

Housing Compliance Regulatory Standards

Purpose of the Report

1. To update members of the Housing, Environment and Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on outcomes of the Regulatory Standards self-assessment and ongoing governance arrangements for the monitoring and reporting of progress to ensure compliance against our action plan.
2. In addition to this report, Members are asked to note the following attachment:
 - Appendix 1- Progress to date against Regulatory Standards self-assessment

Background

3. The Regulatory Standards action plan was shared at the joint HE&HC OSC and Strategic Housing Board (SHB) workshop on 30 September 2021. Progress updates will be reported to OSC commencing October 2021.
4. OSC members requested the Action Plan to be circulated, prior to the meeting to enable sufficient lead time ahead of the next meeting to be able to digest the information and prepare any questions. The action plan relates to four Consumer Standards: the Home Standard; Tenancy Standard; Neighborhood and Community Standard; and Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard, plus the Rent Standard.
5. Following completion of a Self-Assessment exercise in March 2021, the four Consumer Standards and Rent standard (appendix 1) identified which areas of each standard were designated 'good', 'satisfactory' or 'requires improvement'. This provided a current position statement including evidence of compliance and identified specific areas for improvement, in order to become fully compliant with the respective standards.
6. To strengthen this process, Service Managers carried out peer reviews of each of the standards' self-assessments, to ensure a rigorous and independent approach was applied. We achieved a 65% average compliance score across the four Consumer Standards and Rent Standard.
7. As a social housing landlord, Gateshead Council must ensure that it is fully compliant with all aspects of the existing Regulatory Standards and that we have robust governance arrangements in place to provide assurance and scrutiny. To support compliance, a Regulatory Standards action plan has been developed, which sets out the necessary actions to achieve full compliance for the outstanding 35% (which relate to 82 key actions).

8. The role of the Regulator is to intervene where failure to meet the Consumer Standards has caused, or could have caused, serious harm to tenants. These apply to all registered providers including local authorities. In preparation, landlords must focus on repairs, redress and respect, which are all essential elements to building or re-building trust.
9. We are proactively progressing areas of improvement. 41 outstanding actions have commenced and a further 30 actions are now complete. A broad range of activity has been carried out, or is underway, which includes a multitude of engagement with customers, tenants, leaseholders and partner organisations, with Housing Improvement Project teams set up working with and alongside specialist consultants, performing dedicated service reviews, with the necessary strategies and improvement plans being developed. Many strategies have now been developed but will take time to become fully embedded.

Progress reported since the last meeting:

10. Tenancy Standard

- Allocations Policy is being drafted with the support of external consultants Campbell Tickell. Project team established with the Project working group reviewing the policy document. Expectations regarding under-occupation are also being captured within the draft Tenancy Strategy
- A Tenancy Strategy is now drafted, with consultation in the planning stages as part of the Homelessness and Allocations Review Project
- The Tenancy Management Policy has also been developed, which will be presented at the next Core Project Team for consultation
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been agreed by Cabinet and is ready for launch.
- Homelessness Forum and Providers Partnership now established
- Cabinet have approved marketplace development and a Gateshead Choice Based Lettings model

11. Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

- **'You said, we did'** survey feedback was added to council website February 2022 to share our learning and actions with customers
- Council Complaints Policy is now compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's new Complaints Handling Code; and was approved by Cabinet November 2021
- New Tenant Engagement Framework and Strategy was approved by Cabinet in March 2022. Any complaints we receive will be shared with the Resident Influence Panel (RIP) and will help inform future scrutiny reviews
- RIP is holding monthly meetings and started looking at Service Standards/local offers in March. Agreed to begin looking at producing an Annual Report and set up a focus group from the Resident Voice pool
- In March, the Resident Influence Panel agreed that some Service Standards will be reviewed as part of the broader Housing Improvement Programme (HIP). Project Leads will be asked to discuss and agree with the Panel how tenants are to be engaged. Service Standards that sit outside HIP will be reviewed individually; starting with Investment work this month
- As part of the new Performance Framework a target has been set, '% of tenant profiles verified'. The self-service option has been updated via Northgate Housing system on customers MyHousing accounts, to enable them to update and manage their personal information and preferences
- Work has begun in setting up a Multi-Storey Safety Group, to recruit members to ensure actively hold us to account in accordance with the Building Safety Act

12. Home Standard

- New Asset Management Strategy and 5-year and 30-year HRA capital programme budget approved by Cabinet in February 2022. Work underway to populate 5-year programme with planned schemes
- Regulatory Notice for breach of Home Standard (Voluntary Undertaking) - signed off and removed
- Repairs & Maintenance Prototype about to be developed. Project team established in December 2021, conducting analysis of data, case-mapping and fieldwork within the R&M service
- Consultation planned late Spring on proposal to install level access showers in bungalows and flats to reduce the number of medical shower installations going forward
- Option appraisal work completed on three unsustainable assets. Decommissioning approved February 2022
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to be formally included into the stock condition surveying process from April 2022
- New Schedule of Rates introduced to support the business planning process, will be implemented from April 2022

13. Neighbourhood and Community Standard

- New Service Manager (Housing and Neighbourhood Services) appointed - Thomas Sutton. He will begin to review the actions and priorities for the service moving forward to ensure compliance.

14. Rent Standard

- For all new stock a market value, market rent and 1999 value will be provided to enable the formula rent to be maintained; this is an ongoing process.

15. Delivery and accountability continue to be strengthened through the creation of the Strategic Housing Board, supported by a Resident Influence Panel and transformational Housing Improvement Programme workstreams. Complemented by a new Corporate Performance Management Framework and suite of Performance Indicators.

16. Recommendations:

Members of OSC are requested to note the Regulatory Standards action plan and progress to date and provide robust challenge against progress, particularly for areas which 'require improvement' that presently fail to fully meet the required criteria of the specific Regulatory Standard.

Contact: Marie John ext 7795

Appendix 1 - Progress to date against Regulatory Standards self-assessment

Tenancy Standard

Actions identified following self-assessment	Areas where improvement still required	Key progress to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthened Strategic Housing Function - complete ▪ Review of Allocations Policy/Process and Strategic Tenancy Policy - underway and consulting on ▪ Review of Homelessness - complete ▪ Voids Review – Pennington Choices - complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic Housing Needs ▪ Overall need to improve services/choices for under-occupiers and make better use of our stock ▪ We need to improve our response and offer to statutory overcrowding cases ▪ Time empty between letting ▪ Terms of occupation ▪ Tenancy Management Strategy and Policy provision needs to be clear and accessible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allocations Policy being drafted. Project team established with working group reviewing the policy document. Expectations regarding under-occupation are being included within the draft Tenancy Strategy ▪ Tenancy Strategy now drafted, consultation to be planned as part of Homelessness and Allocations Review Project ▪ Tenancy Management Policy also drafted to go to Core Project Team for consultation ▪ Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy agreed by Cabinet and ready for launch. Homelessness Forum and providers partnership now established ▪ Cabinet have approved marketplace development and a Gateshead Choice Based Lettings model

Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

Actions identified following self-assessment	Areas where improvement still required	Key progress to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Voluntary Undertaking and Pennington Assessment - Regulatory Notice removed -complete ▪ 5-year £104 million planned investment -approved ▪ New HRA Asset Management Strategy approved by Cabinet - complete ▪ R&M Service Improvement Plan with external support – in progress ▪ Proposed launch of a new Gateshead HIA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Achieving 100% Decent Homes Compliance ▪ Value for Money R&M Services ▪ Reduction in no-access rate for stock Surveying programme and target remains for 100% by 2023 ▪ Drafting of website content underway - will include information on progress and engagement opportunities ▪ Planned engagement with SHB, Members and residents about future planned works, programme development and the development of Energy Schemes - focus on Butterfly properties and South Sherburn bungalows ▪ Enhancements suggested by Pennington Choices as part of Review of Housing Disrepair defence process, are being developed by Phil Hogg and Simon Chrisp ahead of implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New Asset Management Strategy and 5-year and 30-year HRA capital programme budget approved by Cabinet February 2022. Work underway to populate 5-year programme with planned schemes ▪ Repairs & Maintenance Prototype about to be developed. Project team established in December 2021, conducting analysis of data, case-mapping and fieldwork within the R&M service ▪ Consultation planned late Spring on proposal to install level access showers in bungalows and flats to reduce the number of medical shower installations going forward ▪ Option appraisal work completed on three unsustainable assets Decommissioning approved Feb 2022

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Neighbourhood and Community Standard

Actions identified following self-assessment	Areas where improvement still required	Key progress to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New locality-based delivery model – in development ▪ Development of local planning partnerships ▪ New RP & Private Landlords Partnership Bodies - complete ▪ Planned review of ASB –commenced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Neighbourhood Policy ▪ ASB ▪ Local Partnership Arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New Service Manager (Housing and Neighbourhood Services) appointed - Thomas Sutton. He will begin to review the actions and priorities for the service moving forward. ▪ Strategy and Partnerships Officer appointed, to lead strategy and policy development, including a policy for maintaining and improving neighbourhoods ▪ Review of ASB has begun which will include engagement with customers. Community Safety Board and Strategic Housing Board agreed review framework. ▪ Review of Multi-storeys has started which will also include engagement with customers ▪ All reviews currently underway will inform how we move forward with improving and maintaining neighbourhoods

Rent Standard

Actions identified following self-assessment	Areas where improvement still required	Key progress to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ System Review – More automation and flags	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Affordable Rents – System checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Meeting taken place with property services (valuers) and the rent and income team to discuss the process for updating affordable rented property rental values and also obtaining the 1999 formula rent as they become void. This will mean an incremental approach to the existing affordable stock. This is an ongoing process.▪ For all new stock a market value, market rent and 1999 value will be provided to enable the formula rent to be maintained

