term accommodation.

Accommodation shown in blue is subject to eligibility criteria and is not available to people who have no connection to Guildford or Surrey. *Access to Ann Allen House is restricted to Riverside internal applicants

Guildford has a thriving private rented sector but with a hospital, University and several colleges the market is competitive, and rents remain high. This means that it often isn't possible for people on low incomes to find affordable private rented accommodation in the borough.

Access to social housing is via the Council's Housing Needs Register. Social housing is a long-term solution not a short-term option

Appendix 3 Action Plan 2025-2030

	Action	Target date	Responsible officer	Resources
1	Review of service provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Allocation scheme b) Homes4U service c) Housing First pilot d) Citizens Advice Bureau Money Advice Service e) Tenants Incentive Scheme f) Housing service pathways g) Severe Weather Emergency protocol (SWEP) h) Service information online and in hard copy 	March 2026	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
2	Remodel and refurbish Number Five Hub premises to ensure its sustainability and enable delivery of trauma informed practice.	Summer 2028	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Dependent on funding bid to cover capital costs of the work and ongoing funding through the HRA
3	Review Surrey County Council initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Surrey Adult Matters Programme b) Sanctuary scheme contract c) Floating Support d) Tenants to ensure that local need is identified and addressed. 	July 2025	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
4	Improve the ex-offender housing pathway with our partners in Police, Probation, Prison and Approved Premises.	March 2026	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
5	Extend the arrangements with HOST, to enable re-commissioning of a broader service of initiatives.	2028	Specialist - Strategic Housing	Existing resources
6	Develop a service improvement plan and deliver quality improvement initiatives such as training on completing assessments.	March 2025	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
7	Effective use of Homeless Prevention Grants to provide financial assistance on a case by case basis such as where Local Housing Allowance doesn't meet rents.	Ongoing	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources



8	Reduce rough sleeping and demand on the hub through proactive partnership working with community organisations.	Ongoing	Specialist - Strategic Housing	Existing resources
9	Develop a Supported Accommodation Partnership to bring together providers to share information on vacancies and service issues.	January 2026	Specialist - Strategic Housing	Existing resources
10	Complete annual performance review of the service and make any necessary updates to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.	Annual	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
11	Refresh and review the Council's Tenancy Strategy.	August 2025	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
12	Work with partners to improve the customer journey, avoid duplication and identify opportunities to streamline processes and procedures.	Ongoing	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
13	Review software contracts with MRI for Housing Register and Homelessness.	TBC	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
14	Contribute to the delivery of the objectives within the Housing Improvement Programme	TBC	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources
15	Ensure effective allocation to void properties to reduce the backlog of properties returning into use.	Ongoing	Homeless, Advice and Allocations Lead	Existing resources

Appendix 4 Case study

Relationship breakdown

This applicant and her young son approached after a family trauma culminated in a relationship breakdown. She moved out of the home she shared with her partner. Then, she stayed with a family member. After a few months, the family member could not accommodate her anymore because of their own health issues.

A Specialist Homelessness Officer placed the family into interim temporary accommodation in Guildford. Because they were already homeless at the time of approaching, a 'relief duty' was accepted.

Her son started a local school, and the family got support from nearby services. So, it was important to keep them close to the school. The case officer worked with the child's school. They gave hot meals and food parcels while the applicant waited for her benefit claim to be approved.

The private sector team found a suitable place. The applicant accepted an offer for a 2-bedroom property in Guildford. The Council helped pay for the property through a letting agency. They arranged a 24-month tenancy to provide security for the family.

A referral was made to Riverside Care and Support who provided the applicant with a floating support service. This was gratefully accepted. She was assisted to claim local council tax support, create a My Guildford account and set up utility payments. This service can also assist with charity applications to source furniture and other essentials.

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Response to the consultation on housing strategies vision and priorities January 2025

1. Foreword

1.1 Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to read and respond to our housing survey. We were overwhelmed by the number of responses to our survey on our housing strategies. Thank you for your feedback, and time taken to consider the questions raised. All surveys and comments were individually reviewed to identify common themes and review all points raised. The responses have been collated into key points raised, which we have listed below and responded to.

2.1 A number of you responded that the vision, priorities and survey were not specific or detailed enough, and we hear that more detail is needed. We will take the points submitted as part of this consultation into the development of the full strategies, which we hope will provide the detail you are looking for. These strategies will be reviewed annually, giving you all the opportunity to input further into shaping the delivery of our housing services as we progress on our improvement journey.

2. Executive summary

2.1 The Council's last Housing Strategy covered the period 2015-2020, and was adopted in February 2015. The last Homelessness Strategy covered 2018-2020, and was adopted in 2018.

2.2 Following the adoption of a new Corporate Plan in July 2024, we began planning for reviewing our housing strategies. Continuing our previous format, we have been working on developing two new housing strategies, one overarching strategy to cover all housing services, and the second focussing on the statutory homelessness services.

2.3 Through internal review and discussion, we developed two new draft visions and 4 new priorities for each strategy. These were intended to provide the framework for the development of the details within the strategies.

2.4 In December 2024 we opened a survey asking for feedback on our draft visions and priorities for both housing strategies. We asked whether those completing the survey were a resident, worked in the borough, had family/friends in the borough or no connection, so we could best understand who we were reaching through our survey. The survey was open until the end of January 2025.

2.5 We directly notified many local groups and partner organisations that we work closely with about the survey, as well as it being publicised on the Council's website and social media channels.

2.6 We had a total of 590 responses to the survey; the majority of those responding (90.43%) were residents in the borough, 33.43% of which also worked in the borough (57.02% lived in the borough but worked elsewhere). The remainder worked in the borough and had friends/family living here (1.97%) or were responding as no connection to the borough (2.81%).

3 Summary of consultation responses and council response

3.1 79.5% agreed or somewhat agreed with our housing vision '*Everyone has a home that meets their needs*'.

3.2 Concerns were raised that:

- **it was too vague and not ambitious.**

Response: We will further develop our vision to ensure it is clear, specific, and aspirational. We will provide more concrete objectives and measurable targets in the form of an action plan.

- **We needed to specify the 'needs' we are referring to**

Response: We will clarify the specific needs we are addressing in the detail of the strategy, these could for example relate to the size or type of home someone needs, or adaptations for their specific circumstances, or making sure homes are warm and free from damp.

- **We need to qualify who ‘everyone’ is.**

Response: Our vision is for all demographic groups, which includes those on low-incomes, families, young people, older people, people with disabilities, and marginalised communities. Some comments mentioned a desire to have this focussed on people from Guildford and we will take this into account as we develop our strategy.

- **We need to balance infrastructure and the environment, not developing at the expense of the greenbelt.**

Response: Housing works very closely with the Planning Department to ensure that our approach balances infrastructure growth with environmental preservation, integrating green solutions, high quality design and protecting natural spaces. Our colleagues in the Planning Department have been consulted on the strategy and will be included as it develops. We will work collaboratively on studies for housing that will form part of the Local Plan information gathering and our housing strategy will be aligned and supportive of the new Borough Local Plan.

- **We need to provide for the disabled.**

Response: Accessibility and inclusivity are priorities that run through all our services. We work closely with Surrey County Council on the delivery of specialised housing and will include an action point within our strategy that defines the work we are doing in this area.

- **Our visions should be SMART.**

Response: We will review our strategy as it develops to align with the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound), and deliver clear objectives, measurable outcomes, and realistic timelines for implementation within an action plan.

- **Housing is a basic human right.**

Response: We acknowledge that housing is fundamental, and through our strategy we will reinforce our commitment to ensuring affordable, adequate, and accessible housing for all members of our community.

- **We should separate needs from wants.**

Response: We will establish clear criteria within our housing policies to distinguish essential needs from discretionary wants, ensuring that resources are prioritised effectively to address the most pressing issues first. We want residents to be happy in their homes. Adverts for housing specify the facilities available at affordable housing advertised for let, so applicants can see whether there is a driveway or private garden for example and make a choice over expressing interest in properties that meet their needs and wants.

- **Want consideration of trade offs**

Response: There are significant trade offs in delivering affordable housing including affordability vs. financial viability, quantity vs. quality, location vs. cost and sustainability vs. affordability. Through our strategies we will set our ambitions for delivery. The requirements will be set out in planning policy and based on a study of the housing market and local factors which

- **Help young people / provide starter homes**

Response: Ensuring young people have access to affordable homeownership is a key priority. Rising housing costs have made it increasingly difficult for first-time buyers to get onto the property ladder, and we are committed to addressing this challenge by increasing the supply of homes for sale at a discount to market prices.

- **Importance of infrastructure when delivering new homes**

Response: Delivering new homes is not just about building houses; it's about creating thriving, sustainable communities. Through our planning policy, we will ensure that the correct balance of infrastructure is secured when delivering new homes.

- **Shared ownership is not a good or affordable product**

Response: We always welcome feedback about the affordable tenures that we deliver and will look at encouraging alternative forms of affordable home ownership.

3.3 88.76% agreed or somewhat agreed with our homelessness vision ' *to provide a high quality, responsive service where we support those rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping at the earliest opportunity*'.

3.4 The following points were raised:

- **We should include safe shelter and guidance.**

Response: We will incorporate safe shelter and guidance into our strategy, ensuring that individuals in vulnerable situations receive not only housing but also the necessary support services to rebuild their lives.

- **Ensure clean accommodation and coordinated services that enables people to retain their dignity.**

Response: We realise that our services are about more than ensuring people have basic housing provision. We work closely with housing providers and will continue to do so to ensure accommodation is good quality and people are supported to retain their dignity at those times of crisis or difficulty. Furthermore, that there is support to help them back on their feet and secure long term housing security.

- **Value for the Council and affordable housing**

Response: We set budgets for delivery of our services which we review regularly. When procuring services, we follow procurement processes that are designed to ensure value for money. As part of our improvement work we are striving to improve our services, reduce costs and simplify delivery.

- **Prioritise children, elderly and servicemen**

Response: We will be working on reviewing our allocations policies following the adoption of the strategy. Within this policy we will outline priorities relating to specific groups based on identified needs and existing provision. We will follow all national guidance in the development of our policies. For example, national regulation already provides for veterans of the Regular Armed Forces to be exempt from local connection tests to facilitate their access to social housing.

- **Promote social inclusion**

Response: We are committed to ensuring all individuals, regardless of background or circumstance, have equal opportunities to participate in society.

- **Adopt a proactive approach**

Response: Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy focuses on early intervention and proactive services through our community organisation partners. We will add an action in our action plan to review this provision to see whether we can make any improvements to the services currently offered.

- **Address the lack of concrete measures**

Response: Each strategy will have an action plan with clear, actionable commitments and measurable targets.

- **Incorporate prevention strategies**

Response: Through work to review the root causes of cases, we will develop our understanding of current challenges and be best placed to develop any new interventions that are required. Root causes could include, poverty, mental health issues, or the lack of access to education or employment.

- **Strategies should reference mental health, crime, drug misuse, relationship breakdown, holistic approach and multi-agency co-operation**

Response: We will ensure that all these areas are represented in our strategies.

- **Don't understand what 'move on' means.**

Response: We will review our wording to make sure that this is more clearly explained.

- **Pets can be important support. Consider allowing pets in rented properties.**

Response: Our current pets policy provides for pets to be kept within our homes with prior permission (excluding assistance pets which can be kept and does not require specific permission).

- **Pointless survey, we are going to agree with all priorities / You cannot prioritise statutory duties / The consultation was not detailed enough to get actual feedback**

Response: Our strategies show that all elements of housing services are important. We hoped through our consultation to identify what was important under these themes so we could develop this further within our strategies. Understanding which areas people felt were priorities would help us to set timescales within our action plans to deliver those areas which were seen as a priority for residents first where possible.

- **A survey consulting on two strategies was not as clear as focusing on one strategy. Questions were leading.**

Response: We accept that consulting on the two strategies on one survey may have made this more complicated and we will consider our approach with any future consultations. We appreciate your feedback on the wording of the questions, we want to ensure that our questions are clear and fair. Our goal is to gather accurate information, not to influence responses. The way the questions are structured helps ensure we cover key aspects, and our intent is to gather a full and fair understanding.

- **Make affordable housing actually affordable.**

Response: As part of the evidence base for our new Borough Local Plan we will be reviewing affordability and building up to date affordability levels into planning policy. In line with the national approach, we will be encouraging affordable

housing at the lower social rented level where it can be delivered and looking into the feasibility of setting local 'Guildford Rents' based on local affordability.

- **No joined up care for refugees**

Response: The council supports all national programmes for the support and placement of refugees. We will continue to engage with any requests to support refugees, and work with our community partners to review the current provision and pathways for refugees coming into our Borough.

- **Avoid 'Buzzword Bingo'**

Response: This along with an earlier point about the term 'move on' is a great reminder that we should be making sure our strategies are clear and easy to understand. We'll ask local community groups to work with us to make sure our strategies are understandable.

- **Strategies should include enforcement**

Response: We appreciate concerns around enforcement and know that fair and consistent enforcement is important for maintaining standards and public confidence. We also work on prevention, education, and community engagement to reduce the need for enforcement in the first place. As part of our new strategies, we will include a review of our enforcement approach to ensure we are proportionally and legally sound.

- **People need to feel respected and are worthwhile in the work they do.**

Response: We appreciate your concern, public service is built on the dedication of those who work tirelessly to support communities. When people feel appreciated in their roles, they are more engaged, motivated, and able to deliver the high-quality services that people rely on. As part of our improvement programme, we will include initiatives to support staff to deliver the best services for our residents.

- **Promote pride in living in a neighbourhood that fosters a happy healthy caring community for all**

Response: We work closely with planning on the design of new housing developments to ensure the affordable housing is integrated into the scheme and indistinguishable from the market homes. We work with housing providers to support residents and through wider council services foster happy, inclusive communities.

4 Feedback Word Cloud

3.5 We copied all the feedback text into a tool to create a word cloud. Word clouds are a visual representation of text data, where words are displayed in different sizes based on their frequency. The more frequently a word appears in feedback, the larger and bolder it appears in the cloud.

3.6 The top fifty words that appeared in the feedback from the strategy is displayed in the word cloud below. Many of the key words are unsurprising, 'housing', 'homes', 'homelessness', 'affordable', 'people' and 'needs'. Other words which come in the top 50 most commonly used words include 'everyone', 'support', 'infrastructure', 'quality' and 'strategy' amongst others.



4 Conclusion

- 4.1 This consultation has provided valuable insights into the priorities and concerns of our community. The feedback received will play a crucial role in shaping our next steps, ensuring that our decisions are informed by our residents.
- 4.2 We appreciate the time and effort of all participants and remain committed to ongoing engagement and transparency. Updates on how this input influences our policies and actions will be shared in the coming months on www.guildford.gov.uk/housingstrategy

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Guildford Borough Council

Report to:	Housing Operations Board
Date:	12 March 2025
Ward(s) affected:	All
Report of Strategic Director of:	Housing, Communities & Environment
Report Author:	Annalisa Howson, Assistant Director of Housing
Email:	annalisa.howson@guildford.gov.uk
Lead Executive Member:	Cllr Julia McShane
Email:	Julia.McShane@guildford.gov.uk
Status:	Open
Key decision:	No

Proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2025-26

1.0 Introduction and background

Guildford Borough Council (GBC) is committed to providing effective and efficient services while meeting all legal and contractual obligations.

In an era of enhanced regulation and rising customer expectations, effective performance management is crucial for delivering excellent housing services.

The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 has changed the landscape for social housing providers. Revised consumer standards contain specific expectations and outcomes for landlords to achieve and the new regulatory regime will require strong governance and oversight of the service against the new consumer standards.

To enable effective governance, a strong performance reporting framework is required. We are in the process of drafting formal performance housing management framework.

The framework aligns with our corporate objectives while meeting statutory requirements and regulatory standards. It provides practical tools and guidance to support consistent implementation across the housing service, enabling us to demonstrate effectiveness and drive service improvements for our residents.

Implementation of this framework will ensure we monitor and evidence:

Agenda item number: 6

- all regulatory requirements
- the delivery of excellent services to residents
- making effective use of resources
- identifying and addressing issues promptly
- learning from experience and best practice
- strong governance and oversight

2.0 Recommendation to Housing Operations Board

The Housing Operations Board is invited to consider the proposed KPIs, agree targets and recommend which KPIs should be considered at corporate level.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The proposed KPIs for 2025-26 set out in Appendix 1 will allow a more focused approach to performance management across the Housing Service.
- 3.2 The KPIs are designed to monitor and assess performance of housing services, ensuring that key objectives such as tenant satisfaction, service efficiency, housing quality are met and support us in achieving statutory obligations.
- 3.3 The proposed KPIs align with our corporate objectives while meeting statutory requirements and regulatory standards and have been reviewed in line with best practices.
- 3.4 The adoption of the KPIs and targets, encompassing any changes agreed by HOB members, will provide a basis for effective performance management and drive service improvements.
- 3.5 It is proposed that the Board review a total 28 indicators to gain a wider understanding and awareness of the service. Thus, providing the opportunity for the Board to gain assurance regarding performance and/or challenge performance. It is suggested that an edited highlights of ten indicators (green in annexe one) be considered corporately.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 Once KPIs are agreed, a performance dashboard will be created and presented at the HOB meetings on a quarterly basis. In addition, the performance

dashboard will be shared with teams across the department to ensure visibility to drive continuous improvement.

- 4.2 HOB to review dashboard quarterly and report comments and recommendations regarding performance to the Executive and Assistant Director of Housing.
- 4.3 Performance KPIs will be reported and reviewed at monthly SMT meetings. Any major performance concerns addressed and escalated accordingly.

End

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Housing KPI Dashboard for discussion	Corporate KPI?	Heading	Team	how often?	Type	Proposed Target	Tolerance	current trend	Commentary	Apr-25	May-25
DELIVERING SAFE, DECENT HOMES FOR TENANTS											
S1	yes	Homes that meet the decent homes standard	Asset Management	quarterly?	Target	100% by 2026					
S2		Resident satisfaction that the home is safe	Performance	yearly	Target	90%					
S3		Homes with Gas Safety Certification	Compliance	monthly	Target	100%					
S4		Required Fire Risk Assessments Completed	Compliance	monthly	Target	100%					
S5		Homes with a valid 5 year electrical certificate	Compliance	monthly	Target	100%					
S6		Homes with Inspected Carbon Monoxide Detectors	Compliance	monthly	Target	100%					
DELIVERING AN EFFICIENT REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE											
R1	yes	Percentage of responsive repairs completed on time	Repairs	monthly	Target	90%					
R2	yes	Percentage of high priority repairs completed on time	Repairs	monthly	Target	90%					
R3		Tenant satisfaction with repairs	Performance	monthly	Target	85%					
R4		Reported Damp and Mould Cases	Repairs	monthly	info	Reduce by 30% year on year					
WELL GOVERNED, EFFICIENT, AND FINANCIALLY VIABLE											
V1		Percentage of rent collected	Neighbourhoods	monthly	Target	95%					
V2		Leaseholders in Arrears as a percentage of all leaseholders	Neighbourhoods	monthly	Target	Below 5%					
V3	yes	Voids as a percentage of total stock	Repairs & Lettings	monthly	Target	Below 3% by year end					
V4		Void rent loss	Repairs & Lettings	monthly	Target	Below 2% of annual rental income					
V5		Number of long term voids	Repairs	monthly	info	Reduce by 50% by year end					
V6		Satisfaction with lettings process (part of satisfaction surveys for 25/6)	Performance	yearly	Target	95%					
DELIVERING SERVICES THAT MEET CUSTOMERS' NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS											
C1	yes	Complaints responded to within target times	Performance	monthly	Target	95%					
C3	yes	Stage 1 complaints upheld or partially upheld	Performance	monthly	Target	55%					
C4	yes	Number of Ombudsman Complaints	Performance	monthly	info	info					
C5		Satisfaction with complaint handling	Performance	yearly	Target	75%					
C6		Satisfaction that we listen and act	Performance	yearly	Target	75%					
SUSTAINING TENANCIES AND SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES											
AS1		Number of ASB Cases resolved in target time	Neighbourhoods	quarterly	Target	90%					
AS2		??suggest % of tenancy visits completed??? Anti-social behaviour handling satisfaction	Performance	yearly	Target	75%					
REDUCING HOMELESSNESS AND MEETING HOUSING NEEDS											
LA1	yes	Homeless Prevention: Percentage of prevention and relief cases, where a duty exists, with positive outcomes	Homelessness	quarterly	Target	55%					
LA2	yes	Number in temporary accommodation	Homelessness	monthly	Target	Lower than 55					
LA3	yes	Numbers of placements in emergency B&B accommodation	Homelessness	monthly	Target	15					
LA4	yes	Number of new affordable homes delivered	Enabling	quarterly	info	Corp performance are waiting for a target for 25/6 from housing					

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CONTACT AND SEE OUR ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT**

Guildford Borough Council

Report to: Housing Operations Board
Date: 12 March 2025
Ward(s) affected: All
Report of Strategic Director of: Strategic Director of: Housing,
Communities & Environment
Report Author: Annalisa Howson
Email: annalisa.howson@guildford.gov.uk
Lead Executive Member: Cllr Julia McShane
Email: Julia.McShane@guildford.gov.uk
Status: Open
Key decision: No

Housing Improvement Plan Update

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides an update to the Housing Operations Board on the refreshed Housing Improvement Plan, outlining the key priorities, progress to date, and next steps. The report reflects feedback from the Tenant Engagement Group (TEG), which was consulted on the proposed objectives and provided positive feedback

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Housing Operations Board is invited to note the new objectives for the refreshed plan and provide feedback.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 It is essential to maintain transparent reporting and oversight of the Housing Improvement Plan to meet regulatory requirements and ensure progress is monitored effectively.
- 3.2 The recommendations ensure alignment with best practices and maintain momentum in addressing identified priorities.

4.0 Status of Report

4.1 Open

This report is classified as open and does not contain exempt information.

5.0 Strategic Priorities

5.1 Alignment with Corporate Strategy

The Housing Improvement Plan supports Corporate Strategy priorities by ensuring local people have access to decent, affordable homes and fostering a resilient, well-managed council through improved governance, resident engagement, and service delivery

6.0 Background

The original Housing Improvement Plan was developed by the Council in response to the SOLACE governance review, with a primary focus on compliance and ensuring that housing services met basic standards. The refreshed plan takes a more holistic approach, aiming to improve services by incorporating:

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) feedback
- Sector best practice
- Staff feedback
- Housing Quality Network (HQN) recommendations
- Housing complaints and other resident feedback

This ensures that the refreshed plan is shaped by real experiences and expert insights, allowing the Council to better meet the needs of residents

The Solace recommendations have been embedded within the refreshed Housing Improvement Plan, maintaining continuity and alignment with key improvement objectives.

The original workstreams have been refined and restructured around four key priority areas, providing a more streamlined programme framework. Additional actions have been introduced to enhance service delivery, ensuring a stronger focus on achieving positive outcomes for residents and making the service more effective and fit for purpose.

8.0 Summary of High-Level Objectives and workstreams of the Refreshed Plan

The full plan is available as an **appendix** to this report.

8.1 Quality, Safety & Compliance

- All homes to meet the Decent Homes Standard, ensuring they are safe, warm, and well-maintained.
- Strengthening oversight to meet or exceed safety regulations.
- Investment in long-term home improvements.

Workstreams:

- Asset Management Strategy and Planned Works
- Building Safety Engagement Strategy
- Damp and Mould Prevention and Management Programme
- Housing Compliance Improvement Project

8.2 Service Improvement & Delivery

- Faster, high-quality re-letting of homes.
- Reliable and efficient repairs service, ensuring issues are resolved correctly on the first visit.
- Improved leasehold management.
- Clean, safe, and well-kept estates and public spaces.
- Effective responses to anti-social behaviour (ASB), domestic abuse, and hate crime.

Workstreams:

- Household Data Collection Strategy
- Modern Tenancy Agreements & Tenancy Policy
- ASB / Domestic Abuse Review
- Policy & Procedures Review and Implementation Programme

- Enhancing Estate Management Practices
- Improving Leasehold Management Services
- Improving the Repairs Service
- Voids and Lettings Review

8.3 Resident Engagement & Empowerment

- Working with residents, not just for them.
- Ensuring every resident's voice is heard and acted upon.
- Effective and transparent complaint handling.
- Empowering residents to shape their communities.

Workstreams:

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Feedback
- Resident Engagement Strategy
- Complaint Handling

8.4 Organisational Excellence & Modernisation

- Strong governance and financial integrity.
- Efficient strategies, policies, and procedures.
- Investment in modern ICT systems to enhance services.
- A new operating model to streamline processes and improve efficiency.
- Strengthening staff culture and performance.
- Developing a data-driven housing service to improve outcomes.

Workstreams:

- Governance and Strategic Oversight
- Service Performance Measurement and Accountability Framework
- Building a Data-Driven Culture
- Sound Financial Management of Housing Services
- Digital Modernisation
- Staff Performance and Culture
- Workforce and Operating Model Transformation
- Housing and Homelessness Strategies
- Robust Regulatory Compliance – Review
- North Downs Housing: Future Options Appraisal

9.0 Feedback from Tenants Engagement Group 25 February 2025

- Agreed with priorities but highlighted key issues such as contract management, transparency, and communication.
- Residents wish to be involved in contract management, particularly regarding poorly performing contracts.
- Transparency needed regarding long-term void properties.
- Poor user experience with repairs reporting; issues with online reporting and residents being kept informed by contractors, residents should be involved in system improvements.
- Estate walkarounds should resume as soon as possible and parking issues, fly-tipping, and rubbish-especially from private sector tenants-require involvement from colleagues in the enforcement team. Need a programme to support elderly residents with overgrown gardens.
- A full communication strategy is needed to keep residents informed.
- Suggest including updates with rent letters and assessing online information access

This feedback has been incorporated into the various workstreams, and will also be reflected in the new tenant engagement strategy action plan

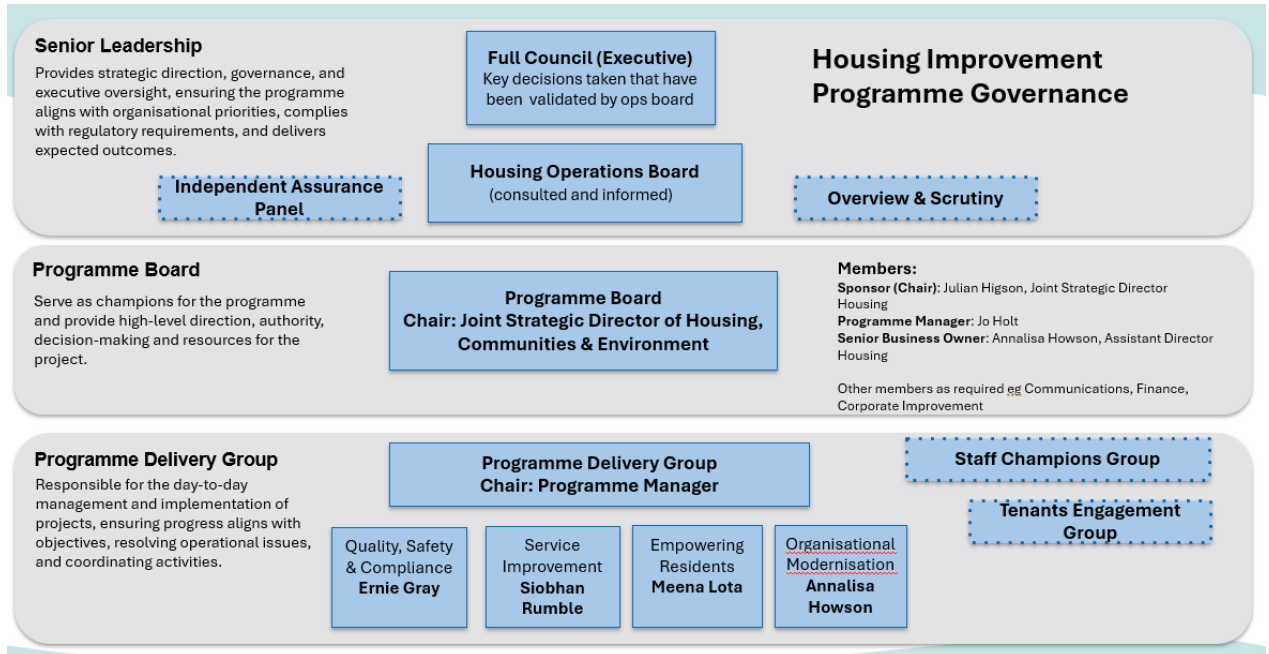
9.0 Governance

9.1 The Housing Improvement Plan is overseen by a Programme Board that ensures delivery against key objectives. Regular progress updates are provided to:

- Tenant Engagement Group (TEG)
- Housing Operations Board
- Independent Assurance Panel
- Regulator of Social Housing
- Tenants via Contact Point magazine and a dedicated page on the council website
- Staff updates
- Full Council

The governance structure ensures strategic oversight, regulatory compliance, and accountability in delivering the objectives of the Housing Improvement Plan.

9.2 Governance Chart



10. Co-Design & Engagement Approach

10.1 We have committed to create a sustainable and resident-focused Housing Improvement Plan by actively engaging residents and staff through co-design, workshops, and feedback sessions

Approach:

- **Resident & Staff Workshops:** Hosting structured workshops where residents and staff can voice their concerns, share experiences, and contribute to shaping the improvement plan.
- **Listening to Feedback:** Ensuring that all feedback collected is reviewed, actioned where feasible, and incorporated into the plan to ensure a collaborative approach.
- **Co-Designing Solutions:** Developing policies, services, and operational changes with direct input from residents and staff, ensuring changes reflect real needs.
- **Transparency & Communication:** Providing regular updates on progress and decisions made based on engagement activities, building trust and accountability.
- **Pilot Programmes & Iterative Testing:** Trialing proposed solutions in selected areas before wider implementation, ensuring effectiveness and refining based on ongoing feedback.

11.0 Key Risks

- 11.1 **Resourcing and Capacity:** Recruitment challenges, especially for technical roles, continue to place pressure on interim staff. The upcoming staffing review will address these gaps.
- 11.2 **IT Systems:** Existing housing management systems are outdated, requiring manual workarounds. Procurement of a new system is underway but will be a long-term project.
- 11.3 **Expectations Management:** Visible improvements in key areas like compliance, voids and complaints are helping rebuild confidence, but the scale of the improvement plan means progress will take time.
- 11.4 **Need for Clearer Communication:** To rebuild trust, the programme must ensure transparent decision-making, better communication of changes, and clear accountability for service improvements
- 11.5 **Competing Priorities:** The programme sits within a wider corporate agenda, and resource pressures across teams could slow down delivery or cause project delays.

12.0 Financial Implications

- 12.1 Adequate resources are allocated to ensure delivery of the Housing Improvement Plan as part of HRA Business Planning.

13.0 Human Resources Implications

- 13.1 The successful delivery of the Housing Improvement Plan relies on sufficient staffing capacity and expertise, particularly in technical and specialist roles.
- 13.2 Recruitment challenges in key areas, such as compliance and asset management, continue to put pressure on existing staff.
- 13.3 The upcoming staffing review aims to address resourcing gaps and ensure the workforce is structured to support long-term improvements.
- 13.4 Investment in training and professional development will be key to embedding cultural and operational changes

14.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 14.1 The Housing Improvement Plan is designed to ensure fair and equitable access to services for all residents, including those from protected characteristic groups.
- 14.2 A focus on resident engagement ensures that the voices of diverse communities are heard and acted upon.
- 14.3 Improvements in service delivery will help address any disparities in housing outcomes.
- 14.4 The plan aligns with the Council's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) commitments, ensuring that housing policies and services are accessible to all.

15.0 Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

- 15.1 The Housing Improvement Plan supports Guildford Borough Council's sustainability goals by prioritising energy-efficient homes and long-term investment in sustainable housing solutions.
- 15.2 Planned works and asset management strategies will incorporate carbon reduction measures, including improvements to insulation, heating systems, and energy efficiency to meet government targets that all social housing attains a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of 'C' by 2030
- 15.3 The Damp & Mould Prevention Programme will contribute to healthier, more sustainable homes by ensuring better ventilation and reducing energy waste.
- 15.4 The Council will explore opportunities to integrate low-carbon technologies and renewable energy solutions where feasible as part of the Asset Management Strategy
- 15.5 Improvements in estate management, including dealing with fly tipping and other issues on our housing estates will contribute to environmental sustainability.

16.0 Next Steps

- 16.1 Approval of the refreshed Housing Improvement Plan at Executive Council.
- 16.2 Resourcing and assigning responsibilities.

- 16.3 Implementation of the key priorities, aligned with governance and regulatory commitments.
- 16.4 Ongoing monitoring, with updates provided to the Housing Operations Board, Overview & Scrutiny (Resources), Assurance Panel Executive, Tenants Engagement Group, Staff, and key stakeholders.
- 16.6 Communication and Engagement with all key stakeholders on the refreshed plan

17.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Housing Improvement Plan – February 2025

Report clearance progress:

Finance	For information only not required	
Legal & Governance	For information only not required	
Human Resources	For information only not required	
Equalities	For information only not required	
Strategic Director	Julian Higson	3 March 2025

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Housing Improvement Plan Refresh

27 February 2025

Contents

1 Programme Management: Align strategy, optimise resources, deliver impact	3
Programme Set Up	3
2. Organisational Excellence and Modernisation: A resilient and well managed service	4
Governance & Strategic Oversight	4
Service Performance Measurement & Accountability Framework.....	5
Building a Data Driven Culture	6
Sound Financial Management of Housing Services.....	7
Digital Modernisation	8
Staff Performance & Culture.....	9
Workforce & Operating Model Transformation.....	10
Housing & Homelessness Strategies	11
Robust Regulatory Compliance - review.....	12
North Downs Housing: Future Options Appraisal.....	13
3. Service Improvement & Delivery: High quality responsive services	14
Household Data Collection Strategy	14
Modern Tenancy Agreements & Tenancy Policy	15
ASB / Domestic Violence Review	16
Policy & Procedures Review and Implementation Programme.....	17



Enhancing Estate Management Practices.....	18
Improving Leasehold Management Services	19
Improving the Repairs Service	20
Voids & Lettings Review	21
4. Quality, Safety, and Compliance: Our residents live in compliant, safe, and healthy homes	22
Asset Management Strategy & Planned Works	23
Building Safety Engagement Strategy	24
Damp & Mould Prevention and Management Programme	25
Housing Compliance Improvement Project	26
5. Resident Empowerment & Engagement	27
Tenant Satisfaction Measures & Feedback.....	28
Resident Engagement Strategy	29
Complaint Handling	30



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
1 Programme Management: Align strategy, optimise resources, deliver impact: Lead Programme Manager							
1.1	Programme Set Up	<p>Why we are doing this: Aligning with strategic goals, ensuring effective resource allocation, proactively managing risks, and delivering measurable benefits are essential to maintaining a well-governed and outcome-driven programme.</p> <p>What good looks like: Stakeholders will have confidence in the programme’s direction and progress, resources will be adequate and effectively deployed, risks will be identified and mitigated before they impact delivery, and the programme will drive meaningful, sustainable outcomes that create lasting value.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop an improvement plan for housing in response to the SOLACE recommendations - Full council 2024) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Programme set up complete for refreshed plan (Jan 25) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Programme governance is completed. <p>Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communications & engagement strategy - by 31 Mar 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Assign Resources to the detailed plan in MS Project - by 30 Apr 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Risks and Issues log completed - by 31 Mar 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Approval of the high-level plan - by 30 Apr 25 	in progress	Nov 24	Apr-25	Solace/ HIP: H1 HQN



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
2. Organisational Excellence and Modernisation: A resilient and well managed service: Lead Ass. Director of Housing							
2.1	Governance & Strategic Oversight	<p>Why we are doing this: To establish clear governance structures, roles, and responsibilities across key housing-related boards and groups, ensuring effective oversight and strategic alignment.</p> <p>What good looks like: Decision-making will be transparent and accountable, stakeholders will have confidence in governance processes, and robust structures will prevent fraud while ensuring that resources and policies drive meaningful outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The governance framework for housing services has been successfully established, with a clear structure, fortnightly SMT meetings, and approved TORs for key boards. ✓ The Tenant Engagement Group Constitution is in place, and stakeholder consultations have been completed. ✓ Key decision reports now go to the Executive via the Forward Plan, ensuring transparency, while urgency powers are used only in exceptional cases with Director and Monitoring Officer approval. 	completed	Apr-24	Nov-24	Solace/ HIP: H2 & H14 & H27 & H27 HQN Transparency, Influence, and Accountability Standard (RSH 2024)

Agenda item number: 7
Appendix 1



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
2.2	Service Performance Measurement & Accountability Framework	<p>Why we are doing this: To establish a structured approach for measuring, monitoring, and improving performance, ensuring alignment with strategic goals and accountability for outcomes.</p> <p>What good looks like: Performance will be transparently measured and continuously improved to demonstrate compliance, stakeholders will have confidence in service delivery, risks will be proactively managed, and data-driven insights will support informed decision-making and long-term impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review of KPIs 24/25 completed with team leaders May 2024 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Key Performance Indicators for 2025/26 have been defined and are now out for approval. <p>Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Housing risk log will be updated in March 2025. <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a performance framework by May 2025 <input type="checkbox"/> Develop real-time tracking tools by August 2025 	In progress	Jan-25	Aug-25	Solace/HIP: H2 Transparency, Influence, and Accountability Standard (RSH 2024) HQN



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
2.3	Building a Data Driven Culture	<p>Why we are doing this: To establish robust data management practices, improve data accuracy and accessibility, and leverage data-driven insights for informed decision-making across key property and tenancy areas.</p> <p>What good looks like: Data will be accurate, accessible, and effectively used to drive strategic decisions, operational efficiencies will be improved, and officers will be equipped with the skills and tools to utilise data analytics for proactive service management.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audit and centralisation of data on garages, car parks, and HRA properties has been completed.</p> <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Audit & review of all leasehold properties let to RPs and charities by Sep 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Review and validate property and tenancy details held by Dec 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Develop and train officers in the use of data analytical tools by Mar 26 	In progress	Nov-24	Mar-26	Solace/ HIP: H23 H34 & H35 Social Housing Regulation Act 2023

Agenda item number: 7
& Appendix 1



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
2.4	Sound Financial Management of Housing Services	<p>Why we are doing this: To enhance financial efficiency, transparency, and sustainability by strengthening budget control, cost efficiency, financial compliance, procurement processes, and supplier management, ensuring robust tracking, accountability, and regulatory adherence.</p> <p>What good looks like: Financial resources will be effectively managed, with clear accountability and oversight. Budgets will be controlled efficiently, procurement will be compliant and value-driven, and financial risks will be proactively managed. Housing services will have the tools and governance in place to ensure long-term financial sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The financial management framework for housing has been strengthened, ensuring HRA Accountants support housing services, and procurement compliance is enforced. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review Housing GF budgets to ensure correct appropriation between HRA and GF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dedicated Procurement Officer for Housing in place <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Procurement and finance training has been delivered for key staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial controls, including purchase order approvals and procurement oversight, have been improved. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A procurement pipeline has been established, along with dedicated procurement support for housing. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Set up the Housing Property Finance & Contracts Board to embed accountability and assurance mechanisms - Ensure clear ownership of financial decisions, with routine compliance checks and transparent reporting by May 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Enhance financial tracking with dashboards by May 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) for all suppliers by Nov 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure adequate procurement support in place longer term by June 25 	in progress	Apr-24	Apr-27	<p>Solace/ HIP: H15 & H16 & H17 & H18 & H25 & H28</p> <p>Best Value Duty (Local Government Act 1999</p> <p>Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Part VI, Sections 74-76)</p>



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
2.5	Digital Modernisation	<p>To modernise and streamline housing management through the procurement and implementation of a cloud-based digital system, ensuring improved efficiency, data accuracy, and seamless integration across finance, asset management, inspections, and CRM functions, while enhancing customer access through a dedicated customer portal.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cloud-based system - A single platform eliminating duplication, improving data accuracy, and boosting efficiency. • Data-driven decisions - Real-time insights support proactive service management and planning. • Enhanced customer access - A self-service portal for tenants to manage accounts, access info, and report issues. • Optimised staff operations - Integration with finance, inspections, and asset management for seamless workflows.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Define scope and write brief for project resource Next Steps (dates subject to change based on scope) <input type="checkbox"/> Establish Housing ICT Project Team by May 26 <input type="checkbox"/> Secure resources - Appoint project leads and specialists to drive implementation by June 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct "As-Is" analysis - Review current systems, processes, and data gaps to inform future requirements by Sept 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Develop "To-Be" blueprint - Define the future vision, system requirements, and transformation roadmap, including cloud integration and portal functionality. By Oct 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Establish procurement strategy & approved business case. By April 26 <input type="checkbox"/> Develop stakeholder engagement & change management plan by May 26. Procurement of a new system by Dec 26 <input type="checkbox"/> Progress to system configuration, testing, and integration -By Apr 27 <input type="checkbox"/> Implement structured training & user adoption strategy - By April 27 	not started	Mar-25	Apr-27	Solace/ HIP: H30 RSH Consumer Standards (TIAS, Neighbour hood & Communit y Standard, Home Standard) HQN

Agenda item number: 7
Appendix 1



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
2.7	Staff Performance & Culture	<p>To develop a high-performing, values-driven workforce by embedding a strong corporate vision, leadership culture, and performance framework, ensuring staff have the skills & support needed to deliver excellent housing services while fostering continuous improvement and cultural change</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A structured training plan is in place, ensuring staff have the necessary skills to excel. • Team plans are established, with objectives set and monitored at department, team, and individual levels. • Staff understand their roles, how they contribute to wider goals, and feel valued through clear, consistent messaging. • Teams work effectively using modern tools, shared values, and clear accountability to drive service excellence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A clear vision, mission, and values have been established and embedded across the organisation. ✓ Regular 1:1s, appraisals, and work-based behavioural targets are now in place. ✓ Collaboration platforms (Teams & SharePoint) have been launched to support teamwork and knowledge sharing. ✓ A skills audit has been completed to assess workforce capabilities and training needs. ✓ Senior managers now hold or are working towards the appropriate housing qualifications. ✓ Procurement and financial management training is in place. ✓ The whistleblowing policy has been embedded to support a culture of transparency and accountability. ✓ The Housing Improvement Group has been launched to drive continuous service improvements. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Away day March 2025 & Winter 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Deliver a Training & Development Programme - Focus on customer service, resilience, EDI, and leadership by Dec 25 <input type="checkbox"/> All teams and individuals have objectives set by June 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Implement appraisal monitoring - Track progress via Business World for transparency and consistency by May 25 	in progress	Jul-24	Dec-25	<p>Solace/ HIP: H4 & H6 & H7 & H8 & H11 & H12 & H13</p> <p>RSH Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard (TIES)</p> <p>HQN</p>



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
2.8	Workforce & Operating Model Transformation	<p>To create a sustainable, efficient housing operating model with the right leadership, staffing, and governance, streamlined recruitment, and a structure that ensures long-term service delivery and compliance.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and sustainable structure - Defined roles and responsibilities within a fully resourced service. • Right people, right roles - Leadership and staffing aligned with strategic needs. • Efficient recruitment - A streamlined process reducing reliance on agency staff. • Workforce stability and compliance - A model that ensures resilience and regulatory adherence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A permanent joint strategic director is in place. ✓ Pivotal roles in compliance and repairs have been appointed, including Surveyors ✓ Agency staff recruitment, induction, and management processes have been reviewed. ✓ The brief and plan for delivering the TOM has been completed <p>Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Appoint a specialist HR project lead - Lead the project and oversee workforce transformation by end March 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a housing staffing structure review - Assess roles, capacity, and long-term workforce needs by Sept 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Launch the new operating model- Implement the redesigned structure, ensuring alignment with strategic objectives. By Dec 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Embed and refine the model - Monitor, adjust, and ensure a smooth transition to the new structure. By April 26 	In progress	Apr-24	Feb-26	<p>Solace/ HIP: H5 H9 H33</p> <p>RSH Consumer Standards (TIAS, Home Standard, Neighbourhood & Community Standard)</p> <p>HQN</p>

Agenda item number: 7
Appendix 1



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
2.9	Housing & Homelessness Strategies	<p>To develop and implement a comprehensive Housing Strategy and Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy that tackles key housing challenges, enhances service delivery, and aligns with corporate priorities and regulatory requirements.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear strategic direction - A well-defined approach to housing and homelessness, aligned with national and local priorities. • Strategies reflect the needs and insights of residents, partners, and service users. • A structured plan with clear milestones, responsibilities, and a robust performance monitoring framework. • Improved housing and homelessness services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing Strategy and Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy have been drafted - Providing a framework for improvement. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder and resident consultation completed - Feedback from residents, the Tenant Engagement Group (TEG), stakeholders, and partners has been incorporated. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Present both strategies to governance boards - Secure approval and ensure alignment with corporate priorities. By April 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Secure Executive sign-off - Formal adoption of the strategies. by April 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Develop an Implementation Plan - Define milestones, responsibilities, and key actions. By May 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Integrate strategies into housing services - Update policies, train staff, and align service delivery. <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a performance monitoring framework - Track progress and impact against strategic objectives. By June 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Launch and communicate the strategies - Use digital channels, reports, and stakeholder events to engage staff, partners, and residents. By June 25 	In progress	Dec-24	Jun-25	<p>Solace/ HIP: H3</p> <p>Homelessness Reduction Act 2017</p> <p>Local Authority Housing Strategy Requirements</p>



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
2.10	Robust Regulatory Compliance - review	<p>To ensure full compliance with the Social Housing Act through an independent review, action planning, and alignment with regulatory expectations.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent assurance of compliance - A thorough external review confirming alignment with regulatory standards. • Clear action planning - Identified risks and recommendations translated into targeted improvements. • Regulatory alignment - Compliance embedded into governance, service delivery, and performance monitoring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Independent review commissioned - Assessing compliance with the Social Housing Act. ✓ Findings received and analysed - Key risks and recommendations identified. ✓ Review findings presentation completed - Outlining compliance gaps and improvement areas. ✓ Validation meeting held with HQN - Ensuring accuracy and robustness of findings. ✓ All recommended actions incorporated into the Housing Improvement Plan - Ensuring full alignment with regulatory requirements. 	completed	Jan-25	Mar-25	Solace/ HIP: H36 H38 Consumer Standards (2024) Building Safety Act 2022 Social Housing Regulation Act 2023

Agenda item number: 7
Appendix 1



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
2.11	North Downs Housing: Future Options Appraisal	<p>To conduct a comprehensive governance and financial viability review of North Downs Housing Limited (NDH), evaluating options for its future operation-including continuation as a commercially viable entity or winding up the company-to ensure the best value and strategic outcome for the council.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear financial and governance position - A full understanding of NDH's viability, risks, and compliance. • Strategic decision-making - An options appraisal that balances commercial viability, legal compliance, and council priorities. • Transparent process - Stakeholder engagement and expert input guiding the final recommendation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regular NDH Reporting to the Executive Shareholder & Trust Committee, as part of the wider improvement work with the Council's function with Companies, Charities and Trust <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Future Options Appraisal initiated - Reviewing NDH's governance, financial position, and strategic direction. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Procure external expertise - Secure independent specialists to support the review. By March 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a detailed financial, governance, and legal review - Assess NDH's viability and compliance. By August 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Undertake a market and risk assessment - Evaluate options for continuation, restructuring, or winding up. <input type="checkbox"/> Engage stakeholders - Gather insights to refine the recommended approach. <input type="checkbox"/> Produce a final recommendation report - Provide a cost-benefit analysis and an implementation plan to support the council's decision. By August 25 	in progress	Aug-24	Aug-25	<p>Solace/ HIP: H24</p> <p>Housing & Planning Act 2016</p>



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
3. Service Improvement & Delivery: High quality responsive services: Lead Head of Neighbourhood Services							
3.1	Household Data Collection Strategy	<p>To ensure accurate, up-to-date household data that improves service delivery, compliance, and decision-making.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and accurate household records - Ensuring services are tailored to tenant needs and regulatory standards are met. • Efficient data management - A structured process for collecting, verifying, and maintaining household information. • Ongoing data quality assurance - A monitoring framework that prevents gaps and inconsistencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Tenancy Visit Process agreed and standardised - Ensuring a consistent approach to data collection. ☑ Procedures and data collection forms in place - Providing clear guidelines for staff. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Identify resource to deliver data mapping exercise by Apr 25 ☐ Identify and map missing household data - Address gaps and inconsistencies in records. ☐ Allocate / hire resources for data entry - Ensure sufficient staffing to process and verify information. ☐ Complete backlog of data entry - Improve record accuracy and reliability. ☐ Deliver staff training - Equip teams with the skills to collect, enter, and manage household data effectively. ☐ Develop a structured monitoring process - Maintain data quality and consistency. ☐ Implement a 2-year rolling programme of tenancy visits - Keep household records regularly updated by Apr 25 	in progress	Feb-25	Oct-25	<p>HQN</p> <p>General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)</p> <p>Housing Ombudsm an Code</p>



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
3.2	Modern Tenancy Agreements & Tenancy Policy	<p>To develop and implement legally compliant, modern tenancy agreements and policies that align with best practices, tenant needs, and regulatory requirements, while transitioning away from flexible tenancies to provide greater security for tenants.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, legally sound tenancy agreements - Ensuring compliance and consistency across all tenancy types. • Tenant-centred policies - Agreements that reflect tenant rights, responsibilities, and service expectations. • Abolition of flexible tenancies - Transitioning all tenants to secure, long-term agreements for greater stability. • Seamless implementation - A structured transition process, including tenant engagement and policy integration. 	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> First iteration of the Tenancy Agreement drafted by legal</p> <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Tenancy Agreement Agreed internal stakeholders by 31 March 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for formal consultation - Develop materials and gather internal feedback. By 25 Apr 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct formal consultation - Engage tenants, stakeholders, and legal teams for feedback by Jul 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Incorporate consultation feedback - Refine the draft Tenancy Agreement and Policy. by Jul 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Seek formal governance and executive sign-off - Ensure compliance and approval. by Oct 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Implement approval process for ending flexible tenancies - Transition tenants to secure tenancies. by Dec 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Roll out new agreements and policy - Embed changes into tenancy management practices. By Dec 25 	in progress	Feb-25	Dec-25	Tenancy Standard (Regulator of Social Housing)



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
3.3	ASB / Domestic Violence Review	<p>To review, update, and implement a legally compliant, tenant-informed ASB and Domestic Violence Policy that aligns with consumer standards, strengthens staff capability, and improves response effectiveness.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, legally sound policies - Ensuring compliance with consumer standards and best practices. • Effective staff response - Strengthened guidance, training, and case management processes. • Tenant-focused approach - Policies informed by resident consultation and lived experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy reviewed and updated - Ensuring legal and regulatory compliance. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legal & Tenant Engagement Group (TEG) consultation completed - Incorporating feedback from key stakeholders. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) conducted - Ensuring the policy is inclusive and equitable. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Incorporate insights from legal, tenants, and stakeholders - Refine the final policy draft. By June 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Develop operational procedures - Provide clear case management guidance for staff by Aug 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Submit policy to the Housing Operations Board (HOB) - Ensure governance review and approval by Sept 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Secure final executive sign-off - Formal approval before implementation. Sept /Oct 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Implement the policy with staff training - Ensure teams are equipped to respond effectively by Dec 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor compliance and effectiveness - Regularly review case handling and policy impact 	in progress	Jan-25	Dec-25	<p>Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014</p> <p>Neighbourhood & Community Standard (2024)</p> <p>HQN</p>



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
3.4	Policy & Procedures Review and Implementation Programme	<p>To review, update, and approve all housing policies and procedures, ensuring legal, financial, HR, and governance compliance while embedding them into operational practice through training and monitoring.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legally & regulatory compliant, up-to-date policies - All policies meet legal, financial, HR, and governance standards. • Tenant-focused and co-produced - Policies are written in plain language, designed for tenants, and developed with their input. • Policies are supported by clear procedures and training to ensure staff can apply them effectively. • Policies are monitored and reviewed, with clear ownership assigned for implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All housing policies identified and grouped into batches - Structured for phased review and approval. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approval timeline established - Ensuring a clear pathway for governance sign-off. <p>Next Steps (rolling programme to be agreed by April 25)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Submit each batch for legal, finance, HR, and equalities review - Ensure compliance before governance approval. <input type="checkbox"/> Co-produce policies with tenants - Engage residents in drafting and reviewing policies to ensure accessibility and relevance. <input type="checkbox"/> Progress policies through Housing Operations Board (HOB) and Executive sign-off - Secure formal approval. <input type="checkbox"/> Draft and align operational procedures - Ensure policies translate into effective frontline practice. <input type="checkbox"/> Assign ownership for implementation - Clarify accountability for policy rollout. <input type="checkbox"/> Deliver staff training - Embed policies into day-to-day operations. <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce monitoring and compliance checks - Ensure adherence and effectiveness. <input type="checkbox"/> Review and refine process after each batch - Improve efficiency and governance. 	In progress	Jan-25	Jan-26	Consumer Standards, Regulatory Framework (RSH) HQN



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
3.5	Enhancing Estate Management Practices	<p>To improve estate management by implementing a structured inspection process, reviewing and procuring effective cleaning and grounds maintenance contracts, and enhancing tenant engagement for better service delivery and accountability</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective estate inspections - A structured, transparent process ensuring estates are well-maintained and issues are addressed promptly. • Contracts aligned with service priorities, delivering consistent, high-standard estate upkeep. • Residents actively involved in estate walkabouts, inspections, and service feedback. • Clear KPIs, regular inspections, and strong contract oversight to maintain service quality. 	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scoping completed on current contracts and estate management processes - Understanding existing challenges and gaps.</p> <p>Next Steps: Programme to be agreed by May 25</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Review estate management practices - Identify areas for improvement in inspections, maintenance, and tenant involvement.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assess and update cleaning and grounds maintenance contracts - Ensure alignment with service expectations and resident needs.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Refresh the estate inspection process - Establish clear standards, accountability, and reporting mechanisms.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gather stakeholder and tenant feedback - Engage residents and staff in shaping service improvements.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Develop new contract specifications - Define service standards and performance expectations.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Procure new contracts - Secure providers who meet the revised estate management requirements.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Establish a monitoring and inspection framework - Implement KPIs and reporting tools for contract compliance.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Implement the new estate management model - Embed structured inspections, enhanced tenant engagement, and ongoing service oversight.</p>	In progress	May-25	Apr-26	Neighbourhood & Community Standards (2024) HQN



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
3.6	Improving Leasehold Management Services	<p>To enhance leasehold management services by conducting a comprehensive review, engaging stakeholders, benchmarking best practices, and preparing for the new Leasehold Reform Bill, ensuring effective financial oversight and appropriate accountancy support.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved communication, service charge transparency, and dispute resolution. Regular surveys, forums, and consultation to ensure services meet Leaseholders needs. Services aligned with industry benchmarks and the new Leasehold Reform Bill. Strengthened processes to ensure accurate service charges and cost recovery. 	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phase 1 of the Leasehold Management Review initiated, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service review with consultants to assess strengths and areas for improvement. Training on new legislation to prepare for regulatory changes. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Engage leaseholders through surveys and forums - Gather insights to shape service improvements. Mar 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Consult internal teams - Align leasehold services with operational priorities. Feb - Mar 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Benchmark best practices - Compare against high-performing providers to identify improvement opportunities. Feb-Mar 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a report with key findings and recommendations - Present to governance boards for approval. By April 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Implement service improvements - Develop an action plan to address recommendations. April - August 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Embed changes in communication, service charge transparency, and dispute resolution - Ensure clarity and fairness for leaseholders by Aug 25 	in progress	Jan-25	Aug-25	<p>Solace/ HIP: H21 & H22</p> <p>Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act 2022</p> <p>Home Standard</p>



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
3.7	Improving the Repairs Service	<p>To enhance the efficiency, quality, and responsiveness of the repairs service by reviewing existing processes, engaging stakeholders, and implementing targeted improvements to ensure a better experience for tenants and improved service performance.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faster, more reliable repairs - Reduced waiting times, better scheduling, and improved contractor performance. Clearer communication with tenants - Transparent updates on repair requests, expected timeframes, and progress. Efficient contractor and resource management - Optimised scheduling and improved oversight of repair works. Compliance and accountability - Ensuring repairs meet legal, safety, and quality standards 	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Repairs Service Improvement Project scoped - Objectives, priorities, and key challenges identified.</p> <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Appoint a Project Lead & Manager - Oversee delivery and ensure accountability by end April 25 <p>Then project milestones to be agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review repairs service performance - Assess current inefficiencies, backlogs, and service gaps. <input type="checkbox"/> Engage tenants, staff, and contractors - Gather feedback to shape improvements. <input type="checkbox"/> Map and redesign the repairs process - Improve scheduling, contractor management, and compliance. <input type="checkbox"/> Implement the new repairs model - Embed changes to drive efficiency and service quality. <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor performance and refine approach - Ensure continuous improvement and tenant satisfaction. 	not started	Mar-25	Jan-26	<p>Home Standard (2024)</p> <p>Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)</p> <p>HQN</p>



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
3.8	Voids & Lettings Review	<p>To improve voids and lettings processes by reducing turnaround times, strengthening contractor management, enhancing the new tenant journey, reviewing long-term voids for disposal or repurposing, and implementing policies that maximise housing stock efficiency.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster turnaround times - Reduced void periods and improved allocation of homes. • Stronger contractor management - Clear expectations and accountability for voids works. • A streamlined new tenant process ensuring tenants settle in smoothly. • Optimised use of housing stock - Long-term voids assessed for disposal, repurposing, or reinvestment. • A clear voids policy, performance KPIs, and compliance checks to maintain service quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regular voids monitoring in place - Improving oversight of turnaround times and performance. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Voids standard developed - Ensuring consistency in property conditions before re-letting. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recruitment underway for a Voids Lead - Strengthening leadership and accountability. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Appoint a Voids Lead (in progress) by 5 April 25 Then project milestones to be agreed: <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a formal voids policy - Standardising processes and expectations. <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a full review of voids and lettings processes - Identify areas for improvement. <input type="checkbox"/> Address long-term voids - Assess properties for disposal, repurposing, or re-letting. <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder workshops - Improve coordination between teams and contractors. <input type="checkbox"/> Enhance voids processes and contractor agreements - Strengthen contract terms and service expectations. <input type="checkbox"/> Improve the tenant onboarding process - Ensure smooth transitions and early tenancy support. <input type="checkbox"/> Embed policy updates, performance KPIs, and compliance checks - Maintain efficiency and accountability. 	in progress	Feb-25	July-26	<p>Solace/ HIP: H19 & H20</p> <p>Tenancy Standard</p> <p>Allocations & Homelessness Regulations</p> <p>HQN</p>



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
4. Quality, Safety, and Compliance: Our residents live in compliant, safe, and healthy homes: Lead Head of Repairs & Maintenance							
4.1	Asset Management Strategy & Planned Works	<p>To develop and implement an Asset Management Strategy and Planned Works Programme that ensures efficient investment, long-term asset sustainability, and regulatory compliance, while delivering VFM and improving housing quality for residents.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Asset Management Plan that ensures housing stock is well-maintained/ future-proofed and meets decent homes standards A Capital Budget approved, balancing short-term improvements with long-term sustainability. Works align with housing safety, regulatory requirements, and best practices. Procurement of long-term delivery partners 	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Procurement process for an Asset Management Consultant underway (26 Feb 25) - To support strategy development and implementation.</p> <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Appoint the Asset Management Consultant - Provide expertise in strategy development by April 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a Short-Term Capital Programme - Address immediate investment needs. In progress <input type="checkbox"/> Create a Long-Term Investment Strategy - Ensure sustainable asset planning by Sept 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Finalise and approve the Asset Management Strategy & Plan - Establish a clear roadmap for asset sustainability. By Oct 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Secure Capital Budget approval - Ensure funding for planned investment by Feb 26 <input type="checkbox"/> Procure long-term delivery partners - Secure external expertise for efficient delivery by May 26 <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a contract and performance framework - Define expectations and ensure accountability <input type="checkbox"/> Implement asset investment projects - Improve housing stock efficiently and cost-effectively. 	In progress	Nov-24	Aug-26	Solace/ HIP: H29 Home Standard Decent Homes Standard (2024) HQN

Agenda item number: 7
Appendix 1



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
4.2	Building Safety Engagement Strategy	<p>To develop and implement a resident-focused Building Safety Engagement Strategy that ensures clear communication, compliance with safety regulations, and increased resident confidence, with a focus on high-rise and higher-risk buildings.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear communication - Regular resident updates on safety measures and responsibilities. • Regulatory compliance - Engagement aligns with building safety laws and best practices. • Confident, informed residents - Accessible info, workshops, and engagement channels. • Trained staff - Housing officers understand and fulfil safety responsibilities. • Continuous improvement - Ongoing monitoring and resident feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initial draft of the Building Safety Engagement Strategy completed - Outlining key principles and actions. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder engagement conducted - Feedback gathered from residents, building safety teams, and external partners. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Secure formal sign-off - Final approval of the strategy by April 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Establish clear communication channels - Ensure regular resident updates on safety measures and responsibilities by June 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Create an accessible Building Safety Information Hub - Centralised, easy-to-understand resources for residents. By Sept 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Deliver staff training - Equip housing officers and frontline teams with safety engagement knowledge by sept 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Implement a monitoring and feedback loop - Regularly review engagement effectiveness and make improvements by Sept 25 	In progress	Jan-25	Sept 25	<p>Building Safety Act 2022 (Section 91)</p> <p>Home Standard</p>



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
4.3	Damp & Mould Prevention and Management Programme	<p>To develop and implement a proactive and accountable damp and mould management strategy that ensures effective reporting, case management, specialist expertise, and resolution, improving resident health, housing conditions, and regulatory compliance.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear processes for logging, tracking, and resolving damp and mould cases. • Dedicated professionals ensuring timely assessments and effective interventions. • KPIs monitoring resolution times, repeat cases, contractor performance, and resident satisfaction. • Proactive prevention reducing damp and mould risks long-term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Damp & Mould Management Framework in place - Providing a structured approach to tackling cases. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reporting mechanisms established - Ensuring clear and accessible ways for residents to report issues. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specialist damp & mould surveyor appointed - Strengthening expertise in case assessments. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy and operational procedures agreed and implemented - Standardising how cases are managed. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce a casework management system - Track reports, progress, and resolution timelines by June 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a KPI reporting framework - Monitor resolution times, repeat cases, contractor performance, and resident satisfaction by May 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure ongoing improvements and accountability - Use performance data to refine processes and enhance service delivery by Aug 25 	in progress	Jan-25	Aug 25	Home Standard Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
4.4	Housing Compliance Improvement Project	<p>To enhance housing compliance by addressing fire safety, gas and electrical safety, legionella, lift maintenance, asbestos management, and smoke detector compliance, ensuring all properties meet regulatory standards and provide a safe environment for residents.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full regulatory compliance - All properties meet fire, gas, electrical, and safety standards. • Efficient monitoring and reporting - A robust compliance tracking system ensures timely action on safety issues. • Improved procurement and contractor management - Ensuring value for money and service reliability. • Engaged and informed residents - Clear communication and improved inspection access rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Governance strengthened - Improved oversight of compliance responsibilities. ✓ Monthly reporting to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in place - Ensuring transparency and accountability. ✓ Major compliance areas addressed - Progress made on fire safety, lift maintenance, asbestos management, and smoke detector installations. ✓ Procurement processes improved - Strengthened contract management and cost efficiency. Short Term Procurement of contractors completed <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Implement a Compliance Casework & Monitoring System - Track overdue actions, contractor performance, and regulatory deadlines by May 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Enhance resident engagement - Improve communication and ensure better inspection access for safety checks by Jul 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Embed ongoing compliance monitoring - Maintain and continuously improve housing safety standards by Apr 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Procurement of Longer term contracts by Sept 25 	In progress	June-24	Sept 25	<p>Home Standard</p> <p>Building Safety Act 2022</p> <p>Social Housing Regulation Act 2023</p> <p>HQN</p>



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
5. Resident Empowerment & Engagement: Lead Head of Insight & Engagement							
5.1	Tenant Satisfaction Measures & Feedback	<p>To develop a structured approach for listening to resident feedback, ensuring multiple feedback mechanisms are in place, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) are effectively collected and used, and feedback drives service improvements and decision-making.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback actively informs policies, priorities, and decision-making. A mix of surveys, complaints, digital tools, and in-person engagement in place Residents see how their feedback shapes services through "You Said, We Did" A structured approach for monitoring trends, acting on issues, and refining services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) in place - Collecting resident views on key services. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal complaints and learning process established - Ensuring resident concerns lead to service improvements. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional feedback channels introduced - Expanding ways for residents to engage. <p>Next Steps (timelines to be agreed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a Residents' Charter - Define clear service commitments and resident expectations. <input type="checkbox"/> Establish Resident Scrutiny & Challenge Panels - Strengthen tenant involvement in service oversight. <input type="checkbox"/> Enhance digital and in-person engagement - Introduce online feedback and resident events. <input type="checkbox"/> Improve communication through "You Said, We Did" reports - Show how feedback leads to action. <input type="checkbox"/> Tenant-led reviews - Assess services from a resident perspective. 	In progress	Nov-24	Mar-26	<p>Solace/HIP: H36</p> <p>Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) (Regulator of Social Housing, 2024)</p> <p>HQN</p>

Agenda item number: 7
Appendix 1



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
5.2	Resident Engagement Strategy	<p>To develop a Resident Engagement Strategy that improves communication, strengthens participation, enhances community pride, fosters collaboration between staff and tenants, and ensures accountability through effective scrutiny mechanisms.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents receive regular service updates through multiple channels. Meaningful involvement in decision-making, service design, and scrutiny. Increased engagement in local projects, estate improvements, and resident-led initiatives. Staff and residents work together to improve services and build trust. Resident oversight through mystery shopping, deep dives, and estate walkabouts. 	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resident Engagement Plan developed - Created in collaboration with the Tenant Engagement Group (TEG), setting key priorities.</p> <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Secure leadership sign-off - Embed the strategy into housing services by May 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Improve communication and accessibility - Introduce multi-format information, website updates, and resident involvement pages by Aug 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Enhance resident participation - Expand TEG meetings and digital/in-person engagement opportunities by Sept 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Train staff on resident collaboration - Strengthen engagement skills across teams by Sept 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Implement resident scrutiny mechanisms (see 5.1) <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a monitoring and review process - Ensure continuous improvement based on feedback and impact by Sept 25 	In progress	Sep-24	Sep-25	<p>Solace/HIP : H37</p> <p>Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard (TIAS)</p> <p>HQN</p>



Task	Name	Objective	Actions	Status	Start	Finish	Source
5.3	Complaint Handling	<p>To enhance complaint handling processes by ensuring efficient response times, improved case management, better resident communication, and compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, while embedding a culture of learning from complaints to drive service improvements.</p> <p>What good looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All residents receive an initial call within 48 hours, and complaints are resolved within target timeframes. Residents are kept informed throughout the complaints process. Strengthened governance, reporting, and escalation processes. Complaints are actively used to identify and implement service enhancements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaint handling improvements fully implemented Dedicated oversight and improved tracking - Ensuring accountability and efficiency. Faster response times - All residents now receive a call within 48 hours. Enhanced resident communication - Providing updates at every stage of the process. Staff training in customer-focused complaint handling - Improving resolution and engagement. Learning from Complaints Framework embedded - Ensuring complaints drive service improvements. Performance monitoring and KPIs established - Tracking resolution times and satisfaction. Governance and escalation processes strengthened - Ensuring effective oversight and accountability. 	completed	Jul-24	Jan-25	Solace/HIP : H31&H32 Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (2024) HQN

Agenda item number: 7
Appendix 1

Guildford Borough Council

Report to:	Housing Operations Board
Date:	12 March 2025
Ward(s) affected:	All
Report of Strategic Director of:	Housing, Communities & Environment
Report Author:	Annalisa Howson, Assistant Director of Housing
Email:	Annalisa.howson@guildford.gov.uk
Lead Executive Member:	Cllr Julia McShane
Email:	Julia.McShane@guildford.gov.uk
Status:	Open
Key decision:	No

Draft Housing Aids & Adaptations Policy

1.0 Executive Summary

This report introduces the new draft Housing Aids & Adaptations policy which will be referred to the Executive for approval. The policy outlines the framework for providing housing aids and adaptations to support individuals with disabilities, older adults and those with mobility challenges.

2.0 Recommendation to Housing Operations Board

The Housing Operations Board is invited to consider the Housing Aids & Adaptations Policy and pass on any comments to the Council's Executive.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 To ensure that the Housing Service has documented policies to support community well-being, ensuring long-term sustainability while fulfilling legal and ethical obligations.

3.2 There are also specific expectations placed on the Council, as a social housing landlord, by the Regulator of Social Housing as part of the Safety and Quality standard to assist tenants seeking housing adaptations to access the appropriate service. Specific expectations include to:

- Clearly communicate to tenants and relevant organisations how they will assist tenants seeking housing adaptations services.
- Co-operate with tenants, appropriate local authority departments and other relevant organisations so that a housing adaptations service is available to tenants where appropriate.
- Allocate homes that are designed or adapted to meet specific needs appropriately.

4.0 Status of Report

4.1 This is an open report.

5.0 Strategic Priorities

5.1 This report supports the Council's priorities "A more inclusive Borough" and "decent and affordable homes" – by identifying residents' needs and shaping services.

6.0 Background

6.1 Guildford Borough Council (GBC) is committed to providing effective and efficient services while meeting all legal and contractual obligations.

6.2 The Housing Service has commenced a programme of work to review existing housing policies to ensure that housing services are being delivered in line with guidance and legislation, to respond to internal audit actions, and to provide the service with a firm foundation to deliver effective landlord services.

Summary of Policy

6.3 The policy aims to assist in the delivery of an aids and adaptation service that will be able to:

- Provide focus of supporting people to consider how their future needs can be met and live more independently, improving their day-to-day quality of life in and around their home
- Ensure that the reasonable needs of the Council's disabled tenants are prioritised, and appropriate aids and adaptations are provided. Additionally, that adapted properties are let taking into account the needs of the tenants
- Ensure integration between internal services and closer working with Surrey County Council's Adult Social Care and the Children with disabilities team
- Comply with the legal and statutory requirements in relation to the provision of disabled adaptations (e.g. Equality Act 2010)

- Maximise all available funding sources and ensure that the available budgets are used effectively and efficiently to maximise best use of Council housing stock and ensure that the needs of the tenants are appropriately prioritised.

6.4 The aim of the policy is to enhance independence, improve quality of life, and enable tenants to live safely and comfortably in their homes.

6.5 The draft Housing Aids & Adaptations Policy is attached as (Appendix 1).

7.0 Options

7.1 No other options were considered as this report is to seek approval on the new policy to meet legislative and regulatory requirements.

8.0 Consultation

8.1 Providing a range of meaningful opportunities for tenants to influence and scrutinise the landlord's strategies, policies, and services is a requirement of the Transparency, Influence, and Accountability Standard.

8.2 Consultation with TEG members on the Aids & Adaptations Policy yielded positive feedback, highlighting the clarity and comprehensibility of the policy.

8.3 The overall feedback on the policy was that TEG members were happy with the information contained in the policy, especially the level of service within it.

9.0 Key Risks

9.1 If the policies are not adequately communicated and implemented, it can lead to incorrect application of the policies, financial loss, and reputational damage on individual cases.

10.0 Legal and Governance Implications

10.1 The Council must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998, ensuring that policies do not discriminate against individuals with protected characteristics.

11.0 Financial Implications

11.1 Any expenditure arising would be met through the established budgets.

12.0 Human Resources Implications

12.1 No implications, the aids and adaptations policy will be implemented by the existing team.

13.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

Agenda item number: 8

13.1 The policy aims to address E & D issues to enable tenants to live independently with appropriate adjustments and has a positive impact for disabled and older residents.

14.0 Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

14.1 There are no direct implications for Climate Change and Sustainability arising from this report. However, consideration for recycling, substantiality and energy efficiency will be given when works are completed.

15.0 Next Steps

15.1 Once policies are approved, procedures will be finalised, and training will be provided to officers.

15.2 The policies will be published on the Council's website.

16.0 Background Papers

16.1 None

17.0 Appendices

17.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Housing Aids & Adaptations Policy

Report clearance progress:

Finance	Jo Knight	26/02/2025
Legal & Governance	Michael Elford	Under review
Human Resources	Francesca Chapman	27/02/2025
Equalities	Ali Holman	27/02/2025
Strategic Director	Julian Higson	



Guildford Borough Council Housing Services Housing Aids and Adaptations Policy

Document Information

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Policy Service Owner: Housing Services

This document replaces: Draft version 1.0

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Governance route: Executive

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Aims of the Policy.....	3
3. Legal Framework and Scope of Policy.....	3
4. Definitions and Eligibility.....	4
5. Adaptations.....	4
6. Minor Adaptations	5
7. Major Adaptations	5
8. Complex Adaptations.....	7
9. Prioritising and Timescales for Adaptations.....	8
10. Moving to a More Suitable Property.....	8
11. Policy Outcomes.....	8
12. Monitoring and Review	9
13. Review and Complaints	9
14. Equality and Diversity.....	9
15. Data Protection and Retention of Information.....	9

DRAFT

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Guildford Borough Council (the Council) is committed to providing a high-quality aids and adaptations service that enables disabled Council tenants to live safely and more independently within our homes.
- 1.2. The Council will take all reasonable measures to provide a fair and accessible aids and adaptations service that makes best use of existing adapted properties and works closely with other external agencies.
- 1.3. The Aids and Adaptations Policy applies to disabled Council tenants and/or their immediate family members living in properties owned by the Council.
- 1.4. This policy supports the corporate priorities detailed in our Corporate Plan 2021-2025 by empowering communities and supporting people who need help, specifically 'tackling inequalities in our communities' and 'working with communities to support those in need'.
- 1.5. This policy should be used by council staff considering an application and by tenants who are considering making an application. Partner agencies such as Social Services should also be aware of the policy when advising and working with tenants.

2. Aims of the Policy

- 2.1. The policy aims to assist in the delivery of an aids and adaptation service that will be able to:
 - Provide focus of supporting people to consider how their future needs can be met and live more independently, improving their day-to-day quality of life in and around their home
 - Ensure that the reasonable needs of the Council's disabled tenants are prioritised, and appropriate aids and adaptations are implemented. Additionally, that adapted properties are let taking into account the needs of the tenants
 - Ensure integration between internal services and closer working with Surrey County Council's Adult Social Care and the Children with disabilities team
 - Comply with the legal and statutory requirements in relation to the provision of disabled adaptations (e.g. Equality Act 2010)
 - Maximise all available funding sources and ensure that the available budgets are used effectively and efficiently to maximise best use of Council housing stock and ensure that the needs of the tenants are appropriately prioritised.

3. Legal Framework and Scope of Policy

- 3.1. The Council's obligations, powers and duties in relation to the provision of financial assistance for repair and adaptations are contained within the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is available to owners and tenants of private landlords and housing associations. Council tenants are not eligible for DFG, however we will consider requests on the same grounds.

Agenda item number: 8

Appendix 1

- 3.2. In determining this policy, consideration has been given to the integration with the Council's Lettings, Allocations and Mutual Exchange policies together with statutory provisions of the relevant acts.
- 3.3. Under the Equality Act 2010, councils must ensure that their adaptations service is equally accessible to all. Under the act councils as landlords, do not have to make changes which affect the structure or which would substantially and permanently alter their housing stock, however where a disabled person requests and would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled, the council must "take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to provide the auxiliary aid".
- 3.4. The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended) states that grant aid must be provided for adaptations that are "necessary and appropriate" to meet the needs of the disabled applicant and where the council is satisfied that it is "reasonable and practicable" to carry out the works, having regard to the age and condition of the property adaptations should be consider if they are: Necessary, Appropriate, Reasonable and Practical
- 3.5. Under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002 the councils have wide reaching discretionary powers to provide financial assistance for repairs, improvements and adaptations to living accommodation. This includes help with the cost of moving and adapting or improving another property where it is deemed to be a more cost-effective option.
- 3.6. The policy scope covers how the Council's Specialist Services – Environment & Regulatory team are able to provide aids and adaptations to assist in meeting the needs of the Council's tenants. This includes:
 - The types of aids and adaptations that can be reasonably carried out
 - The definition of disabled and the situations where the Council will and will not be able to assist in providing aids and adaptations
 - Provide clarity in identifying the Council's responsibilities
 - The type and level of service that tenants may reasonably expect from the Council
 - The tenant's financial expectations and possible charges for on-going maintenance of specialist equipment and adaptations

4. Definitions and Eligibility

- 4.1. An adaptation is an alteration to an aspect of a dwelling to assist the disabled person to live as independently as possible in their home.
- 4.2. A disabled person is defined as having a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities (Equality Act 2010).
- 4.3. To be eligible a person must be a Council tenant and either they, their partner or a member of their immediate family who is permanently resident in the household, have an impairment that is likely to last for at least 12 months or for the remainder of the person's life that substantially affects their ability to carry out normal day to day activities or access facilities in or around their home.

- 4.4. Under the terms of this policy a person is regarded as 'disabled' as defined under the Housing, Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended) if they have any of the following:
- Sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired
 - Mental disorder or impairment of any kind
 - Physically substantially disabled by illness, injury, impairment present since birth, or otherwise
- 4.5. If a person does not live in a Council owned property and are not a Council tenant, their initial enquiry should be directed to the Council's Private Sector Housing Team who facilitate all adaptation referrals for owner occupiers, housing association and private landlord tenants.

5. Adaptations

- 5.1. Adaptations are split into two categories – minor and major. These distinctions are based on the nature of the work required to implement the adaptation and do not correspond to the impact the adaptation will have on the individual requiring such work. It is understood that both minor and major adaptation work can impact significantly on an individual's quality of life.

5.2. Minor Adaptations

Includes but is not limited to the provision of adaptations such as:

- Ramps
- Handrails
- Grab rail
- Lever taps
- Sanitary ware

5.3. Major Adaptations

These require more extensive and complex work, often designed for the specific need of an individual, and including, but are not limited to the provision of adaptations such as:

- The installation of lifts and special purpose equipment
- Bathroom and kitchen adaptations, ground floor WC conversions
- Garage conversions, extensions and access

6. Minor Adaptations

- 6.1. Tenants can request (self-refer) for minor adaptations by contacting the Council. Any tenant unsure of the extent of the required adaptation will be asked to contact their Occupational Therapist (OT) in the first instance.
- 6.2. Minor adaptations (typically under £500) are easily installed and do not affect the future use of the property, for example, lever taps, grab rails, half step and mop stick handrails.
- 6.3. Minor adaptations will be raised as a routine repair job (i.e. up to 30 working Days) as long as they do not exceed £500 in total value in any one property.

Agenda item number: 8

Appendix 1

- 6.4. The likely timeframe for completing minor adaptations may be less depending on critical need or if there are immediate risks to health and safety to the occupants of the property.
- 6.5. All minor adaptation requests that cost between £500 and £1,000 will be assessed by the OT and Council's Adaptations Team, within 10 working days, to assess whether a major adaptation would be more suitable.
- 6.6. The Council reserves the right to seek an Occupational Therapist's report on aids and adaptations requests below £1,000 in value on a discretionary basis, to ensure the proposed works meet the customer's individual needs in the most effective way.
- 6.7. If an assessment is required, once agreed, the Council aims to ensure all minor adaptations are completed within 4-6 weeks from the date they are approved.
- 6.8. Minor adaptations do not include non-fixed equipment to assist with a disability or mobility problem that are normally supplied by Surrey County Council Equipment Services which is run by Millbrook Healthcare.

7. Major Adaptations

- 7.1. Major adaptations (typically over £1,000) are adaptations that meet needs identified through an Occupational Therapist referral, for example, a stair lift, through floor lifts, over bath showers, a level access showers, electric opening doors, ramps.
- 7.2. Approvals for major adaptations will only be made on receipt of an Occupational Therapist's assessment and clear recommendation that the work is necessary & appropriate and reasonable & practical to sustain independent living, addressing basic needs only (with critical needs assessments receiving the greatest priority).
- 7.3. When evaluating a request for an adaptation, the Council will consider individual, technical and other relevant factors to enable a balanced decision to be taken to ensure best use is made of the available financial resources.
- 7.4. Wherever possible, and suitable for a customer's circumstances, the Council will endeavour to facilitate approved requests for major adaptations through allocations or management moves to an alternative suitable property that meets required needs. This will include consideration of the suitability of the property, where factors such as floor level and under occupation of the property will be considered. For example, if a single household requires an adaptation, but is occupying a larger family home, a transfer to a more suitable property is likely to be more appropriate.
- 7.5. We will consider the following criteria when prioritising permissions and providing funding for major adaptations works:
 - There is a completed independent Occupational Therapist referral with all relevant information to make a full assessment.
 - The work requested is to assist in meeting a long-term medical condition that is likely to continue for the near future.
 - The Occupational Therapist's eligibility criteria to decide if they have priority needs (with 'critical needs' receiving priority over those with 'substantial' needs').

- Where there is more than one applicant with the same Occupational Therapist recommendation, priority will be given on date order (i.e. those that have been waiting longest).
- Additional priority may be given where the requirement for adaptation is causing a current health and safety or fire risk.

7.6. The Council reserves the right to refuse the request for a major adaptation on the following grounds:

- Where the adaptation is requested in a property that is due for demolition or major refurbishment within two years.
- The property is unsuitable for the tenant, for example too large or too small for their household. In the case of under occupation, the Council may, on a discretionary basis, waive this condition where no other suitable housing is available.
- Where the property is underoccupied by 2 rooms or more and the adaptations exceed £7000.00
- The property is unsuitable for adaptation.
- Where the request is for the communal parts of buildings.
- The adaptation is considered unreasonable and unsuitable for the tenant's needs.
- The request is to address specialist needs recommended by the OT other than basic needs (example of specialist needs: self-washing or changing facilities).
- The request affects other areas of health and safety, for example fire safety.
- The adaptation requested is unlikely to meet the needs of a progressive condition or on-going health needs.
- A suitable, alternative or already adapted property is offered and refused (depending on individual circumstances).
- Tenants are in persistent rent arrears or are subject to a current anti-social behaviour order or injunction action against them. The Council may on a discretionary basis waive this condition in cases of critical need or where there are immediate risks to health and safety to the occupants of the property.
- If the tenant is in the final year of their flexible tenancy we will consult with the Case Officer about the likelihood of it being renewed before we decide whether or not to make any major/permanent adaptations to the property. If it has been decided the tenancy will not be renewed no adaptations will be considered.
- If the tenant has submitted an application under the right-to-buy (RTB) scheme they will be signposted to the Disabled Facilities Grant. The referral will be reassessed if the RTB is withdrawn.
- Where a tenant has transferred from another property within the last 12 months which had the adaptations that are now being requested again unless that property was

Agenda item number: 8

Appendix 1

confirmed to be no longer suitable for their needs by a health professional or Council officer or if the tenant is downsizing to a smaller property.

- Where the building structure is considered integrally unsuitable for technical and practical reasons, for example widening doorways in prefab buildings, wet floor showers in beam and block floors etc.
- Where the tenant's needs may be met by a more reasonable solution. Particularly where the OT has recommended an extension or major works the tenants needs will be assessed and consideration given to applying alternative solutions, for example utilising a ground floor dining room as a bedroom, instead of building an extension, a smaller extension or rehousing.

7.7. The Council will aim to ensure all major adaptations are completed within 12-18 months from the date they are requested. Adaptations where a move to a more suitable property has been identified are deemed 'complex'.

7.8. We may consider non-permanent adaptations if it is expected to take over 6 months to find a suitable alternative property.

7.9. We will inspect all major adaptations on completion to ensure that the work has been undertaken professionally and to check that the resident is satisfied with the work.

8. Complex Adaptations

8.1. Complex adaptations require work that is more extensive, for example, major remodelling, widening of doors, off road parking and extensions, and are often designed for the specific need of the individual. These works are of high cost and affect the future use of the property.

8.2. Upon receipt of the Occupational Therapists report, a feasibility assessment will be carried out in consultation with the Occupational Therapist, along with a member of the Council's Adaptations Team, Neighbourhood Housing Team and the Allocations Team.

8.3. The feasibility assessment will seek to establish:

- If there is a possibility for the tenant to be moved to more suitable accommodation.
- The implications of the adaptation work when the property becomes available to re-let, particularly the impact on future allocations and under occupancy issues.
- If the adaptation works are suitable for the disabled tenant.
- The feasibility of the adaptation in relation to the layout and structure of the property.
- The proposed works meet all planning, estate management and building regulation requirements.
- Whether the estimated cost of the adaptation work is likely to exceed the Council's maximum budget provision.

8.4. Where it has been identified that a move to a more suitable property is both reasonable and practicable, the Council reserves the right to refuse approval for the adaptations requested for the original home.

- 8.5. In situations where a suitable alternative or already adapted property is offered and refused, approval of the complex adaptation will be subject to review by the Best Practice Panel attended by the OTs, surveyors, and the Care & Repair Team Leader.
- 8.6. We may seek advice from an independent Occupational Therapist to assist with requests for complex (and sometimes major) adaptations. This individual will be registered with a professional body, for example the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), or similar alternative.
- 8.7. We will aim to ensure all complex adaptations are approved within 12-18 months, where possible from the date they are requested. Due the detailed nature of these requests, timescales to complete complex adaptations will be discussed and agreed at the time they are made.

9. Prioritising and Timescales for Adaptations

- 9.1. Occupational Therapist reports are normally processed in chronological order. However, we recognise that on occasions we will receive a request to fast track the adaptations in exceptional circumstances. Where possible and appropriate we will fast track the works requested.
- 9.2. Minor adaptations have a target deadline of 4-6 weeks (unless part of a major adaptations request, where they may be completed at the same time).
- 9.3. Major adaptations have a target deadline of 6 months from receipt of the OT report, although we aim to complete 80% of major adaptations within 3 months.

10. Moving to a More Suitable Property

- 10.1. For those disabled tenants downsizing, we may be able to offer help to people who need financial assistance/help and/or support with the moving process. Each case will be looked at individually and the assistance/support will be tailored to individual needs.
- 10.2. Where circumstances allow, we may also offer:
 - Staff to help tenants through the process with issues such as arranging removals, reconnection of gas and electric and other practical issues.
 - Additional support via our tenancy support service for some tenants who may need extra help.

11. Policy Outcomes

- 11.1. By successfully implementing this policy we will ensure that the reasonable needs of the Council's disabled tenants are prioritised, and appropriate aids and adaptations are implemented. Additionally, that adapted properties are let taking into account the needs of the tenants
- 11.2. The effective implementation of this policy will mean that all GBC tenants/customers are treated in a fair and transparent manner, in accordance with our policy, the relevant regulatory standards and applicable legislation.

12. Monitoring and Review

- 12.1. In order to ensure that the policy is effective and delivering the intended impact, the following Key Performance Indicator's (KPI's) are in place to monitor the performance of the policy:

Agenda item number: 8

Appendix 1

- Number of minor adaptations completed in the financial year
- Number of major adaptations completed in the financial year

Furthermore, in line with the Group's Policy Framework, this policy is scheduled to be reviewed every 3 years, unless due to a change in Government legislation or regulatory requirements, the review period will be brought forward in order to ensure compliance.

13. Reviews and Complaints

13.1. Any individual who is dissatisfied with the service experienced should be encouraged to provide feedback. Complaints regarding the implementation of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's corporate Customer Complaints Policy and associated procedures.

14. Equality and Diversity

14.1. GBC is committed to equal and fair treatment of all sections of the community. Accordingly, no person will be discriminated against during the implementation of this policy on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

14.2. We are committed to helping customers to access information about their homes and services in a way that suits individual needs.

14.3. The council aims to provide homes and services that meet the diverse needs of customers. We believe that all customers should be able to access housing, support and care services with the same ease and that the quality of our service is the same high standard for all.

14.4. In delivering this policy, GBC Housing's staff will comply fully with the requirements of the Council's Equalities and Human Rights Policy.

14.5. In order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, an equality impact analysis (EIA) was completed as part of the policy review. Upon completing the EIA it was found that the implementation of the policy would support and encourage the aims of the public sector duty.

15. Data Protection and Retention of Information

15.1. All information will be handled in accordance with the requirements of General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018. The handling and storage of personal data will be managed and stored in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and our Record Retention Disposal Schedule.

Guildford Borough Council

Report to:	Housing Operations Board
Date:	12 March 2025
Ward(s) affected:	All
Report of Strategic Director of:	Housing, Communities & Environment
Report Author:	Annalisa Howson, Assistant Director of Housing
Email:	annalisa.howson@guildford.gov.uk
Lead Executive Member:	Cllr Julia McShane
Email:	Julia.McShane@guildford.gov.uk
Status:	Open
Key decision:	No

Draft Damp & Mould Policy

1.0 Executive Summary

This report includes the updated draft Damp and Mould policy which has been updated to reflect the Amendments to the Social Housing (Regulation) Act introducing “Awaab’s Law”.

This policy will undergo a further comprehensive review once Awaab’s Law comes into force in October 2025.

This policy will be referred to the Executive for approval.

2.0 Recommendation to Housing Operations Board

The Housing Operations Board is invited to consider the updated Damp and Mould Policy and pass on any comments to the Council’s Executive.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 As a landlord, the Council is responsible for maintaining the properties it owns and manages in line with the relevant regulations, legislation and guidance. This includes keeping tenant’s homes safe from hazards under the Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) under section 9 of the Housing Act 2004. One of those hazards is identified as damp and mould.

3.2 A Damp and Mould the policy for the Council was published in January 2023. This policy has been reviewed to incorporate changes

following Awaab's Law and the wider Social Housing (Regulations) Act 2023, which became statute April 2024.

- 3.3 The key objective of the policy is to keep residents safe and well, and in so doing provide assurance that the Council is meeting legal and regulatory requirements.
- 3.4 The Housing Ombudsman published a spotlight report on damp and mould on 26 October 2021. The report states that landlords should take a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould and that landlords need to be proactive when addressing damp and mould to improve the experience of tenants. The Ombudsman report was written following a high number of complaints from tenants that certain landlords did not act appropriately to deal with these issues.
- 3.5 The Housing Ombudsman published a severe maladministration report in October 2024 specific to damp and mould – timeliness. The report provides lessons to help prepare for the introduction of Awaab's Law.
- 3.6 Since the publication of the Housing Ombudsman spotlight report and the tragic case of two-year-old Awaab Ishak who died after prolonged exposure to mould in his home, the Government is planning to introduce a tabled amendment to the Social Housing (Regulation Act) which will require landlords to fix reported health hazards within specified timeframes.

4.0 Status of Report

- 4.1 This is an open report.

5.0 Strategic Priorities

- 5.1 This report supports the Council's priorities "Decent and affordable homes" and "A more inclusive Borough" – by identifying residents' needs and shaping services.

6.0 Background

- 6.1 Guildford Borough Council (GBC) is committed to providing effective and efficient services while meeting all legal and contractual obligations.
- 6.2 The Housing Service has commenced a programme of work to review existing housing policies to ensure that housing services are being delivered in line with guidance and legislation, to respond to

internal audit actions, and to provide the service with a firm foundation to deliver effective landlord services.

- 6.3 In December 2020, two-year old Awaab Ishak died from a respiratory condition caused by extensive mould in the one-bedroom flat in Rochdale where he lived with his parents. The failings that led to Awaab's death has highlighted the importance of managing and preventing condensation, damp and mould effectively.
- 6.4 Amendments to the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 introduced 'Awaab's Law'. This requires landlords to fix reported health hazards within prescribed timescales (yet to be confirmed) and provides greater powers to the Regulator of Social Housing to ensure housing providers are managing condensation, damp and mould effectively.

Landlords were already under obligations to ensure the homes they let are free from the hazards created by damp and mould. This includes The Housing Act 2004, The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and the Decent Homes Standard.

Awaab law summary

Summary of Policy

- 6.3 The Council has always been committed to tackling damp and mould in its properties and recognises the serious health implications it may have. This includes respiratory problems or other conditions that impact on the immune system. Damp and mould may also have an impact on mental health if left untreated. To tackle issues and to reduce damp, mould and condensation, the Council delivers a range of planned works to help reduce the risk of damp and mould and the likelihood of condensation occurring.
- 6.4 The key aim of the policy to assist in the delivery of a damp and mould service that will be able to:
- Ensure that tenants are treated in a fair and consistent way.
 - Take a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould.
 - Raise awareness of landlord and tenant responsibilities on damp and mould.
 - Focus on working in partnership with tenants ensuring that a safe and healthy living environment is provided.

- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate damp including managing and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that tenants have access to and/or are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.
- Comply with statutory requirements and good practice in line with the relevant targets for delivering a resolution.
- Maximise the available budgets and ensure that they are used effectively and efficiently to deal with damp and condensation problems.
- Ensure that the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and condensation.
- We will ensure that our teams and our contractors operatives are able to:
 - Spot signs of condensation, damp and mould and understand the causes of these.
 - Carry out preventative maintenance to reduce the occurrence of damp and mould.
- Know our stock and the archetypes of properties that are likely to suffer from damp and mould (e.g. solid wall insulation) and the components in our properties which may cause damp.
- Make sure that appropriate budget levels are assigned to reducing the cause of damp and mould.

6.5 The draft Damp and Mould Policy is attached as (Appendix 1).

7.0 Options

7.1 No alternative options are proposed as the policy is required to meet relevant regulations, legislation and guidance.

8.0 Consultation

8.1 Providing a range of meaningful opportunities for tenants to influence and scrutinise the landlord's strategies, policies, and services is a requirement of the Transparency, Influence, and Accountability Standard.

8.2 The draft policy was shared with TEG members and there were no comments received.

9.0 Key Risks

- 9.1 The highest risk of not acting appropriately on damp and mould is to the health and wellbeing of our tenants and the impact on their living conditions.
- 9.2 There is significant reputational risk if the Council does not act swiftly and appropriately to reports of damp and mould. This policy and monitoring of the policy will allow for this risk to be mitigated.
- 9.3 The adoption of the policy will help mitigate risks around safety in the homes that the Council manages. However, to further mitigate the risks associated with damp and mould it is essential to ensure the policy is appropriately embedded in working practices.
- 9.4 These risks are mitigated by the tracking of performance against key performance indicators. The proposed strategic KPI's for 2025/26 includes two measures relating to damp and mould to ensure there is effective oversight of performance in this service area.

10.0 Legal and Governance Implications

- 10.1 The legal obligations are listed within the policy. The policy has been developed in line with the legal and regulatory requirements.
- 10.2 Failure to discharge our responsibilities and obligations surrounding a hazard such as damp and mould could result in disrepair claims under Homes (Fitness for Human habitation) Act 2018, Defective Premises Act 1972 or Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- 10.3 Failure to comply with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 including Awaab's Law could result in unlimited fines, poor inspection results or imposing other management arrangements to manage social housing.

11.0 Financial Implications

- 11.1 The ongoing application of this policy will be used to inform development of future budget requirements and will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect any other legislative changes.
- 11.2 The implementation of this policy will aid in the reduction in number of and costs associated with disrepair claims and any compensation awarded via the Council's complaint procedure or as ordered by the Housing Ombudsman Service because of failure to address issues reported by tenants about damp and mould within properties.

12.0 Human Resources Implications

Agenda item number: 9

12.1 No implications the policy will be implemented by the existing team

13.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

13.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out and the policy aims to address E & D issues to enable tenants to be safe in their homes and free from damp and mould. Young families, disabled and older residents are more at risk if the policy is not followed.

14.0 Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

14.1 There are no specific implications for Climate Change and Sustainability arising from this report. When addressing issues with damp and mould, and improving insulation and ventilation, this will also improve the energy efficiency of our homes.

15.0 Next Steps

15.1 Once policies are approved, training will be provided to officers.

15.2 The policies will be published on the Council's website.

16.0 Background Papers

16.1 None

17.0 Appendices

17.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Damp and Mould Policy

Report clearance progress:

Finance	Jo Knight	26/02/2025
Legal & Governance	Michael Elford	Under review
Human Resources	Francesca Chapman	27/02/2025
Equalities	Ali Holman	27/02/2025
Strategic Director	Julian Higson	



Damp and Mould Policy for Guildford Borough Council Properties

Document Information

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Governance route: Executive

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Strategic Context.....	3
3. Aim of the Policy	3
4. Definitions.....	4
5. Legislation	4
6. Reporting Damp and Mould.....	4
7. Types of Damp	5
8. The Council’s Responsibilities	6
9. Tenant Responsibilities	7
10. Leaseholders.....	7
11. Reviews and Complaints.....	8
12. Equality and Diversity	8
13. Data Protection and Retention of Information.....	8
14. Review of the Policy.....	8
15. Performance of the Policy	8

DRAFT

1. Introduction

This Policy sets out the activities and responsibilities involved in the control of condensation, damp and mould within Guildford Borough Council's (GBCs) housing stock. The Council aims to provide a consistently high-quality repairs and maintenance service to ensure that properties are well-functioning, habitable and safe.

Condensation and mould in a property are generally caused by a fault with the building (i.e. the landlord's responsibility) or how the building is used by the occupier (i.e. the tenant's responsibility). This policy sets out broadly how the Council will address the issues of damp and condensation, and the resulting mould that occurs. We will work with residents where mould is present to identify the solutions and to resolve the problem.

2. Strategic Context

In October 2021, the Housing Ombudsman published its 'Spotlight on Damp and Mould' report. This report heavily criticised the way a number of social housing landlords have failed to listen to and effectively act upon reports from their tenants and leaseholders about incidents of damp and mould in their homes. The Ombudsman's report makes it clear that social housing providers must adopt a zero-tolerance approach to tackling damp and mould and not to dismiss reports of dampness from their residents as down to 'lifestyle.' This includes taking a more proactive approach when dealing with tenants' complaints about damp.

This reflects the wider principles set out in the Social Housing Regulation Act which seeks to ensure all social housing residents are given a greater voice in how their homes are managed and that their complaints are listened to and dealt with effectively.

Awaab's Law was introduced following the death of Awaab Ishak, who died following extensive exposure to damp and mould in his home. The law focusses specifically on the timescales for landlords to respond to complaints of damp and mould in social housing homes. On 20 July 2023, Awaab's Law entered the statute book through Clause 42 of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act. It effectively inserts into social housing tenancy agreements a term (called an implied term) that will require landlords to comply with new requirements. This is to be set in detail through secondary legislation and will mean all registered providers of social housing (also referred to as 'social landlords') will have to meet these requirements and, if they fail to do so, tenants will be able to hold their landlords to account by taking legal action through the courts for a breach of contract. The government consulted on their proposal in January 2024 and is due to be implemented October 2025.

3. Aim of the Policy

The policy aims to assist in the delivery of a damp and condensation service that will be able to:

- Ensure that tenants are treated in a fair and consistent way.
- Take a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould.

- Raise awareness of landlord and tenant responsibilities on damp and mould.
- Focus on working in partnership with tenants ensuring that a safe and healthy living environment is provided.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate damp including managing and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that tenants have access to and/or are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.
- Comply with statutory requirements and good practice in line with the relevant targets for delivering a resolution.
- Ensure that appropriate budget levels are assigned to reducing the cause of damp and mould.
- Maximise the available budget and ensure it is used effectively and efficiently to deal with damp and condensation problems.
- Ensure that the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and condensation.
- We will ensure that our teams and our contractors operatives are able to:
 - Spot signs of condensation, damp and mould and understand the causes of these.
 - Carry out preventative maintenance to reduce the occurrence of damp and mould.
- Know our stock and the archetypes of properties that are likely to suffer from damp and mould (e.g. solid wall insulation) and the components in our properties which may cause damp and take preventive action
- Complete preventive work during void works e.g. increase ventilation and insulation

4. Definitions

- **Damp** - refers to the presence of excess moisture in a building, typically resulting from either condensation, penetrating damp or rising damp. It can cause damage to buildings and harm the health of occupants if not treated.
- **Mould** - appears as in various colours, often black or yellow. Mould needs to be removed carefully to avoid spreading spores and to prevent it causing ill-health.
- **Landlord** - (or social landlord) for the purpose of this policy the landlord is Guildford Borough Council.
- **Residents** - for the purpose of this policy are Guildford Borough Council tenant.
- **Vulnerable** - (or vulnerability) a resident who has characteristics that mean they are less able to cope with a situation which may impact on their health, safety, or wellbeing, and have an increased need for support.

5. Legislation

The scope of this policy is covered by legislation including the following:

- Housing Act 1985.
- Homes (Fitness for Human habitation) Act 2018.
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 Section 11 - Repairs and Maintenance.
- Housing Act 2004 - Housing Health and Safety Rating.

- Decent Homes Standards.

6. Reporting Damp and Mould

Tenants can report damp and mould by:

- Calling our customer service centre on 01483 505050
- Emailing us at repairs@guildford.gov.uk
- Using the online damp and mould reporting form on our website
- Telling us in person
- Writing to us

Tenants can also get help by visiting our website at www.guildford.gov.uk where they will find information such as:

- How to prevent condensation and mould in their homes
- What to do if they have a mould problem in their home
- How to get rid of mould in their home

7. Types of Damp

The types of damp covered by the policy include rising damp, penetrating damp and condensation damp.

7.1 Rising Damp

This is where there is a movement of moisture from the ground, rising up through the structure of the building through capillary action.

7.2 Penetrating Damp (including internal leaks)

This is where water penetrates the external structure of the building or internal leaks causing damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structure. The cause of this may include:

- Water ingress due to defective or poor original design/workmanship of the structure.
- Defective components, for example roof coverings, external wall doors and windows.
- Defective or blocked rainwater gutters and pipes.
- Defective or leaking internal waste pipes, hot and cold water and heating systems.
- Flooding due to burst pipes.

7.3 Condensation Damp

Condensation occurs when moisture held in warm air comes into contact with a cold surface and then condenses producing water droplets. The building conditions and features that can increase the risk of condensation include:

- Inadequate ventilation, either not in place or not used, for example natural opening windows, trickle vents and mechanical extraction in bathrooms and kitchens.

- Inadequate heating, for example undersized radiators.
- Inadequate thermal insulation, for example defective wall and loft insulation.
- Poor building design and construction, for example specific cold areas (bridging) which are integral with the building construction.
- Defective insulation, for example dislodged insulation in lofts.

The living conditions that can lead to condensation include:

- Lack of ventilation - not opening windows, blocking up vents, not turning on extractor fans, not allowing air to circulate around furniture.
- Lack of adequate heating - not heating the house which can be a result of fuel poverty.
- High humidity - not covering pans when cooking and drying laundry inside the house can contribute to this.
- Lack of space around possessions and storage that prevents air flow through the property.
- Overcrowding.

8. The Council's Responsibilities

We will investigate to determine the cause of damp, mould and condensation carrying out remedial repairs and actions in accordance with the tenancy agreement and in line with best practice and statutory guidelines, including:

- Ensuring that remedial work for the treatment of damp, mould on void properties is undertaken before being let to new tenants.
- Diagnose the cause of damp correctly and deliver effective solutions based on dealing with the cause of the damp not just the symptom.
- Promote and provide general advice and guidance on how to manage damp and condensation.
- Ensuring that the relevant staff are aware of and understand the delivery of the service that will meet the aims of this policy.
- Ensuring competent contractors are employed to carry out any works associated with damp.

We will inform the tenant of the findings of the investigations following the visit. This will include identifying the possible causes of damp, recommending effective solutions, all necessary remedial works, including removing any immediate risk of mould where possible, and the estimated timescale to complete the works.

When the Council is satisfied that, in partnership with the tenant, all reasonable efforts in managing condensation damp has been carried out and this has not been successful, the Council will visit the property and investigate the matter further.

The Council is responsible for maintaining a tenant's home to avoid penetrating and rising damp carrying out remedial action if these do occur. We will undertake reasonable improvement works required to assist in the management and control of condensation

damp through an effective ventilation strategy using mechanical extractor fans or air vents, alongside improving or repairing existing insulation.

Remedial works will only be carried out where it is reasonable and practical to do so. We will have regard to the constraints of the existing building design and structure and will take a pragmatic approach in finding appropriate solutions. In some cases, this may mean that we will need to sell or dispose of the property.

The Council will make good internal surfaces following any remedial work carried out and apply mould resistant paint when redecorating.

The Council will not be able to control condensation damp where it is unreasonable or impractical to do so or if any remedial action would be ineffective for example:

- Poor construction or design (not meeting current construction and living standards) for example, cold bridging areas in the fabric of the building that cannot be eliminated.
- Non habitable rooms, for example out –buildings and sheds that have been converted including linking buildings between the house and outbuilding and other add-on structures.
- Unheated or uninsulated external toilets and storerooms.

We will respond to a report of damp and condensation and complete any remedial works/measures within a reasonable timescale that will be reflective of the statutory requirements and best practices in place. The overall timescale for a solution will be dependent on the problem and the complexity of the solution and the remedial works required.

Where internal conditions within a home, for example as a result of overcrowding or excessive hoarding of personal belongs, are influencing the health and wellbeing of the occupants or are preventing inspections or remedial works being carried out, we will provide support and assistance to review the tenant's options that may include moving to more appropriate alternative suitable accommodation. Effective remedial action could be limited in these instances until the situation(s) has been resolved.

If it is unsafe for the occupants to remain in the property while the works are carried out, alternative accommodation arrangements will be made. This may be on a day-to-day basis or a temporary decant to an alternative property.

In cases where residents have made a claim of Disrepair, we will seek to access the property and put right whatever issues are contributing to the damp and mould while at the same time managing the disrepair case. We write to solicitors acting for our residents telling them not to advise their clients to refuse access as we do not believe doing so is in the interests of the resident and their household. Where this advice is not followed and access still proves to be problematic, we will consider using the options offered within the tenancy conditions to allow us to deliver effective solutions for the resident.

9. Tenant Responsibilities

The tenant's responsibilities include:

- Reporting to the Council evidence of rising and penetrating damp, and faulty equipment that will hamper the management and control of damp and condensation (e.g. faulty extract fan, unable to open windows, lack of heating etc).
- Regularly checking for mould and clean signs of mould as soon as they are discovered.
- Allowing access for inspections and for the carrying out of remedial works.

Tenants are asked to manage condensation damp by reducing the conditions that lead to condensation damp by:

- Keeping the presence of moisture to a minimum, for example covering pans when cooking, drying laundry outside, keeping the kitchen or bathroom door closed when cooking or bathing.
- Adequately heating rooms and keeping humidity between 40-60%. The average recommended temperatures should be maintained at around 20°C, bedrooms around 16-19°C, corridors around 15-18°C
- Keeping the house well ventilated, for example opening windows when, or after, cooking/bathing, turning on and ensuring that the extractor fan is working if applicable, keeping trickle vents in windows open, and allowing air to circulate around furniture.

If an inspection by the Council shows that all reasonable measures are in place for the tenant to adequately manage the condensation damp, further advice and support will be given to the tenant.

10. Leaseholders

Leaseholders shall manage and maintain their properties, including damp and condensation, in accordance with their lease agreement. The Council do not carry out damp and condensation remedial works to leasehold properties unless covered by the lease or the cause of the damp and mould is linked to the fabric of the building.

Any neglect by the leaseholder to manage or carry out repairs for which they are responsible for, and where this has a direct impact on the condition of a Council owned property, will be dealt with in accordance with the lease.

11. Reviews and Complaints

Any person who is not satisfied with how the Council or its contractor(s) have delivered the service they have received has the right to have their case investigated and should follow the Council's complaint policy & procedure.

12. Equality and Diversity

We will treat all customers and staff with fairness and respect. We value diversity and work to promote equality and tackle unlawful discrimination.

We are committed to helping customers to access information about their homes and services in a way that suits individual needs.

We are committed to welcoming and valuing diversity, promoting equality of opportunity and tackling unlawful discrimination. We will not discriminate against staff, customers or others based on their sex, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, race, religion, belief, disability or age collectively referred to as protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.

The Council aims to provide homes and services that meet the diverse needs of customers. We believe that all customers should be able to access housing, support and care services with the same ease and that the quality of our service is the same high standard for all.

13. Data Protection and Retention of Information

All information will be handled in accordance with the requirements of General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018. The handling and storage of personal data will be managed and stored in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and our Record Retention Disposal Schedule.

14. Review of the Policy

We will review this policy annually or when there are changes to legislation or statutory codes of practice. New guidance is expected late summer 2025 to adhere to Awaab's law. The policy will be updated at that time when full details and requirements are clear.

15. Performance of the Policy

The implementation of this Policy will be measured and monitored in a number of ways, including a quarterly report against key performance indicators, which is reviewed by the Senior Management Team.

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Guildford Borough Council

Report to:	Housing Operations Board
Date:	12 March 2025
Ward(s) affected:	All
Report of Strategic Director of:	Housing, Communities & Environment
Report Author:	Annalisa Howson, Assistant Director of Housing
Email:	annalisa.howson@guildford.gov.uk
Lead Executive Member:	Cllr Julia McShane
Email:	Julia.McShane@guildford.gov.uk
Status:	Open
Key decision:	No

Draft Planned Maintenance Policy

1.0 Executive Summary

This report introduces the draft Planned Maintenance policy which will be referred to the Executive for approval. The policy sets out the approach to the organisation of planned works and how such investment will be delivered to tenants and leaseholders in relation to the Council's responsibilities within the terms of the lease.

2.0 Recommendation to Housing Operations Board

The Housing Operations Board is invited to consider the Housing Planned Maintenance Policy and pass on any comments to the Council's Executive.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 To ensure that the Housing Service has a documented planned maintenance policy to ensure major repairs are planned, implemented and managed effectively.

4.0 Status of Report

4.1 This is an open report.

5.0 Strategic Priorities

5.1 This report supports the Council's priorities "Decent and Affordable homes" and "A more inclusive Borough" – by maintaining the

quality and components of the housing portfolio and identifying residents' needs and shaping services.

6.0 Background

6.1 Guildford Borough Council (GBC) is committed to providing effective and efficient services while meeting all legal and contractual obligations.

6.2 The Housing Service has commenced a programme of work to review existing housing policies to ensure that housing services are being delivered in line with guidance and legislation, to respond to internal audit actions, and to provide the service with a firm foundation to deliver effective landlord services.

Summary of Policy

6.3 This policy links to the longer-term management of current and future investment requirements that are set out within the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and the emerging Housing Asset Management Strategy

6.4 The purpose of this policy is to outline our approach to the way we plan, implement, and manage major repairs and improvements in properties under the management of Guildford Borough Council.

6.5 The policy aims to ensure that the long-term investment provides sustainability and of our properties whilst providing a safe and comfortable living environment for residents is in accordance with current and emerging legislation and meets regulatory requirements.

6.6 Underpinning the policy is to work with all residents when planned works are being organised to the homes that they live by effective and meaningful consultation throughout all stages of the proposed works.

6.7 The draft Planned Maintenance Policy is attached as (Appendix 1).

7.0 Options

7.1 No other options were considered as this report is to seek approval on the new and reviewed policies to meet legislative and regulatory requirements.

8.0 Consultation

8.1 Providing a range of meaningful opportunities for tenants to influence and scrutinise the landlord's strategies, policies, and services is a requirement of the Transparency, Influence, and Accountability Standard.

8.2 Consultation with TEG members on the Planned Maintenance Policy yielded positive feedback, highlighting the clarity and comprehensibility of the policy.

8.3 There were no further comments on the policy.

9.0 Key Risks

9.1 If the policy is not adequately communicated and implemented, it can lead to incorrect application, financial loss, and reputational damage on individual cases.

10.0 Legal and Governance Implications

10.1 The legal obligations are listed within the policy. The policy has been developed in line with the legal and regulatory requirements.

11.0 Financial Implications

11.1 Any expenditure arising would be met through the established capital programme budget.

12.0 Human Resources Implications

12.1 There are no human resource implications

13.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

13.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out and there no implications arising from this policy. However, we will incorporate any adjustments to meet residents needs with communication and planning works.

14.0 Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

14.1 There are no implications for Climate Change and Sustainability arising from this policy. There are no specific implications for Climate Change and Sustainability arising from this report. When setting the planned works programmes we will include heating insulation to improve the energy efficiency of our homes.

15.0 Next Steps

Agenda item number: 10

15.1 Once policies are approved, procedures will be finalised, and training will be provided to officers.

15.2 The policies will be published on the Council's website.

16.0 Background Papers

16.1 None

17.0 Appendices

17.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Planned Maintenance Policy

Report clearance progress:

Finance	Jo Knight	26/02/2025
Legal & Governance	Michael Elford	Under review
Human Resources	Francesca Chapman	27/02/2025
Equalities	Ali Holman	27/02/2025
Strategic Director	Julian Higson	



Guildford Borough Council Housing Services Planned Maintenance Policy

Document Information

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Policy Service Owner: Technical Services

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Table of Contents

1. Purpose -----3

2. Scope and exclusions -----3

3. Policy statement -----3

4. Legislation and regulation -----4

5. Monitoring and controls -----4

6. Related documents -----5

7. Communication -----5

8. Development and Review -----5

9. Monitoring -----6

10. Reviews and Complaints -----6

11. Equality and Diversity -----6

12. Data Protection and Retention of Information -----7

DRAFT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline our approach to the way we plan, implement, and manage major repairs and improvements in properties under the management of Guildford Borough Council. It aims to ensure the long-term sustainability, safety, and functionality of our properties whilst providing a safe and comfortable living environment for residents.

2. Scope and exclusions

2.1 This policy applies to all residential properties owned or managed by Guildford Borough Council which require major repairs or improvement.

2.2 The scope includes structural repairs, renovation projects, infrastructure upgrades, component replacements including kitchens, bathrooms, doors, windows, roofs, and other significant planned maintenance activities.

2.3 It excludes work for which another owner, freeholder, leaseholder or tenant, is responsible. Refer to the terms of the relevant agreement/contract.

2.4 Unplanned, responsive repair work and work in vacant properties is also undertaken by the Council to deal with newly identified and immediate needs. While this may cross over in some cases with planned work and can even inform major work programmes, it is not the subject of this policy, which focuses on programmed work.

3. Policy statement

3.1 Needs Assessment and Planning

Guildford Borough Council will conduct regular needs assessments to identify properties requiring major repairs or improvements. This assessment may include inspections, surveys, and input from relevant stakeholders, including residents, and be informed by our stock condition survey. Based on the assessment, a five, ten, and 30-year forward maintenance plan will be developed, outlining the priority of replacements and improvements, and estimated costs.

3.2 Budget Allocation

The Council will define the Capital Budget allocating a specific budget for major repairs and improvements. The budget will be determined based on available funds, the urgency and scope of projects, and long-term planning considerations. It will be reviewed and adjusted as part of the regular budgetary process. This is linked to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and the medium-term financial strategy that sets out the housing capital programme delivery requirements over a five year period.

3.3 Contractor Selection and Procurement

A transparent and competitive process will be followed for selecting qualified contractors to perform major repair and improvement work. This process may involve requesting proposals, evaluating bids, assessing contractor qualifications, and ensuring compliance with relevant regulations and licensing requirements. Guildford Borough Council will adhere to procurement legislation, policies and ethical guidelines in contractor selection.

3.4 Project Management

The Council will appoint a dedicated Stock Investment and Asset Management team to plan and oversee major repair and improvement projects. They will be responsible for coordinating with contractors, monitoring project progress, ensuring quality control, and managing the budget and timelines. Regular updates and communication channels will be established to keep stakeholders informed throughout the lifecycle of the Capital Budget and Programme.

3.5 Leaseholder Contributions

Leaseholders are required to pay for services, management and major works provided to the building and estate where their property is situated, and part of our role is to consult and collect these charges where applicable. In this regard we will follow the legislation and Section 20 requirements in conjunction with our major work and Service charge collection procedure.

4. Legislation and regulation

4.1. This policy is governed by many regulations and statutory law. They set out the duties that need to be undertaken to provide a repairs and maintenance service. They include (but are not limited to):

- Construction, Design Management 2015 (as amended)
- Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Building Safety Act 2023
- Social Housing Act 2023
- Public Health Act 1963
- Housing Act 1985
- Home Standard 2015
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities Regulations
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Fire Reform Regulations 2005
- The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- Guidance specifically the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (as amended)
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended)
- Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 2018 (as amended)

4.2 All major repair and improvement work will comply with applicable building codes, health and safety regulations, environmental guidelines, and other relevant standards. The Council will ensure that contractors appointed for such projects also adhere to these requirements. Necessary permits and approvals will be obtained before commencing any work.

5. Monitoring and controls

5.1 Quality Assurance and Inspection

Quality assurance measures will be implemented throughout major repair and improvement projects to ensure compliance with specifications, standards, and contractual obligations. Regular inspections will be conducted by qualified personnel to verify the quality of work, identify any deficiencies, and take corrective actions when necessary.

5.2 Project Evaluation and Documentation

Upon completion of major repair and improvement projects, an evaluation exercise will be conducted to assess the outcomes, identify lessons learned, and best practice. This information will contribute to future planning and decision-making processes, ensuring continuous improvement in our maintenance practices.

6. Related documents

Related documents include but are not limited to:

- Rechargeable work policy
- Repairs policy
- Service Charge policy
- Major Work and service charge collection procedure
- Resident Engagement framework

7. Communication

7.1 The Council will engage and communicate with affected stakeholders, including tenants and leaseholders, to provide timely information about major repair and improvement projects. This is in line with our Tenant engagement strategy and will include statutory and non-statutory consultation. We will consider feedback and concerns during the planning and implementation stages and will make efforts to do all that we reasonably can to minimise disruptions and inconvenience.

7.2 Complaints regarding the implementation of this policy will be handled in line with our Corporate Complaints Policy.

7.3 This policy will be published on our website, and our internal intranet for easy access by staff.

7.4 We will provide training for staff on the implementation of this policy, including contract management.

8. Development and Review

8.1 Whilst this policy has been newly developed, it clarifies existing arrangements that are already in place. As part of the development of this policy we considered what we were already working to in terms of relevant legislation, our statutory duties, contractual obligations, and best practice.

8.2 This policy, and the procedures that implement it, will be periodically reviewed to assess their effectiveness, incorporate lessons learned – including wider learning, and alignment with evolving legislation, regulations, and industry standards. Feedback from stakeholders and our staff will be used to inform updates and improvements.

8.3 An Equality assessment was undertaken as part of the development of this policy. Relevant comms and tailored services will be provided to meet residents needs for e.g. translation services, consider disruption

of works to old, young and those disabled. It acknowledged that individual projects that are undertaken in line with this policy will have their impact assessed at the point of implementation.

9. Monitoring

9.1 In order to ensure the policy is effective and delivering the intended impact, it will be monitored using Key Performance Indicator's (KPI's) in line with Guildford Borough Council's Policy Framework.

9.2 Furthermore, in line with the Guildford Borough Council's Policy Framework, this policy is scheduled to be reviewed every 3 years, unless due to a change in Government legislation or regulatory requirements, the review period will be brought forward to ensure compliance.

9.3 Input and approval will be sought from our residents (via the Tenants Engagement Group) prior to making any substantive changes.

10. Reviews and Complaints

10.1 Any individual who is dissatisfied with the service experienced should be encouraged to provide feedback. Complaints regarding the implementation of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's corporate Customer Complaints Policy and associated procedures.

11. Equality and Diversity

11.1 Guildford Borough Council is committed to equal and fair treatment of all sections of the community. Accordingly, no person will be discriminated against during the implementation of this policy on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

11.2 We are committed to helping customers to access information about their homes and services in a way that suits individual needs.

11.3 The council aims to provide homes and services that meet the diverse needs of customers. We believe that all customers should be able to access housing, support, and care services with the same ease and that the quality of our service is the same high standard for all.

11.4 In delivering this policy, the Council's staff will comply fully with the requirements of the Council's Equalities and Human Rights Policy.

11.5 In order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, an equality impact analysis (EIA) was completed as part of the policy review. Upon completing the EIA, it was found that the implementation of the policy would support and encourage the aims of the public sector duty.

12. Data Protection and Retention of Information

12.1 All information will be handled in accordance with the requirements of General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018. The handling and storage of personal data will be managed and stored in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and our Record Retention Disposal Schedule.

Housing Operations Board Work Programme 2025/26

Date	Item	Additional Information	Relevant Lead HOB Member	Lead Officer
12-Mar-25	Standing Items	Regular updates and monitoring items		Annalisa Howson
	Policies to be discussed	Policies to be reviewed prior to approval by Executive : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned Maintenance • Housing Aids & Adaptations • Damp & Mould 		Meena Lota and Ernie Gray
	Housing Improvement Plan refresh	Update on the refreshed plan including HQN feedback		Jo Holt
Page 159	Feedback from Tenant Engagement Group	Feedback on housing-related initiatives [VERBAL UPDATE]	TEG Lead	TEG lead / Conor
	Housing Strategy & Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Strategy	Progress and update on key strategies and presentation [VERBAL UPDATE]		Helen Steward
	New KPI Sign Off	Discussion proposed new KPIs		Meena Lota
14-May-25	Standing Items	Regular updates and monitoring items		Annalisa Howson
	Policies to be discussed	Policies to be reviewed prior to approval by Executive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disrepair • ASB & Hate Crime 		Meena Lota

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repairs 		
	Housing Improvement Plan Update	Progress update		Jo Holt
	Feedback from Tenant Engagement Group	Feedback on housing-related initiatives		TEG lead / Conor
	Review of Current Housing Strategy Progress	Progress update on strategy		Helen Steward
	Capital Programme	Explanation of planned works		
	Resident Engagement & Building Safety Strategies	Review and sign-off of engagement strategies		
09-Jul-25	Standing Items	Regular updates and monitoring items		Annalisa Howson
	Policies to be discussed	Policies to be reviewed prior to approval by Executive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mutual Exchange Compensation Reimbursement Mobility Scooters 		Meena Lota
	Housing Improvement Plan Update	Progress update		

	Feedback from Tenant Engagement Group	Feedback on housing-related initiatives		
	Q1 2025/26 KPI Reporting	Review of Q1 performance metrics		
	Annual HRA Business Plan Review	Review and updates on HRA business plan		
	Decent Homes Standard Compliance Update	Progress report on compliance		
24-Sep-25	Standing Items	Regular updates and monitoring items		
	Performance Monitoring Q2 2025/26 KPI Reporting	Review of Q2 performance metrics		
	Policies to be discussed	Policies to be reviewed prior to approval by Executive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Abuse • Estate Management 		Meena Lota
	Housing Improvement Plan Update	Progress update		
	Feedback from Tenant Engagement Group	Feedback on housing-related initiatives		

	Progress on the Stock Condition Survey	Update on survey findings		
19-Nov-25	Standing Items	Regular updates and monitoring items		
	Policies to be discussed	Policies to be reviewed prior to approval by Executive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voids • Leasehold Management 		Meena Lota
	Housing Improvement Plan Update	Progress update		
	Feedback from Tenant Engagement Group	Feedback on housing-related initiatives		
	Additional Key Items	TBD		