

Cheltenham Borough Council Cabinet Housing Committee

Meeting date: 13 November 2024

Meeting time: 6.00 pm

Meeting venue: Council Chamber - Municipal Offices

Membership:

Councillor Flo Clucas, Councillor Jan Foster, Councillor Richard Pineger, Councillor Julian Tooke and Councillor Suzanne Williams

Ian Mason (Tenant Representative), Bozena Tarnawska (Leaseholder Representative) and Agnieszka Wisniewska (Tenant Representative)

Important notice – filming, recording and broadcasting of Council meetings

This meeting will be recorded by the council for live broadcast online at www.cheltenham.gov.uk and <https://www.youtube.com/@cheltenhambc/streams>. The Chair will confirm this at the start of the meeting.

If you participate in the meeting, you consent to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for broadcasting and/or training purposes.

If you have any questions on the issue of filming/recording of meetings, please contact Democratic Services.

Contact: democraticservices@cheltenham.gov.uk

Phone: 01242 264 246

1 Apologies

2 Declarations of interest

3 Public and Member Questions

4 Minutes of the last meeting (Pages 3 - 12)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2024.

5 CEO Briefing (Verbal)

**6 Property Compliance Performance and stock condition project update
(Pages 13 - 36)**

**7 Quarter 2 2024 - 25 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Tracker Update
(Pages 37 - 78)**

**8 Quarter 2 2024 - 25 Housing Complaints and Compliments Report (Pages 79
- 94)**

9 Fencing, Hedgerow & Boundary Policy (Pages 95 - 120)

10 Strategic Housing Risk Register (Pages 121 - 126)

11 Updates from the Tenant and Leaseholder Panels (Pages 127 - 128)

12 Review of the Housing Committee Forward Plan (Pages 129 - 134)

13 Items to be referred to Cabinet

14 Briefing Note - Housing Sector Insight (Pages 135 - 144)

Cabinet Housing Committee Minutes

Meeting date: 25 September 2024

Present:

Councillors:

Flo Clucas, Jan Foster, Richard Pineger, Julian Tooke and Suzanne Williams

Cooptees:

Ian Mason and Agnieszka Wisniewska

Also in attendance:

Councillors:

Rowena Hay

Gemma Bell (Director of Finance and Assets and Deputy S151 Officer), Gareth Edmundson (Chief Executive), Dean Epton (Interim Service Improvement Lead), Claire Hughes (Director of Governance and Customer Services and Monitoring Officer), Martin Stacy (Housing Strategy and Partnerships Manager), Caroline Walker (Head of Customer Services) and Rhian Watts (Democracy Officer)

1 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Objective: To elect the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, to serve until the next local election in 2026.

Councillor Tooke was nominated by Councillor Clucas and was elected as Chair of the Committee.

Councillor Tooke commented that the Committee will be redefining and improving how it considers housing over the next year. He explained that it was important that the Committee acts separately from CBC to provide independent scrutiny on how housing is managed. He highlighted that it was vital to remember that the work carried out is not about buildings, it's about homes and the people who live in them.

Councillor Pineger was nominated by Councillor Tooke and was elected as Vice-Chair of the Committee.

2 Apologies

No apologies received.

3 Declarations of interest

Councillor Pineger declared a related party interest as his wife is employed as the Health and Wellbeing Co-Ordinator for the west of Cheltenham by the Springbank Centre.

It was confirmed that being a tenant of a CBC owned property is not considered a conflict of interest.

4 Public and Member Questions

There were none.

5 Regulator for Social Housing - Consumer Standards Update

Objective: To provide a high-level overview of compliance with the Regulator's Consumer Standards and the development of an Improvement Plan to resolve areas of non-compliance.

The Chief Executive addressed the Committee and explained that Cheltenham Borough Homes had managed the Council's social housing for the past two decades and from the outside had appeared to be a high performing, well-functioning organisation as confirmed by an external review carried out in 2021. He confirmed that the decision to bring housing services back into the Council was to ensure they had direct management of safety and compliance in light of the new regulatory regime. As part of the transfer an extensive due diligence exercise had been carried out which had revealed areas of improvement needed, particularly in relation to health, safety and compliance. He highlighted that whilst hundreds of dedicated officers have worked tirelessly on trying to maintain and look after housing stock, we are not able to evidence our compliance and the decision had been made to self-refer to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) on what improvements are needed and how they will be addressed. He explained that we currently cannot demonstrate 100% compliance on the Safety and Quality Standard in some properties and expressed the Council's apologies to the tenants living in these homes. The Chief Executive gave his complete assurance that the organisation takes matters of health, safety and compliance and providing good, decent safe homes very seriously and stressed that significant action is already being taken to address these areas. He highlighted that the Council's collective aim, with the support and oversight of the Committee, is to deliver excellent homes and be an exemplar housing provider to the sector that continues to improve the services delivered and provide people with well maintained, safe and compliant homes.

The Head of Community Services provided the Committee with a presentation that outlined CBC's position against the four Consumer Standards. She confirmed that an Improvement Plan had been developed and progress would be reported to the Committee at future meetings.

The Committee's discussion raised the following points:

- The importance of the Committee seeing the evidence behind the compliance with the Consumer Standards supported by clear explanations.
- Work to collate all people and property data onto the QL system is ongoing. In preparation for the stock condition surveys commencing the infrastructure has been built to allow automatic collation of the survey results. The appointment of a specialist resource will be proposed at the next Appointments and Remuneration Committee meeting to address both system and people barriers in the use of QL and ensure the system is being used to its' full potential. A significant piece of work is also being carried out to ensure both existing data and future data is stored efficiently so we can evidence compliance.
- On estates where non-Council owned homes sit alongside Council owned properties issues will be managed by the Council for leasehold properties where the Council is effectively responsible for maintenance of the block. Whilst the Council does not hold the same responsibility or authority over individual privately owned homes, issues can be managed through appropriate departments within the Council depending on the specific circumstances.
- During the planned review of the Tenant Handbook we need to ensure that the document is readable, accessible and easy to understand. It should lay out both our responsibilities to tenants and their responsibilities in line with the Consumer Standards. To support tenants who are not literate or who do not have English as a first language consideration should be given to the provision of an audio version or translated versions.

6 Quarter 1 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Tracker Update

Objective: Feedback and insight from the quarter 1 phone surveys with tenants carried out on behalf of CBC by Acuity. These surveys provide our results for the perception based Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

The Head of Community Services presented the report to the Committee and explained that it would be shared quarterly. She highlighted that performance is strong, with the Council being benchmarked in quartile one due to satisfaction above 80% in time taken to carry out repairs, keeping tenants informed and treating tenants fairly and with respect. She noted that areas for improvement had been identified with how we communicate our listening and acting to tenants, our management of anti-social behaviour (ASB), complaints handling and the maintenance and cleaning of communal areas. She explained that in the case of ASB and complaints handling those surveyed may not have used the service being reviewed and that an additional

transactional survey would be launched in October to balance our understanding of the perception with lived experiences.

The Committee's discussion raised the following points:

- All customers who express dissatisfaction are followed up with a personal conversation that aims to resolve their concerns and change their perception of how we listen and act to their feedback. Work is also being undertaken with the Comms team to highlight the actions carried out through 'You Said, We Did' features in our tenant magazine.
- Communal areas are a fundamental part of tenants' homes. A tenant scrutiny activity has been carried out on the maintenance and cleaning of these areas and a number of recommendations have been made, which alongside the survey feedback will form a multi-team project. The Committee will review progress of this work in the future.
- The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) also recognises the importance of communal areas and this is reflected in the regulations where an issue in a communal area is reported as an issue per each home accessing that area.
- Work in communal areas is primarily managed by UBICO and a strong client-contractor relationship is maintained with regular meetings. UBICO have generally been responsive to areas of concern raised.
- Some concerns about communal areas relate to design issues rather than service issues, for example with bin storage areas. It is hoped that the efficiencies in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) achieved through bringing CBH back in-house will enable the Council to re-invest using the feedback that the surveys provide.
- ASB has been identified as a priority issue for both tenants and the Council. It is important that this is addressed through partnership working. A Community Safety Partnership has met which is built of key organisations including the Council and the Police. A proposal around management of ASB as a tenure neutral service to improve our offer to all Cheltenham residents is being developed.
- It was agreed that it would benefit Cabinet and Committee Members to visit estates to understand the areas and issues being discussed.
- Tenants need to be assured that they have a right to live in clean, well maintained and decent homes and communities. It is important that a welcoming culture is developed to ensure they feel empowered to raise issues and provide feedback. One of the Council's key commitments is to build a culture within the organisation that is people driven without judgement and provides a welcoming communal offer.

Councillor Jan Foster joined the meeting

7 Quarter 1 2024 - 25 Housing Complaints and Compliments Report

Objective: To provide an overview of housing related complaints and compliments from quarter 1, identifying key areas of dissatisfaction and areas for learning and service improvement.

The Head of Community Services introduced the report and confirmed that the self-assessment carried out in June against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code had been approved by the Housing Ombudsman. She noted that the national profile of complaints is still leading to an upwards trend with 71 complaints received during the quarter, the majority of which had been upheld. In addition, progress has been made in partnership with the courts at redirecting disrepair claims to the internal complaints process, ensuring that where tenants receive compensation they are able to benefit rather than losing money to solicitors. She highlighted that complaints were seen by colleagues as learning opportunities rather than criticism and viewed positively within the organisation. This will be further supported by the introduction of transactional surveys in October. Main areas of concern mirror those seen in the perception surveys, focusing on communal areas and tenant communication. A Stage 2 panel review has also been completed.

The Committee's discussion raised the following points:

- Following feedback from the Housing Ombudsman a Stage 2 panel will consist of a senior member of staff with the Cabinet Member for Housing kept informed as they are also the Member responsible for complaints.

8 Property Compliance Healthcheck

Objective: To provide the Committee with an understanding of our property compliance status as of 31 July 2024 and the planned improvements needed to address areas of non-compliance. Appendix ii provides an additional information relating to the management of fire safety.

The Interim Service Improvement Lead provided the Committee with the following verbal update:

- Review carried out on the out-of-date fire risk actions. Some are recommendations rather than actions, which have now been removed from the main list to allow focus to be maintained on the priority actions. These recommendations will be considered again once this work has been completed. This has reduced the number of actions to 139 within three strategic areas:
 - o 74 outstanding actions relating to fire doors and windows, down from 89 – contracts are now in place and surveys started to address these replacements and repairs. Demand in the sector is still providing challenging lead times but it is anticipated that the high risk actions will be completed by December. A specialist is being recruited to manage the works being carried out on site.
 - o 57 outstanding actions relating to compartmentation, down from 66. Works have been issued to the contractor to start to plan in the work and it is anticipated this will commence in the next 2 weeks. Individual specific letters are being developed with the Comms team to tenants who will be affected by the work. Accessibility of the letter is being

considered and we will confirm whether any tenants require translations.

- 8 outstanding actions relating to escape routes, down from 10. Some of these are associated with the location of bin storage areas. Visits are taking place to review where these could be moved to.
- The 5-year electrical checks are down to 81 from 349. These are coming down at a consistent rate. One property has not been inspected in 10-years due to issues with access but is currently not tenanted.
- Asbestos surveys and remediation contracts are now in place and will be signed by the end of the week. Work on carrying out the asbestos checks will start in the next 2 weeks.
- 4 out of date actions, down from 9, relating to water safety. These are mainly due to access issues with communal water tanks in loft spaces. All outstanding actions are scheduled for completion by the end of the week.

The Committee's discussion raised the following points:

- Where actions involve communal areas for multiple properties these should be reported by number of homes impacted.
- Actions relate to a range of issues including repairs, required replacements, missing certification, and compartmentation issues arising from cables, pipes etc. being run through cupboards and walls. The Committee would benefit from greater granularity, detail and examples in the report to enable them to understand what actions involve.
- Currently private landlords are required to carry out electrical surveys every 5-years, social landlords will be migrating to this from 10-year inspections in the new year. Our policy has already moved towards this requirement.
- Whilst there is insulation on some CBC properties this is not of the sort used at Grenfell. Intrusive surveys are being carried out to ensure that there are no issues with the external wall insulation that is present.
- If the Committee wish to have training sessions between meetings to raise awareness these can be provided.
- Whilst properties may be compliant issues may still exist for tenants living within them, so we need to ensure that tenants are able to evacuate. Work is being carried out to put together premises information to include details of tenants who cannot self-evacuate that can be provided to emergency services. Consideration is being given to how we can maintain communication with tenants through tenancy audits and encouraging proactive engagement to ensure information is correct throughout their tenancies.
- Properties with capped gas still require a Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR). We will be reviewing how we support tenants in capped properties and considering how issues can be resolved.
- Currently considering what information from the asbestos surveys will be brought into QL from the contractors' system to ensure that sufficient information is connected to the property. Currently tenants are provided with

full asbestos assessment on request, in the future the contractor will be required to provide them with a plain English version of this information.

- There were a larger number of fire risk actions as we have chosen to carry out some more intrusive type 3 risk assessments, these were also carried out in a short space time leading to deadline challenges. To address the timing issue some fire risk assessments are being brought forwards to allow a phased approach to surveys in the future.

9 Stock Condition Survey - Knowing Our Properties

Objective: To raise awareness of existing issues with out-of-date stock condition surveys and the impact this has had on compliance with the Consumer Standards, and the actions being taken to resolve this issue.

The Interim Service Improvement Lead presented the report and confirmed that the survey would be going live in the following week. Test surveys have been carried out to allow strategic decisions to be carried out on how information is gathered and stored. Focus will be on completing a representative target of 20% including the blocks to inform the Asset Management Strategy and the 20-year HRA Business Plan. This sample will include a range of building types and ages. If issues are identified with particular property types within this sample, similar properties will form the next focus of the stock condition surveys.

10 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Monitoring Report - Quarter 1

Objective: To provide a monitoring position statement for the HRA against the budget approved by Council on 23 February 2024, highlighting any key variances.

The Director of Finance and Assets presented the report and explained that it forecasts any variances on income and expenditure against the budget approved by Council for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). She noted that some of the variances relate to external factors, including continuing high interest rates, and internal factors such as the work on compliance. She confirmed that these have been offset by some of the savings made by bringing housing management colleagues back in-house and combining senior management teams. She highlighted that as an organisation we will be doing everything possible to ensure resources are in place to manage compliance. This includes a change in the bottom line of how the capital works are funded for this year with the revenue budget held centrally rather than a revenue contribution to allow the Consumer Standards Improvement Plan to be funded.

The Committee's discussion raised the following points:

- The Finance team will consult with the Development team to review whether the budget for 320 Swindon Road and Monkscroft School is likely to be spent within the budgeted period. Flexibility is provided within the capital programme for the next years to allow budget to be carried forwards in case of slippage.

- The HRA capital programme was previously funded by borrowing by the Council being issued as a loan to the HRA with the interest cost also passed to the HRA. Last year the proportions of the programme funded by borrowing increased which has impacted interest costs. The expectation that fixed interest rates from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) would reduce has also taken longer than expected, which has led to us maintaining higher level temporary debt than originally planned. This caused a one-off higher debt payment. We are now able to take advantage of lower rate fixed deals and it is anticipated this will enable us to invest in tenants' priorities in the future.
- £11.1m has been budgeted for insulation over the next 3 years, it will be important to secure additional funds after 2028 to help reach the 2030 net zero target.

11 Updates from the Tenant and Leaseholder Panels (verbal)

Objective: To highlight the ongoing activities of the Tenant and Leaseholder Panels and provide an additional opportunity for tenant and leaseholder voices to be heard.

The Tenant Representative confirmed that the Tenant Panel had held its first meetings. She explained that since April they have supported the transition of housing services back in-house and reviewed the recommendations made by Campbell Tickell, the gap analysis against the Consumer Standards, the Fencing Policy and the Single Equality Scheme. She noted that they will next be carrying out a scrutiny of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code.

12 Housing Committee Workplan

The Committee requested the following additions to the Committee workplan:

- Oversight of the new build programme and development pipeline.
- A review of the ongoing project to improve the maintenance and cleaning of communal areas.
- A regular review of the housing risk register.
- A review of the Leasehold and Commonhold Bill following review by the Leaseholder Panel.

13 Items to be referred to Cabinet

There were none.

14 Briefing Note - Housing Sector Insight

Objective: To provide the Committee with an overview of recent developments in the housing sector and provide opportunities for horizon scanning.

15 Any other business

Councillor Williams raised concerns about the risk of flooding experienced the previous week in Princess Elizabeth Way. The Chief Executive and Chair thanked

teams and community groups for the work carried out to protect properties and tenants. It was agreed that further consideration should be given to how vulnerable tenants are supported during periods of flooding and what additional support could be provided.

This page is intentionally left blank

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet Housing Committee – 13th November 2024

Property Compliance Performance

Accountable member:

Cllr Flo Clucas, Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services

Accountable officer:

Vicky Day – Head of Technical & Investment

Ward(s) affected:

All wards with HRA stock

Key Decision: No

Executive summary:

The Property Compliance KPI Report (Appendix 1) outlines the compliance status as of 30th September 2024. It includes an explanation of actions together with proposed plans for addressing areas of non-compliance related to gas, electrical, water, fire, asbestos, lift safety, and the management of damp, mould, and condensation in homes.

Additionally, it incorporates KPIs from the ongoing stock condition survey.

While overall performance is getting better, improvements are still needed in addressing out of date actions arising from risk assessments. Key areas of focus include:

1. **Overdue Fire Actions:** The number of outstanding and overdue fire safety actions has decreased from 217 at the end of July to 133 by the end of September. However, the pace of progress has slowed, and it is anticipated that it will not increase until new contractual arrangements are in place. It is planned to complete all overdue fire actions by March 2025, with all high-priority actions completed by December 2024.
2. **Five-Year Electrical Safety Checks:** The number of overdue tests has fallen from 349 at end July to 56. All remaining overdue tests are due to access issues. We are following a robust legal process to facilitate access for these checks.
3. **Asbestos Survey and Remediation Contracts:** We have evaluated tenders for new asbestos survey and remediation contracts, Cabinet Member approval has been obtained and we are now progressing to contract. Contracts will be signed during November and mobilised as soon as possible after that.

4. **Stock condition survey:** The commencement of the stock survey was delayed to October, pending finalisation and successful testing of the digital survey solution. We are working closely with the third party surveying company, Rand Associates, to ensure that the programme is designed to enable early extrapolation of the data to identify whether there are potential issues that need to be considered.

Recommendations:

1. To note and understand the position regarding compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.
-

1. Implications

1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications

Budgetary provisions are in place to manage compliance in line with statutory and regulatory requirements. Long term contracts are in place, or in procurement to cover most areas and therefore the majority of the costs associated with achieving and maintaining compliance can generally be predicted. The exceptions to this are fire safety actions identified through fire risk assessments and asbestos remediation. If additional budget is required, then this can be provided for by adjustments to other less critical programmes of work. The 2025/26 HRA budget proposals will include for an expected increase in spend requirements in relation to both fire safety and asbestos management.

Signed off by: Gemma Bell gemma.bell@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.2 Legal implications

As a landlord of residential properties, the Council must comply with a number of regulations and legislation. The compliance report monitors whether or not the Council is complying with the relevant legislation relating to the areas listed above.

As identified in the report the council is currently non-compliant in some areas of property compliance and therefore may be subject to a regulatory judgment and intervention from the Regulator.

Signed off by: Claire Hughes, Monitoring Officer claire.hughes@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.3 Environmental and climate change implications

No specific arising from the report and actions being undertaken.

1.4 Corporate Plan Priorities

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Being a more modern, efficient and financially sustainable council

1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

The Council needs to know its tenants and leaseholders to be able to ensure that they are not at high

risk in their homes. Understanding the home and those that live in it are of equal importance. Tenancy Audits are being carried out to understand any particular needs and vulnerabilities which tenants may have. For example, if they need information in a different language or if they have a disability which means that they cannot leave the building without help in an emergency.

An EDI assessment is included below.

1.6 Performance management – monitoring and review

Overall performance in relation to property compliance is monitored through monthly KPIs, these are reviewed by Leadership Team, the Compliance Performance Monitoring Group and reported to this Committee.

2 Background

2.1 The Council's top priority is to ensure the health and safety of its residents. This commitment is demonstrated through compliance with relevant legislation and the updated Consumer Standards established by the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, which took effect on 1st April 2024.

2.2 Appendix 1 presents the KPIs relating to the individual areas of compliance as at 30th September 2024, as follows:

- **Gas safety**

Performance remains good with 99.95% compliance with the requirement for appliances to have an up to date gas safety certificate. Only two properties were out of date at end September, which were due to access issues and these are being pursued through the legal process.

- **Electrical safety**

Good progress has been made in gaining access to undertake electrical safety inspections, based on a 5-year cycle with the number of non-compliant properties reducing from 349 at end July to 56 at end September, those outstanding are due to difficulties in obtaining access and are being pursued through the legal process.

- **Fire safety** – All required fire risk assessments (FRAs) remain in date with none due for renewal until December 2024. The number of outstanding and overdue actions has reduced from 217 at end July to 133 at end of September, 32 of these are classed as high priority.

A delivery plan is in place for the remaining actions. These will primarily to be completed through a new contract for timber fire door replacement, which is progressing to contract signing and the direct award of a passive fire protection contract, under the South West Procurement Alliance Framework, for which approval is being sought.

Where high priority actions remain overdue, we have considered and implemented certain mitigation measures to reduce risks, until the actions can be completed.

All high priority actions are expected to be completed by end December 2024, with all remaining overdue actions completed by end March 2025.

We are looking to procure a new term contract for passive fire protection so that we have a

mechanism to quickly respond to actions that arise from the new programme of FRAs. It is expected that the procurement exercise will take approximately nine months, in the interim it is proposed that the direct award passive fire protection contract will be used to mitigate any delays in undertaking improvement works.

Asbestos safety – All non-domestic areas continue to have up to date asbestos management surveys and re-inspections in place, whilst 51% of relevant homes also have asbestos management surveys.

The procurement of new contracts for surveying and asbestos remediation is progressing to formal contract, with tenders evaluated and Cabinet Member approval given. The new asbestos survey contract includes a plan to accelerate domestic surveys, aiming for all homes to be surveyed by 2027.

This new contract will enable implementation of improved systems for managing and distributing asbestos information to contractors working in properties as well as to tenants for their own homes to reduce the risk of exposure.

To enhance assurance, we need to improve processes that ensure actions identified in the surveys can be easily tracked to completion. This will enable accurate reporting and provide assurance over effective management and will be addressed in the mobilisation of the new contracts.

- **Water safety** -All legionella risk assessments were renewed recently with management regimes, including flushing and temperature testing in place.

The number of outstanding actions has reduced from 9 at end July to 4 at end September. 3 of the outstanding actions are rated as high priority with one medium priority. These are being progressed and expect to be cleared in early October.

We are investigating how we can use systems to more effectively manage and report on the routine water hygiene activities.

- **Lift safety** – All lift safety inspections remain in date, with no outstanding remedial actions.
- **Damp mould and condensation (DMC)** – A robust process to manage instances of DMC within homes is in place and at end September the number of open cases had reduced to 126, from 177 at end July. There are no instances designated as Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Category 1 (a hazard that has the potential to cause serious harm).

New cases reported over the summer months have, as predicted, remained low. However, as we move into the colder weather it is expected that the number of cases being reported will increase. It is also expected that the stock condition survey will identify further cases where tenants have not previously reported problems.

The increase in resource required to react within required timescales will continue to be reviewed.

- **Stock Condition Survey** – Maintaining up-to-date information on the condition of homes is a requirement of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. This information is collected and updated through various methods, including service inspections and record updates following major works. However, it is best practice to regularly review and update component data through stock condition surveys.

Although good asset data was previously maintained in the asset database with a rolling programme of surveys, this was halted in 2018 due to the transition to the current Housing Management database. As a result, the information is now outdated. While updates have been made to reflect planned programmes of work, data integrity issues have arisen, necessitating an urgent complete refresh of asset information.

To address this, a new stock condition survey for all homes has been commissioned, utilising a third-party surveying practice to assess all properties over the next 12 months. Although there were delays in developing the IT systems to support the surveys, these issues have now been largely resolved, and surveys commenced in October.

The stock condition survey will evaluate the components within each home and in communal areas, ensuring data accuracy. It will also assess the current condition and remaining lifespan of these components, facilitating more precise reporting on compliance with the Decent Homes Standard and aiding in the development of future planned maintenance programmes.

In addition to evaluating component condition and lifespan, the survey will assess the 29 hazards of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Workflows have been established to ensure that Category 1 and 2 hazards are promptly reported, allowing for swift mitigating actions. This includes cases where damp and mould issues are identified.

The survey will also gather information on adaptations made to homes, which will support the GCC Accessible Homes Register to assist in allocating adapted homes to those in greatest need.

We are also taking the opportunity to conduct energy surveys for properties where such assessments have not yet been undertaken or where existing surveys are outdated. This will enhance our understanding of energy performance and support our decarbonisation efforts.

Appendix 1 includes new KPIs to track the progress of the stock condition survey and the proportion of the housing stock with up-to-date data.

- 2.3. As well as the internal audit programme undertaken by SWAP and following on from the Pennington's 'Big Six' Healthcheck undertaken in 2022, it is proposed to implement a programme of external technical audits to support in identifying improvements that may be made and provide greater assurance. Pennington have undertaken a further high-level review, which is informing the improvement plan and it is expected that a programme of technical audits will commence once the current self-referral investigations have been completed.

3 Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 This report is for information and does not contain recommendations.

4 Alternative options considered

- 4.1 N/A

5 Consultation and feedback

- 5.1 None

6 Key risks

6.1 Instances of non-compliance present an increased health and safety risk to residents, potential for Regulatory or legal action and as a result reputational risk. It is therefore essential that the extent and nature of any non-compliance is understood with supported robust plans in place to move to a position of compliance.

Report author:

Vicky Day, Head of Technical & Investment

Vicky.day@cbh.org

Appendices:

- i. Risk Assessment
- ii. Equality Impact Assessment – Screening –(to be included in all Cabinet and Council reports)
- iii. Property Compliance KPIs – September 2024

Background information:

N/A

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
1	If statutory requirements in relation to property compliance are not met then in the event of an accident CBC could be held liable		3	2	6	Reduce	Maintain/improve performance monitoring	Vicky Day	Ongoing
2	If overdue fire safety actions are not completed then the risk of serious injury or death in the event of fire increases		4	3	12	Reduce	Progress with plan to complete outstanding actions	Vicky Day	March 2024
3	If overdue electrical checks are not undertaken there is a risk that there are electrical installations that are unsafe		4	2	8	Reduce	Progress with legal process to gain access	Mark Way	November 2024
4	If gas safety checks are not undertaken, then there is a risk of unsafe appliances		4	2	8	Reduce	Progress with legal process to gain access	Vicky Day	November 2024

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
5	If the asbestos register is incomplete or not appropriately shared		4	2	8	Reduce	Improve systems for sharing data through new contracts	Vicky day	March 2025
6	If we do not have up to date information on the condition of our stock then we may not be aware of defective components		3	2	6	Reduce	Complete stock survey to ensure up to date information is held and then have robust processes for ensuring continued data accuracy	Vicky Day	Sept 2025

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

1. Identify the policy, project, function or service change

a. Person responsible for this Equality Impact Assessment

Officer responsible: Vicky Day	Service Area: Housing
Title: Head of Technical & Investment	Date of assessment: 30.10.24
Signature: <i>Vicky Day</i>	

b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Function

If other, please specify:

c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Property Compliance

Is this new or existing?

**Already exists
and is being
reviewed**

Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project

N/A – this relates to performance monitoring and service improvement

d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:

To ensure that CBC meets its statutory and regulatory obligations

Objectives:

To ensure so far as possible the health and safety of residents, visitors, contractors and employees of the Council.
To meet statutory and regulatory requirements and thereby avoid adverse actions for non compliance.
To assist with ensuring sound asset management practices

Outcomes:	Ensure homes are safe Reduce risks of property related accidents Reduce risk of complaints or claims Reduce risk of regulatory intervention Reduce risk of
Benefits:	Sound business planning

e. What are the expected impacts?

Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers.	Yes
Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative?	Positive
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	
In delivery of property compliance services individuals circumstances and specific requirements will be taken into account to ensure that no-one is disadvantaged.	

If your answer to question e identified potential positive or negative impacts, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.

f. Identify next steps as appropriate

Stage Two required	Choose an item.
Owner of Stage Two assessment	
Completion date for Stage Two assessment	

Appendix iii – Property Compliance KPI Report

Period of reporting: at 30th September 2024

NB: for direction of travel in performance the comparison is made against the previous report to committee i.e. the period to end July 2024

Workstream		Total No. properties in programme	No. compliant properties	No. Non compliant properties	Compliance %	Direction of travel	
Gas safety	Domestic LGSR	4262	4260	2	99.95	↓	
	Commercial LGSR	6	6	0	100	↔	
	TSM: Percentage of Gas Safety Checks Compliant (properties)	4422	4420	0	99.95	↓	
	Properties or properties in blocks with communal heating requiring gas safety check in next 3 months	669					
		No. tenanted homes capped	No. tenanted homes capped over 3 months				
	Properties with capped gas	69	42				
		No. of overdue LGSR					↓
	Overdue LGSR <1 month	1					↔

Page 23



	Overdue LGSR 1-3 months	1	
	Overdue LGSR >3 months	0	
Comments	At the end of September two properties did not have a current gas safety certificate, of these: 1 - Passed to Legal to start Court Action - Court Hearing Date 15/10/24 1 - Passed to Legal to start Court Action - Awaiting Court Hearing Date Our contractor's performance is continually monitored to ensure that they are maintaining the 10 month service programme to give the best chance of accessing homes before the LGSR expires and also that they have adequate resource assigned to enable timely delivery of the programme.		

Workstream		Total No. properties in programme	No. compliant properties	No. Non compliant properties	Compliance %	Direction of travel
Fire safety	FRAs - blocks	446	446	0	100	↔
	TSM: Percentage of Gas Safety Checks Compliant (homes)	2250	2250	0	100	↔
		High risk actions	Med risk actions	Low/planned risk actions	Total no. overdue actions	
	Overdue FRAs remedial actions < 3 months	0	0	0		
	Overdue FRAs remedial actions 3-6 months	0	9	0	9	↑
	Overdue FRAs remedial actions 6-12 months	14	9	4	27	↑
	Overdue FRAs remedial actions >12 months	12	54	31	97	↑
	Total	26	72	35	133	
Comments	<p>All required FRAs remain in date with none due for renewal until Dec 2024 when 2 blocks require new FRAs.</p> <p>Actions arising from FRAs are categorised by the risk they present to the occupants of the building with: High priority to be completed within 2 months of the date of the FRA Medium priority to be completed in 2-4 months of the date of the FRA Low priority to be completed within 4-6 months of the date of the FRA Planned priority to be completed within 12 months of the date of the FRA</p>					

Of the 133 outstanding fire actions:

- **Timber fire doors = 70:** A new contract for replacement of timber fire doors has been procured and is being mobilised. The contractor has commenced survey of these doors prior to manufacture. The manufacturing period is 2 months. As many are in listed buildings a listed building application is required.
All existing doors identified for replacement are nominal fire doors and are being maintained. However, as they are not certified fire doors we cannot evidence that they are compliant with current standards, we have therefore agreed to replace them so that this assurance can be given.
- **Escape routes = 7:** Of these, 3 relate to position of refuse/bin stores, we have mitigated the risk by moving bins to an acceptable location on a temporary basis whilst planning permission is being sought for permanent solutions. The other 4 relate to escape route issues, with planning permission required in relation to 2, management actions in relation to 1 and a technical solution being verified and costs obtained for the other.
- **Compartmentation issues = 56:** In these cases, either the compartmentation 'as built' does not meet current requirements, historic improvement works have not considered compartmentation implications and improvements are now required, or damage has been caused to the integrity of compartmentation, for instance by drilling through walls to install cabling etc and where the holes have not been made good in a suitable way. Of these:
 - 38 are to be delivered by proposed direct award contract under an existing suitable framework. to enable us to expedite the works as quickly as possible. We are seeking sign off for this contract and have engaged with the contractor who has expressed the ability to deliver the works required.
 - 15 are allocated to Building Services for completion as soon as possible
 - 2 relate to a new build block; the developer is trying to complete the works, however, access is problematic
 - 1 relates to completion of works where hoarding is an issue and we are actively working with the tenant to resolve this

Workstream		Total No. properties in programme	No. compliant properties	No. Non compliant properties	Compliance %	Direction of travel
Electrical checks	5 year EICR domestic testing cycle	4,622	4,566	56	98.79	↑
	10 year EICR domestic testing cycle	4,622	4,619	3	99.94	↑
	Communal EICRs	340	340	0	100%	↔
	EICRs overdue against 5 year cycle	<2 years	2 -3years	3-4 years	4 -5 years	>5 years
		9	18	7	15	
		Overdue high risk C1 (danger to life)	Overdue medium risk actions C2 (potentially dangerous)	Overdue high risk C1 (danger to life)		
	Overdue electrical remedials <3 months	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown		
	Overdue electrical remedials 3-6 months	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown		
	Overdue electrical remedials 6-12 months	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown		
	Overdue electrical remedials >12 months	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown		

	Electrical safety inspections due in next 3 months	7				
Comments	<p>10 yr cycle – there has been an increase from 2 to 3 properties not having had an electrical inspection within the last 10 years. One property is being investigated for fraud, one is in the legal process, seeking injunction for access and one is currently in long term hospital care.</p> <p>5 yr cycle – the number of homes requiring an electrical safety inspection has reduced from 349 in July to 56 at end September. These 56 properties are where access has not been provided; 3 properties are expected to be returned as vacant in coming weeks, 12 are with legal and for the remainder appointments have been booked or we are seeking joined approach with our Tenancy Management team to assist us with access due to hoarding, arrangements through GDASS or long term hospital cases.</p> <p>167 homes and 18 blocks have had electrical safety tests completed in Sept. 95 attempts for appointments were carded as no access throughout the month (57% no access rate).</p> <p>All C1 and C2 remedials are completed at the time of the EICR, however the current method of reporting C3 remedials does not allow reporting against the EICR. We are seeking a solution to ensure that assurance can be given that they are being appropriately managed and completed.</p> <p>Annually, CBC undergo an assessment of their technical capability to carry out electrical installation work in accordance with the requirements of BS7671 (IET Wiring Regulations). This assessment last successfully completed by the NICEIC 15th August 2024.</p>					
		Total No. properties in programme	No. compliant properties	No. Non compliant properties	Compliance %	
Smoke and CO alarms	Smoke detectors/alarms	4,637	4,585	52	98.88	↓
	CO detectors/alarms	4262	4252	10	99.77	



Comments	<p>Smoke detectors - there are 52 properties from the original list overdue, all of these are due to no access which is actively being pursued. Once access is achieved, Aico monitoring devices will be installed which will facilitate remote monitoring and checking of the smoke detectors in future. In addition to these 52 properties, there are a further 11 properties that will require monitoring from October onwards as the gas has been capped and PH Jones will no longer be attending to check the boiler or the smoke detectors.</p> <p>Of the 10 tenanted properties without a CO detector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 have capped gas > 2yrs with no gas appliances in use• 7 have capped gas >2yrs with no gas appliances in home• 1 gas meter removed but gas appliances remain in property <p>Therefore, these do not represent a risk as there are no live gas supplies with appliances in use.</p>					
PAT Testing	Temp furnished properties with up to date PAT tests	21	21	0	100	

Workstream		Total No. properties in programme	No. compliant properties	No. Non compliant properties	Compliance %	Direction of travel	
Asbestos safety	Asbestos reinspection's - non domestic areas - blocks	358	358	0	100.00	↔	
	TSM: % asbestos safety checks compliant (no properties affected)	1872	1872	0	100.00	↔	
	Overdue asbestos re-inspections <3 months	0					Page 30
	Overdue asbestos re-inspections 3-6 months	0					
	Overdue asbestos re-inspections 6-12 months	0					
	Overdue asbestos re-inspections >12 months	0					
	Asbestos re-inspections due in next 3 months	0					
		High risk	Medium risk	Low risk	Total		
	Overdue actions <3 months	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown			
	Overdue actions 3-6 months	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown			
	Overdue actions <3 months	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown			

Comments

All surveys and re-inspection of non-domestic areas remain in date. Any actions arising from these surveys are considered and, where appropriate, orders for remediation raised, there are no high risk occurrences within the inspected materials, however currently this cannot be evidenced. The mobilisation of the new survey contract will address this.

6 communal areas were resurveyed in Sept 24; 2 garage blocks due for resurvey in September were not done due to issues with access, and we are working with the contractor to ensure access can be obtained to undertake these surveys. Notwithstanding this the risks associated with the delay in resurvey are low due to the type and location of the asbestos containing materials. No further resurveys are due until December 2024.

Procurement for new survey/analytical and remediation contracts is progressing. However there has been a challenge from an unsuccessful tenderer for the remediation contract which has slowed progress. It is expected that contracts will be awarded by early November, with mobilisation of the survey/analytical contract taking approx. 2 months. Under the new contract the third party contractor will host the asbestos register together with a portal, this will provide improved access to asbestos information for CBC and contractors. In addition the contractor will provide plain English reports for residents on asbestos within their homes.

Further work is required to enable reporting on the status of actions arising from asbestos surveys.

Of the relevant homes, 51% currently have asbestos management surveys in place, with surveys undertaken on void properties where required and targeted R&D surveys in advance of intrusive works. Under the new contract the programme of domestic surveys will be accelerated to achieve 100% survey of relevant (pre 2000) homes by 2027.

Workstream		Total No. properties in programme	No. compliant properties	No. Non compliant properties	Compliance %	Direction of travel
Water safety	Legionella risk assessments	25	25	0	100.00	↔
	TSM: % water safety checks compliant (no properties affected)	243	243	0	100.00	↔
	Legionella risk assessments due in the next 3 months	0				
		No. high risk remedials	No. medium risk remedials	No. low risk remedials	Total	
	Overdue water safety remedial actions <3 months	0	0	0	0	↑
	Overdue water safety remedial actions 3-6 months	0	0	0	0	↑
	Overdue water safety remedial actions 6-12 months	3	1	0	4	↑
	Overdue water safety remedial actions >12 months	0	0	0	0	↔
	Total	3	1	0	4	


Comments

A total of 5 actions were closed between end July and end September, reducing the number of outstanding actions from 9 to 4.

Two of the open actions (high priority) relate to providing safe access to inspect water tanks as the access hatches are located over stairwells, We are working with Building Services to determine how access can be safely gained. 16 flats are potentially affected. The other two actions (1 high priority, 1 medium priority) relate to a water heater, which is currently turned off and the guest room shower at James Donovan Ct, neither are considered to present any significant risk.

N.B. the TSM does not include for James Donovan Court as this is 100% leasehold.

Workstream		Total No. properties in programme	No. compliant properties	No. Non compliant properties	Compliance %	Direction of travel	
Lift safety	Passenger lifts (LOLER) servicing	16	16	0	100.00	↔	
	TSM: % lift safety checks compliant (no properties affected)	262	262	0	100.00	↔	
	No. stair lifts/through floor lifts with current LOLER certificate	70	70	0	100.00	↔	
	LOLER inspections due in the next 3 months	0					Page 34
		High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	Total no. Overdue actions		
	Overdue remedial actions <3 months	0	0	0	0		
	Overdue remedial actions 3-6 months	0	0	0	0		
	Overdue remedial actions 6-12 months	0	0	0	0		
	Overdue remedial actions >12 months	0	0	0	0		
	Comments						
As at 30 th Sept All LOLER inspections are within date with no outstanding actions							

Workstream		No. open cases	Open cases categorised as HHSRS Category 1	Direction of travel
Damp Mould & Condensation	Damp and mould cases	126	0	
	Cases overdue <3 months	Unknown		
	Cases overdue 3-6 months	Unknown		
	Cases overdue 6-12 months	Unknown		
	Cases overdue >12 months	Unknown		
Comments	There are currently no HHSRS Cat 1 cases. We continue to react quickly to each new case and resolve as per our procedure, prioritising and responding according to risk and severity to reduce health risk for our tenants as soon as possible. We are working to interrogate the data we hold with the intention of being able to provide inform by age of case as requested in above table.			

Stock condition survey

Workstream		No. properties in programme	No. properties inspected and data updated with last 5 years	% up to date stock surveys	Direction of travel
Stock condition survey	Houses and bungalows	2170	69	3.2%	
	Flats and maisonettes	2486	144	5.8%	
	Blocks	538	25	4.6%	
	Garage blocks	92	0	0%	
		HHSRS Cat 1 cases	HHSRS Cat 2 cases		
		0	0		
Comments	<p>The stock survey mobilisation has been delayed with no surveys undertaken in September. The Surveys are now expected to commence mid October with a gradual increase in surveyors to be assigned through to Jan 25. Only a small number of surveys have been undertaken in the last five years (238), as reported above.</p> <p>From October we will report the status based on the new surveys as these are more comprehensive than those previously undertaken and the new survey will include for 100% of properties, whether they are deemed to have up to date surveys in place or not.</p>				

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet Housing Committee – 13th November 2024

Quarter 2 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Tracker update

Accountable member:

Flo Clucas, Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services

Accountable officer:

Caroline Walker, Head of Community Services

Ward(s) affected:

n/a

Key Decision: No

Executive summary:

The purpose of this report is to inform Housing Committee members of the results of Tenant Satisfaction Measure results for quarter 2 2024/25 and to outline activities being developed to address areas of dissatisfaction. Members are reminded that tenant satisfaction surveys are carried out independently on the council's behalf, 250 tenants are contacted each quarter so that a representative sample of tenant perceptions and opinions is obtained. Most tenants (around 80%) give permission for the council to contact them to discuss areas of dissatisfaction further. These dissatisfied customers are contacted to better understand areas of concern and the feedback used for learning and improvement.

Key messages from the quarter survey results include:

- 82% tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided by the council (an increase of 4% from quarter 1)

Several satisfaction areas achieved satisfaction above 80%, these included:

- Time taken to complete repairs
- Keeping tenants informed
- Treating tenants fairly and with respect
- Overall satisfaction in repairs increased to 87% - the highest score achieved

In contrast, tenants were less satisfied in three areas (below 70%)

- how the council listen to tenant's views and acts upon them (67%)
- the approach to dealing with ASB (62%)
- Maintenance of communal areas (65%)
- Satisfaction with the handling of complaints (47%)

Follow up calls have been made to all dissatisfied tenants and contact established with 44 tenants. The key areas for dissatisfaction were repairs, ASB and estate services (cleaning of communal areas), where possible individual tenant concerns have been resolved.

An ASB service improvement programme has been established, and addition to meeting regulatory requirements, the following are in development to respond to the TSM survey results:

- Text based surveys to understand tenants lived experience of the ASB service
- Programme of focus groups to understand the experience of ASN victims and perpetrators
- A communication campaign to share achievements in addressing ASB and educate the wider tenant population around the ASB service available.

The team will be delivering a range of activities in ASB awareness week (18th – 24th November 2024) and a focus group will take place on Let's talk ASB day (20TH November 2024)

The team is in the process of contacting tenants who expressed dissatisfaction with the council's approach to dealing with ASB or are dissatisfied with the handling of complaints but have had no contact with these services. Tenants will be engaged to understand the barriers to reporting and to proactively address where possible, unreported ASB or complaints.

The estate services team are working in addressing the dissatisfaction with the cleaning of communal areas and the following activities are in progress:

- New Cleaning Rotas & Schedules – A review was completed, and new rotas and schedules were introduced in June 2024. Historically cleaning teams may have visited the same estate more than once in a week to clean different blocks on that estate, the new rota sees the number of visits reduced with more time spent at each location to complete the cleaning to all blocks on the estate. This approach reduces travel time, dedicates more time to cleaning, increases the impact of the cleaning and the visibility of the cleaning teams.
- New equipment – the team are investing in new equipment that is more suited to the cleaning requirements of our blocks. This will increase efficiency and quality of the work being completed Backpack hoovers and Mechanical floor scrubber dryers have been ordered with delivery anticipated early November. Staff have had training on the new equipment being purchased.
- Block survey form – a draft block inspection form for use by staff has been created, colleagues across numerous teams have been involved providing ideas and feedback to ensure that the final form will work for each team. Initially the form will be piloted in paper format as a template for staff to complete when out on the estates visiting our blocks, going forwards, the intention is to develop this an electronic form (using Versaa mobile working tool). Tenants have agreed to pilot the use of this form and feedback on the cleaning service by completing the form and commenting on the form itself.
- Team meetings – we have covered the feedback received via the Acuity customer satisfaction surveys and the cleaning staff have discussed the feedback and ways that they may improve quality and efficiency in their work. The new equipment will help, as would a collective more proactive approach to their work, for example, planned replenishment of van stocks and better

route planning. Attitude and behaviours have been discussed with the team to reinforce expectations around providing quality services for our customers.

- Estate Inspections – are taking place on a quarterly basis with Tenancy Management and Estates & Cleaning Supervisor, Councillors and Police attending.
- CCTV Installed – CCTV has recently been installed at the block which receives the greatest level of fly-tipping. In conjunction with CBC Neighbourhood Team, Tenancy Management and the Estates and Cleaning Team monitoring this block, it is anticipated that the CCTV cameras will act as a deterrent to fly tippers. We are also exploring the possibility of joint funding for more CCTV capacity.
- Dedicated multi-trade resource – from November onwards a multi trade person will be dedicated to work specifically on communal areas, visiting one block at a time in a planned proactive manner to complete an inspection which will be recorded on the Versaa mobile working form, any repairs will then be completed by the same trade's person where possible.

Recommendations:

1. that Committee note quarter 2 Tenant Satisfaction Measure survey results
-

1. Implications

1.1 Corporate Plan Priorities

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Being a more modern, efficient and financially sustainable council
-

2 Background

2.1 Please see attached Tenant Satisfaction Measure Tracker report (quarter 1)

3 Key risks

3.1 Tenant Satisfaction Measure surveys are a mandatory requirement, failure to undertake surveys would result in intervention from the Regulator for Social Housing

Report author:

Caroline Walker, Head of Community Services – caroline.walker@cbh.org

Appendices:

- i. Tenant Satisfaction Measure Tracker report

This page is intentionally left blank



Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBC - LCRA)

TSM Tracker Q2 2024/25 Report

Prepared by: Acuity Research & Practice



Key TSM Metrics

Overall Satisfaction

Good Repair

Building Safety

Neighbourhood

Engagement

Complaints

Wellbeing

Improvements

Trends

Summary

Demographics

Introduction

Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH) manages around 4,500 properties on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) but now also owns around 100 properties itself, a mixture of LCRA and LCHO properties. Acuity has been commissioned to undertake quarterly independent satisfaction surveys of the tenants of Cheltenham Borough Homes to collect data on their opinions of, and attitudes towards, their landlord and the services provided.

The survey was designed using the Tenant Satisfaction Measures from the Regulator of Social Housing, which became mandatory to collect in April 2023 and was due to be reported to the Regulator for the first time in June 2024 and will be required annually from now on. Every quarter, tenants are contacted and invited to take part in a telephone interview. The survey is designed to collect the views of approximately 221 tenants per quarter, proportionately sampled by needs, tenancy tenure type and age.

The report presents an analysis of the results based on the 221 tenant interviews for Q2 24/25 which includes 221 completed surveys, as well as 16 incomplete, which are required to be included by the Regulator.

The telephone survey is confidential, and the results are sent back to CBH anonymised unless tenants give their permission to be identified – 82% of tenants did give permission to share their responses with their details attached and 93% of these tenants are happy for CBH to contact them to discuss any comments or issues they raised.

The aim of this survey is to provide data on tenants' satisfaction, which will allow CBH to:

- Provide information on tenants' perceptions of current services
- Compare the results with previous surveys, where possible
- Compare the results with other landlords (where appropriate at year-end)
- Inform decisions regarding future service development
- Report to the Regulator from April 2024 onwards.

For the overall results, Acuity and the Regulator of Social Housing recommend that landlords with under 10,000 properties achieve a sampling error of at least $\pm 4\%$ at the 95% confidence level. For the quarterly tenant survey, 221 completed responses were received in Q2 24/25. This response is high enough to conclude that the findings are accurate to within $\pm 6.4\%$ for the quarter and $\pm 3.4\%$ annually. For there to be a statistically significant difference in results, the change from Q1 to Q2 will need to be above 13 percentage points and annually will need to be greater than 6 percentage points.

Note: The majority of figures throughout the report show the results as percentages. As percentages are rounded up or down from two decimal places in the results file to the nearest whole number, they may not always total 100%. Rounding can also cause percentages described in the supporting text to differ from the percentages in the charts by 1% when two percentages are added together. The charts also show the base for each question shown as n=...

TSM Key Metrics Q2 2024/25

82%



Services Provided

Just over eight out of ten tenants (82%) are satisfied with the overall service provided by Cheltenham Borough Homes, up 4 percentage points (p.p) in Q2.

Six survey metrics received satisfaction scores above 80%, including the time taken to complete repairs, keeping tenants informed, and treating tenants fairly and with respect. The highest score is seen in repairs in the last 12 months (87%).

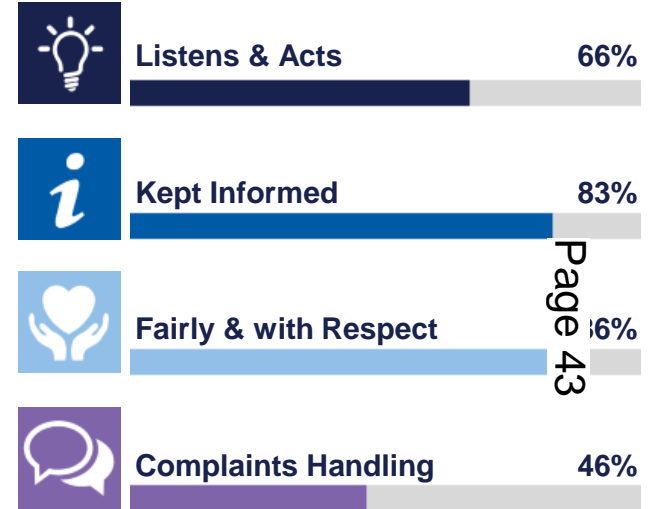
However, four metrics fall below 70% satisfaction, including how CBH listens to tenants' views and acts upon them (67%), the approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour (62%), the maintenance of communal areas (65%), and just 47% are satisfied with complaints handling.

The end of the report also includes a breakdown of the results by different demographic elements such as age, gender and length of tenancy.

Keeping Properties in Good Repair



Respectful & Helpful Engagement



Page 43

Responsible Neighbourhood Management





Overall Satisfaction

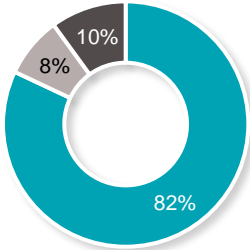
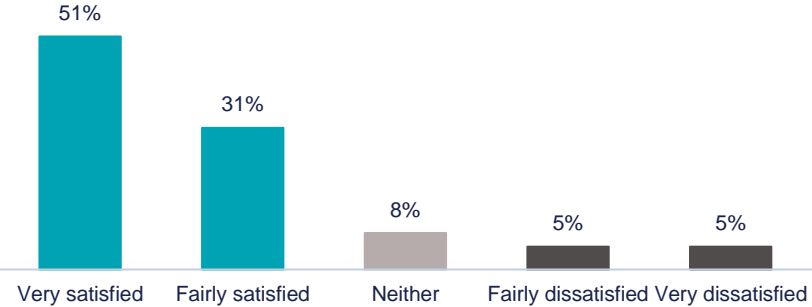


Overall Satisfaction

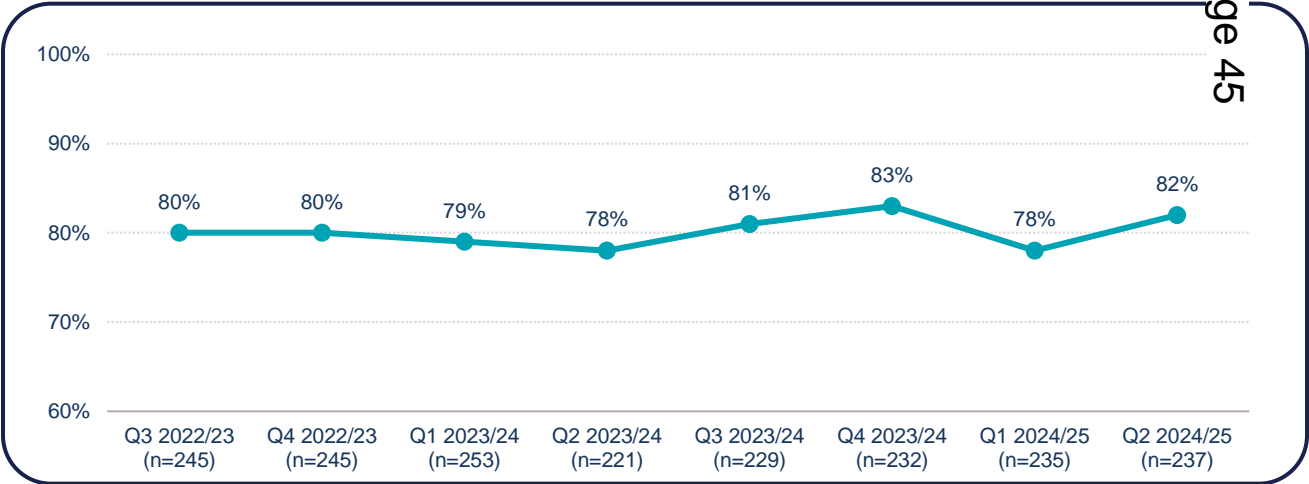
Tenants were asked, "Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by Cheltenham Borough Homes?" This is the key metric in any tenant perception survey.

Just over eight out of ten tenants (82%) are satisfied with the overall service provided by CBH, an increase of 4p.p. Around half of tenants are very satisfied (51%), and one in three (32%) are fairly satisfied; just one in ten are dissatisfied in Q2.

Satisfaction has been in the 80% range for the last two years, and has returned to a score of above 80% in Q2, following a temporary dip to 78% in the previous quarter.



■ Satisfied ■ Neither ■ Dissatisfied





Keeping Properties in Good Repair



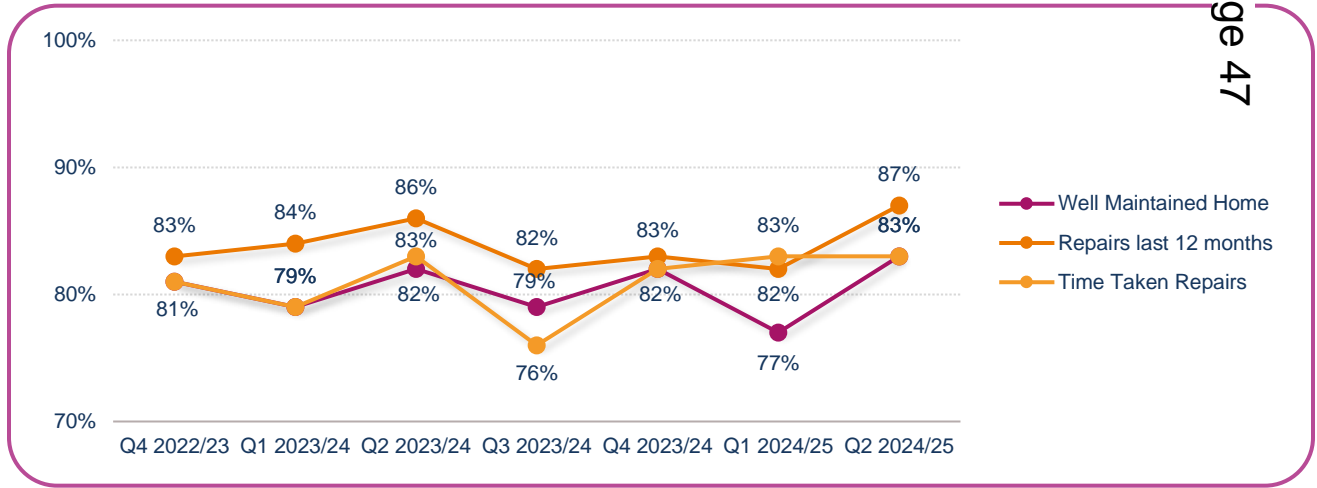
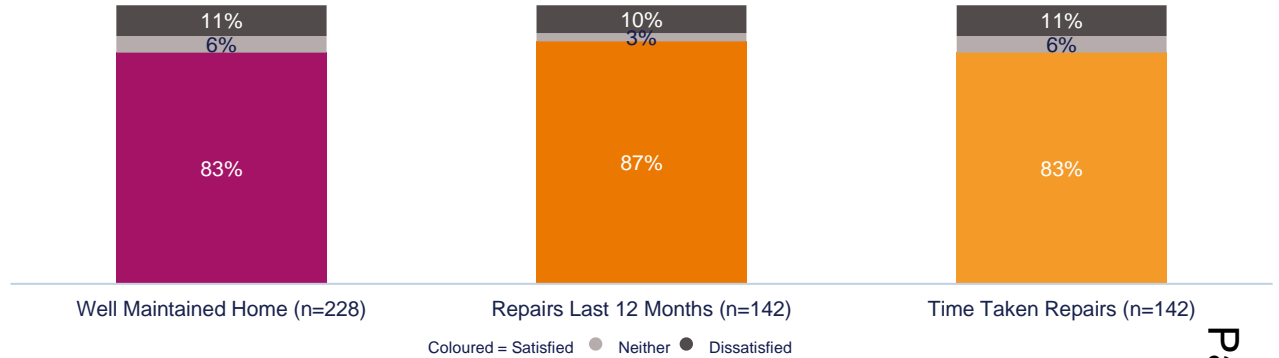
Keeping Properties in Good Repair

Around eight out of ten tenants are also satisfied that their home is well maintained (83%), and this is up by 6p.p since the previous quarter; just one in ten are dissatisfied.

Similar to Q1, around six out of ten tenants (63%) said they had a repair completed on their home in the last 12 months. Of these, 87% are satisfied with the overall repairs service during this period, up 5p.p in Q2. Repairs in the last 12 months is the highest scoring metric in the survey in Q2; this is not always seen in similar surveys and is very positive indeed.

As for the time taken to complete their last repair, 84% are satisfied, also with just 10% dissatisfied. Satisfaction here has not changed since Q1.

Similar social landlords often see lower satisfaction scores for the time taken to complete repairs compared to that of the recent service, but CBH shows similarly high scores for both metrics in Q2, as they did in Q1.





Comments - Dissatisfaction with Repairs

Tenants not satisfied with the way CBH deals with repairs and maintenance were also asked to explain why and just 20 made comments. It is important to note that only around 10%-11% of tenants are dissatisfied with the repairs service, perhaps resulting in fewer responses here.

Outstanding repairs, quality of work, and the time taken to complete repairs are the most common causes for concern, with each featured in around a quarter of all comments. For example, one tenant said, *"My back door frame was rotten. It took several weeks (for them) to come out. The job was unsuitable. The door is not sitting correctly, and rain comes through."*

Others comment on their repair not being done right the first time, whilst others comment on needing home improvements like new kitchens and bathrooms.

Damp and mould features in only three comments in this area, and these cases should be investigated with urgency, if not already being done so.





Maintaining Building Safety

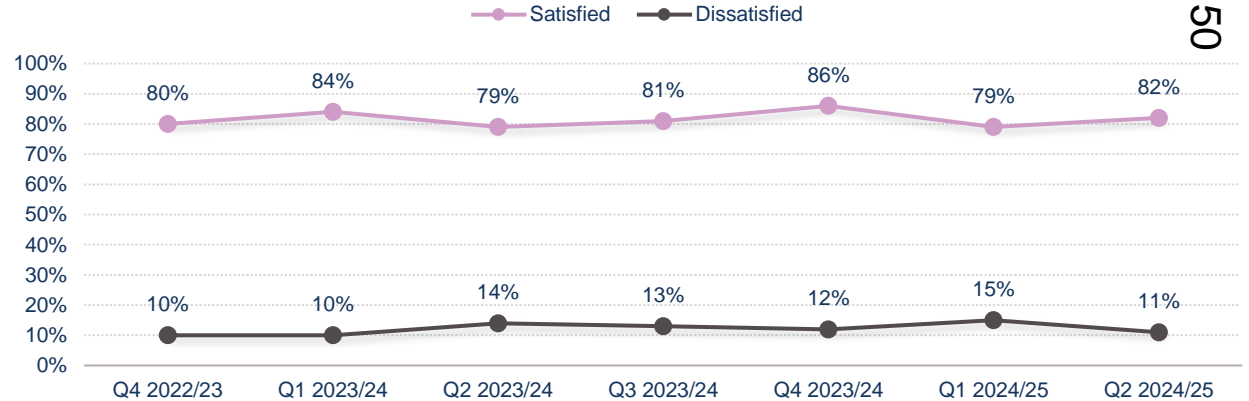
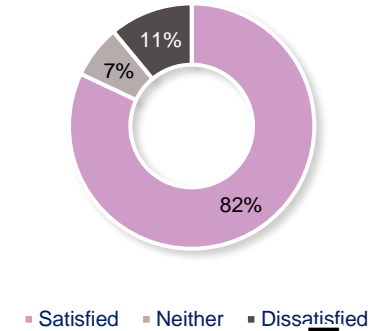
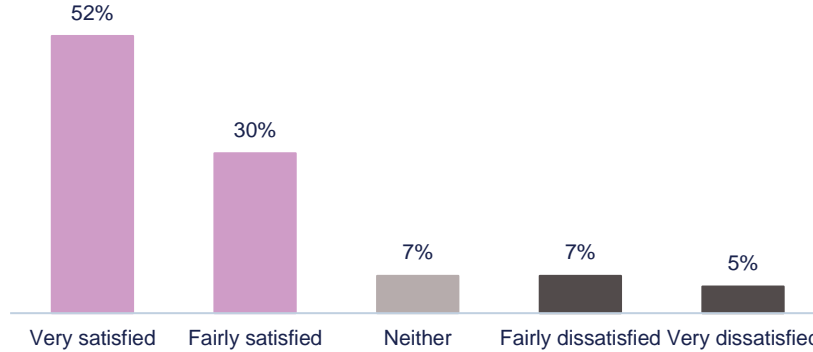


Maintaining Building Safety

Again showing high scores, 83% of tenants are satisfied that CBH provides a safe home, up 3p.p since Q1. One in ten (11%) are dissatisfied and a further 6% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Q2 results follow the slight fluctuations seen in this metric across the last two years, with satisfaction scores generally remaining within the 79%-85% range.

Dissatisfaction has also decreased in Q2 by 4p.p, and has continues to remain relatively low.





Comments - Home or Communal Areas not Well Maintained or Safe

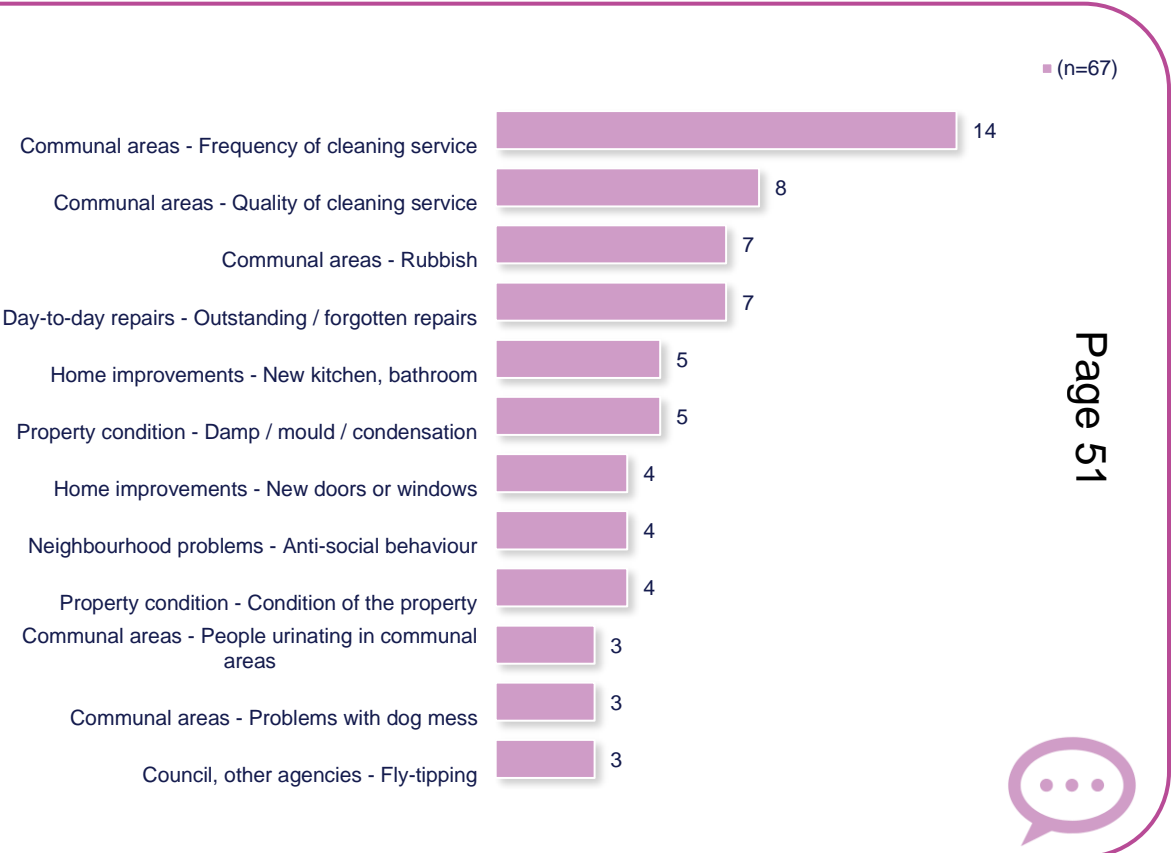
Tenants not satisfied that their homes and/or communal areas are well maintained and safe were asked to explain why and what could be done to improve this, and 67 made comments.

The cleanliness of the communal areas is a key focus with the frequency of the cleaning service the number one theme in tenant comments for Q2, for example, *"It is the stair well, it is always dirty. They are supposed to clean once a fortnight, but they do not really clean it."*

The quality of this cleaning service is also a cause for concern for some tenants, whilst others mention rubbish left in the communal areas.

Home improvements are also mentioned to a lesser degree, including a desire for new or updated kitchens and bathrooms, as well as new doors and windows.

Issues with damp and mould are mentioned by five tenants, and the full text of comments in this area, and all others, can be found in the data files.



Page 51





Responsible Neighbourhood Management

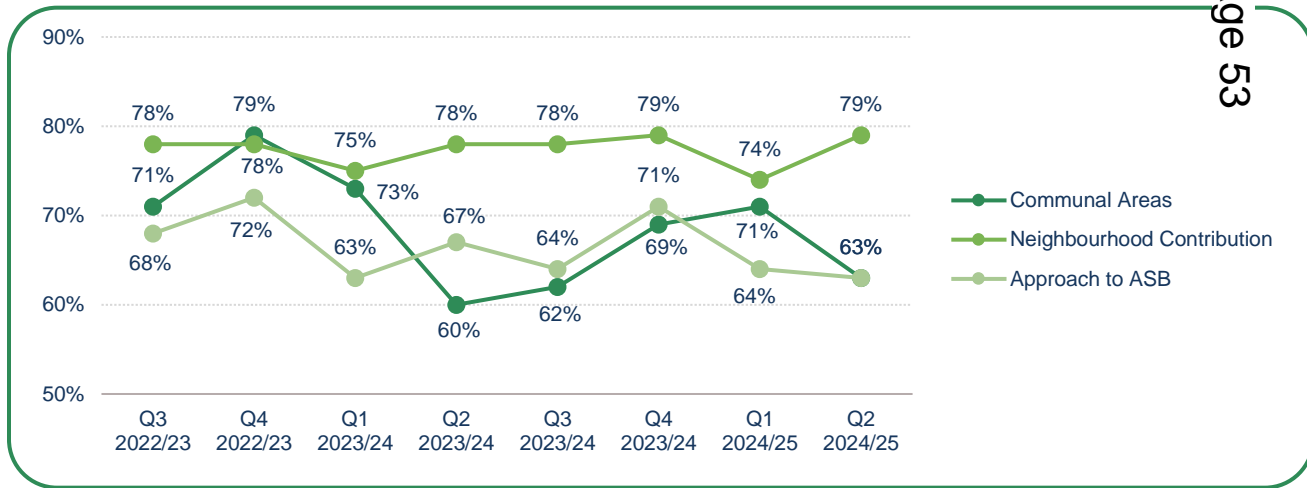
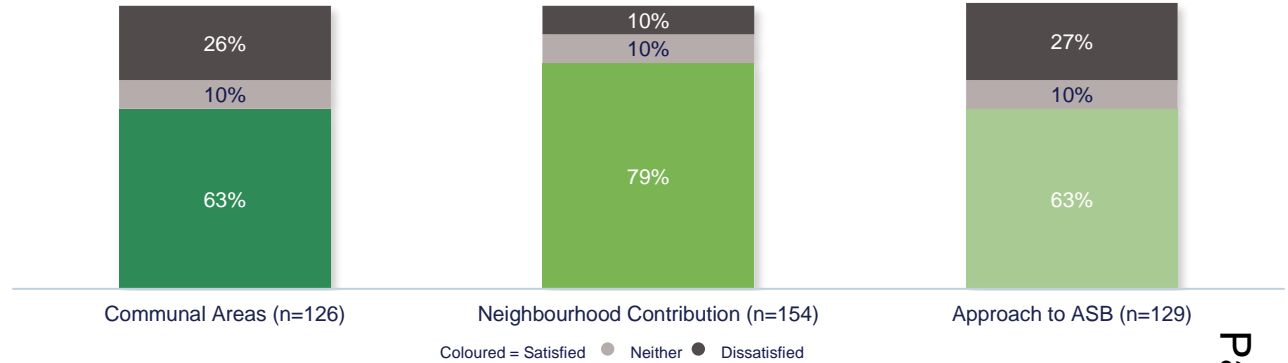
Responsible Neighbourhood Management



Some 56% of tenants stated that they live in a building with communal areas that CBH is responsible for maintaining. Of these, 63% of tenants are satisfied that their communal areas are clean and well maintained, but this has fallen by 7p.p in Q2. One in four remain dissatisfied.

A positive 79% of tenants feel that CBH makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood, and this is up 5p.p to the high 70%, after a temporary drop in Q1.

On the other hand, satisfaction with CBH's approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour is consistent with the previous quarter, down by a marginal 1p.p in Q2. Some 27% remain dissatisfied with approach to ASB, creating an area of improvement for CBH.





Respectful & Helpful Engagement

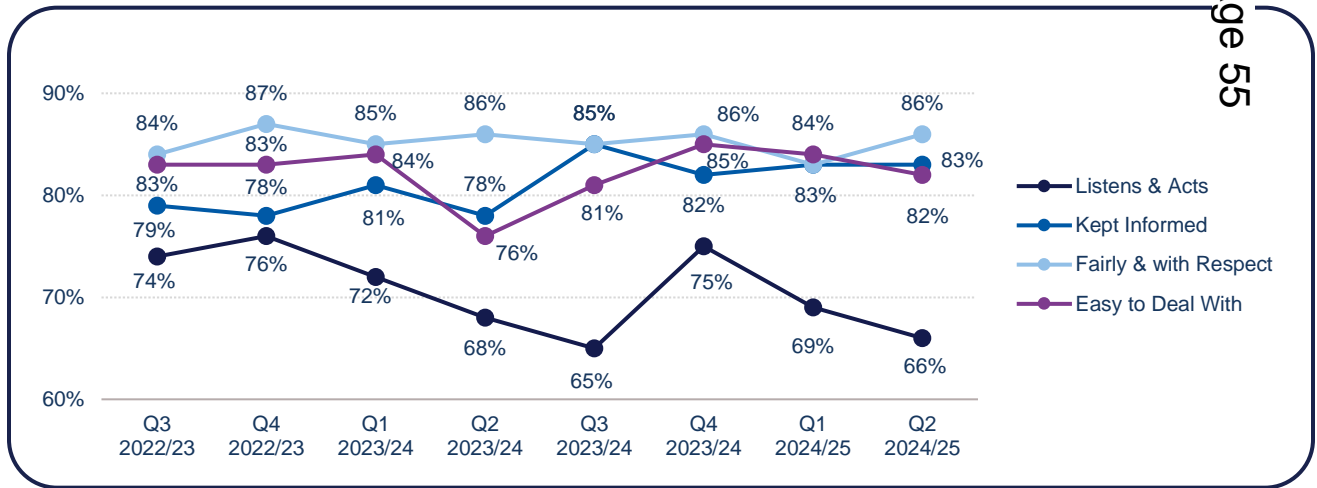
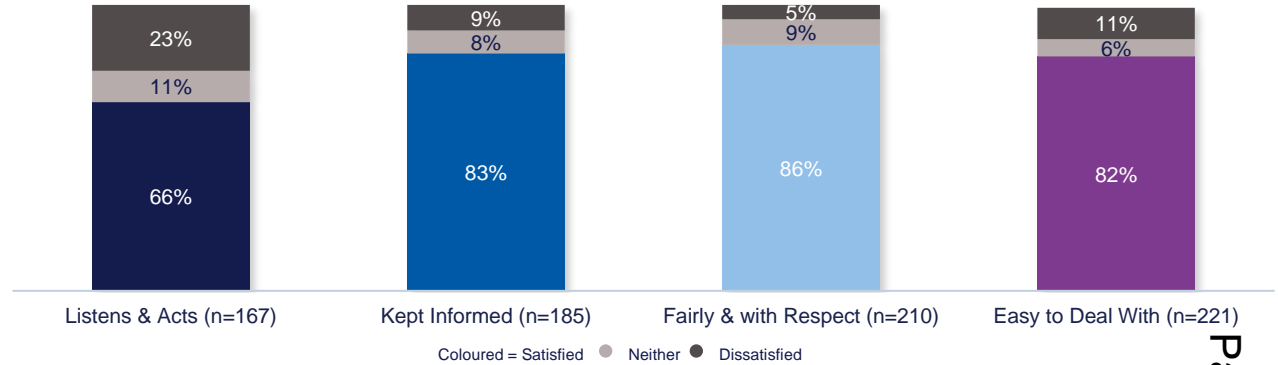


Respectful & Helpful Engagement

Similar to Q1, over eight out of ten (82%) tenants find CBH easy to deal with, just one in ten (11%) finding it difficult.

A similar number feel that CBH keeps them informed about things that matter to them (83%), consistent with Q1. Slightly more (86%) feel that CBH treats them fairly and with respect, up 3p.p.

Fewer tenants feel that CBH listens to their views and acts upon them (66%), down 3p.p since Q1. Just over one in five (23%) are dissatisfied, and this measure consistently scores lower than others in the survey. After a temporary rise to 75% in Q4 23/24, this metric has fallen back to the 60% range seen this time last year.





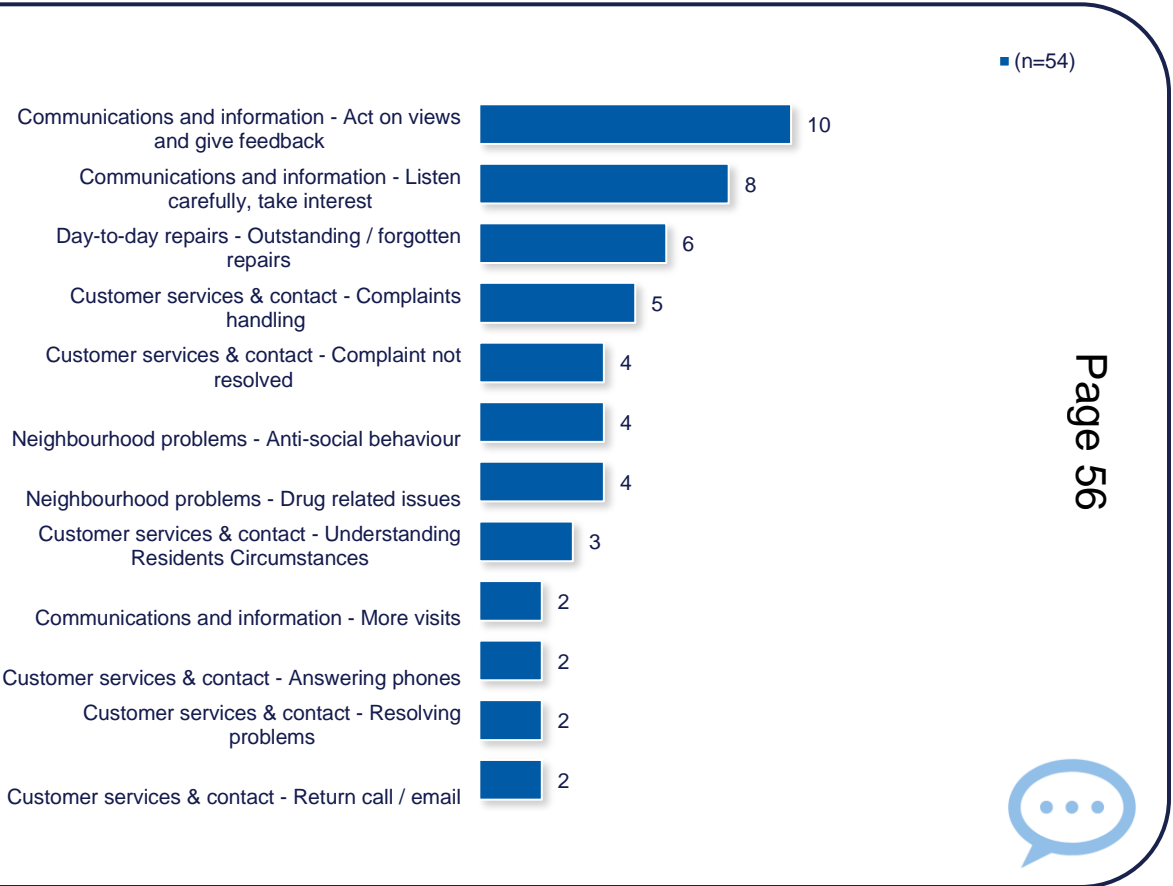
Comments - Listens & Acts

Tenants who stated that they are not satisfied with the way CBH listens to their views and acts upon them were asked how this could be improved, and 54 made comments.

Around a fifth of comments mention a need for CBH to act on tenants' views, and give feedback when they do so. For example, one comment says, "They haven't seemed to take action when we ask for things."

Other aspects of communications are also mentioned, including a need for CBH to listen carefully and take interest in tenants' views.

Other areas of concern include outstanding repairs, and issues with customer services and contact, including complaints not being resolved, general complaints handling, and understanding tenants' circumstances, to a lesser extent.



Comments - Treated fairly and with respect



Tenants who do not feel CBH treats them fairly and with respect were asked to explain why, and 27 made comments.

No single issue stands out amongst the rest, but issues around communications from CBH and the repairs service attract the most comments.

As for communication, some tenants wish for CBH to listen more carefully and take interest in tenant concerns, commenting *"They don't listen to what you say to them."* Perhaps greater feedback on the actions CBH takes on tenants' views could be beneficial.

Outstanding repairs and the quality of repairs work are also mentioned, alongside some frustrations when repairs are not completed right the first time.



(n=27)



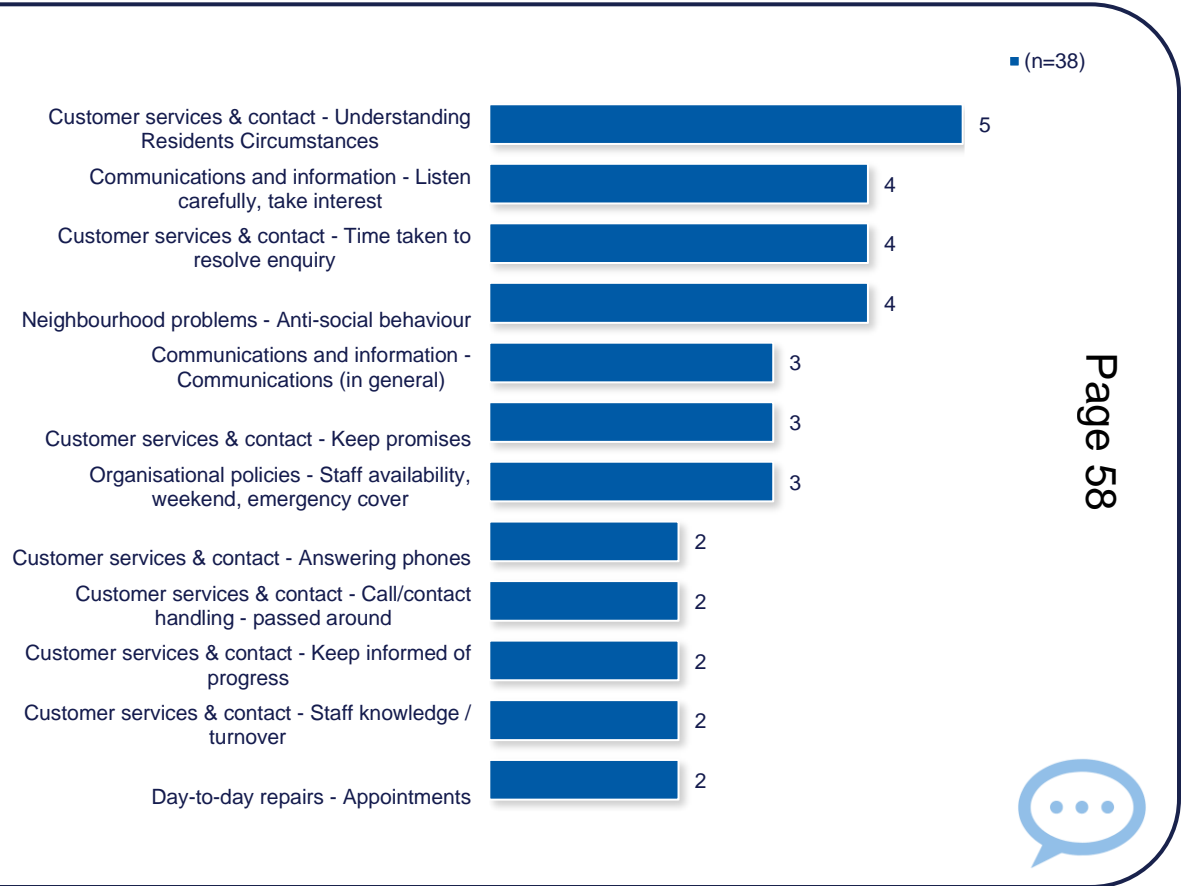


Comments - Easy to Deal With

When asked about the ease of dealing with CBH, 38 tenants made comments.

Again, there is no single issue that stands out from the rest. As seen in Q1, issues of calls not being returned are seen in Q2. Some are concerned with the time taken for customer services to resolve enquires, whilst others comment on the persistence of anti-social behaviour problems in their neighbourhood - e.g., *"I am still waiting 3 years on for ASB with a neighbour to be sorted out with CBH..."*

It is worth looking at the full text of these comments to understand a little more why some tenants do not find dealing with CBH easy.





Effective Handling of Complaints



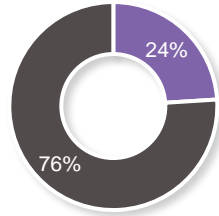
Effective Handling of Complaints

Similar to the previous survey, a quarter of tenants said they had made a complaint in the last 12 months (24%). There remains the issue of how many reported complaints are actually complaints or service requests, but many tenants are not happy with the service they currently get.

Just under half of tenants (46%) are satisfied with the handling of their complaints. A high 39% are dissatisfied, with more being very dissatisfied (28%) than fairly dissatisfied (11%). However, at least there are now more tenants satisfied than dissatisfied, a change from the last quarter.

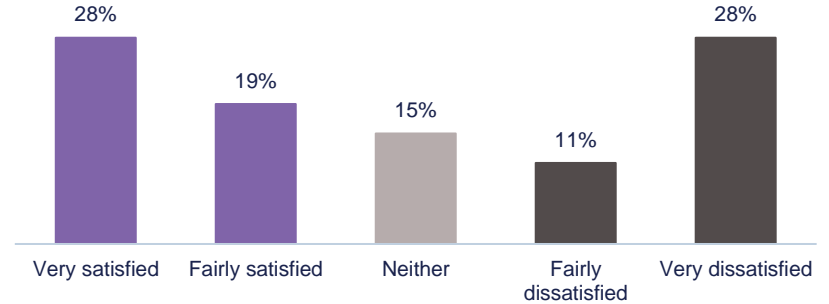
Like other social landlords, CBH may wish to include additional open-ended and targeted questions about the complaints process to pinpoint the key factors causing dissatisfaction.

Complaint in last 12 months

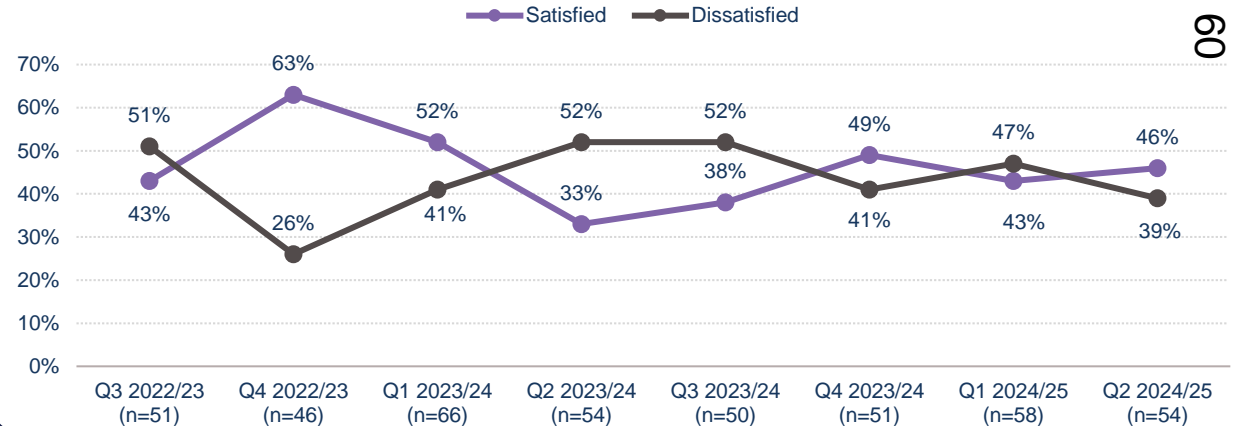


■ Yes ■ No

Satisfaction with Complaints Handling



Page 60





Well Being



Cost of Living

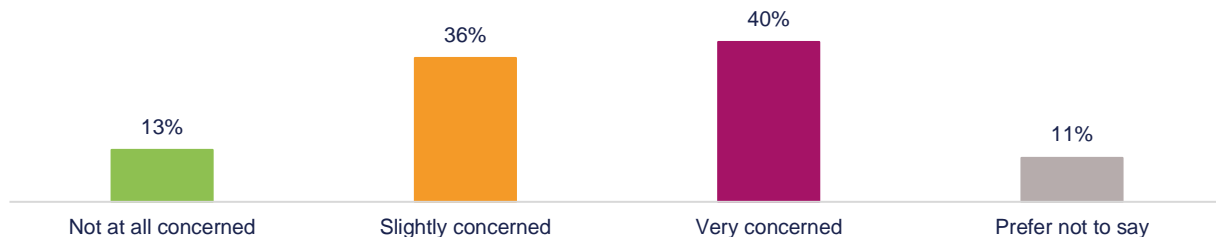
CBH also asks tenants questions about their wellbeing, including how they feel about the cost of living crisis.

Three quarters of tenants are at least slightly concerned about the cost of living crisis, with more very concerned (40%) than slightly concerned (36%). Only 13% of tenants are not at all concerned.

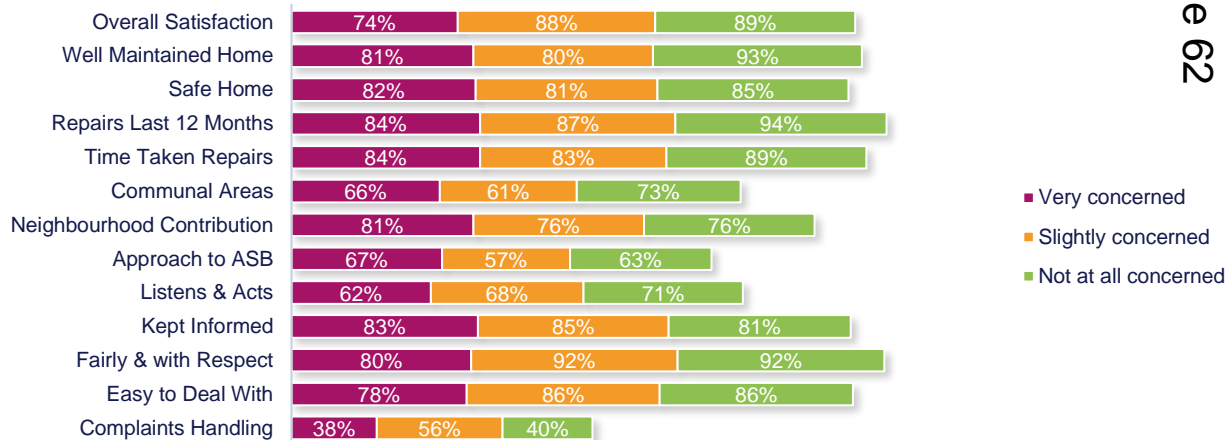
As seen in similar surveys from social landlords, CBH tenants who are concerned about their financial situation and the cost of living are less satisfied across the range of survey metrics.

Those not at all concerned about the cost of living see higher overall satisfaction at 89%, compared to 74% for those very concerned. A similar trend is seen across the survey metrics, though is less notable in time taken on repairs (showing only a 5p.p difference), and complaints handling (a marginal 2p.p difference).

Cost of Living Concern



Cost of Living Concern & Satisfaction





Damp and Mould

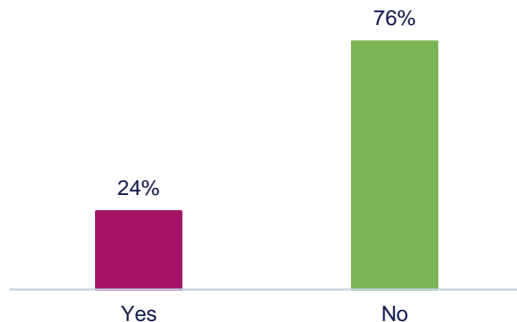
CBH also asked tenants about whether they have any damp or mould in their homes.

A quarter of tenants (24%) stated that they currently have damp or mould in their homes in Q2, whilst 67% of these tenants have reported the issue to CBH.

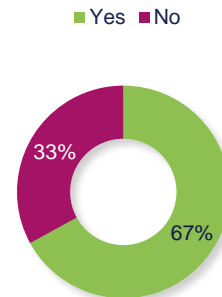
Although levels of damp and mould have decreased in Q2, this may simply be a one-off fluctuation, and levels are likely to change from quarter to quarter.

If not already being done so, these cases need to be investigated with urgency to protect tenant health and safety, and to prevent further deterioration of CBH properties.

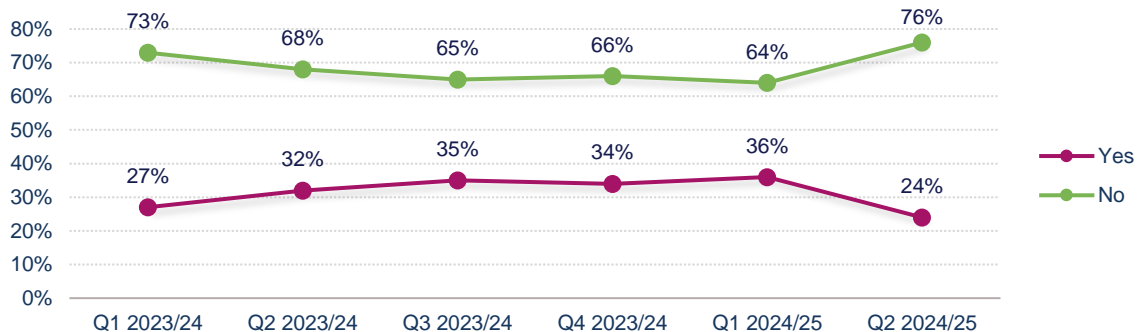
Experienced Damp/Mould Last 12 Months



Reported Damp/Mould



Experienced Damp & Mould Over Time





Improvements



Improvement Suggestions

Tenants were also asked if there was one thing CBH could do to improve its services and what would they like it to be, and 212 made comments.

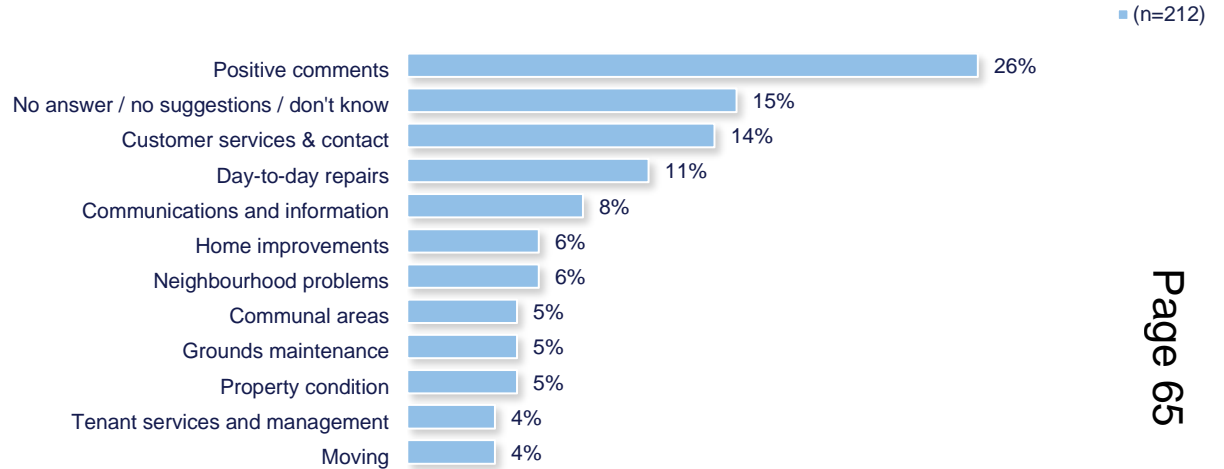
On a positive note, 26% of tenant comments are positive, for example, *"they are pretty good with what they do, I have had no problems."* An additional 15% had no suggestions, perhaps feeling that CBH services are already satisfactory.

In Q2, customer services and contact features as the most common area for improvement, with great care, empathy and support from staff wanted in particular.

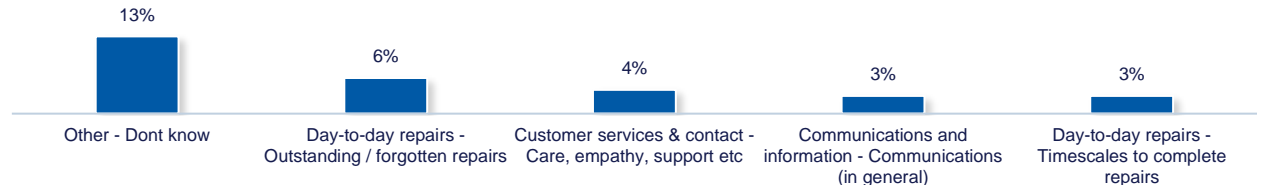
The repairs service also features in 11% of comments, with outstanding repairs and the timescales to complete them being the largest issues for tenants.

Others mention communication issues from CBH, including general communications problems, and others wish for home improvements and resolutions to neighbourhood problems, to a lesser extent.

Categories



Top 5 Improvements





Trends

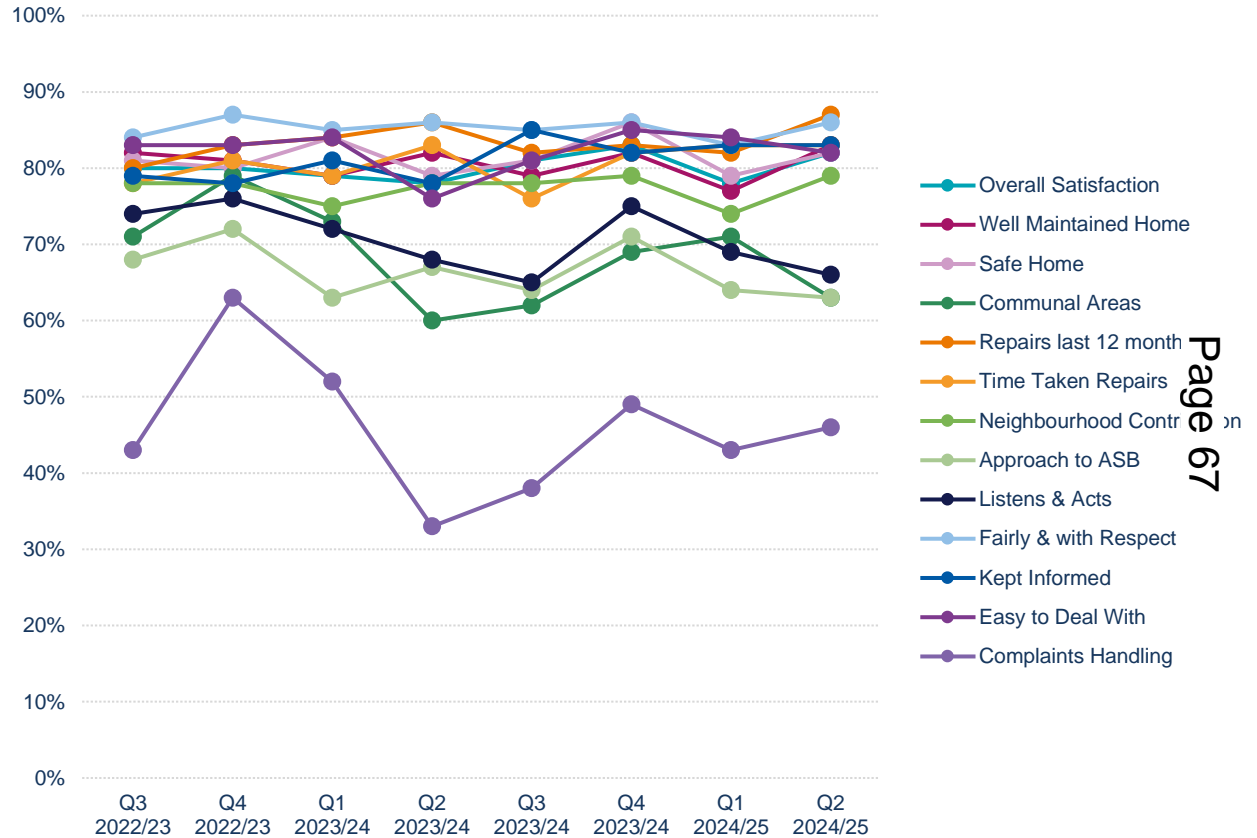


Trends Over Time

The chart opposite shows the changes in satisfaction for all measures within the survey over the last two years.

To be statistically significant, changes need to be more than the combined margins of error for the last two surveys, being 13p.p in this instance. No change exceeds this in Q2, with the largest change being a -7p.p decrease in satisfaction for communal areas.

Satisfaction is generally up in Q2, with the largest increase seen in well maintained home, up 6p.p. A few decreases are seen this quarter, including -7p.p for communal areas, -3 for listens and acts, -2p.p for approach to ASB, and -1p.p for listens and acts.



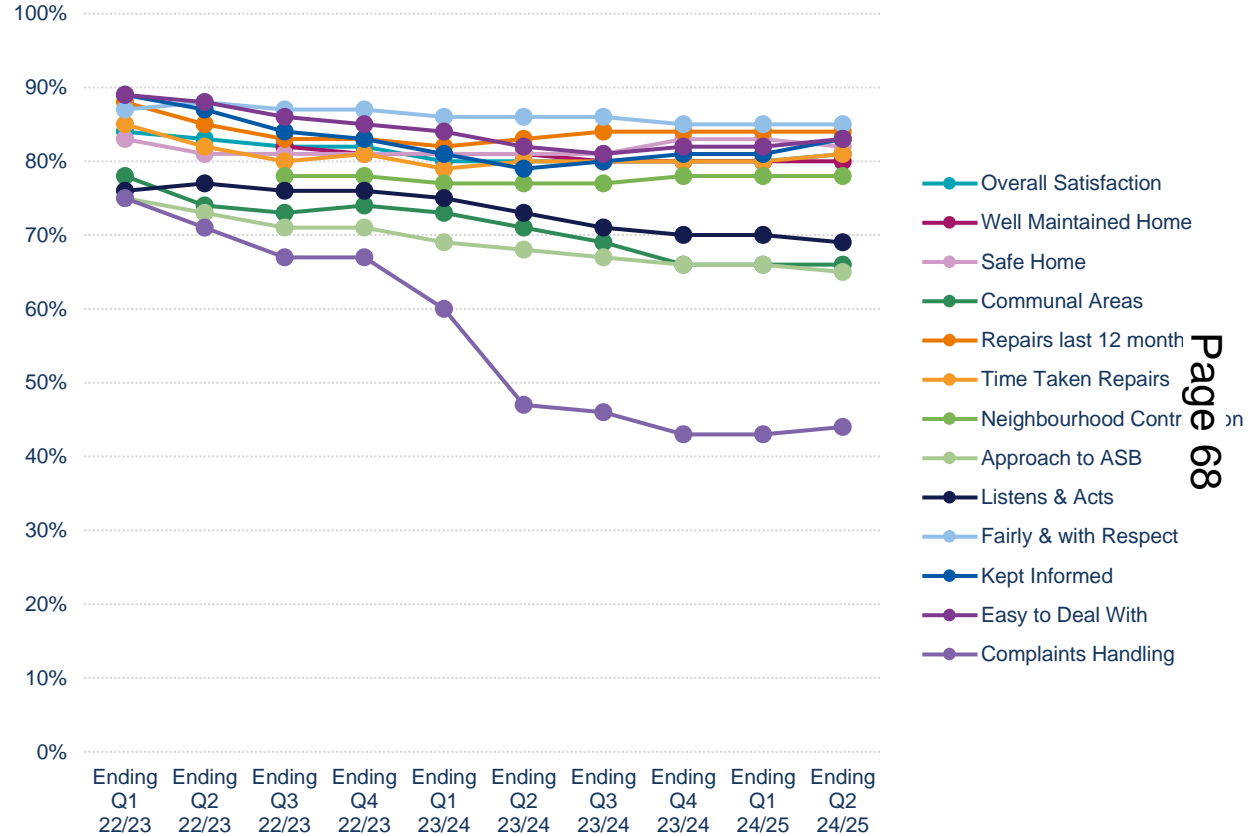


12 Month Rolling Averages

Another way to consider the results is to calculate the 12 month rolling averages. These average the last four results and are affected as much by those dropping out as the new ones added in.

Most metrics show a steady decline over the last several quarters using this measure. Both listens and acts and communal areas saw increases in 2022/23, before declining again from 2023/24 onwards.

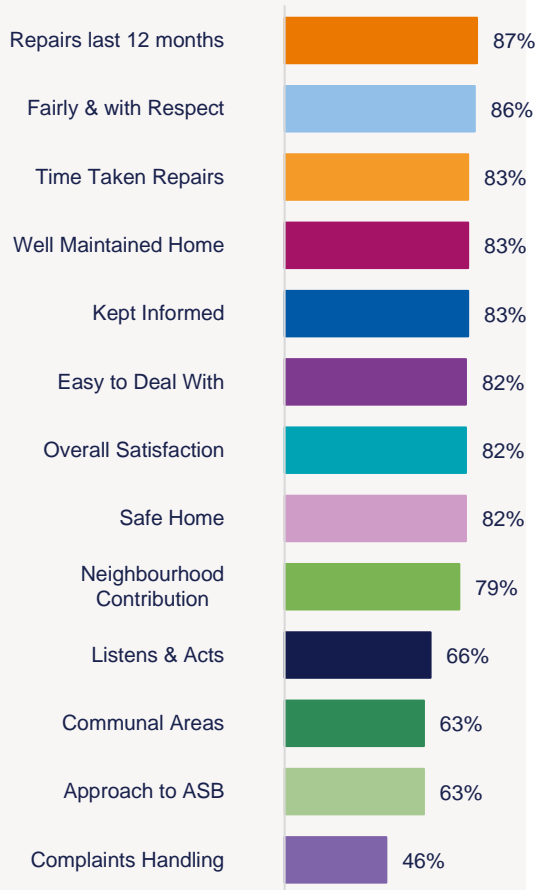
Complaints handling has been the most dramatic change over the last few years, but appears to have stabilised somewhat since Q4 of 23/24.





Q1 2024/25 Summary

Satisfaction with Measures



Summary

The quarterly surveys have continued into 2024/25, and satisfaction levels remain generally positive in Q2. This report is based on the 221 tenants that responded to the survey, plus 16 incomplete surveys, which are also required to be included by the Regulator.

As seen on the chart to the left, overall satisfaction sits at 82% in Q2, remaining in the middle of the range of measures. The highest scores in Q2 are seen in repairs in the last 12 months (87%), how tenants are treated fairly and with respect (86%), and the time taken to complete repairs (83%). In total, eight out of the 13 metrics achieve over 80% satisfaction. The lowest ratings are for communal areas, the approach to handling ASB, and complaints handling.

Compared to Q1, satisfaction is generally up, with the largest increase seen in well maintained home, up 6p.p to 83%. The largest decrease is -7p.p for communal areas, down to 63%. Time taken on repairs is consistent with Q1, showing a 0p.p change in Q2, and approach to ASB has declined by a marginal -1p.p this quarter. For a change to be statistically significant, the change must be greater than the combined margin of error for the past two surveys, being 13p.p in Q2, and no change exceeds this amount in Q2.

Around a quarter (24%) of tenants said they have problems with damp and mould in their homes, and a third (33%) of these have not been reported the issue to CBH. These cases should be investigated with urgency, if not already being done so. In Q2, around three quarters of tenants (76%) are at least slightly concerned about the cost of living, though this is down slightly from the 83% seen in Q1. This does appear to impact satisfaction scores, and so anything CBH can do to relieve some of these worries would surely be appreciated.

The survey includes open-ended questions to pinpoint specific areas of improvement for CBH based on specific tenant concerns. The repairs service attracts the most of these comments, as is often seen, with outstanding repairs, the time taken to complete them, and the quality of repairs work attracting some negative attention. Communications is also an area of concern for tenants who wish for staff to listen to them more carefully and show greater empathy and support during contact. Others would like to feel that CBH takes more of an interest in their views.





Recommendations

CBH prides itself on being a top-performing Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) aiming to make Cheltenham a better place to live by providing great homes and stronger communities.

The set of results from Q2 2024/25 largely confirm that CBH is well on its way to achieving this aim with high levels of satisfaction with many of the services it delivers which exceeds that of other councils, satisfaction is up a little from the previous quarter.

While satisfaction is good and generally compares well against other landlords, there are always areas that can be improved, and the recommendations opposite may help CBH to target these.

Repairs and Maintenance

Repairs metrics score above 80% in Q2, which is a very positive result. However, when asked about reasons for dissatisfaction with multiple metrics, and possible improvement areas for CBH, the repairs service is one of the most frequently mentioned areas, namely outstanding repairs that appear to have been forgotten, the time taken to complete repairs, and, to a lesser extent, the quality of repair works; these issues are common to other social landlords. Problems and delays can be caused by rising costs, dealing with urgent issues such as damp and mould, and dissatisfaction can also be driven by high expectations of service. However, reliable, clear, and consistent communications and updates on repairs can help build realistic tenant expectations around how long repairs will take, how many visits may be required, and the potential reasons for delays, which may help ease dissatisfaction in this area.

In addition, a quarter of tenants say they have problems with damp and mould, and a third of these have not reported the issue to CBH. Perhaps clearer communications around how to report damp and mould, amongst other repairs or complaints, can ensure none of these instances are missed by CBH, helping to protect tenant health and safety ; the condition of CBH properties.

Handling complaints

Dissatisfaction with complaints handling is down by -8p.p in Q2, with satisfaction increasing by a smaller 3p.p. Satisfaction in this area still sits at a low 46%, however, meaning fewer than half of tenants are happy with the service. Since the introduction of the measure in the TSMs, complaints handling has been consistently the lowest rated service for many, and has thrown complaints into the spotlight across the sector. This could, however, be an opportunity to contact those tenants affected to find out what went wrong and what could be improved. Including additional open ended probes into the survey would also highlight specific areas of tenant concern and dissatisfaction.

Communal Areas and ASB

The maintenance of the communal areas sees the biggest decrease in the survey for Q2, declining -7p.p to just 63%. The cleaning service for communal areas is most commonly mentioned in tenant comments in this area, including the frequency and quality of the service - particularly in communal stairways. Ensuring these services are maintained regularly will help ease dissatisfaction in this area. Rubbish left in communal areas is also mentioned, alongside some tenants waiting a long time for resolutions or updates on their complaints around anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood. Although CBH will not have full control over these issues around tenant behaviour, communications around what CBH has done for these issues, and even acknowledgement of tenant complaints in the first place, can help tenants feel more seen and heard by CBH.



Demographics



Tenure

As is often seen in these kinds of surveys, older tenants, and those in sheltered accommodation, are more satisfied than their general needs counterparts for CBH in most metrics - even though they show lower overall satisfaction by just 1p.p.

Differences are quite notable across all metrics, with the exception of treating tenants fairly and with respect, overall satisfaction, and easy to deal with (all showing a small 1p.p difference in scores in Q2). This suggests that tenure type does in fact have an impact on satisfaction.

	All Residents	General	Sheltered
Overall Satisfaction	82%	82%	81%
Well Maintained Home	83%	83%	85%
Safe Home	82%	81%	88%
Repairs Last 12 Months	87%	87%	92%
Time Taken Repairs	83%	82%	92%
Communal Areas	63%	60%	82%
Neighbourhood Contribution	79%	77%	94%
Approach to ASB	63%	61%	82%
Listens & Acts	66%	66%	72%
Kept Informed	83%	83%	82%
Fairly & with Respect	86%	86%	87%
Easy to Deal With	82%	82%	83%
Complaints Handling	46%	48%	25% *

Page 73

*Base below 10



Age Group

Again, as seen with sheltered tenants, it is common in these types of surveys that satisfaction increases with age, and this is generally the case for CBH as well.

The highest overall satisfaction scores are seen for those aged 65-74 (94%), with all groups over the age of 55 scoring above 80% overall satisfaction.

The lowest overall satisfaction scores are seen in younger tenants, namely 25-34 year olds and 45-54 year olds (both at 77%). Although 16-24 year olds score even lower than this, fewer than 10 responses were received (shown by the *), impacting the accuracy of these results.

	All Residents	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Overall Satisfaction	83%	71% *	77%	81%	77%	83%	94%	89%	86% *
Well Maintained Home	83%	57% *	77%	79%	86%	81%	91%	100%	86% *
Safe Home	82%	57% *	73%	87%	74%	81%	94%	95%	71% *
Repairs Last 12 Months	88%	100% *	86%	79%	78%	97%	84%	100%	100% *
Time Taken Repairs	83%	100% *	71%	83%	72%	82%	89%	100%	100% *
Communal Areas	63%	57% *	45%	57%	57%	70%	77%	75%	63% *
Neighbourhood Contribution	79%	80% *	65%	79%	73%	75%	88%	100%	79% *
Approach to ASB	62%	40% *	50%	58%	57%	65%	74%	88% *	62% *
Listens & Acts	66%	67% *	65%	50%	59%	67%	85%	87%	50% *
Kept Informed	82%	100% *	75%	84%	74%	80%	87%	94%	80% *
Fairly & with Respect	87%	86% *	86%	89%	82%	85%	91%	94%	75% *
Easy to Deal With	83%	100% *	80%	83%	65%	86%	85%	94%	100% *
Complaints Handling	46%	50% *	60%	47%	25% *	55%	25% *	50% *	- *

Page 74

*Base below 10



Property Type

Very few tenants live in bedsits in Q2, impacting the accuracy of results received.

With this in mind, tenants in all property types appear to show high overall satisfaction of above 80%. The highest overall scores are seen in bungalows (93%), with the lowest score still being a positive 81% for flats.

As seen previously, there is little difference in satisfaction between flats and houses for overall satisfaction, but flats score notably higher in repairs in the last 12 months (a 13p.p difference), and approach to ASB (a 9p.p difference).

	All Residents	BEDSIT	BUNGAL	FLAT	HOUSE
Overall Satisfaction	82%	100% *	93%	81%	82%
Well Maintained Home	83%	100% *	100%	84%	78%
Safe Home	82%	100% *	93%	80%	83%
Repairs Last 12 Months	87%	100% *	100%	92%	79%
Time Taken Repairs	83%	100% *	80%	86%	79%
Communal Areas	63%	100% *	100% *	64%	38%
Neighbourhood Contribution	79%	100% *	82%	81%	76%
Approach to ASB	63%	- *	88% *	58%	67%
Listens & Acts	66%	100% *	82%	65%	65%
Kept Informed	83%	100% *	93%	81%	82%
Fairly & with Respect	86%	100% *	93%	84%	87%
Easy to Deal With	82%	100% *	86%	83%	81%
Complaints Handling	46%	- *	0% *	46%	50%

Page 75

*Base below 10



Gender

Generally, female tenants tend to be less satisfied in these kinds of surveys, but this is not the case for CBH in Q2. Female tenants show 86% overall satisfaction, 9p.p higher than the 77% shown by their male counterparts.

Very few transgender tenants responded to the survey in Q2, so these results have not been commented on.

Female tenants, however, are more satisfied across all measures, with the exception of repairs in the last 12 months, though there is only a 2p.p difference between genders for this metric.

	All Residents	Male	Female	Transgender
Overall Satisfaction	83%	77%	86%	0% *
Well Maintained Home	83%	78%	86%	0% *
Safe Home	82%	81%	83%	100% *
Repairs Last 12 Months	88%	89%	87%	- *
Time Taken Repairs	83%	82%	84%	- *
Communal Areas	63%	69%	59%	0% *
Neighbourhood Contribution	79%	77%	80%	- *
Approach to ASB	62%	59%	65%	0% *
Listens & Acts	66%	58%	72%	0% *
Kept Informed	82%	78%	85%	- *
Fairly & with Respect	87%	82%	90%	0% *
Easy to Deal With	83%	79%	85%	0% *
Complaints Handling	46%	38%	52%	- *

Page 76

*Base below 10



Length of Tenancy

It is common that new tenants to an organisation are highly satisfied, perhaps having waited for some time for an offer or having been in poor accommodation, but then satisfaction tails off over time.

However, in Q2 it is those with CBH for over 20 years who are the most satisfied (100%) and those of 6 to 10 years the least satisfied overall. Interestingly, those with long tenancies of 11-20 years are the most dissatisfied across almost all metrics.

Satisfaction is still high with the longest serving tenants in regards the repairs service and the maintenance of their homes.

	All Residents	A. < 1 year	B. 1 - 3 years	C. 4 - 5 years	D. 6 - 10 years	E. 11 - 20 years	F. Over 20 years
Overall Satisfaction	82%	83%	85%	83%	72%	77%	100%
Well Maintained Home	83%	90%	92%	78%	76%	69%	100%
Safe Home	82%	85%	90%	78%	80%	69%	94%
Repairs Last 12 Months	87%	91%	97%	88%	88%	71%	100%
Time Taken Repairs	83%	91%	90%	100%	76%	62%	100%
Communal Areas	63%	62%	67%	60%	68%	52%	69%
Neighbourhood Contribution	79%	91%	84%	73%	76%	72%	88%
Approach to ASB	63%	86% *	59%	64%	60%	58%	73%
Listens & Acts	66%	58%	75%	69%	63%	53%	84%
Kept Informed	83%	85%	87%	82%	77%	73%	97%
Fairly & with Respect	86%	88%	83%	95%	85%	79%	97%
Easy to Deal With	82%	89%	85%	86%	77%	75%	91%
Complaints Handling	46%	33% *	50%	67% *	63%	17%	33% *

Page 77

*Base below 10



This research project was carried out to conform with ISO20252:2019 and the MRS Code of Conduct.

For further information on this report please contact:
Denise Raine: denise.raine@arap.co.uk

Acuity
Tel: 01273 287114
Email: acuity@arap.co.uk
Address: PO Box 395, Umberleigh, EX32 2HL

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet Housing Committee – 13 November 2024

Q2 2024/25 Housing Complaints & Compliments Report

Accountable member:

Cabinet Member for Housing & Customer Services, Flo Clucas

Accountable officer:

Caroline Walker, Head of Community Services

Ward(s) affected:

n/a

Key Decision: No

Executive summary:

This report provides an overview of housing related complaints and compliments received during quarter two 2024/25.

In this quarter, 59 complaints were received and accepted at stage one of the housing complaints process. Of these, 54 have been responded to, with 45 complaints upheld, either in their entirety or in part, and 9 were not upheld.

2 cases were considered at stage two of the complaints process, with one being upheld.

8 compensation payments, totalling £1,770 have been paid to customers, three of which related to dissatisfaction with new build properties where a photovoltaic system had not been activated at handover.

The three areas of greatest dissatisfaction are poor communication, contractor related issues & quality of work.

34 compliments have been received during the quarter, with Repairs (19), Estates maintenance (4) and Tenancy Management (3) attracting the highest levels of positive customer feedback.

Complaints relating to disrepair remain low with two reported during this quarter

There has been a significant decrease in complaints relating to quality of works with 12 complaints of

that nature recorded during this period, compared with 21 in quarter one. This reflects the work of the Complaints Officer in working with the management team in Repairs & Maintenance to proactively review the complaints and engage in conversation with individuals where quality of work concerns have been identified.

Complaints relating to works carried out on our behalf by contractors are the second highest area of dissatisfaction, with 15 complaints of this nature recorded during quarter 2, rising from 12 in quarter one.

Reviewing these complaints to identify gaps in service, and engagement with our contractors around this have been identified as areas for learning and service improvement.

Following a review of stage 2 of the housing complaints process, a revised process has been adopted, whereby a senior officer will now be appointed to review and respond any case escalated from stage one, replacing the complaints panel approach.

Recommendations:

1. That the report and next steps are noted by the Committee.
-

1. Implications

1.1 Corporate Plan Priorities

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Being a more modern, efficient and financially sustainable council

1.2 Performance management – monitoring and review

Committee will be kept informed quarterly regarding performance in housing complaints.

2 Background

2.1 Complaints data is collected monthly and reported quarterly and annually. This allows for monitoring of areas and levels of customer dissatisfaction as well as the identification of learning and service improvements.

This reporting allows for performance monitoring to ensure that we are compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code in respect of complaint management and response timescales.

3 Reasons for recommendations

3.1 To ensure that committee are kept informed of housing complaints and dissatisfaction, the service areas experiencing complaints, as well as the areas for learning and service development.

4 Key risks

Failure to comply with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and the Council complaints policy and manage complaints appropriately may result in a maladministration decision from the Ombudsman, intervention and financial penalty.

Report author:

Caroline Walker, caroline.walker@cbh.org

Appendices:

- i. Q2 2024/25 Housing Complaints and Compliments report

This page is intentionally left blank

Housing Complaints and Compliments Report

Q2 - July– September 2024

Natasha Dhillon – Complaints Officer

Natasha.Dhillon@cbh.org

In this period:

	Compliments	Complaints responded to
July	15	17 (1 withdrawn)
August	9	13 (4 withdrawn)
September	10	24

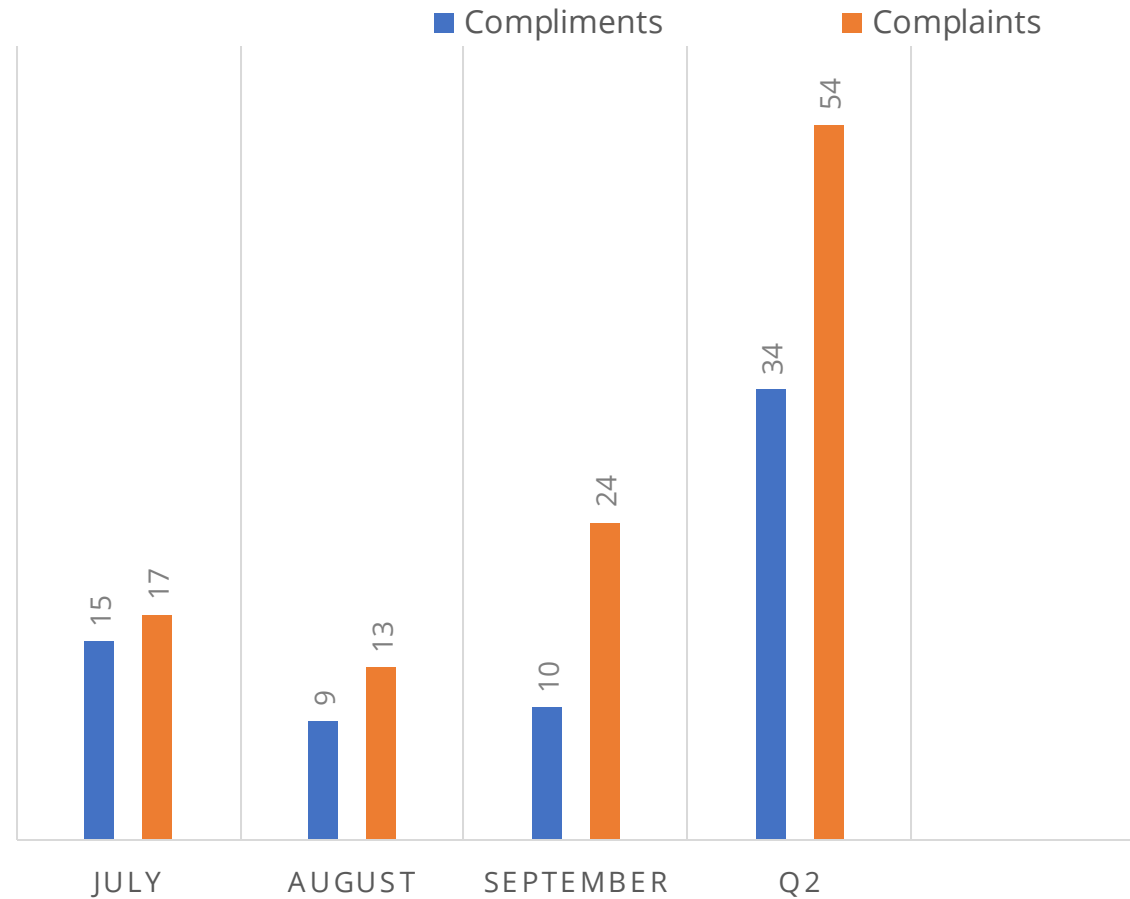
During quarter 2 a total of 59 complaints were opened at Stage 1 of the complaints process, with 54 being responded to.

This represents a 19.4% decrease in responded to complaints compared with quarter 1, during which 67 complaints were responded to at Stage 1.

It is evident that there is a trend in complaints involving contractors completing repairs and planned maintenance, which have risen from 12 complaints in quarter 1 to 15 in quarter 2.

These complaints have been reviewed to identify gaps in the service provided to our customers by our contractors. The Complaints Officer will collaborate with relevant contract managers to address these issues with individual contractors.

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2024



Q2 OVERVIEW – July - September 2024

59 complaints opened in Q2 July- September 2024.

5 complaints were withdrawn or closed due to no tenant contact.

35 of the 54 complaints responded to were responded to within 10 working days.

19 complaints had agreed Stage 1 extensions applied, all of which were responded to within the extended timescale.

5 complaints were declined, with clear reasoning provided to the customer in writing in line with the HOS complaint handling code.

The average number of days taken to investigate all closed complaints was 13.3 days.

The average time taken to respond to complaints that were not extended was 9.1 days.

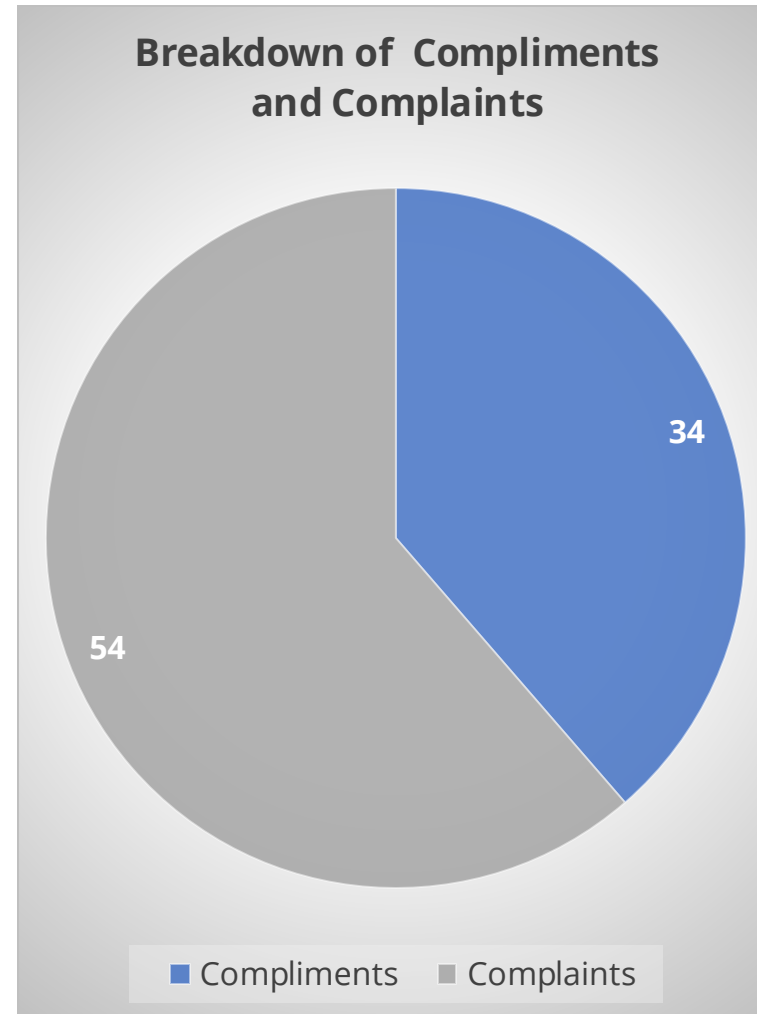
Compensation - 8 complaints were offered compensation at Stage 1
1 complaint received compensation at Stage 2

In this period 4 complaints were escalated to Stage 2, all are current and have not yet been responded to.

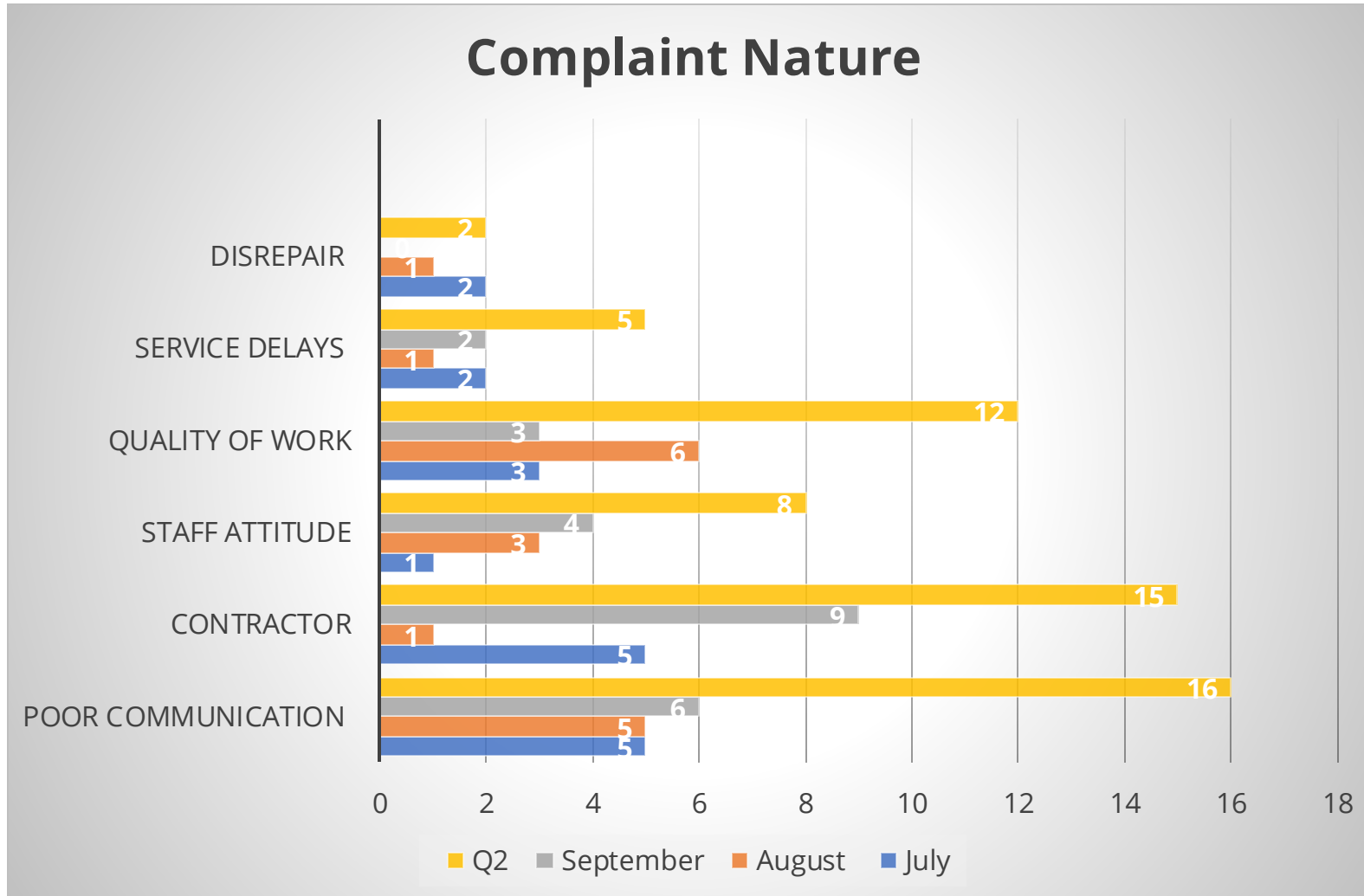
Two Stage 2 responses were sent within the period, one of which was upheld.

RESOLVED AT STAGE 2	ESCALATED TO OMBUDSMAN
1	1

UPHELD	PARTLY UPHELD	NOT UPHELD
33	12	9



Breakdown of Complaint Nature



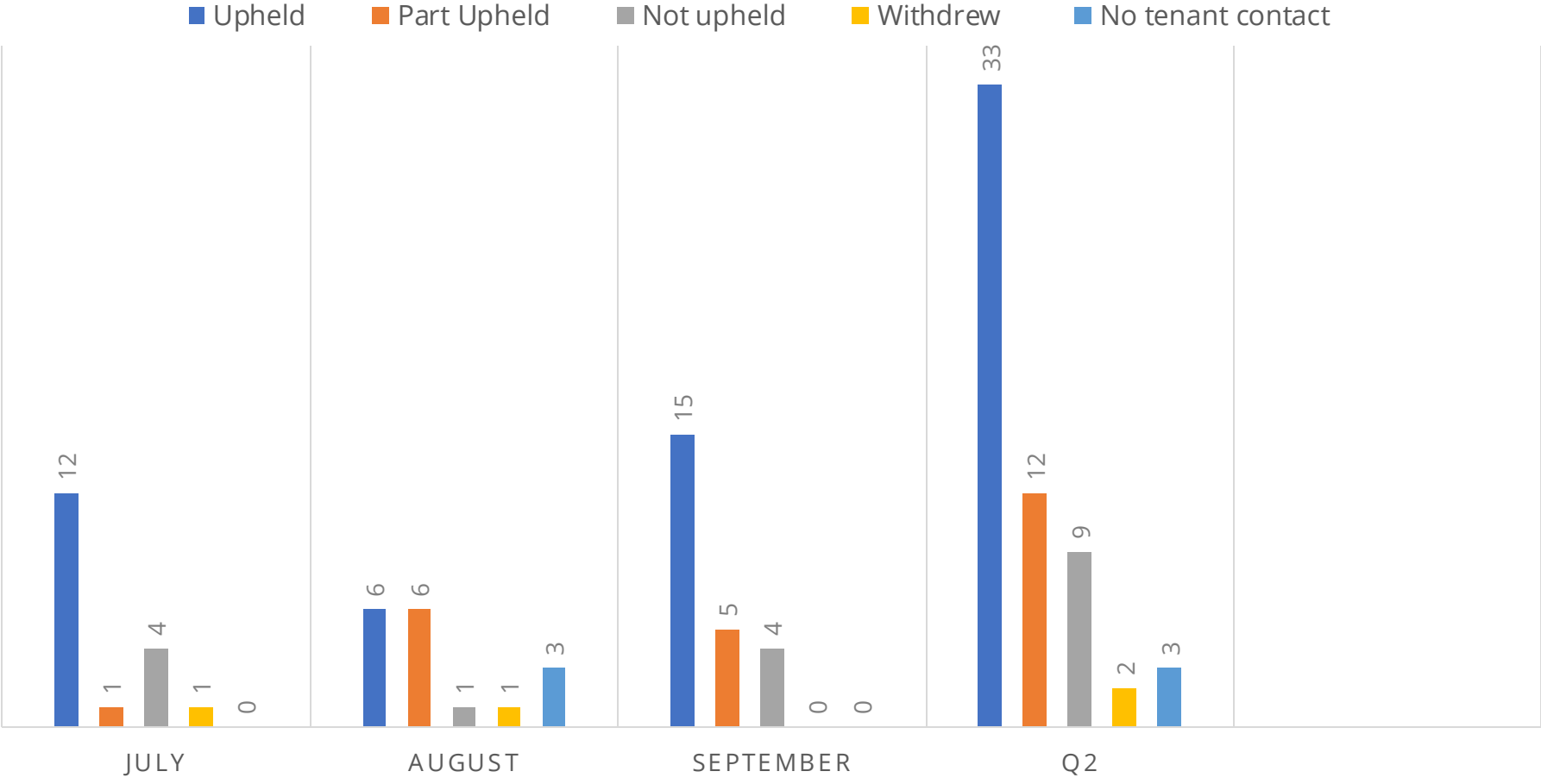
Upon review, it has been noted that there has been an increase in poor communication and contractor complaints, which will be thoroughly investigated by the complaints officer within each service area.

It is encouraging to report that the quality of works has significantly improved. In the previous quarter, this was the primary reason for complaints.

This improvement is attributed to repairs managers proactively addressing highlighted issues and engaging in conversations with individuals to address concerns regarding the quality of works.

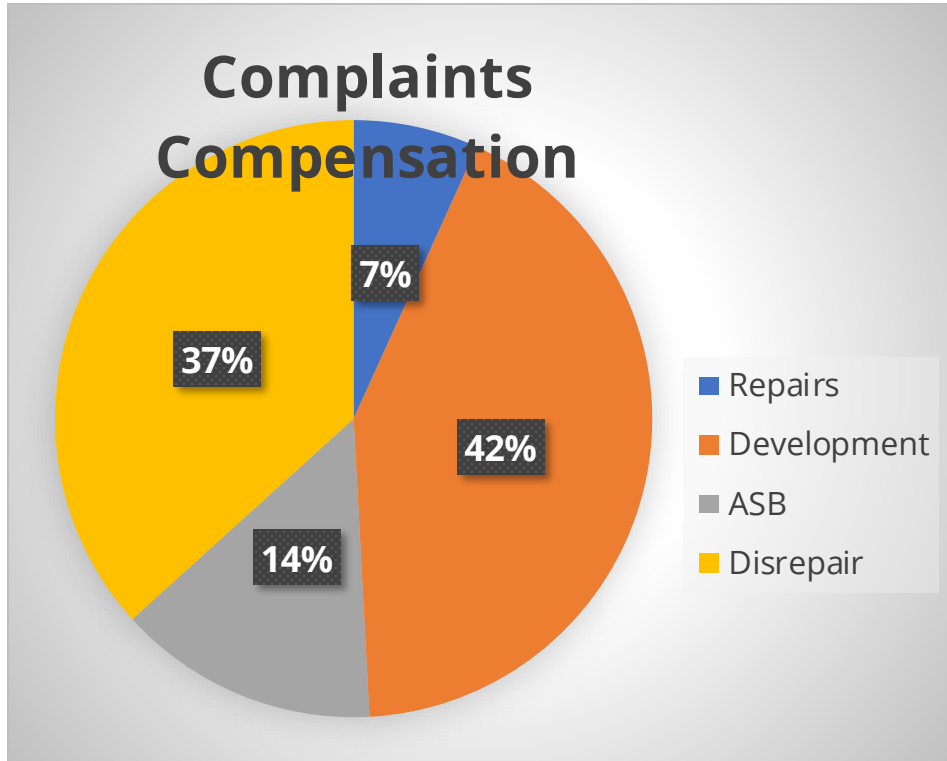
Furthermore, there has been a notable improvement in service delays complaints, which were the highest contributing factor for complaints in 23/24

Complaint Outcomes



42/54 complaints upheld and in part.

Complaints Compensation



Month	Amount	Department	Total
July	£120 £300 £350	Repairs Disrepair Disrepair	£770
August			
September	£150 £100 £250 £250 £250	ASB ASB Development Development Development	£1000
Total			£1,770,00

There has been a decrease in compensation requests this quarter in comparison with quarter 1 and this period last year. The decline is disrepair cases had also contributed to the decrease in compensation paid out.

We have received 3 complaints from the new build service team. This has led to a wider review of the handover process as they all stem from the same development and with similar issues.

Complainant Profile

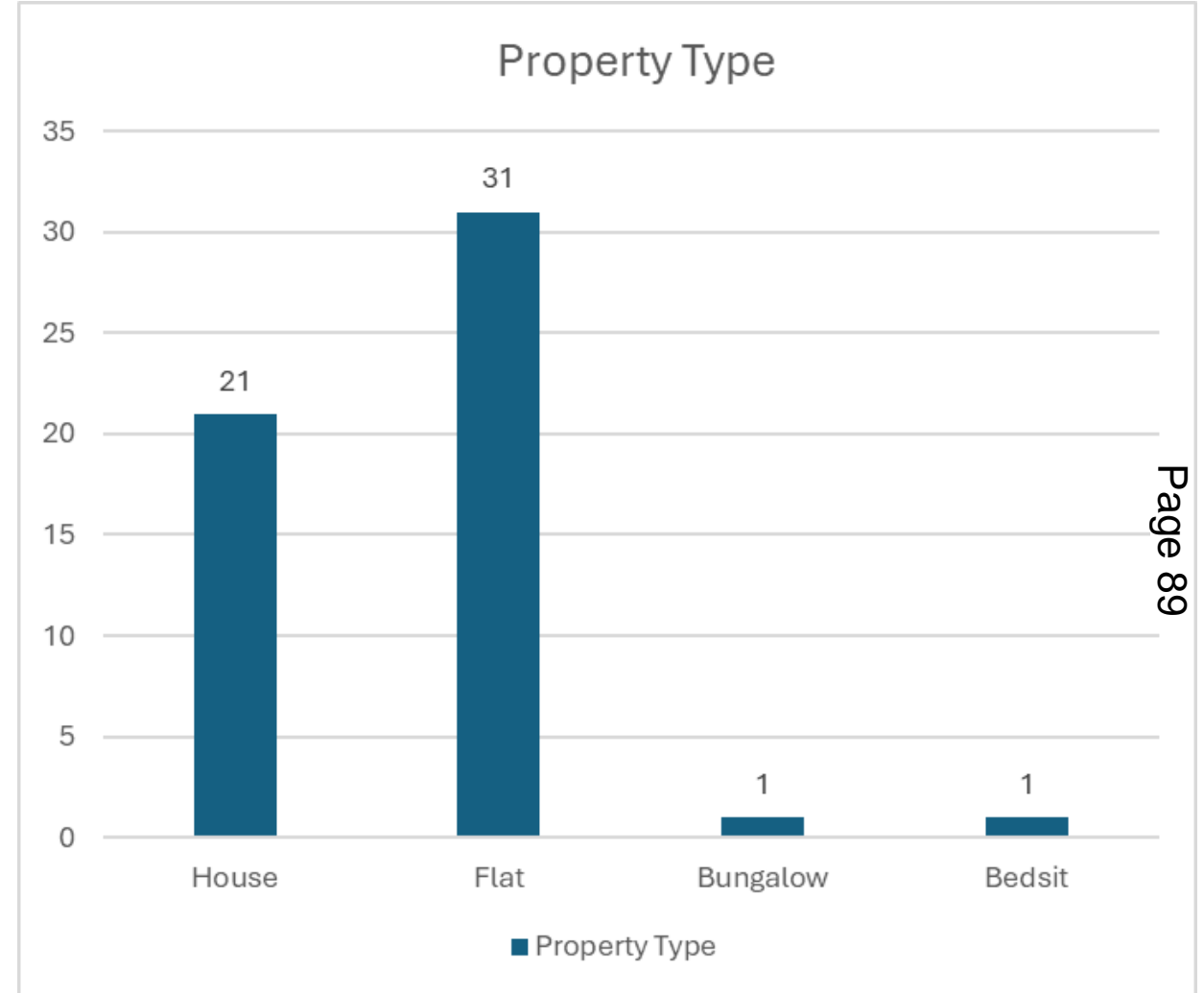
Age Category	Total
No Age Data	6.8%
16-24	1.7%
25-34	22.0%
35-44	18.6%
45-54	20.3%
55-64	20.3%
65-74	5.1%
85+	1.7
Total	100%

Disability Flag	Total
Disabled	23.7%
Not Disabled	69.5%
No Data	6.8%
Total	100%

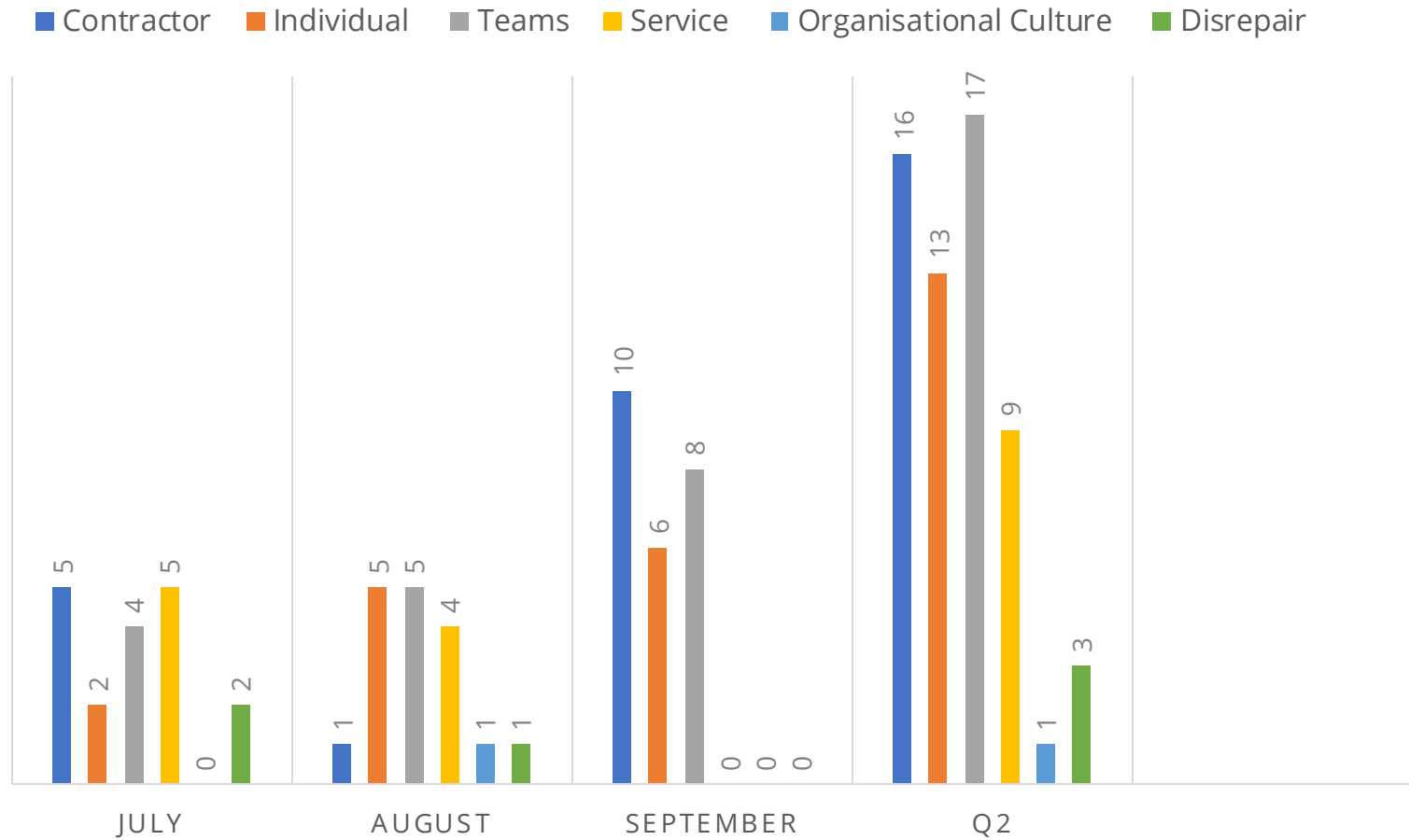
Ethnic Origin	Total	
White British	74.6%	
No Data	11.9%	
White Other	10.2%	
White Irish	1.7%	
Black or Black British African	1.7%	
Total	100%	

Gender	Total
No Data	6.8%
Female	71.2%
Male	22.0%
Total	100%

Property Type



LEARNING FRAMEWORK

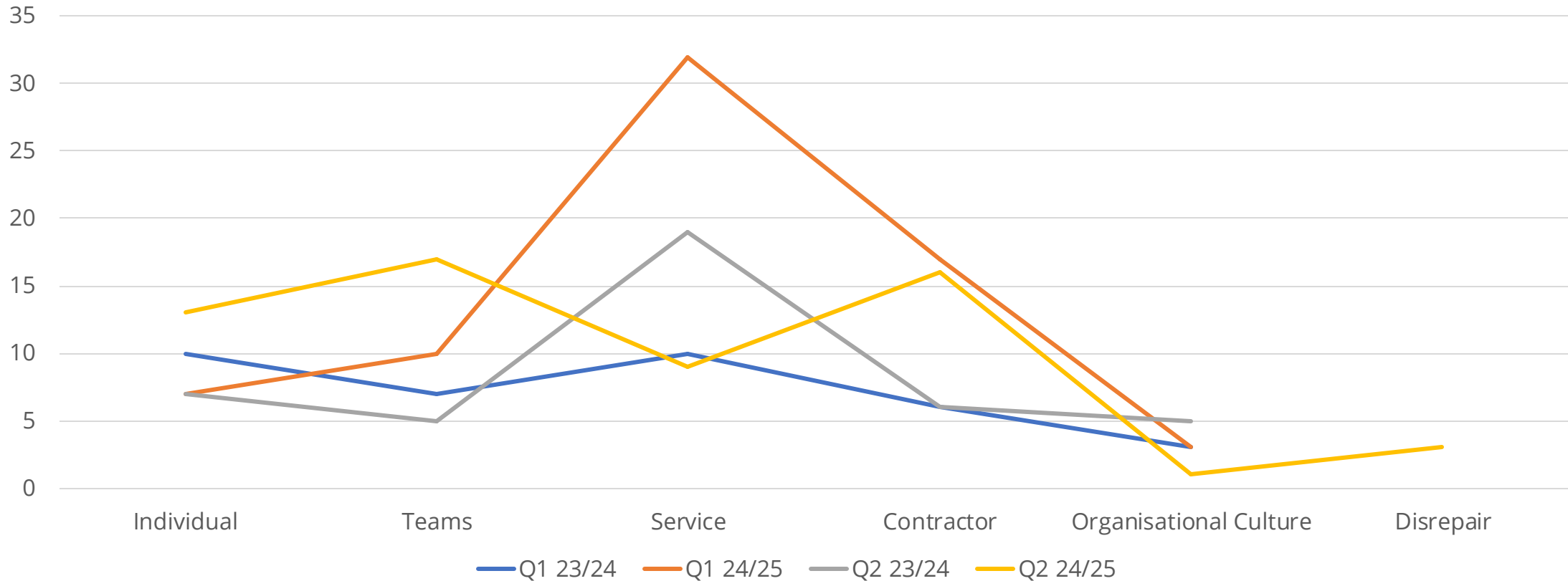


Contractor concerns have remained a significant issue, with the second highest number of complaints being related to this area.

The Complaints Officer will address this matter with the relevant departments. Notably, service has been identified as the primary area for improvement in Q1 of this year. Efforts to enhance the services provided have resulted in an improvement in this aspect.

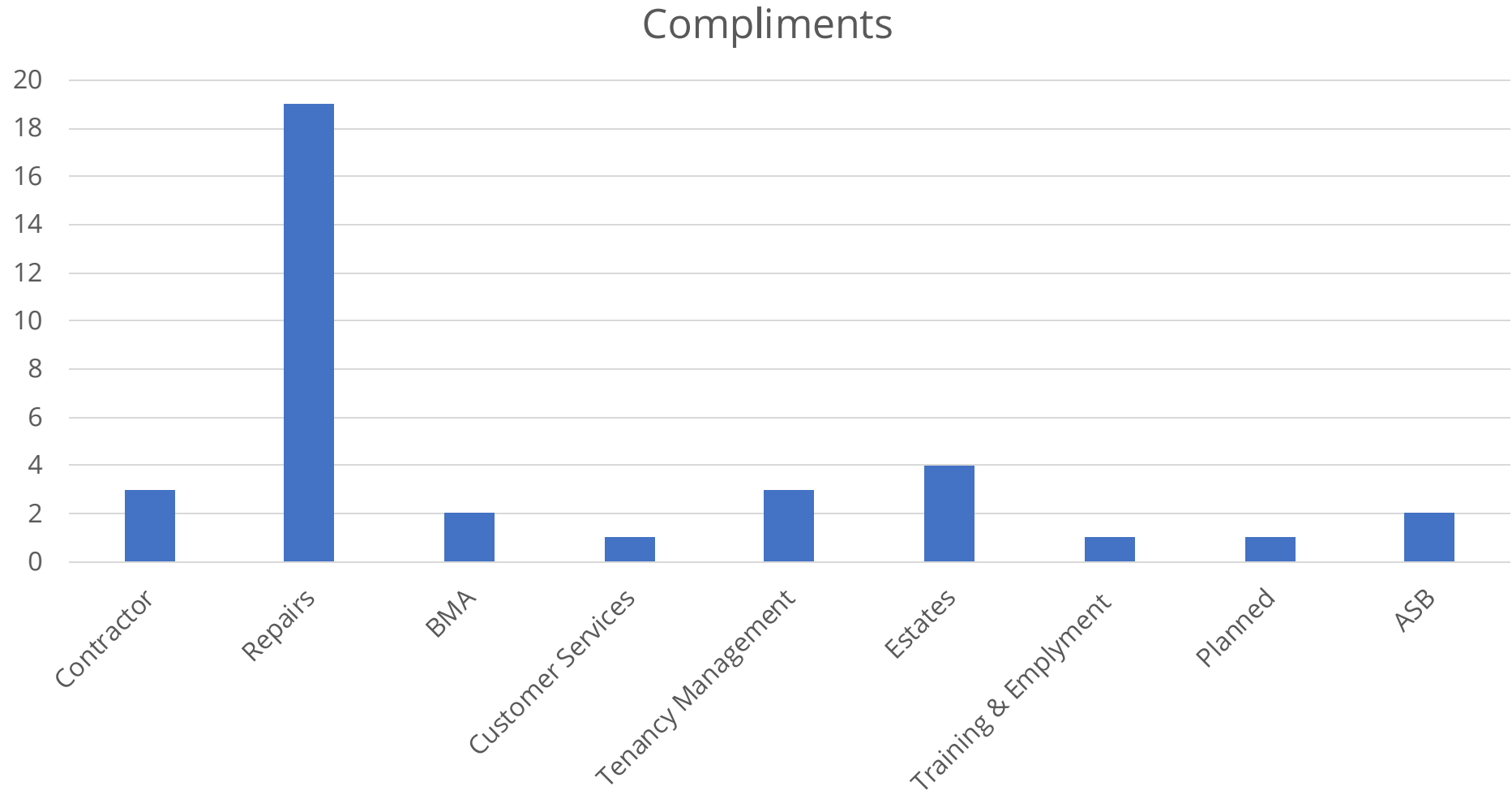
The Complaints Officer will examine each complaint stemming from contractor or team issues and conduct thorough investigations with the relevant service area

Learning Framework Applied



Since the introduction of the Complaints officer in February 2023, we have accumulated a year's worth of data for comparison. As demonstrated earlier, there is a noticeable correlation in the learning framework's application to the complaints. The decrease in the number of service failure-related complaints is a positive development, underscoring the significance of learning from complaints and its impact.

The Complaints Officer will conduct further analysis of complaints concerning contractors/teams following an increase in such complaints. Subsequently, they will collaborate with relevant Managers and Heads of Service to assess the implementation of identified learning and improvement actions and determine if further measures are necessary.



IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS

- We have completed testing on the complaints SMS satisfaction surveys.
- The Stage 2 complaint process change has been implemented and is now a streamlined process of senior officer review, replacing the complaint panel approach.

NEXT STEPS

- TSIP to undertake a scrutiny of the complaints process
- Develop quarterly complaints focus groups targeted at customers with experience of the complaints process
- To go live with the SMS satisfaction survey with coordinated communications to customers
- Review contractor related complaints with relevant contract managers ahead of engagement with individual contractors
- To utilise complaints data as a part of the review into our customer service standards.

This page is intentionally left blank

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet Housing Committee – 13 November 2024

Covering Report for Fencing, Hedgerows and Boundary

Policy

Accountable member:

Cllr Flo Clucas, Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services

Accountable officer:

Mark Way, Head of Building Services

Ward(s) affected:

All

Key Decision: No

Executive summary:

The Fencing, Hedgerows and Boundary policy broadly sets out how Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) will address the repairs, maintenance and renewals of existing boundary fencing. It sets out how we will respond to boundary issues raised by our tenants and others residing in adjacent properties.

Recommendations:

1. **To recommend the adoption of this policy for approval by Cabinet.**
-

1 Implications

1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications

Budgetary provision was made in the HRA budget 24/25 proposals presented for Council approval in Feb 24, with a projection of budgetary requirements for the following two years. The HRA 30-year plan includes for investment in repairs and if necessary, renewal of these components. For future years no orders committing to spend will be raised until budget approval has been given on an annual basis.

[please send to your finance business partner to summarise any financial implications of the recommendations – if the report also includes property and/or asset implications please send it to.]

Signed off by: Gemma Bell, Director of Finance and Assets, gemma.bell@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.2 Legal implications

In dealing with any fences between CBC land and privately owned land, the Council should be aware of the provisions of the Party Walls etc Act 1996 and in particular the requirement to serve notices before carrying out any work to party structures. One Legal can provide further advice on individual cases if required.

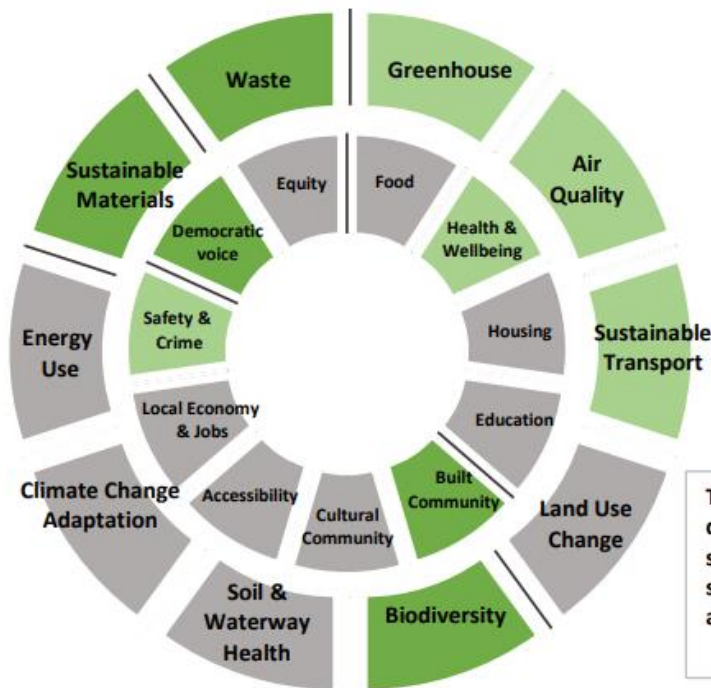
It would also be advisable to enter into agreements with adjoining landowners regarding ongoing maintenance to avoid questions of future liability.

Signed off by: One Legal (Sian Cheetham, Sian.Cheetham@onelegal.org.uk)

1.3 Environmental and climate change implications

This policy reduces negative environmental implications by adopting a ‘Repair First’ approach, which is a more sustainable, holistic practice over unnecessary renewal. By utilising this approach it follows good waste management practice, by maximising longevity of existing fences through repair. The protection of hedges, shrubs, bushes, and trees is also promoted, whereby tenants are encouraged to maintain existing and plant new hedgerows, instead of using fencing wherever practicable. Minimising further negative impacts on wildlife has been considered, for example gaps will be left at the base of fencing to allow wildlife (Hedgehogs etc) to roam freely. Assessment Table below with full report in Appendix 3.

Fencing, Hedgerows and Boudary Policy



Key	
	Significant and/or long-term positive impact identified. No changes needed.
	Slight or short-term positive impact identified. No changes needed but could be reviewed to improve.
	Not applicable or no cause for concern.
	Slight or short-term negative impact identified. Review to identify possible improvements.
	Significant and/or long-term negative impact identified. Changes needed before proceeding.

This summary of the CIAT should be used to aid your decision making. Please note that red/amber segments simply mean that mitigations and changes should take place not that the project cannot go ahead.

Signed off by: Maizy McCann, Climate Emergency Officer, maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.4 Corporate Plan Priorities

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Working with residents, communities and businesses to help make Cheltenham #netzero by 2030
- Ensuring residents, communities and businesses benefit from Cheltenham's future growth and prosperity
- Being a more modern, efficient and financially sustainable council

1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

An equalities impact assessment has been completed and is attached at Appendix 2.

1.6 Performance management – monitoring and review

The policy will be reviewed 3 years with performance being monitored every quarter. The performance reviews will include tracking of customer satisfaction, complaints and compliments and expenditure against budget.

2 Background

- 2.1 The current Tenant Handbook states “we will only repair fences that are connected to public land, intermediate fences between properties will be posts with strands of wire”. However, the standard of posts with three stands of wire does not meet our customers' expectations and, historically this has not been adhered to, with concrete posts and chain link fencing becoming the minimum standard and, furthermore, a plethora of other fence types have been erected by us, by our tenants and by others in adjacent properties. The situation has been further complicated with the introduction of timber fencing being used for newly developed property and repairs having been completed to all types of fences and not just those connected to public land as stated in the Tenant's Handbook.
- 2.2 The current situation has arisen over many years and is not something that can be rectified quickly, however, the new policy sets out an aspirational long-term position and provides the means for more control over what happens now and going forwards. It will provide staff with the guidance they need when delivering services and will ensure that our tenants are fully informed about the approach we will take.
- 2.3 In terms of funding, there is insufficient budget in the HRA for a full fencing renewal programme, however, the numbers support an annual programme of replacement to the value of £150K - £300K per Annum. Therefore, the policy sets out a repairs first approach with renewals only to be programmed where fencing is beyond repair and where budget is available.

3 Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 To standardise the approach to repairs, maintenance and renewals of fencing, hedgerows and boundary renewals across CBC estates.

3.2 To provide clear guidance to staff and tenants and residents.

3.3 To set out CBC's aspirations for improvements in standards and acknowledge the importance of biodiversity on our estates.

4 Alternative options considered

4.1 N/A

5 Consultation and feedback

5.1 The fencing policy was developed after cross-team consultation and following review by Tenant Scrutiny and Improvement Panel (TSIP) it was amended accordingly. The policy sets out a standard approach that will be affordable and that can be easily followed by staff and explained to tenants. It will facilitate incremental improvements and renewals on our estates which should in turn be reflected with improved customer satisfaction.

6. Key risks

6.1 A risk assessment has been completed and it attached at Appendix 1.

Report author:

Mark Way, Head of Building Services, mark.way@cbh.org

Appendices:

- i. Risk Assessment
- ii. Equality Impact Assessment – Screening –(to be included in all Cabinet and Council reports)
- iii. [Climate Change Impact Assessment](#) (*if needed*)

Background information:

None

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
1	Without a policy in place there is a risk that we are unable to manage the expectations of our tenants resulting in complaints	Head of Busing Services	2	3	6	Reduce the risk	Introduce Policy	Head of Building Services	Dec 2024
2	Without a policy in place there is a risk that our services will be inconsistent thereby resulting in confusion amongst staff and contractors	Head of Building Services	3	3	9	Reduce the risk	Introduce policy and make sure staff are aware of its existence	Head of Building Services	January 2025
3	Without a policy in place there is a risk that we will not be able to maximise opportunities for increased biodiversity	Head of Building Services	2	3	6	Reduce the risk	Introduce policy and make sure staff are aware of its existence and publicise so tenants also become aware of it	Head of Building Services	January 2025

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
4.	Without a policy in place there is a risk that we will not be able to realise opportunities to minimise CBC's carbon footprint	Head of Building Services	2	3	6	Reduce the risk	Introduce policy and make sure staff are aware of its existence	Head of Building Services	January 2025

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

1 Identify the policy, project, function or service change

a. Person responsible for this Equality Impact Assessment

Officer responsible: Mark Way / Debbie Copeland	Service Area: Housing
Title: Head of Building Services / Planned Maintenance Manager	Date of assessment: 11/09/24
Signature: M Way / D J Copeland	

b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Policy

If other, please specify:

c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Fencing, Hedging and Boundary Policy

Is this new or existing? **New or proposed**

Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project

d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:

The aim of this policy is to provide guidance to all staff and customers about our approach to fencing to our customers' homes including CBC's obligations for repair and replacement.

Objectives:

To clearly set out the obligations of the landlord (Cheltenham Borough Council) and the obligations of tenants and leaseholders.

- To provide clarity for CBC staff, tenants and leaseholders through a document which clearly defines the type and standard of fencing adopted when renewal is required.
- To set out and define the principle of a "Repairs First" approach to maximise the longevity of existing boundary fences and thus make the renewal of fences to a higher standard affordable when renewal is required.
- To set out a standard approach where fences need renewal that will meet tenant expectation, reduce complaints, improve security and aesthetics, and simplify future repairs with a combined effect of improving efficiency and increasing tenant satisfaction
- To provide a means by which disputes and complaints can be resolved through the application of this policy

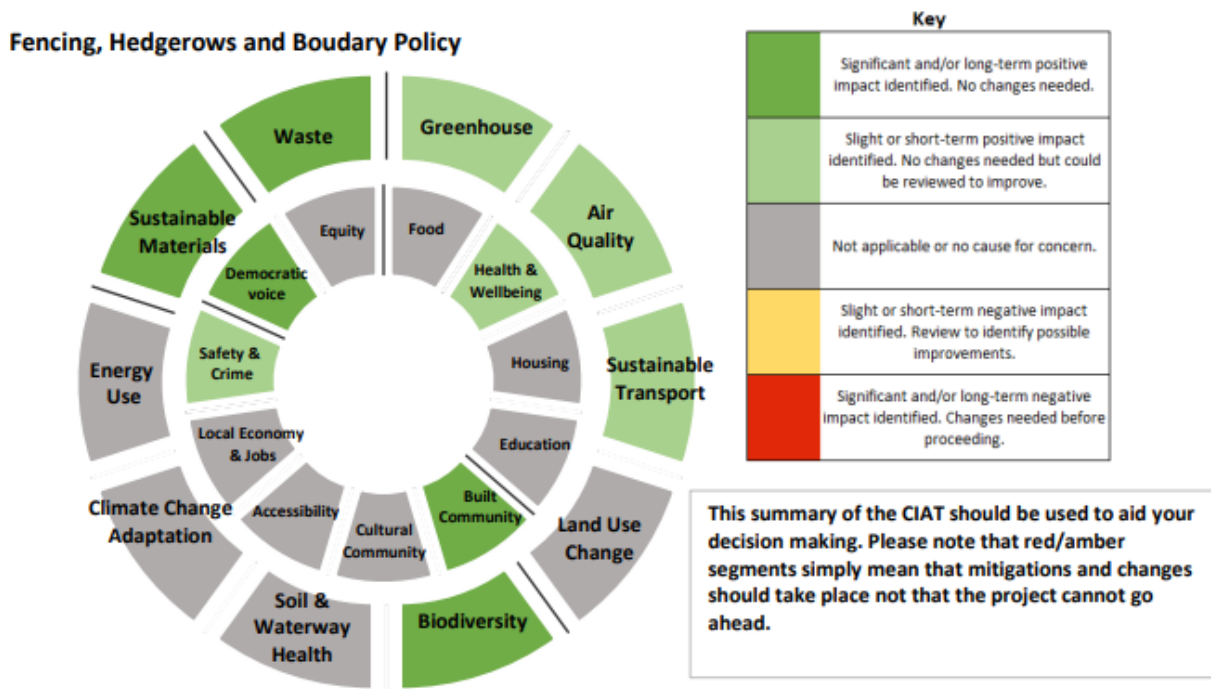
<p>Outcomes:</p>	<p>The policy will ensure compliance with the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England as adopted by the Regulatory of Social Housing, outlined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repairs and Maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Registered providers are required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that respond to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants, and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time. ▪ Meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants of their homes. • Understanding and responding to diverse needs of tenants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Registered providers are required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Treat all tenants with fairness and respect ▪ Demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality standards and tenants with additional support needs. • Neighbourhood management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Registered providers are required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe. They shall work in partnership with their tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so.
<p>Benefits:</p>	<p>By following this policy staff will be consistent and fair when dealing with fencing, hedging and boundaries</p>

<p>e. What are the expected impacts?</p>	
<p>Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative?</p>	<p>Positive</p>
<p>Please provide an explanation for your answer:</p>	
<p>The policy will set out a standard approach where fences need renewal that will meet tenant expectation, reduce complaints, improve security and aesthetics, and simplify future repairs with a combined effect of improving efficiency and increasing tenant satisfaction</p>	

If your answer to question e identified potential positive or negative impacts, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.

f. Identify next steps as appropriate	
Stage Two required	Yes
Owner of Stage Two assessment	
Completion date for Stage Two assessment	

Appendix 3: Climate Change Impact Assessment



Environmental	Scores	Justification
GHGs	2	Plans are in place to transition the fleet used for activities associated within this policy, away from diesel and to Electric or HVO. By utilising a 'Repair First' approach this also reduces the amount of waste and therefore the amount of products being purchases and thier associated embodied carbon.
Air quality	2	Please see section 1D. By encouraging tennants to plant and maintain hedges, shrubs, bushes, and trees used as boundaries, this will also improve localised air quality.
Sustainable Transport	2	As 1D above
Land use change	0	Policy applies to repairs and renewal of existing fences to domestic properties

Biodiversity	4	This policy aims to minimise further negative impacts on wildlife for example gaps will be left at the base of fencing to allow wildlife (Hedgehogs etc) to roam freely. Tenants are encouraged to maintain existing, and plant new hedgerows when practical, providing habitat for biodiversity.	
Soil and waterway health	0	0	
Climate Change Adaptation	0	0	
Energy Use	0	0	
Sustainable Materials	4	The Repair First' approach minimises primary material need, increasing the sustainability.	
Waste	4	Through forming this policy, it provides a framework which reduces unnecessary renewal of fencing, when repairs can be utilised instead, which will have a positive impact on waste.	

Social	Scores	Justification	
Food	0	Policy sets out approach to repair and renewal of fences in domestic properties.	
Health	2	CBC recognises that fencing is an important issue to tenants and believes, good fences make for better neighbours, and that good fencing can make a positive difference to the look and feel of neighbourhoods as well as improve security and safety.	
Housing	0	0	
Education	0	0	
Community	8	Policy supports biodiversity aspirations through preference towards hedgerows rather than fencing, and sets out a framework for improving facilities.	
Culture	0	0	
Accessibility	0	See 1D	
Local Economy and Jobs	0	0	
Safety	2	Secure boundaries can increase security and sense of safety, whilst also acting as a deterrent.	
Equity	0	0	

Democratic Voice	4	This policy has been formed in consultation with other teams, who provided feedback from tenant complaints.	
-------------------------	---	---	--

Cheltenham Borough Council Fencing, Hedgerow and Boundary Policy



Version control

Document name: Fencing, Hedging and Boundary Policy

Version: 1.0

Responsible officer

- Head of Building Services
- Head of Technical and Investment

Approved by: Cabinet

Next review date: October 2027

Retention period: 6 months from replacement

Revision history

Revision date	Version	Description
November 2024	1	

Consultees

Internal

- Tenant Scrutiny Improvement Panel
- Internal cross team consultation
- Heads of Service

External

- Market research of Social Housing Sector

Distribution

Staff, Tenants

Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Purpose of the Policy.....	3
3. Scope of the Policy.....	3
4. Policy Statement.....	4
5. Accountability and Responsibility	10
6. Set out clear definitions of acceptable actions/behaviours etc.....	10
7. Non-Compliance with the Policy	10
8. Related Policies, Procedures, Quality Standards and Legislation	11
9. Consultation/Research Undertaken.....	11
10. Communication, Monitoring and Review of the Policy	11
APPENDIX 1:.....	13

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The aim of this policy is to provide guidance to all staff and customers about our approach to fencing to our customers' homes including CBC's obligations for repair and replacement.
- 1.2. The policy covers how we will deal with requests for enclosing open plan spaces, day to day reactive repairs and requests for replacement of dividing or boundary fencing.
- 1.3. The policy will ensure compliance with the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England as adopted by the Regulatory of Social Housing, outlined as:
- Repairs and Maintenance
 - Registered providers are required to:
 - Provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that respond to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants, and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time.
 - Meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants of their homes.
 - Understanding and responding to diverse needs of tenants
 - Registered providers are required to:
 - Treat all tenants with fairness and respect

- Demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality standards and tenants with additional support needs.
- Neighbourhood management
 - Registered providers are required to:
 - Keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe. They shall work in partnership with their tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so.

2. Purpose of the Policy

- 2.1. To clearly set out the obligations of the landlord (Cheltenham Borough Council) and the obligations of tenants and leaseholders.
- 2.2. To provide clarity for CBC staff, tenants and leaseholders through a document which clearly defines the type and standard of fencing adopted when renewal is required.
- 2.3. To set out and define the principle of a “Repairs First” approach to maximise the longevity of existing boundary fences and thus make the renewal of fences to a higher standard affordable when renewal is required.
- 2.4. To set out a standard approach where fences need renewal that will meet tenant expectation, reduce complaints, improve security and aesthetics, and simplify future repairs with a combined effect of improving efficiency and increasing tenant satisfaction.
- 2.5. To provide a means by which disputes and complaints can be resolved through the application of this policy.

3. Scope of the Policy

- 3.1. This policy will be applied to all rented dwellings owned by the council and tenants living in them.
- 3.2. CBC recognises that fencing is an important issue to tenants and believes, good fences make for better neighbours, and that good fencing can make a positive difference to the look and feel of neighbourhoods as well as improve security and safety.

3.3. CBC has consulted with tenants and agreed what CBC's responsibilities are regarding fencing repairs and replacement.

3.4. Where CBC has a repairing obligation to external boundary fencing, it reserves the discretionary right to undertake this obligation as a reactive repair, a planned repair or a planned renewal as a "one off" or as part of a programme of works as appropriate. The time taken to complete the work will therefore vary and the tenants will be informed of the anticipated timescales for completion.

3.5. There will be occasions where the work is deemed to be of a more urgent nature and the list below, although not exhaustive, provides examples of where work would be expedited:

- The protection and / or privacy from people of vehicles entering a garden where it borders a busy thoroughfare or public space.
- Separation of a garden from hazards such as streams or severe changes in ground level at the edge of a property.
- Where social / health / occupational therapist care services have intervened and recommended that improvement to or renewal of the existing fencing or the installation of a new fence where none was there previously is required to safeguard the tenant/s or a member of their family residing in the property.
- There is a long standing anti-social behaviour issue and fencing has been recommended as part of the solution.

3.6. The policy will apply to boundaries between tenanted property and privately owned property. The title deeds for the property will be reviewed and the ownership established. If the title is not proven or is shared, the costs shall be agreed before works begin and distributed by agreement.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 Fencing Quality Standard – CBC aspires to standardise the type and quality of fencing used across its estates, but financial restraints mean that this cannot happen immediately and practically there is no need to replace fencing that has not reached the end of its anticipated life cycle, has not failed and where reactive repairs will ensure that it remains serviceable.

4.2 Open Plan Estates – Many of the social housing estates managed by CBC are open plan i.e., they do not have fencing to the front of the properties and this open plan feature will be maintained as far as practicable. CBC has responsibility for the maintenance of the front gardens on open plan estates and services this responsibility through a ground's maintenance contract. Open unobstructed front gardens facilitate efficient cutting and maintenance. Requests to enclose gardens that form part of open plan spaces will in general be declined and only considered

in absolute extreme cases, Where obstructions (Fences, demarcation posts, unofficial drives/parking areas) have been erected/created to front gardens on open plan estates, they will be removed as soon as practical with the ground being returned to open plan and once again becoming part of the ground's maintenance programme.

- 4.3 Empty Properties (Voids and Acquisitions) - CBC will check all fencing whilst the property is void before a new tenant moves into a property to ensure it is secure and free from any health and safety hazards.

The boundary will be checked against the deeds to ensure that it hasn't been moved or altered by a previous tenant or owner.

Work to existing fences of void properties will follow the "repairs first" approach for all existing fences to the front / rear / side gardens, providing the fencing is sound, of suitable quality and constructed from materials that are in keeping with the aesthetics and character of the neighbourhood. Where fences, demarcation posts and / or unofficial drives/parking areas have been erected/created in front gardens on open plan estates then, all such obstructions will be removed, and the front garden returned to open plan as mentioned in 4.1 above.

When only part of a fence is damaged only the damaged section will be renewed, either to match the existing fence or to meet the new standard. CBC Officers will use their discretion when deciding whether to match the existing fence or not, with such decision dependent on the location and extent of the damage and the impact on aesthetics and character of the surrounding neighbourhood.

Gifted - Where a fence has been erected by the previous tenant and is deemed to be in good condition but not standard, the incoming tenant will be asked if they would like CBC to Gift the fence. In accepting the fence, the incoming tenant would be responsible for future repairs and maintenance, with replacement only occurring when CBC considers it to have reached the end of its life. Any replacement will be to the agreed standard fencing and may not be to the same standard as the "gifted" fence.

- 4.4 Where fencing is installed, CBC will not normally carry out systematic or cyclical maintenance programmes and will only complete repairs to fencing in circumstances where;

- Reported damage has been caused by an expected level of wear and tear
- Damage is caused by adverse weather conditions
- Damage has been caused by acts of wilful vandalism, that after investigation by CBC Officers is found not to be the responsibility of the tenant or their visitors.

- 4.5 Where damage is caused to fencing by acts of wilful vandalism and the responsibility can be established, CBC Officers will seek to recharge the costs of any remedial works or renewal to those parties responsible where it is feasible to do so.
- 4.6 Repair first Approach - Where there are existing fences, CBC reserves the discretionary right to follow a repair first approach rather than undertake partial or full renewal. In such instances the repair may be completed in response to a repair request from the tenant as a routine reactive repair (typically smaller non urgent works completed within 15 working days of notice) or as a planned repair (typically larger repair work). The tenant reporting the repair will be notified accordingly as to whether the work will be completed as a reactive or planned repair where a target completion date will also be provided.
- 4.7 Renewal of fencing – where CBC deems a fence to be beyond repair and / or a risk to health and safety, a planned renewal of the defective fencing will be completed as a one off. CBC Officers will use their discretion when deciding whether to match the existing fence or install a section in accordance with the new standard, such decisions will be dependent on the location and extent of the damage and the impact on aesthetics and character of the surrounding neighbourhood.

CBC will only carry out planned fencing renewal programmes when a budget is available to do so. In such circumstances tenants will be contacted in advance before the works are commenced to notify them that their property is included in the programme.

- 4.8 Developing planned fencing renewal programmes – as stated above, these will only occur when a budget is available and where this is the case, CBC will first survey the areas under consideration and will decide to introduce new or renew fencing depending upon the following criteria:
- The original fence is no longer in place or is in such a condition that it is beyond repair, and it requires renewal and, to install a new fence will not breach any existing planning/building regulation or interfere with any existing permanent/semi-permanent structure or obstacle.
 - The existing fence does not provide adequate security.
 - The proposed installation is feasible, practical and affordable.
 - Permission has been given by all adjoining residents affected by the fence for CBC or its contractors to access any land as required to complete the new installation.
 - Any divisional fencing installed is faithful to the original boundary lines as identified in the property deeds.

4.9 Type / style of Fencing

4.9.1 Existing fencing – CBC has many different types and styles of fencing already in-situ around its properties and estates and in many cases hedges, shrubs, bushes and trees may form the boundary or part there of (see 4.9.2 below). Most fences remain perfectly serviceable and as previously stated, the intention is to repair and maintain these fences wherever practicable. In some circumstances, the type of and style of fencing forms an integral part of the aesthetics and character of the estate, for example, concrete post and chain-link fencing with steel gates, and to make a change to one property would spoil the overall effect and, therefore, in such circumstances repairs and renewals will be on a like for like basis.

4.9.2 Estate Biodiversity - Existing boundary Hedges, shrubs, bushes and trees (commonly referred to as hedgerows hereafter).

CBC aspires to maintain biodiversity on its estates wherever it is practicable to do so and will encourage tenants to maintain existing and plant new hedgerows instead of fencing wherever practicable. However, the maintenance of gardens and boundary hedgerows is a tenant responsibility and as such, the tenant has some choice over what they wish to plant and maintain in their garden and CBC will respect this.

Where fences are to be repaired or replaced, CBC will give consideration to the impact that such fencing may have on the biodiversity of the estate and will actively seek to create means to assist rather than hinder wildlife, for example, gaps will be left at the base of fencing to allow wildlife (Hedgehogs etc) to roam freely.

4.9.3 New fencing standards – In consultation with tenants, a new standard has been agreed for existing fencing that is to be renewed, and the following points set out the standard, the caveat to this being like for like renewals that are required to maintain the aesthetics and character of the area.

4.9.3.1 CBC will not install new fencing where there has been none previously unless recommend to do so, see item 3.5 above.

4.9.3.2 All timber used in new fencing will be pre-treated and will not need to be stained or painted. Tenants may stain their fences if they wish.

4.9.3.3 Front Garden fences will be replaced as follows

- No fence installed where there is none previously
- 0.9m timber picket fencing replaced where this exists currently
- 1.2m Chain link – replaced where this exists currently

4.9.3.4 Rear Garden fences between tenanted properties (each side and back fence)

- 2 x privacy panels adjacent to or abutting the home (each 1.8m x 1.8m) constructed from concrete post, concrete gravel board and infilled with timber panel fencing (a timber post may be used if abutting/fixed to the home).
- Remainder of fence line will be to be constructed from concrete post, concrete gravel board and infilled with 1.2m high timber panel fencing.

4.9.3.5 Rear Garden Fences or walls between tenant and private property.

- Check deeds to establish responsibility
- If CBC has responsibility, inform the adjoining owner and replace as 4.9.3.4
- If adjoining owner has responsibility, CBC will write to them informing them if repairs / replacement is necessary
- If there is shared responsibility, CBC will obtain quotes and inform the adjoining owner and agree an action plan.

4.9.3.6 Demarcation between front and rear of property

- Fencing and side gates will only be repaired and / or replaced when they were originally installed by CBC

4.9.3.7 Public Space Boundaries - Boundary fencing, where the property is adjacent to a public accessible space, will in general, be of more substantial design providing additional security and resistance to vandalism. In such areas the type and style of the fencing will be chosen to compliment the aesthetics and character of the surrounding area. This type of fencing will not be used for standard divisional fencing.

4.10 Service Charges - Where fencing works on communal areas will cost more than £250 per leasehold flat, CBC will consult leaseholders in line with its with its statutory obligations under section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (as amended by the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002).

4.11 Tenant Responsibilities

4.11.1 Tenants are responsible for the safe enclosure of any pets to prevent escape onto neighbouring properties and highways.

4.11.2 Boundary alterations - The tenant must obtain written permission from CBC before a commencing alteration to any boundary structure. This includes the taking down, alteration and installation of fences, hedges, trees and walls. The specification and standard for the works must also be agreed with CBC prior to the

work starting.

- 4.11.3 It is the tenant's responsibility to ensure all other necessary approvals, for example, planning permission and/or building regulations are in place prior to work commencing. The landlord (CBC) will not give its permission until these are evidenced.
- 4.11.4 CBC reserves the right to remove fencing or boundaries, and recharge works to the tenant where the fencing or boundary constructed by the tenant is not deemed acceptable, is unsafe or where deliberate damage of the structure has taken place.
- 4.11.5 Any new boundary or fencing erected by the tenant must give due consideration to the setting, appearance and style of the surrounding neighbourhood. If any boundary or fencing erected by the tenant does not fit its surrounding, CBC reserves the right to remove it and recharge the tenant for the costs of this and any reinstatement work.
- 4.11.6 CBC accepts no responsibility for boundary structures installed by the tenant and will have no obligation to maintain, repair or renew and such responsibilities will remain with the tenant.
- 4.11.7 If, after being given reasonable notice, a tenant does not keep in good repair or renew a fence that is their responsibility to maintain under this policy, CBC may carry out the works itself (repair, remove or renew), and will recharge the tenant for the cost of this and all associated remedial work.
- 4.11.8 If a tenant fails to maintain their garden and, as a result, damages a fence owned by a third party to the point that it has to be replaced, CBC may, after giving reasonable notice to the tenant to pay for the replacement of the fence, agree with its owner to contribute to its replacement up to the cost of providing a four-foot chain link fence and recharge the tenant for that element of the cost.
- 4.11.9 A tenant is responsible for keeping any trees, bushes or flowers maintained and not allowing any such foliage to cause any damage to fences, or walls belonging to CBC. The tenant is responsible for any damage caused, for rectifying such damage or CBC will do so and re-charge the tenant.
- 4.11.10 Generally, any work that the council carries out that are the tenant's responsibility under this policy, or the conditions of tenancy will be recharged and recovered in line with our recharge policy.
- 4.11.11 At the end of a tenancy CBC will be obliged to remove any fencing or other boundary structure that is found to be in a damaged, unsatisfactory, or unsafe

condition. These works will be recharged to the former tenant(s) in line with CBC's recharge policy.

5. Accountability and Responsibility

CBC's responsibilities once a repair or renewal request has been received are:

- 5.1 To establish ownership of the boundary structure.
- 5.2 To respond to the repair request in accordance with priority targets:
 - Emergency – respond within 2 hours, complete within 24 hours
 - Urgent – complete with 5 working days
 - Routine – complete with 15 working days
 - Planned Work -time frame to be confirmed
- 5.3 To undertake an inspection of the property / fence as and when appropriate to do so.
- 5.4 To communicate with the tenant / residents and inform them of what work, if any is to be done.
- 5.5 Issue recharges or service charges as necessary.

6. Set out clear definitions of acceptable actions/behaviours etc.

- All staff to read and understand the policies and procedures
- All staff to adhere to policy, give explanations and communicate with tenants.
- All staff to report any damage or changes to fencing while on site.

7. Non-Compliance with the Policy

Financial:

- Repairing and planning for the replacement of fencing will make sure the budget figure is more accurate. The Stock Condition Survey is out of date, but a detailed stock condition survey is being completed this financial year.
- There is a current contract for fencing which gives more accurate prices.
- The standardisation of fencing and the planned approach to the work will allow economies of scale.
- Savings in time and money for staff not dealing with complaints

Procedure

- Non-Compliance with this Policy: Colleagues and contractors who fail to comply with this policy will pose a risk to CBC. Training will be provided, and communications will be organised to mitigate against this. Where training and communications are not followed, an informal performance discussion will take place with those responsible and where matters fail to improve a formal performance review will follow.
- Strategic: Good fences that meet the aspirations of our tenants will reduce complaints and over the long term will improve service and provide cost savings.
- Risk in terms of reputational damage - due to complaints which may bring negative publicity.

8. Related Policies, Procedures, Quality Standards and Legislation

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Housing Act 2004
- Housing Health and Rating System (HHSRS) 2006
- Decent Homes Standard 2006
- The Equality Act 2010
- Homes Standard 2015
- The Safety and Quality standard – Consumer Standards April 2024 (Superseding the 2015 version)
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2023 (Updated 2024)

9. Consultation/Research Undertaken

- Tenant Consultation has taken place via TSIP.
- Cross Team Consultation – a working party consisting of members from Technical and Investment, Repairs, Tenancy Management has met and reached consensus on the policy.




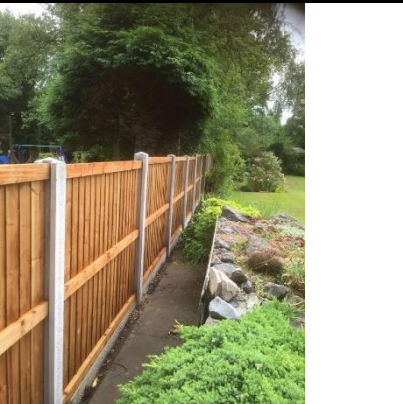
10. Communication, Monitoring and Review of the Policy

- 10.1. This policy will be shared with CBC staff and will be a public document shared via the CBC Website.
- 10.2. Training will be provided to all staff who may have need to refer to and / or use this policy.

- 10.3. A User Guide including a check list will be developed and issued to all staff visiting properties.
- 10.4. Good fences will help to reduce neighbourly issues if they are maintained to an appropriate standard that meets tenant aspirations but doing so can be costly. As this policy sets out aspirational standards and a firmer approach, for the foreseeable future, it will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains affordable.

APPENDIX 1:

Images of the fencing most commonly at CBC properties.

Examples of Existing Fencing		
<p>1. Post and Wire with concrete posts. As per tenancy agreement. With 2 x Privacy Panels</p>		
<p>2. Chain link with concrete posts. With 2 x Privacy Panels.</p>		
<p>3. Picket Fencing to front of some properties</p>		
Example of Proposed Fencing		
<p>1. Concrete post, Concrete Gravel Board infilled with 1.2m timber panel fencing. With 2 x 1.8m Privacy Panels nearest to property.</p>		

This page is intentionally left blank

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet Housing Committee – 13 November 2024

Strategic Housing Risk Register

Accountable member:

Councillor Flo Clucas, Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services

Accountable officer:

Claire Hughes, Director of Governance and Customer Services

Ward(s) affected:

N/A

Key Decision: No

Executive summary:

- This report provides a copy of the Council's Strategic Housing Risk Register detailing strategic housing risks as at 30 October 2024.
- The register has been prepared in consultation with Risk Managers and the Senior Leadership Team.
- Moving forward the register will detail risk movements since the last formal report enabling Members to track CBC's housing risk profile.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Housing Committee note the Strategic Housing Risk Register.

1. Implications

1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications

Poor risk management can lead to increased financial costs therefore it is important to have a robust processes in place.

Signed off by: gemma.bell@cheltenham.gov.uk.

1.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from the report and its recommendations. It is fundamental

that the Council has an embedded risk management framework which considers the identification, recording, and management of risks to the Council in the delivery of its housing services.

Signed off by: One Legal

1.3 Environmental and climate change implications

Leveraging the requirement to complete Climate Impact Assessment to support decision making, alongside a Risk Management programme specifically for climate and flood risks, an effective risk management framework across projects, programmes and business activities will ensure that climate implications are considered, relevant risks highlighted, and mitigations controls put in place.

Signed off by: maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.4 Corporate Plan Priorities

This report contributes to all Corporate Plan Priorities as effective risk management is essential to the achievement of CBC plan.

Signed off by: claire.hughes@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

Good risk management across all aspects of our business should ensure Equality, Diversity and Inclusion implications are considered and any risks are highlighted, and controls put in place to mitigate.

2 Background

2.1 Risk management is the culture, process and structures that are directed towards effective management of potential opportunities and threats to the Council achieving its priorities and objectives.

2.2 The Council has a Risk Management Policy, reviewed in October 2024, that sets out the approach to risk management including the roles and responsibilities for Officers and elected Members. The policy also details the processes in place to manage risks at corporate, operational and project levels.

2.3 This strategic housing risk report is provided to the Cabinet Housing Committee detailing strategic housing risks. A broader, corporate risk report is reported to the Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee.

2.4 This is the first housing specific risk report. Future reports will include a narrative outlining changes to risks and scores since the last formal report. This will allow the committee to track movements in our housing risk profile.

2.5 The risk register covers:

- Risk status.
- Risk details.
- Risk manager.
- Current risk score (impact & probability).

- Change from last assessment.
- Risk action.
- Details of any controls in place to mitigate the risk.
- Risk review date.

2.6 A copy of the risk register is attached at appendix 1, however for ease they are:

- **Stock Condition Data** - If there is a failure to maintain accurate, in date stock condition data then this means we are unable to plan spend, evidence investment, demonstrate accurate decent homes data and provide assurance that tenant's homes are safe.
- **Housing Regulatory & Legal Requirements** - If we fail to meet regulatory and legal requirements, specifically the Regulator for Social Housing consumer standards and the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code then this may result in intervention and reputational damage.
- **Property Compliance** - If there is ineffective management of property compliance then this will result in regulator intervention and reputational damage.
- **Housing Properties Health & Safety** - If we do not manage health and safety management of our housing properties, then we may be putting tenant at risk of serious injury or death.
- **Tenant Satisfaction** - If there is a decline in the quality of services delivered to tenant's, then this may result in reduction in customer satisfaction (evidenced through the TSMs).
- **Housing Revenue Account** - If the housing revenue account becomes unviable then this may result in the council being unable to fund service delivery, investment in existing homes and the delivery of new housing.

3 Sector Risk Profile

3.1 In October 2024 the Regulator of Social Housing published its latest version of the [Sector Risk Profile](#), setting out its view of the most significant sources of risk to landlords ongoing compliance with the regulatory standards.

3.2 The risks are centred about 3 key areas: existing stock and service quality, development and sales, finance and treasury management.

3.3 Members can access the risk profile in full by following the link provided. However, a high level summary of each area is set out below.

3.4 Existing stock and service quality: Risks in this area centre around matters such as health and safety, stock quality, data integrity, costs and access to skilled labour, rent setting, rental income and arrears, cyber security and supported housing. Specifically highlighted are the ongoing risk around fire remediation works and stock meeting the decent homes standard, both of which are captured within our own strategic housing risk register.

3.5 Development and sales: Risks in this area centre around low-cost home ownership and market sales, fixed assets sales and construction process risk. As these risks relate largely to construction and disposals they generally fall outside the remit of this committee.

3.6 Finance and treasury management: Risks in this area centre around debt, alternative funding models, pensions and fraud. These risks are all managed across the council at a strategic and operational level. Members will receive a report regarding the specifics of housing related fraud in due course.

3.7 Throughout the profile there is great emphasis placed on the importance of the committee understanding risks and obtaining appropriate levels of assurance. We will continue to work with the committee to develop our approach to risk and also to our reporting to ensure that members are able to feel properly informed and assured in all areas of our housing services.

4 Alternative options considered

4.1 None

5 Consultation and feedback

5.1 Risk Managers and Leadership Team.

6 Key risks

6.1 None.

Report author:

Claire Hughes, Director of Governance and Customer Services

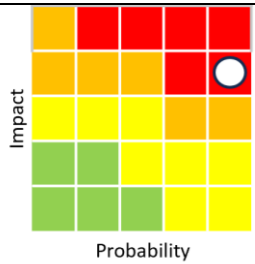
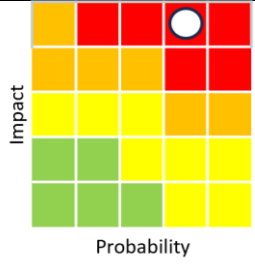
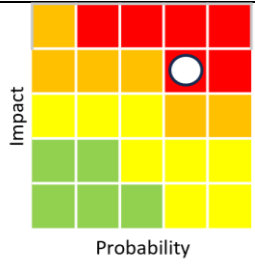
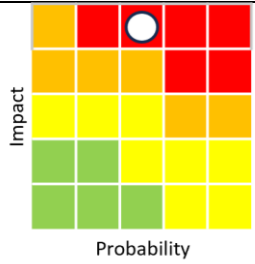
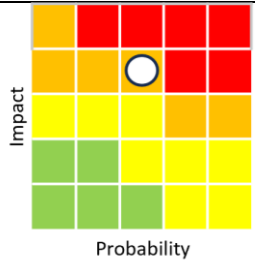
Appendices:

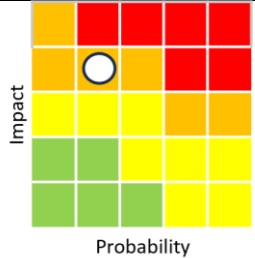
i. Risk Register

Background information:

[Sector Risk Profile – October 2024](#)

Cheltenham Borough Council – Strategic Housing Risk Register – 30 October 2024

Ref	Status	Risk Details	Risk Manager	Current Assessment	Change from Last Assessment	Risk Action	Current Control Details	Review Date
CH3		Stock Condition Data - If there is a failure to maintain accurate, in date stock condition data then this means we are unable to plan spend, evidence investment, demonstrate accurate decent homes data and provide assurance that tenant's homes are safe.	Paul Jones	Impact - 4 Probability - 5 Score - 20	New corporate housing risk.	Reduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective oversight of property compliance performance by senior officers, Cabinet and Housing cabinet committee. - Maintaining up to date stock condition data. - Using data to prioritise property investment and address decency / H&S issues. 	31/11/2024
CH6		Housing Regulatory & Legal Requirements - If we fail to meet regulatory and legal requirements, specifically the Regulator for Social Housing consumer standards and the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code then this may result in intervention and reputational damage.	Claire Hughes	Impact - 5 Probability - 4 Score - 20	New corporate housing risk.	Reduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-referral made to regulator - Effective oversight of regulatory performance by senior officers, Cabinet and Housing cabinet committee. - Delivery of Consumer Standard Improvement Plan - External expertise in place to support compliance with the standards. - Annual self-assessment of compliance with the Complaints Handling Code (published to tenants and HO). 	31/11/2024
CH2		Property Compliance - If there is ineffective management of property compliance then this will result in regulator intervention and reputational damage.	Paul Jones	Impact - 4 Probability - 4 Score - 16	New corporate housing risk.	Reduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective oversight of property compliance performance by senior officers, Cabinet and Housing cabinet committee. - Robust delivery model for each of the big 6 property compliance areas + damp, mould, and condensation. - Ensure delivery meets property compliance policy. - Development of systems to evidence delivery through consistent data and record keeping. - Assurance processes to ensure delivery meets legal requirements. 	31/11/2024
CH4		Housing Properties Health & Safety - If we do not manage health and safety management of our housing properties, then we may be putting tenant at risk of serious injury or death.	Paul Jones	Impact - 5 Probability - 3 Score - 15	New corporate housing risk.	Reduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear health & safety procedures in place with evidence these are followed. - Regular independent assurance that health and safety is being management effectively. - Effective oversight of health and safety performance by senior officers, Cabinet and Housing cabinet committee. 	31/11/2024
CH5		Tenant Satisfaction - If there is a decline in the quality of services delivered to tenant's, then this may result in reduction in customer satisfaction (evidenced through the TSMs).	Claire Hughes	Impact - 4 Probability - 3 Score - 12	New corporate housing risk.	Reduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective oversight of service delivery performance by senior officers, Cabinet and Housing cabinet committee. - Review and monitoring of service standards. - Effective tenant voice and listening and acting on tenant feedback. - Learning from complaints. 	31/11/2024

CH1	 <p>The risk matrix is a 4x4 grid. The vertical axis is labeled 'Impact' and the horizontal axis is labeled 'Probability'. The colors of the cells are: Row 1 (High Impact): Red, Red, Red, Red; Row 2 (Medium-High Impact): Orange, Orange, Red, Red; Row 3 (Medium Impact): Yellow, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow; Row 4 (Low Impact): Green, Green, Yellow, Yellow. A white circle with a black outline is positioned in the cell at the intersection of the second row and the second column.</p>	<p>Housing Revenue Account - If the housing revenue account becomes unviable then this may result in the council being unable to fund service delivery, investment in existing homes and the delivery of new housing.</p>	Gemma Bell	<p>Impact - 4 Probability - 2 Score - 8</p>	New corporate housing risk.	Reduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure effective controls are in place. - Ensure effective controls are in place. - Ensure 30 year HRA financial model is in place and is reviewed and updated by regular stress testing. 	31/11/2024
-----	--	---	------------	---	-----------------------------	--------	---	------------

Tenant Engagement Update, Housing Services, Cheltenham Borough Council

November 2024

Tenant Panel

The Tenant Panel, previously known as the Tenant Improvement Scrutiny Panel (TSIP), has successfully transitioned into the new governance structure of CBC housing. It consists of nine members from various localities across Cheltenham, representing the broader tenant community.

Since April, the panel has played an active role in shaping and providing feedback on several key initiatives:

1. **Consumer Standards Improvement Plan:** The panel has shown keen interest in how housing services are adapting to new regulations. They have reviewed the self-assessment results and were satisfied that we are making the right steps to become fully compliant. The panel has requested ongoing updates on the plan's progress.
2. **Fencing Policy:** The panel has explored the possibility of offering tenants more choices in the style and height of fences, indicating an interest in further consultation on this issue.
3. **Single Equality Scheme:** During discussions on equality and diversity, the panel highlighted a desire to address "non-reporting" within housing and its connection to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). They expressed interest in using this topic as the foundation for a new scrutiny review.

Additionally, the panel is conducting a scrutiny review following a presentation by Natasha Dhillon. The focus of this review is on whether the current complaints handling process meets tenants' needs and how housing services are learning from complaints. This review is set to be completed before Christmas.

As part of the Consumer Standards Improvement Plan, the Tenant Panel members will also participate in Property Compliance Training provided by Penningtons.

The panel has nominated Agnieszka Wisniewska to represent them on the newly formed Housing Committee.

Leaseholder Panel Update

As part of the new governance structure, all leaseholders were invited to express their interest in joining a newly formed Leaseholder Panel, aimed at representing the collective interests of all leaseholders.

The panel's first meeting took place in August 2024, with seven leaseholders attending (with apologies from others). All attendees expressed a desire to join the panel. A second meeting, held after further promotion through letters, saw increased participation, with 12 leaseholders in attendance.

The panel is currently meeting monthly as it establishes itself, with plans to transition to quarterly meetings once fully operational.

Key outcomes from the first two meetings include:

1. Membership: 10 leaseholders have officially agreed to join the panel.
2. Terms of Reference: The panel reviewed and unanimously approved its terms of reference.
3. Housing Committee Representation: Bozena Tarnowska was selected to represent the panel on the Housing Committee.

The panel has begun identifying key areas for exploration, with a focus on service improvement. These include:

- Understanding the Lease: A back-to-basics approach to clarify the respective responsibilities of CBH as the housing provider and those of the leaseholders.
- Neighbourhood Works and Planned Maintenance: Ensuring transparency in scheduling and delivering value for money.
- Service Charges: Developing a clearer understanding of service charges and how they are calculated.
- Leaseholder Experience: Leveraging the lived experiences of leaseholders to improve communication and transparency.

As a starting point, the panel has requested a review of the leaseholder handbook and website information to ensure they meet the needs of leaseholders.

Cabinet Housing Committee Forward Plan 2024-2025

Title	Objective	Format	Officer/Interested Party/Partner
15 January 2025 – (Deadline 30th December)			
Property Compliance Performance and stock condition project update	<i>To provide the Committee with an understanding of our property compliance status and the planned improvements needed to address areas of non-compliance</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Interim Housing Transformation Director / Head of Technical and Investment
Consumer Standard Improvement Plan	<i>To provide the Committee with a copy of the Improvement Plan developed to resolve areas of non-compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing’s Consumer Standards.</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Director of Governance and Customer Services
Quarter 3 2024 - 25 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Tracker Update	<i>Feedback and insight from the quarter 3 phone surveys with tenants carried out on behalf of CBC by Acuity. These surveys provide our results for the perception-based Tenant Satisfaction Measures.</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Director of Housing – Customer and Community Services
Quarter 3 2024 - 25 Housing Complaints and Compliments Report	<i>To provide an overview of housing related complaints and compliments from quarter 3, identifying key areas of dissatisfaction and areas for learning and service improvement.</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Director of Housing – Customer and Community Services
Communal Areas Project	<i>To update the Committee on the ongoing project to improve the cleaning and maintenance of Communal Areas.</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Head of Building Services
Draft HRA budgets and performance targets 2025-2026	TBC	TBC	Director of Finance and Assets / Head of Finance and IT
Quarter 2 2024-25 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Monitoring Report – 30 September 2024	<i>To provide a monitoring position statement for the HRA against the budget approved by Council on 23 February 2024, highlighting any key variances.</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Director of Finance and Assets / Head of Finance and IT
Updates from the Tenant and Leaseholder Panels	<i>To highlight the ongoing activities of the Tenant and Leaseholder Panels and provide an additional opportunity for tenant and leaseholder voices to be heard.</i>	Information/Verbal Update	Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives

Cabinet Housing Committee Forward Plan 2024-2025

Title	Objective	Format	Officer/Interested Party/Partner
Review of the Housing Committee Forward Plan	<i>To provide the Committee with opportunities to identify any additional areas they may wish to scrutinise.</i>	Information/Discussion	Director of Governance and Customer Services
Briefing Note - Housing Sector Insight	<i>To provide the Committee with an overview of recent developments in the housing sector and provide opportunities for horizon scanning.</i>	Information	Director of Governance and Customer Services
10 March 2025 - (Deadline 18th February)			
Property Compliance Performance and stock condition project update	<i>To provide the Committee with an understanding of our property compliance status and the planned improvements needed to address areas of non-compliance</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Interim Housing Transformation Director / Head of Technical and Investment
Consumer Standard Improvement Plan	<i>To provide the Committee with a copy of the Improvement Plan developed to resolve areas of non-compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards.</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Director of Governance and Customer Services
Quarter 3 2024-25 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Monitoring Report – 31 December 2024	<i>To provide a monitoring position statement for the HRA against the budget approved by Council on 23 February 2024, highlighting any key variances.</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Director of Finance and Assets / Head of Finance and IT
Updates from the Tenant and Leaseholder Panels	<i>To highlight the ongoing activities of the Tenant and Leaseholder Panels and provide an additional opportunity for tenant and leaseholder voices to be heard.</i>	Information/Verbal Update	Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives
Review of the Housing Committee Forward Plan	<i>To provide the Committee with opportunities to identify any additional areas they may wish to scrutinise.</i>	Information/Discussion	Director of Governance and Customer Services
Briefing Note - Housing Sector Insight	<i>To provide the Committee with an overview of recent developments in the housing sector and provide opportunities for horizon scanning.</i>	Information	Director of Governance and Customer Services

Cabinet Housing Committee Forward Plan 2024-2025

Title	Objective	Format	Officer/Interested Party/Partner
11 June 2025 – (Deadline 27th May)			
Property Compliance Performance and stock condition project update	<i>To provide the Committee with an understanding of our property compliance status and the planned improvements needed to address areas of non-compliance</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Interim Housing Transformation Director / Head of Technical and Investment
Consumer Standard Improvement Plan	<i>To provide the Committee with a copy of the Improvement Plan developed to resolve areas of non-compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing’s Consumer Standards.</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Director of Governance and Customer Services
Quarter 4 2024 - 25 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Tracker Update	<i>Feedback and insight from the quarter 4 phone surveys with tenants carried out on behalf of CBC by Acuity. These surveys provide our results for the perception-based Tenant Satisfaction Measures.</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Director of Housing – Customer and Community Services
Quarter 4 2024 - 25 Housing Complaints and Compliments Report	<i>To provide an overview of housing related complaints and compliments from quarter 4, identifying key areas of dissatisfaction and areas for learning and service improvement.</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Director of Housing – Customer and Community Services
Quarter 4 2024-25 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Monitoring Report – 31 March 2025	<i>To provide a monitoring position statement for the HRA against the budget approved by Council on 23 February 2024, highlighting any key variances.</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Director of Finance and Assets / Head of Finance and IT
Housing Risk Register	<i>To review the strategic risks relating to housing from the Council’s Risk Register.</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Director of Governance and Customer Services
Updates from the Tenant and Leaseholder Panels	<i>To highlight the ongoing activities of the Tenant and Leaseholder Panels and provide an additional opportunity for tenant and leaseholder voices to be heard.</i>	Information/Verbal Update	Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives
Review of the Housing Committee Forward Plan	<i>To provide the Committee with opportunities to identify any additional areas they may wish to scrutinise.</i>	Information/Discussion	Director of Governance and Customer Services

Cabinet Housing Committee Forward Plan 2024-2025

Title	Objective	Format	Officer/Interested Party/Partner
Briefing Note - Housing Sector Insight	<i>To provide the Committee with an overview of recent developments in the housing sector and provide opportunities for horizon scanning.</i>	Information	Director of Governance and Customer Services
16 July 2025 – (Deadline 30th June)			
Property Compliance Performance and stock condition project update	<i>To provide the Committee with an understanding of our property compliance status and the planned improvements needed to address areas of non-compliance</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Interim Housing Transformation Director / Head of Technical and Investment
Consumer Standard Improvement Plan	<i>To provide the Committee with a copy of the Improvement Plan developed to resolve areas of non-compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing’s Consumer Standards.</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Director of Governance and Customer Services
Acuity Surveys Overview for 2024-25 and Quarter 1 2025-26 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Tracker Update	<i>Feedback and insight from the quarter 1 phone surveys with tenants carried out on behalf of CBC by Acuity. These surveys provide our results for the perception-based Tenant Satisfaction Measures. This report will also include an annual overview of results and trends for 2024-2025.</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Director of Housing – Customer and Community Services
Quarter 1 2025 - 26 Housing Complaints and Compliments Report	<i>To provide an overview of housing related complaints and compliments from quarter 1, identifying key areas of dissatisfaction and areas for learning and service improvement.</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Director of Housing – Customer and Community Services
Quarter 1 2025-26 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Monitoring Report – 30 June 2025	<i>To provide a monitoring position statement for the HRA against the budget approved by Council, highlighting any key variances.</i>	Information/Discussion Paper	Director of Finance and Assets / Head of Finance and IT
Updates from the Tenant and Leaseholder Panels	<i>To highlight the ongoing activities of the Tenant and Leaseholder Panels and provide an additional opportunity for tenant and leaseholder voices to be heard.</i>	Information/Verbal Update	Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives

Cabinet Housing Committee Forward Plan 2024-2025

Title	Objective	Format	Officer/Interested Party/Partner
Review of the Housing Committee Forward Plan	<i>To provide the Committee with opportunities to identify any additional areas they may wish to scrutinise.</i>	Information/Discussion	Director of Governance and Customer Services
Briefing Note - Housing Sector Insight	<i>To provide the Committee with an overview of recent developments in the housing sector and provide opportunities for horizon scanning.</i>	Information	Director of Governance and Customer Services

This page is intentionally left blank

Briefing Note

Committee name: Cabinet Housing Committee

Date: 13 November 2024

**Responsible officer: Claire Hughes, Director of Governance and Customer Services,
Claire.Hughes@cheltenham.gov.uk**

This note provides information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Cabinet or a committee but where no decisions from Members are needed.

If Members have questions relating to matters shown, they are asked to contact the officer indicated.

Government Strategy and Announcements

- a. In advance of the Autumn Statement, the Deputy Prime Minister and Housing Secretary, Angela Rayner MP, provided a written statement to Parliament confirming several housing policies. The announcement included:
 - An immediate one-year cash injection of £500 million to top up the existing Affordable Homes Programme (AHP). Rayner stated that the additional funding comes ahead of the Government's full Housing Strategy, which is due in Spring 2025.
 - A consultation "*on a new 5-year social housing rent settlement... [which] will also seek views on other potential options to give greater certainty, such as providing a 10-year settlement*". The 'Future Social Housing Rent Policy' will run until the 23 December 2024. The consultation explains that the government intends to introduce a framework for social rent policy over a minimum five-year period, allowing for annual rent increases of up to CPI (Consumer Price Index) plus 1%. The proposal includes the potential for a five- or ten-year rent settlement to ensure stability and predictability for social housing providers. The consultation also seeks views on the draft Direction that would require the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) to set rent standards for all registered providers, encompassing both private providers and local authority landlords.
 - Confirmation "*that councils will be able to retain 100% of the receipts generated by Right to Buy (RtB) sales*" and that the budget will "*set out how Right to Buy discounts will be reduced to protect existing social housing stock to meet housing need*". ([See e for further developments on RtB](#))

- b. The Chancellor, Rachel Reeves MP, presented her Autumn Statement on the 30 October. Key headlines from the budget included:
- A target of £40 billion in tax rises have been announced with increases in Capital Gains Tax, changes to the non-dom tax regime, increases in windfall tax on oil and gas profits, and the introduction of VAT on private school fees announced.
 - The biggest tax raising measure will be from employers' National Insurance contributions, which will rise from 13.8% to 15% from April 2025. This is expected to raise £20bn a year annually. In addition, the threshold at which businesses start paying National Insurance on a workers' earnings will be lowered from £9,100 to £5,000. There is some mitigation through an increase in the Employment Allowance from £5,000 to £10,500, which the Chancellor says will mean 865,000 employers won't pay any National Insurance at all next year.
 - Income tax and National Insurance thresholds will rise in line with inflation from 2028-2029. The threshold freeze has been in place since 2022. The Chancellor said: *"I have come to the conclusion that extending the threshold freeze would hurt working people. It would take more money out of their payslips."* When personal tax allowances and thresholds don't rise with inflation or wages, the amount people can earn tax-free, or at a lower rate, falls behind. As wages tend to rise over time the number of taxpayers in higher rate bands increases.
 - A 6.7% raise in minimum wage from April 2025, with hourly rates for over-21s set to go up to £12.21 an hour. In addition, the National Minimum Wage will rise for people aged between 18 and 20-years old from £8.60 to £10. Apprentices will get the biggest pay bump, with hourly pay increasing from £6.40 to £7.55.
 - The current 75% discount to business rates - due to expire in April 2025 - will be replaced by a discount of 40% - up to a maximum discount of £110k. This means that many businesses will see their business rates nearly double (rather than quadruple).
 - The Chancellor has committed to making billions of pounds of cuts to disability and incapacity benefits. She says she will proceed with the work of the previous government to reform the work capability assessment, which is used to determine what work-related conditions a disabled person must meet to keep getting their benefit. It's part of Labour's promise to support more disabled people to work. Reeves didn't give any details on what the changes will look like, but a consultation by the Conservatives last year suggested plans to change the way the assessment scores new claimants.

In addition to the measures already announced by Rayner ([see item a](#)), of particular note for the housing sector:

- The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) agreed a funding settlement of £12.6 billion in 2025-26, equivalent to an annual average real-terms growth rate of 9.7% from 2023-24 to 2025-26.
- The Government will set out details of future grant investment beyond the current AHP at the Spending Review in the Spring, aiming to *"support greater investment in new affordable housing from social housing providers"*. It pledged that investment would run for at least the duration of this Parliament,

and “*will support a mix of tenures, with a focus on delivering homes for social rent.*”

- An investment of £1 billion in 2025-26 to extend the Household Support Fund in England and Discretionary Housing Payments in England and Wales and a new Fair Repayment Rate to cap Universal Credit (UC) repayments at 15% of the standard allowance, benefiting 1.2 million households by allowing them to retain more of their UC each month. The Government had previously announced a £421m extension to the Household Support Fund (HSF) (which was due to end on 30 September) until April 2025. The fund enables Local Authorities across England to help those struggling with the cost of energy, food, and water. The Government confirmed that it is exploring options around how best to provide sustainable support to vulnerable households in the longer term while the ministerial Child Poverty Taskforce develops “*an ambitious strategy to tackle the root causes of poverty.*”
 - £46 million of additional funding “*to support recruitment and training of 300 graduates and apprentices into local planning authorities*” to accelerate large developments stuck in the system and “*boost and upskill local planning authority capacity to deliver the Government’s wider [housing] agenda.*”
 - An investment of over £1 billion in building safety and accelerating remediation of unsafe housing by 2025-26. This includes new investment to speed up remediation of social housing.
 - An initial £3.4 billion towards heat decarbonisation and household energy efficiency over the next three years as part of the Warm Homes Plan. This includes £1.8 billion to support fuel poverty schemes and increased funding for the Boiler Upgrade Scheme in England and Wales this year and next. It also committed to “*providing funding to grow the heat pump manufacturing supply chains in the UK to support the plan.*”
 - An increase in the Higher Rates for Additional Dwellings (HRAD) surcharge on Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) from 3% to 5%. This applies to second homes, buy-to-let residential properties and companies purchasing residential property, with the aim of giving first-time buyers and those purchasing a primary residence a comparative advantage.
 - Additional funding of £233 million allocated to homelessness services, taking total spending to £1 billion in 2025-26.
 - £47 million of funding to support the delivery of up to 28,000 homes that would otherwise be stalled due to nutrient neutrality in affected catchments. Nutrient neutrality is a requirement for new housing developments in areas with protected habitats sites that are affected by nutrient pollution.
- c. The first Labour Party conference since their election took place between September 28 and October 1. Housing was a core issue at the Conference, key messages for the housing sector included:
- Sir Keir Starmer MP revealed his intention to exempt veterans, young care leavers and victims of domestic abuse from the local connection or residency test. In his keynote address, he said: “*Homes will be there for heroes. They will have the security they deserve. They will have a roof over their head because Britain belongs to them.*”
 - Starmer also promised planning reform, including the introduction of new brownfield planning passports that would be more specific about the

development that should be regarded as acceptable on brownfield sites, with the default answer to suitable proposals being a straightforward “yes.”

- Angela Rayner MP emphasised the Government’s commitment to addressing the shortfall of social housing, saying: *“Unless we address the social and council housing problem in this country, then we’re really not going to get to the root problem of the housing crisis for everybody. I actually think it’s a moral mission with the Labour government to recognise the problem and to build the social housing we need. I’ve been honest about not putting a figure on that today, because there’s a lot of moving parts within that. But hopefully at the spending review, you’ll see that this government is really serious that we’re going to build those houses we desperately need.”*
 - It was confirmed that there will be a third and rebranded wave of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (now known as the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund), as well as a new local authority retrofit scheme (known as the Warm Homes: Local Grant). In a change to the bidding process from earlier waves of the SHDF, all applications that meet the minimum requirements of the new scheme will be awarded funding. Ed Miliband MP also reiterated Labour’s commitment to raising energy efficiency standards across the social housing sector. He said that legislation was being introduced to ensure all social homes in England meet an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of at least C by 2030.
 - The Government has confirmed that it will introduce Awaab’s Law in the social rented sector this autumn. This legislation will set legally binding timescales for landlords to investigate and remedy hazards such as damp and mould in tenants’ homes. The Government has also committed to extending these protections to the private rented sector, helping tenants across both sectors secure quicker repairs and improved safety standards.
 - The Government will consult on a new Decent Homes Standard for social and private renters. The consultation, which will launch as soon as possible, will look to ensure safe, secure housing is the standard people can expect in both social housing and private rented properties.
 - Andy Burnham called for a ‘Grenfell law’ to *“enshrine in UK law the right of all UK citizens to live in a good, safe, secure home”*, and for the return of mandatory council representation on housing association boards.
- d. Social landlords in England will be permitted to raise rents by a maximum of 2.7% for the 2025-26 financial year, following the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rise of 1.7% in the year to September 2024, with the current rent settlement of CPI +1% in place until April 2026. The Office for National Statistics said the CPI figure for September is 1.7%, lower than expected by analysts. This figure is down from 2.2% on August and is the lowest CPI figure since April 2021.
- e. Following the budget the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published the findings of its review on Right to Buy (RtB) discounts. The policy paper concludes that: *“Returning RtB discounts to pre-2012 levels provides a fairer and more sustainable scheme, balancing tenant opportunities for homeownership with councils’ ability to retain housing stock for future need.”* The review makes the following conclusions and policy decisions:
- In a bid to balance tenant access to homeownership with protecting council housing stock, the Government will reinstate the pre-2012 regional RtB

discount caps. This move is projected to decrease annual sales by approximately 25,000 over five years, ultimately resulting in a net increase in social housing stock. The maximum discount will revert to regional levels, such as £38,000 in London and lower amounts in other regions, aiming to better reflect local housing markets.

- Councils will no longer be required to remit a portion of RtB sales receipts to the Treasury, allowing local authorities to retain all sales proceeds for reinvestment into social housing. This move, according to MHCLG, will help councils keep up with housing demands and ensure that sold properties can be effectively replaced.
- The Government will extend the cost floor period from 15 to 30 years. It says that this adjustment will help safeguard councils' investments by ensuring that any RtB purchase price does not dip below the council's outlay for building or maintaining the property, further discouraging rapid turnover and speculative resale.
- Following the publication, the Government will launch a public consultation on broader RtB reforms, seeking feedback on policies to support the sustainability of the RtB programme, while protecting new build stock and encouraging councils' capacity to replace sold properties effectively.

The new discount levels will come into effect on 21st November, following the laying of secondary legislation.

- f. The Minister of State for Housing and Planning, Matthew Pennycook MP, has written to Homes England's Chair, Peter Freeman, to set out his priorities for the Agency in their role delivering housing and regeneration across England. A Chair's letter is issued annually to ensure there is a clear set of expectations communicated to Homes England's leadership. This letter includes 7 priority areas of focus to support delivery of the new homes which sit alongside Homes England's overarching objectives, which the government will articulate in its' forthcoming long-term housing strategy:
- To urgently address the reduced rates of housebuilding to deliver the 1.5 million new homes target by doing everything in its power to accelerate development and increase delivery in 2024/25. This will require an increase in the Agency's offer and role as master developer, better leveraging of funding programmes, a greater willingness to utilise the existing powers available to it (including the rarely used compulsory purchase power), and to work quickly with the Department to implement the Public Bodies Review's conclusions on streamlining processes including the securing of required financial flexibilities and increased delegations from HM Treasury.
 - To continue to provide appropriate support to the New Homes Accelerator to speed up delivery on large sites that are stalled or building out too slowly. This activity will also extend to new sites where Homes England are not currently involved, but where Homes England support has been identified as the best lever to accelerate delivery.
 - To continue to support the Department's work on new towns and other major schemes by providing expertise and advice to the New Towns Taskforce where required and more actively leading place-based delivery. As well as the above, the Agency should continue to support new settlements and urban extensions already in train through funding programmes.

- To reflect the high priority the government attaches to social and affordable housing by taking steps to ensure that the Agency is maximising the number of social rent homes delivered through the allocation of remaining Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) funding and support plans for a future programme (details of the future AHP are not expected until Spring 2025).
 - To support the reform and diversification of the housing market by continuing to support efforts to grow the SME (small and medium-sized enterprise) and Build to Rent sectors (including developing new finance opportunities and increasing SME access to Homes England sites and services); increase the adoption of mixed tenure delivery; support the self and custom build and community-led housing sectors; boost productivity through the uptake of MMC; and attract institutional investment into UK residential real estate.
 - To continue to focus on achieving best value for money for the taxpayer and ensure that the Agency drives efficiencies and prioritises resources. This should include the rapid implementation of a new Target Operating Model to ensure Homes England has a sustainable, regional, and place-based operating model to reflect the shifting focus to delivering successful placemaking and align with our wider devolution agenda.
 - To work with the Department to make the case for an ambitious package of housing interventions at the Budget and Spending Review.
- g. The Government has announced plans to build thousands of new homes on disused brownfield sites, with a £68 million funding boost aimed at unlocking land for development. The funding, which will be distributed to 54 councils across the country, is expected to pave the way for 5,200 new homes. The funding will support councils in converting neglected land, such as former car parks and industrial areas, into residential developments. By covering the costs of decontaminating and clearing these sites and improving infrastructure like internet, water and power, the Government hopes to make these areas ready for construction.
- h. The UK impact investment sector has announced £550 million in new investments. These funds will be used to help build tens of thousands of homes across Britain, including at least 5,000 homes aimed at addressing social inequality. The investment from three investments funds, Schrodgers, Man Group and Resonance, underpins its drive to foster public-private partnerships to drive meaningful impact across the country. Further details of the investments are as follows:
- Schrodgers has confirmed a new £50m allocation from Homes England, into its recently launched real estate impact fund. The fund, which has an initial target of raising £200m with the aim of ultimately delivering 5,000 homes to address social inequality and deliver an appropriate financial return to investors, expects to make its first investments before the end of 2024. It is focused on helping to deliver more social and affordable housing, regenerate town centres and invest in social infrastructure.
 - Man Group has announced a further £100m investment to deliver affordable and environmentally sustainable housing for key workers across England, with 90% of homes to be designated as affordable housing.
 - Resonance has announced an expected 300% increase in investment – from £79m to £250m - into its initiative to tackle homelessness. It directly channels investment into residential property to help create pathways out of Temporary

Accommodation for individuals and families.

- i. Rushanara Ali MP, the building safety minister, confirmed in a statement to parliament on 2 September that plans for residential PEEPs (personal emergency evacuation plans) would be brought forward by the Home Office in the autumn. Under the plans, residents with disabilities and impairments will be entitled to a “person-centred risk assessment” to identify appropriate equipment and adjustments to aid their fire safety or evacuation.

Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)

- j. The RSH has issued its first C4 rating to Newham Council. The report states that the council’s stock had “very serious health and safety issues,” with thousands of high-risk fire safety actions and repairs outstanding, and at least 20 per cent of its 16,000 homes not meeting decent living standards. Kate Dodsworth, Chief of Regulatory Engagement at RSH, said: *“The breadth and scale of these failings, including very serious health and safety issues, pose an unacceptable risk to tenants’ well-being. Taking accountability is a critical part of the co-regulatory approach and it is extremely concerning that, despite the gravity of these failings, the landlord failed to refer themselves to us over key issues. We are now engaging intensively with Newham as they work to resolve these issues. While we are not proposing to use our enforcement powers at this stage, this will be kept under review.”* At the other end of the scale Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council became the first Local Authority to receive the highest C1 rating in partnership with its ALMO, Berneslai Homes.

Housing Ombudsman

- k. The Housing Ombudsman (HO) has released its’ latest insight report which analyses complaints received from shared owners between July 2023 and June 2024. The HO report shows that the proportion of complaints it received each year from shared owners is the same proportion as the percentage of social housing that is shared ownership – 6%. However, the latest data from HouseMark reveals that average satisfaction amongst shared owners with their landlord overall was 57%, compared with 83% for social rented tenants. This echoes a report on shared ownership published in March 2024 by the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee which found little evidence that shared owners were aware of their right to escalate unresolved complaints to the HO. The top three shared owner complaint categories identified in the HO report were:
 - Complaint handling (266 complaints)
 - Property condition (193 complaints)
 - Charges (99 complaints)

The report identified six key learning areas for landlords around the sales process, defects, cladding, repairs, charges and acting as the managing agent for freeholder properties. It also sets out nine key tests that should be considered when investigating complaints from shared owners to improve fairness.

- I. In its latest severe maladministration report, the HO challenged the approach of eight landlords to moving residents temporarily. The Ombudsman said that landlords must learn how to better communicate to reduce stress and anxiety for residents during temporary moves, as well as ensuring that temporary moves are not delayed when conditions are hazardous. Housing ombudsman Richard Blakeway also took aim at the use of the term “decant,” which he described as “*crude, dehumanising and stigmatising language for what can be a difficult and emotional process for any person.*” Mr. Blakeway emphasised that providing temporary housing is a routine part of property management and stressed the importance of handling these situations correctly, given the costs involved, to avoid further distress and safeguard residents.

Tenant Engagement

- m. Tpas, the tenant engagement body, has published an updated set of standards for social landlords, with the aim of “*setting a higher bar for tenant involvement and empowerment in the social housing sector.*” The revised standards challenge social landlords to go beyond mere regulatory compliance, advocating for a framework that fosters deeper tenant engagement and delivers better value for money. The updated standards are grouped into seven key areas: governance and transparency, scrutiny, business and strategy, complaints, information and communication, resources for engagement, and community and wider engagement.

Research and Campaigns

- n. The Local Government Association (LGA) has published its response to the Government’s consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework. In its submission, the LGA highlights that planning permission is not a barrier to housebuilding, with local authorities approving almost nine in ten planning applications despite significant resourcing and capacity issues. It goes on to argue that councils and communities know their areas best and are well placed to make judgement decisions on how to manage competing demands for uses in their local areas through the local plan-led system, so national planning policy should remain suitably flexible to allow this. It called on the Government to:
 - Revoke permitted development rights without contributions to affordable housing and local infrastructure.
 - Allow councils to set their own planning application fees.
 - Reconsider the new Standard Method (which determines mandatory housebuilding targets).
 - Roll out five-year local housing deals by 2025.
 - Give councils the powers and flexibilities to use the Right to Buy scheme and receipts in their local area.
 - Review and increase the Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) grant levels per unit.
 - Strengthen Housing Revenue Accounts via a long-term rent settlement of at least 10 years.
 - Further invest in the Brownfield Land Release Fund and One Public Estate programmes.

- Bring forward further opportunities to utilise compulsory purchase powers.
 - Increase flexibility for local authorities in the use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- o. In its submission to the Treasury ahead of the Autumn Budget, the LGA said that the Government needs to take immediate steps to stabilise council finances and protect vital local services. LGA analysis shows that due to inflation and wage pressures alongside cost and demand pressures, English councils face a £2.3 billion funding gap in 2025/26, rising to £3.9 billion in 2026/27, amounting to a £6.2 billion shortfall across the two years. It warned against any “disastrous” further cuts in the Autumn Budget and added that there is a growing risk of systemic financial failure with 18 councils reliant on being given Exceptional Financial Support by the Government in February to balance their books in 2024/25. It calls on the Government to give councils:
- A significant and sustained increase in overall funding that reflects current and future demands for services.
 - Multi-year and timely finance settlements.
 - General rather than ring-fenced grant funding, reduce the fragmentation of government funding and end the use of competitive bidding to allocate grant funding.
- p. The National Housing Federation and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors aim to launch a new stock condition survey standard for social housing in 2025. Although housing associations currently carry out their own surveys, the NHF says that its members have been seeking a “*universal approach*” to streamline the collection and analysis of stock condition data. The new standard is intended to serve as a reliable tool for assessing the quality of homes and will support social landlords in making informed decisions about repairs and maintenance. The development of the new survey standard will involve collaboration with housing associations, as well as other sector organisations such as the National Federation of ALMOs and the Association of Retained Council Housing. Residents’ views will also be sought throughout the process to ensure their concerns and expectations are fully integrated into the new approach.
- q. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has published its latest statutory homelessness statistics for the financial year 2023-24, which show that compared to last year there has been a 92% increase in the number of households owed a prevention duty (if a person is threatened with homelessness, the local authority has a legal obligation to help prevent it) and a 79.2% increase in those owed a relief duty (where a person is already homeless the local authority has a legal obligation to help them secure accommodation for at least six months). It also shows that there is a higher concentration of households with children in temporary accommodation (TA) in areas such as London, where they are most likely to be housed in nightly paid self-contained accommodation. The statistics show that over a fifth of households with children in TA had been there 2-5 years, and a further fifth had been there for over 5 years. Following the release of the statistics, homelessness charity Crisis has once again called on the Government to commit to building 90,000 social homes every year “*so it can start to deliver on its aspirations to tackle homelessness and end the damage it does to people’s lives*”.

These statistics followed an Inside Housing survey that revealed 80% of homelessness workers feel at risk of burnout with the vast majority struggling to help people find housing, as demand for services soars. More than 1,000 frontline employees contributed to the survey and 93% of respondents said they found it difficult or very difficult to find suitable accommodation for people accessing services.

- r. A new survey conducted by the District Councils Network (DCN) found that planning departments have the worst staff shortages across councils, with 84% experiencing recruitment and retention issues. The survey also found that almost a third of councils had experienced staff shortages in teams working to prevent homelessness.
- s. The latest Government data shows that 123,000 households across England, Scotland and Wales had their benefits capped as of May. This was up by 61%, or 46,000 more households since the previous quarter. 87% of households which had their benefits capped (110,000 households) included children. Of these, 92% (98,000 households) had between one and four children, while 8,900 or 8% had five or more children. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) said this coincided with the annual benefit uprating and the local housing allowance uprating which happened in April. A Government spokesperson responded: *“This is another example of the dire inheritance this Government faces – too many people are trapped on benefits. We are taking bold action to support people into work, through reforming job centres and giving local areas the power they need to tackle economic inactivity, which will boost their finances and reduce the likelihood of being impacted by the cap. We are committed to supporting low-income families and our ambitious strategy along with a £421 million extension to the Household Support Fund will ensure we can drive down poverty in every part of the country.”*

Contact Officer: Claire Hughes, Director of Governance and Customer Services
Email: Claire.Hughes@cheltenham.gov.uk