

Meeting:	Executive
Meeting date:	03/06/2025
Report of:	Director of Housing & Communities
Portfolio of:	Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities

Decision Report: Housing Landlord Annual Report

Subject of Report

1. The City of York Council is the largest residential landlord in the city, owning and managing around 7500 homes. This equates to around 60% of the total social rented housing stock in the city. The Council's landlord function has a significant and meaningful impact on the city and its residents. Our council housing landlord service strongly relates to the four core commitments of the Council Plan – namely Equalities and Human Rights, Affordability, Climate, and Health.
2. Central government have made a commitment to improving social housing landlord services across the country. This is being supported through the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) which was established in April 2024 seeking to create a *'viable, efficient, and well governed social housing sector able to deliver quality homes and services for current and future tenants.'* RSH has set out a number of Consumer Standards with a *'focus on neighbourhood, safety, transparency, influence, accountability and tenancy standards'*.
3. City of York Council has been working with the RSH for the last year, sharing existing performance information and a plan for making improvements where needed. The council self-referred to the Regulator in the summer of 2024 outlining some areas where the Consumer Standards were not being met. In December, the council received a response from the Regulator welcoming improvements being made across the service. Each year every

social landlord is required to submit performance information to the RSH. To accompany this submission and to provide greater transparency and accountability for elected members and residents of the city, this is being accompanied by the first Housing Landlord Annual Report. This report summarises the previous year's service and sets priorities for the year ahead. A summarised version of this report will be shared with council house tenants and leaseholders.

4. This report:
 - Provides context for the social housing sector and the new standards with which the service is measured;
 - Outlines current performance levels against a range of standards including tenants perception and compliance data; and
 - Outlines priorities and targets for this year, providing an opportunity for Executive and council house tenants to scrutinise performance.
5. This report has a key focus on the landlord functions of the Housing Service. These primarily relate to repairs, asset management and investment, health and safety of council homes, adaptations, new build development, and housing management services. All of these services are funded through tenants rental income and form the basis for the council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The report seeks to provide a clear and transparent analysis of the Council's landlord functions which are subject to scrutiny from the RSH.
6. The Council's landlord work is supported by a 'Housing Charter' which sets out how the council delivers these services. The Charter has the following Mission Statement *'We are ONE TEAM, working with you in positive and responsive ways, always listening and improving our services. We invest in, and plan for the future, ensuring we support safe, sustainable, affordable and good quality homes. Working with residents, other parts of the council and external organisations, we aim to support strong and diverse communities where you can live well and thrive'*.
7. The Housing department also delivers a range of other services which are not within the HRA and not a housing landlord function. These services do not form part of this report and are funded through the General Fund. These services include homeless prevention and resettlement, housing options, supporting

Registered Provider partners, and work within the private housing sector including health and safety standards, licensing, adaptations and retrofit. The Housing service also contributes to the Planning service as part of the decision-making process and in formulating policies and guidance. The Housing service operates three Gypsy and Traveller sites in the city which contain 61 pitches. £5.25m has been allocated to deliver additional and improved pitches, further details of which are contained in an annual Gypsy and Traveller report and are not replicated here.

Benefits and Challenges

8. The recommendations of this report will set priorities for 2025 - 26 for the Housing landlord service. An approved set of priorities, informed by existing performance data and feedback from tenants, will increase accountability for services as well as directing investment and resources where they are needed. The recommendations build on the increased data available following the Stock Condition Survey and will respond to feedback provided by tenants. The report will build on the principle of a Neighbourhood Model, considering how Housing can work with partners to deliver support, advice, and information at the point of need.
9. The introduction of Consumer Standards by the RSH has given clear direction for social housing landlords. However, as with all new regulatory frameworks there are a number of challenges. The Consumer Standards require social landlords to measure and monitor performance closely, this means holding accurate, detailed and up to date records, including on housing stock and appropriate and relevant information about tenants. Achieving full compliance against the standards is likely to take the majority of landlords a significant amount of time, this is particularly true for Local Authority landlords who have not been highly regulated until the recent introduction of the RSH. Landlords are given a judgement between C1 (delivering the outcome of the Consumer Standards) through to C4 (very serious failings). To demonstrate the challenge, to date the RSH have provided 34 regulatory judgements for Local Authority social landlords. Of these just three have been awarded a C1 rating. Eleven have been awarded C2, eighteen C3, and two C4. This means around 62% of judgements for Local Authority social landlords to date have concluded that there are 'serious' or 'very serious failings' by the landlord in delivering the outcomes of the Consumer Standards. There is no

additional central government resource allocation to accompany the new regulatory regime. Inflationary pressures, with social rents rising by significantly less than inflation overall during the last 10 years, requires service delivery to be more efficient and cost effective.

Policy Basis for Decision

10. The Council Plan, 'One City, For All', contains four core commitments. These are Equalities and Human Rights, Affordability, Climate, and Health. It is considered that the provision of good quality, safe, warm, healthy, and affordable council housing is pivotal to achieving the aims of the Council Plan.
11. Similarly, the three ten-year strategies of Climate Change, Health and Wellbeing, and the Economic Strategy all relate strongly to the living environment provided for our customers.
12. The Council's Housing Charter sets out a series of goals for the service, seeking to foster closer working relationships across the service and with council house tenants. This is set around the themes of 'We Think Forward, We Think Together, We Think Community, We Think Home, and We Think You'. The 2023-28 Asset Management Plan also guides our landlord services in respect of guiding investment to ensure our homes are safe and of good quality.
13. The Council's housing landlord service is now regulated by the RSH with services being expected to meet the Consumer Standards.

Financial Strategy Implications

14. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ringfenced account within the General Fund. The account includes income and expenditure related to all of our landlord functions. The approved budget for 2025/26 anticipates an income of around £41m, the vast majority of which will be received from the rent of council homes. This is utilised to fund repairs (£11m), general management (£7m), special services (£4m), insurance and fees (£1m), and planned investment (12m). A further £5m is being utilised to pay interest associated with the self-financing deal agreed with City of York Council in 2012, historic HRA debt as well

as borrowing utilised for some new build housing projects. The HRA debt level was £146.4m as at 31st March 2024 which is considered manageable with a £41m income stream.

15. There have been significant financial challenges for the HRA in recent years. This includes a three-year rent reduction imposed by central government from 2016 which removed c£6m pa from anticipated income. This combined with significant inflationary pressures in more recent years, which have been particularly acute in the construction sector, means that more needs to be delivered from less. Despite these challenges the HRA remains in a stable financial position with a reserve of £29.6m as at 31st March 2024. This report is seeking to add some further detail around how the budget for 2025/26 will be utilised to meet our priorities as set down by the RSH and taking account of the views of council house tenants.

Recommendation and Reasons

16. Executive are asked to approve the following recommendations:
 - i. *Note the current performance levels across the Council's landlord services and the proactive approach to working alongside the Regulator of Social Housing.*
 - ii. *Approve the priorities for 2025-26 as highlighted within this report and summarised in Annex C. Note the related performance targets, seeking to deliver further improvements to the quality of service provided for council house tenants.*
 - iii. *Approve the adoption of a new Responsive Repairs Policy for Tenants of Council Houses included in Annex A.*
 - iv. *Approve the 2025-26 capital programme contained in Annex B.*
 - v. *Approve the principles of the Neighbourhood Investment Programme (para 23), allowing the service to respond more effectively to the priorities of council house tenants. Note that further details will be included in the Neighbourhood Model report to be considered by Executive this summer.*

Performance of the Council Housing Landlord Service and Setting Priorities for 2025/26

17. Evaluating performance of the Council's housing landlord service can be complex. There are a range of services provided to tenants across the city. There are three key sources of data to aid understanding of service delivery performance:
 - Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) benchmarked to similar social housing landlords (in York's case we use Local Authority Landlords outside of London with stock of less than 10,000 homes);
 - Stock condition data; and
 - Tenants perception of performance.
18. The RSH is interested in all of these performance measures. They are all contained within the Consumer Standards which has provided greater consistency across the sector around how performance should be measured. Whilst not all Consumer Standards are easy to quantify and benchmark, many are, either through resident feedback and surveys or through data collation. The Consumer Standards are built up of four sub-standards, these are:
 - *Neighbourhood and Community* – this focuses on safe and well maintained neighbourhoods where tenants can feel safe.
 - *Safety and Quality* – takes account of stock quality, decency, health and safety, repairs and maintenance, and adaptations within tenants homes.
 - *Tenancy* – this considers the fair allocation and letting of homes and how tenancies are managed and ended by landlords.
 - *Transparency, Influence and Accountability* – being open with tenants and treating them with fairness and respect so that they can access services, raise complaints, and influence decision making and hold their landlord to account.
19. As the first Housing Landlord Annual Report to be considered by Executive, this report brings together existing information and

establishes a baseline from which future performance can be measured. The report identifies areas where performance is positive when measured against peers, areas where focus is needed to make improvements, and some areas where work is needed on creating a more comprehensive performance framework to better understand what is working well for tenants and what isn't. From this information, priorities are established for 2025-26, covering both planned actions and targeted performance improvements. This information is set out below against the four areas of the Consumer Standards with resultant actions set out at the end of each section and brought together in Annex C.

Neighbourhood and Community Standard

20. The Neighbourhood and Community Standard requires landlords to:
- Ensure the safety of shared spaces
 - Cooperate locally with relevant partners to promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing
 - Have a clear route for the reporting of anti-social behaviour and hate incidents and an effective approach for dealing with it
 - Effectively respond to cases of domestic abuse

Safety of Shared Spaces, Local Cooperation, and Anti-Social Behaviour

21. In November, the Design Principles of a Neighbourhood Model for York were approved as a way of delivering improved outcomes for individuals and communities. Further engagement is taking place to inform a detailed proposal for this model with a formal decision expected this summer.
22. The Neighbourhood Model can add significant benefits to council housing tenants and support the work of the Council's landlord teams, including Housing Management and Repairs. Working alongside partners such as the Public Realm, Police, NHS, community groups, voluntary organisations, schools, and other landlords will create an improved collective knowledge of issues, challenges and opportunities and provide a strengthened approach to cooperation in finding solutions.
23. As well as helping day to day service delivery to be well connected and responsive to tenants priorities, this approach can support

estate improvement works. The HRA budget includes a £170k annual capital budget for investing into estates. This Neighbourhood Investment Programme will deliver improvements to the areas around Council homes. The primary focus of the funds will be:

- Building community capacity to co-manage shared spaces.
- Support wider estate regeneration work, for example supporting The Groves Neighbourhood Plan objectives and supporting the development of neighbourhood plans in other areas.
- Supporting measures to reduce ASB, for example through new lighting, security gates and the closing off of unsafe passageways.
- Improving communal areas around council houses and apartments, such as improving hardstanding areas, tree and shrub planting, and enabling community and resident activity.

This funding will not be used for building repair tasks, this work will be funded from general repairs budgets.

Domestic Abuse

24. In February, the Council Housing Domestic Abuse Resident and Tenant Policy 2025-28 was approved. The Policy is designed to reduce the risks and consequences of domestic abuse and outlines how CYC's Housing Service will respond to domestic abuse when it affects residents, tenants, and leaseholders. The Policy builds on existing pathways, approaches and responses to domestic abuse as well as providing guidance on how the Service will improve current practice, to ensure victims and survivors of domestic abuse receive a victim centred, supportive response.
25. In 2023, supported by Public Health, the Housing Services committed to achieving the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation (DAHA). This accreditation gives social housing providers and local authorities a framework on best practice responses for domestic abuse victims/survivors, to develop and embed within Housing Services at a strategic and operational level.

Neighbourhood and Community Standard - Table of current performance and targets for the year

Tenants perception from satisfaction surveys	Current performance	Target for 25/26	Benchmark
Landlord listens to views and acts upon them	46%	55%	57.5%
Overall satisfaction with council as landlord	60%	70%	70.9%
Satisfied with approach to handling Anti-Social Behaviour	33%	43%	52.4%
Landlord makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood	38%	48%	58.9%
Keeps communal areas cleaned and well-maintained	44%	54%	63.7%

Neighbourhood and Community Standard - Priority workstreams to support further performance improvement:

- a) Programme of Estate Walkabouts - published dates for partners and tenants to walk the patch and discuss opportunities, issues and concerns with positive service responses provided quickly.
- b) Work collaboratively with partners to develop and adopt the Neighbourhood Model of working.
- c) Deliver investment into communities through the Neighbourhood Investment Programme, working collaboratively as part of the Neighbourhood Model.
- d) Increase the number of tenancy and wellbeing home visits by Housing Management Officers, aiming to deliver over 1000 visits during 2025-26.
- e) Submit evidence to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation.

Safety and Quality Standard

26. This standard requires social landlords to:

- Hold accurate and an up to date evidenced understanding of the quality and condition of homes.
- Meet decent homes standards.
- Ensure homes are healthy and safe.
- Deliver an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned investment services for homes and communal areas.
- Assist tenants seeking housing adaptations.

Understanding the quality and condition of homes

27. During 2024-25 great progress was made on creating a comprehensive, accurate and up to date data set regarding the condition of council homes. Around 6400 properties were surveyed with data being collected on all components within each home, providing an estimate of the remaining lifespan of each component. In addition, the survey identified a number of repairs which had not been previously reported as well as assessing whether any homes contained health and safety risks which needed to be resolved or mitigated.
28. This stock condition survey is utilised to develop a 1 year, 5 year and 30-year investment plan. Those components with the lowest remaining lifespan and where there are health and safety risks are prioritised first. The remaining council homes will be surveyed during 2025-26 after which the council will survey 20% of the housing stock each year to ensure that records are kept up to date and in accordance with good practice. This process will ensure the council invests in the right components, in the right homes, at the right time.

Decent Homes

29. The survey also provides much of the evidence needed to assess whether any council homes fall short in meeting the government guidance on the 'Decent Homes Standard'. Decent Homes considers both the age and remaining life of housing component and provides a guide on when components should be replaced e.g. kitchens every 30 years. Clearly, the ambition is that no council homes should fall short of the definition of decent homes. However, failing to meet the decent homes standard does not mean that a home is unsafe or unhealthy to live in. It acts as a guide around investment decisions and priorities.
30. The table below summarises the number of council homes which do not meet the Decent Homes Standard, including the current position compared to previous years and a benchmarked position against peers. The City of York Council decent homes figure measures favourably against the benchmark of peers. The decent homes figure is calculated at the end of each financial year.

Decent Homes	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Current Benchmark
Percentage of dwellings failing to meet the decent homes standard	4.9%	1.6%	1.9%	1.5%	3.7%

31. The percentage of dwellings failing to meet the decent homes standard has reduced this year. It is important to also note that this reduction occurred during a year when a comprehensive stock condition survey was undertaken. Stock condition surveys will always identify some unknown issues. To have reduced the number of homes failing to meet decent homes standard in a year when 6400 properties were surveyed is very positive. The stock condition survey provides the foundation for further improvements in decent homes figures in the coming years.

Ensuring Homes are Healthy and Safe

32. The Regulator expects all landlords to take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of tenants in their homes and communal areas. This is achieved through checks and risk assessments with associated actions being carried out in appropriate timescales. An annual snapshot of health and safety compliance information is shared with the regulator at the end of each financial year. This information covers the issue of gas and electrical safety certificates, asbestos records, water hygiene, lift checks and fire. Where issues are identified a risk-based approach is followed, taking account of both the building and the tenants, in prioritising works. A summary of the recent health and safety return to the RSH is summarised below:

	% compliant	
Compliance area	24/25	23/24
Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out	99.9%	99.9%
Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out	100%	97%

Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out	100%	100%
Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out	96.66%	90.2%

33. As summarised above, performance is strong and improving, in ensuring council homes meet the required health and safety requirements of the Regulator. In respect of the legionella risk assessments, there are 10 properties where the landlord service has not been able to gain access. Once access to these homes has been secured performance will be at 100%. Only 4 homes, out of 6824 with a gas supply, are overdue a gas servicing. Again this relates to being unable to access the home, significant work is taking place to gain access as soon as possible.
34. During 2024/25, major refurbishment works commenced at Glen Lodge Independent Living Community and within a number of flats at Bell Farm. These buildings contained multiple health and safety issues which could not be resolved without tenants moving out. As well as resolving health and safety risks related to water hygiene, fire, and asbestos, opportunities have been taken to improve the quality of these buildings. This has included amending internal layouts, improving accessibility, installing new kitchens and bathrooms, window replacement and significant retrofit works including improved insulation and the installation of renewable energy generation. The 71 homes at Glen Lodge and Bell Farm will be complete and occupied during the 2025-26 financial year.

Deliver an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned investment services for homes and communal areas

Repairs and Maintenance

35. There are around 27,000 repairs, maintenance and planned investment services undertaken each year. This volume, per home, is broadly consistent with peers. Currently repairs operate under two sections, emergencies and standard. It is expected that emergency repairs are resolved within 1 day and standard repairs

within 20 working days. Current performance against these targets is presented below:

% of all repairs completed on time	82.85% (Feb 2025)
% of Emergency Repairs completed on same day or next day	86.77% (Feb 2025)

36. Whilst delivering against these targets is improving, performance is below that of peers. However, it is worth noting for context that the average number of days taken to complete a repair is better at CYC than that of peer averages. This suggests that the majority of jobs are completed more quickly than peers, but more complex repairs are often delivered outside of the target date.
37. There is a challenging context for the repairs work. The City of York Council housing stock varies in type, but around a third of the stock was built before 1964. Around 7% of total stock numbers are classified as 'complex and of non-traditional construction'. This means that around 4 in every 10 council homes in York are either over 60 years old or built of non-traditional methods. There are some further challenges with York being low lying with high water tables in some areas of the city.
38. The current repairs policy is a number of years old and doesn't reflect the guidance provided by the Consumer Standards. As such, a revised Repairs Policy (see Annex A) has been developed. The revised policy has been shortened and its tone adjusted to be customer facing.
39. One key change is the introduction of a third category of repair, this is called Planned Repairs. These are repairs that require intrusive remedial works that may require significant resources from multiple trades or a specialist contractor to complete the work. Often this sort of work will require a survey, after which works can be planned and delivered. The nature of this sort of work means that the standard repair time is not appropriate and doesn't provide an accurate expectation for tenants. A proposed target time for these works has been set at 65 working days. This approach and target time is consistent with the approach of many other social housing landlords, including those with stock in York.
40. The other key changes within the revised policy compared to the previous version are:

- Improved channels of communication, particularly in respect of updates regarding repair appointments;
 - Greater clarity around positive adjustments being made for tenants where needed;
 - The strengthening of our approach around hazards, building on the requirements introduced by Awaab's law; and
 - Creating greater assurance around the services' positive response to repairs linked to hate crimes or domestic abuse.
41. The revised Repairs Policy was considered by Health, Housing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny on 4th December 2024. Positive feedback was received and suggestions around minor alterations to wording have been incorporated into the latest draft where appropriate. Tenant engagement on the repairs policy has been undertaken in recent weeks through a combination of an online survey and more detailed consultation.
42. 100% of respondents to the engagement stated that they believed the policy is clear and understandable. 80% of respondents agreed that should the standards set out in the repairs policy be achieved, this would achieve a good standard of service. Qualitative feedback included some comments about potentially missing information from the policy and some queries around whether some services could be delivered more quickly. The draft policy has been adjusted, where appropriate, to reflect comments received and aims to find a suitable balance taking account of resources and standards set by other social landlords.
43. This report recommends the adoption of the Responsive Repairs Policy for Tenants of Council Houses included in Annex A. Further changes planned for the repairs service are the introduction of transactional repair reviews. This involves tenants receiving contact soon after a repair is undertaken and are given an opportunity to provide instant feedback. This will support performance management and an opportunity to resolve any identified issues more quickly.

Planned Investment

44. 2023-24 was the last year of investment without the availability of a comprehensive stock condition survey. Up until now, much of the investment has primarily been based around component lifecycles

e.g. components replaced based on their age. The new stock condition data and our approach moving forward allows investment decisions to be made taking account of both component age and condition. This will support investment into the homes most at need and over time this should improve overall condition and reduce the number of homes which do not meet the definition of decent homes.

45. In 2023-24, planned investment of £9.7m was made. The largest investments were in the following works:

Types	Numbers of Homes
Home modernisations	140
Replacement kitchens	40
Structural damp works with retrofit	62
External doors	391
Fire doors	100
Whole house window replacement	107
Capital void works	132

46. In 2025-26, it is anticipated that a budget in the region of £15.6m will be available within the Planned Investment Budget. The uplift is a combination of an inflationary increase of £800k and budget being carried over from the previous year in order to respond to the stock condition survey information. Further detail around the planned use of this budget is contained in Annex B. However, it should be noted that final spend against these budget lines will be amended by the management team throughout the financial year to respond to priorities and any updated information.
47. The principles guiding the allocation of budgets for 2025-26 are:
- A rolling £0.5m retrofit budget has been created, the ambition will be to increase spend and delivery through the utilisation of grant funding where available.
 - Tenants who have been promised replacement windows and home modernisation works in 2025 – 26, based on the age of those components, will be offered these works even if the stock condition survey identified that they are not in need of immediate replacement. This primarily relates to

window replacements in Tang Hall and home modernisation works in Dringhouses.

- Homes with remaining structural damp issues will be prioritised for remediation works and a proactive approach to damp will commence where homes which data suggests are at risk, but where an issue hasn't been reported, will be considered for remedial works. It is hoped that by undertaking works before issues become significant that this will reduce costs in the long term and provide health benefits for tenants.
- Homes with components of an age and condition that would mean the homes fail to meet the decent homes standard by the end of the financial year will see those components replaced.
- The stock condition survey identified 500 homes as needing a new roof in the next 5 years. This expenditure has been smoothed out over an indicative five year spend profile to support delivery and ensure budgets in future years are sufficient.
- An increased investment will be made into fire remedial works to take account of measures identified in the fire risk assessments.

48. A new passenger lift will also be installed at Glen Lodge to replace a lift which has required a large number of repair visits and has been unreliable, causing issues for tenants.

Adaptations to Improve Accessibility

49. Adaptations are undertaken in council houses to help support independence for our tenants. An annual budget of £701k was set to deliver these works. Due to significant demand an additional £200k was added to the programme budget this year.
50. During the year five contractors have been procured to deliver these works. Contracts were signed in September 2025, to enable the acceleration of major adaptation works. During the year, 49 major adaptation works have been approved within 43 homes. The 49 measures installed are detailed in the table below.

Adaptation Measures	Number of Measures Installed
Stairlift	16
Level Access Shower	9
Ramp Access	4
Bathroom Adaptations	3
Kitchen Adaptations	3
Vehicle hardstanding and crossover	3
Auto Door Opener	2
Door Widening	2
Downstairs Toilet Provision	2
Access Works	1
Doorway	1
Garden Fencing	1
Paving	1
Room padding	1
Total Measures	49

51. For those tenants who have received a major adaptation this year, 100% were satisfied with the service provided.
52. At the end of 2024-25 there are 73 properties waiting for adaptations works. All 73 properties will receive these adaptations during 2025-26. New requests received will be triaged based on priority need from Occupational Therapy Assessments. A new housing adaptations policy for Council houses will be developed, taking a long-term approach to providing a greater number of homes with higher accessibility standards.

Safety and Quality Standard - Priority workstreams to support further performance improvement:

- f) Develop the Open Housing System to allow repairs to be logged and repair appointments to be booked online, providing greater convenience for tenants.
- g) Adopt the new repair policy to support effective service delivery.
- h) Introduce transactional repair feedback from tenants to improve understanding of performance and to enable a quick response where the service did not meet expected standards.
- i) Complete retrofit works at Alex Lyon House, Honeysuckle House, and SHDF Wave 2 funded works.
- j) Improve over 1000 council homes through the delivery of the £15m planned investment programme.
- k) Undertake stock condition surveys for all homes which were not surveyed during 2024-25.
- l) Develop a revised Housing Adaptations Policy to create a long-term approach to the delivery of additional council homes with improved accessibility standards.

Tenancy Standard

53. This standard requires social landlords to:
- Allocate homes in a fair and transparent way that meets the needs of tenants.
 - Support tenants to maintain their tenancy terms and provide advice and support if a tenancy is ended.
 - Offer tenancies that are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation and the needs of tenants and the local community.
 - Support the mutual exchange of homes by tenants.

Housing Allocations

54. In order to be allocated a council home, residents must first be on the Housing Register. The register has an eligibility criteria and applicants who meet these are placed in priority bands depending

on personal circumstances. The bands are Emergency, Gold, Silver and Bronze. A detailed Housing Allocations Policy sets out the process for applying to the register, how applications are prioritised and then the process for applying for a home and being assessed against that bid through a prioritisation process. The majority of social housing lets in York follows the same process, regardless of whether it is a council owned house or one managed by another social housing provider. There are occasions when a 'Direct Let' is provided for a tenant instead of following a bidding and allocation process.

55. The current 'Housing Register' contains 1518 active applicants. There are 464 people who have submitted an application which has not yet been processed and who are therefore currently unable to bid for a home. A priority for this year is to reduce the number of people waiting for an application to be assessed to zero. There will also be an increase in the amount of information provided to those on the register to ensure people understand both the process of what happens next, other housing options, and the likely timescale for waiting for an affordable home. It is hoped that this will empower those on the waiting list to more fully explore options available to them.
56. To maximise home availability there has been a significant focus on void performance in the last two years. The ambition is to enable new tenants to move into homes as quickly as possible after a previous tenancy has ended. Significant progress has been made with the number of voids reducing to around half the number of empty council homes in June 2022. The average time to re-let a home has also reduced to around 45 days, which compares favourably to the benchmarked figure of around 59 days.
57. In addition, the Housing Delivery Programme will be delivering 68 new affordable homes in 2025-26 with construction due to commence on a further 101 affordable homes at Ordnance Lane. The major refurbishments at Glen Lodge and Bell Farm will provide an additional 71 improved and modernised social rented homes during 2025-26.

Support Tenants to Maintain Tenancy

58. A Housing Management Officer (HMO) team supports tenants from housing allocation through the process of signing up for a

home, moving in, benefits maximisation, paying rent, and responding to queries or issues. In the last two years the council has been piloting an approach whereby those beginning a tenancy are offered more intensive support. This is based on evidence that the first few months of a tenancy are crucial to increasing the chances of a long-term tenancy sustainment.

59. The other HMO's work in patches, i.e. working with a set of tenants in one area or within Independent Living Communities. HMO's are often the first point of contact for tenants and provide a crucial support service. The intention is to review how the HMO team operates alongside the introduction of the Neighbourhood Model to ensure support services are well connected. This will include the creation of a performance framework measuring such things as tenancy and wellbeing visits, estate walkabouts, rent collection, and improving tenants satisfaction with how we respond to ASB and complaints.
60. Services are provided within temporary and homeless accommodation to support residents to be 'tenancy ready'. This includes support around financial matters and life skills. The aim is to increase the number of residents who are able to sustain an independent tenancy. A new tenancy sustainment strategy will be developed to ensure there is a planned and coordinated approach to supporting tenants to manage their homes and the responsibilities and obligations which come with a tenancy.

Type of Tenancies

61. The Tenancy Policy sets out the council's approach to the types of tenancy on offer and how these will be managed. This policy is being updated with an ambition to ensure it is customer facing in its content and tone and sets expectations around a person centred and joined up approach to tenancy management. The policy provides clarity around introductory and secure tenancies, succession, tenancy reviews, ASB, and mutual exchanges.
62. The Housing service work alongside Adult Social Care to support people into accessible, appropriately sized homes, for example through the over 55 year old accessible housing at Magnolia Court at Lowfield Green. The completed refurbishment at Glen Lodge later this year will provide another opportunity to provide high quality extra care accommodation.

63. Working alongside Children's Services, an approach has been taken to ensure that our young people leaving care are supported into housing. When a care leaver is moving into a council home, flooring, decorated walls, and kitchen white goods are included, supporting our duties as a corporate parent.

Supporting Mutual Exchanges

64. A mutual exchange allows tenants to swap homes with one another, making it easier to find the right space or location for their needs. This can be a quicker process than waiting for a transfer through the Housing Register and also has the benefit of reducing potential voids for the council. The council is supported through the national organisation Home Swapper. The council provides guidance on registration with Home Swapper, required checks from a HMO relating to home and garden condition and rent arrears, and guidance on the circumstances in which a swap is likely to be approved or refused.
65. The RSH expects social landlords to provide support to eligible households for mutual exchanges. Mutual Exchanges can be a successful way of supporting tenants to move into an alternative home which better meets their needs. In 2021-22, 87 Mutual Exchanges were undertaken, there were 70 in 2022-23, 73 in 2023-24, and 77 in the last financial year.

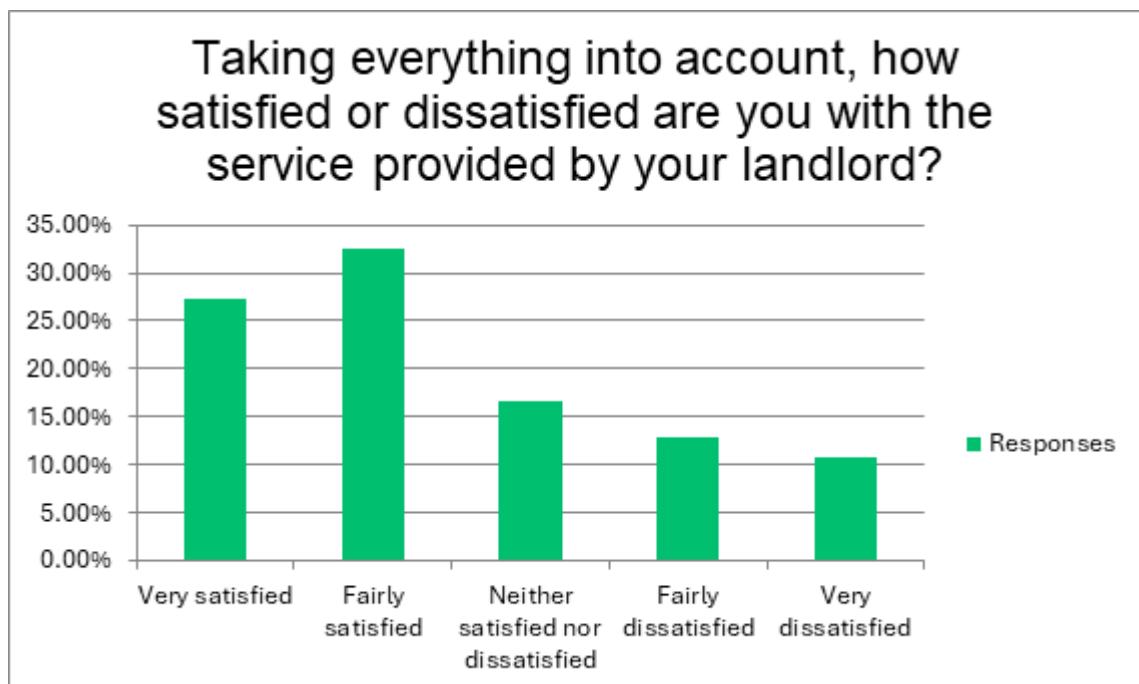
Tenancy Standard: Priority workstreams to support further performance improvement

- m) Develop a new Tenancy Policy which is customer facing in its content and tone and sets expectations around a person centred and joined up approach to tenancy management.
- n) Deliver additional affordable homes at Burnholme and Duncombe Barracks, re-let the refurbished homes at Bell Farm and Glen Lodge, start construction of new affordable homes at Ordnance Lane, progress plans for affordable housing delivery at Lowfield Plot A and dispose of the following sites for affordable housing – Morrell House, Woolnough House, former Clifton Without School Site, Castle Mills, and Lowfield Plot B.
- o) Speed up the decision process for those applying to be on the Housing Register. Process the existing backlog of applications.
- p) Develop a new tenancy sustainment strategy to ensure there is a planned and coordinated approach to support tenants in managing

their homes and the responsibilities and obligations which come with a tenancy.

Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard

66. The final standard focuses on tenant satisfaction measures with an emphasis around being open with tenants and treating them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account.
67. To support this, the council has undertaken an annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey. Last year, this survey was completed either online or through a postal copy. The full results of the survey are included in this report under Annex D.
68. The survey asks multiple questions about different areas of the housing landlord service, inviting tenants to provide a level of satisfaction with the service. The overarching question is whether tenants are satisfied with the service provided by the Council as a landlord. The graph below illustrates the response received to this question:



69. The tenant satisfaction data is contained in full in Annex D. Analysis of the responses identifies a number of priority areas which tenants state need to be improved:
- Overall communication and availability of staff.

- The quality and upkeep of communal areas.
- Issues with repairs around waiting times, particularly for complex jobs or from customers who experienced multiple visits.
- The response to complaints and ASB.

70. Some of the key changes being made to improve performance in these areas are:

- Introduction of transactional repair feedback to capture the performance of each repair.
- Utilising the Neighbourhood Investment Programme alongside the Neighbourhood Model with an increased presence within communities through tenancy and wellbeing visits and estate walkabouts (commenced in the Groves as an early example).
- A review of the complaints handling process to ensure more complaints are responded to within the target time and that responses show accountability, are positive and empathetic.
- Appointment of the Executive Member Housing portfolio holder as the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) with the responsibility for monitoring complaint performance and Ombudsman's decisions with reports to Audit and Governance Committee. This is a requirement from the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) complaint handling code.
- Reviewing and improving the relationship between Housing Management and the ASB Hub to improve outcomes for tenants.

71. It is also planned that a new approach will be taken to capturing tenant satisfaction moving forward. This will be through a more regular and in-depth conversation with tenants. Many other social landlords utilise multiple tools for collecting feedback to ensure voices are heard and understood and so that service changes can be made on a timely basis. The council will explore and implement a new approach to collecting tenant feedback so that trends can be picked up and resolved more quickly and a more detailed analysis of issues can be explored. This is likely to involve in person and/or telephone conversations with some tenants.

Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard: Priority workstreams to support further performance improvement

- r) Introduce an improved and more comprehensive route to capturing tenant feedback through person-to-person interviews.
- s) Review the approach and process for responding to complaints or cases of ASB including providing training for staff where needed.
- t) Implement the Actions from the Member Responsible for Complaints Action Plan.

Consultation Analysis

- 72. Both tenants and Health, Housing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny have considered a draft of the Responsive Repairs Policy for Tenants of Council Houses. Comments received from these consultations have been utilised to inform the final version contained in Annex A for adoption.
- 73. The Neighbourhood Model has been developed following extensive consultation with York Place Board, York Health and Care Collaborative and Primary Care Networks. A paper was considered by Children's, Culture and Communities Scrutiny on 5 November 2024 Before being approved at the Council's Executive on 12th December 2024.
- 74. The Tenants Satisfaction Survey Results are summarised within this document. These survey results are based on 1068 responses with all tenants being invited to complete the questionnaire by email, post, or via text. The response rate was 15.1%.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

- 75. This report provides analysis of the current service provision by the Council as a housing landlord. The report summarises information relating to stock condition, performance data benchmarked against peers and tenants satisfaction. This creates a comprehensive baseline position from which to measure future performance. The report will form the basis on an Annual Report for tenants and is a positive step towards meeting the objectives of the Regulator of Social Housing in providing transparency to tenants.
- 76. This report positively responds to the service information in setting some priority actions for the 2025-26 financial year. There are a range of accompanying performance targets, seeking continual

improvement in the service provided to council house tenants. By approving the actions including a Neighbourhood Investment Programme, £15m investment programme, and a new repairs policy, there is greater clarity for tenants and the internal council housing team and its partners.

77. The intention is for a report to be brought back to Executive in Spring 2026 reflecting on performance against targets and the delivery of priorities. Should the recommendations not be approved, there will be less clarity and transparency for tenants and staff around service delivery.

Organisational Impact and Implications

- ***Financial***

The report details the operational activity across the HRA. The report details expenditure that has been agreed as part of annual budget processes. The proposals outlined in the recommendations can all be delivered within the budgets agreed for 2025/26.

The Housing Environmental Improvement Budget, which is funded from a revenue contribution, will be renamed Neighbourhood Investment Programme going forward.

- ***Human Resources (HR)***

There are no HR implications contained within this report.

- ***Legal***

The Council's responsibilities in relation to social housing flow from the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. Social housing is defined in the Act as:

- Low-cost rental accommodation (defined by section 69) or
- Low-cost home ownership accommodation (defined by section 70), or both

The Act gives powers to the Regulator of Social Housing to set regulatory standards which landlords must achieve. The details of those standards are set out in the main body of this report and the Council, as a landlord of social housing, is required to submit performance information to the RSH to illustrate how those standards are being met. This report will accompany the submission of the required performance information. A Housing Landlord Annual Report will be presented to future Executive meetings on an annual basis to set out how the Council is achieving the required regulatory standards.

- ***Procurement***

There are no Procurement implications contained within this report.

- ***Health and Wellbeing***

Housing is a key social determinant of health across the life course. Poor, 'unhealthy' housing can have serious long-term effects on both physical and mental health and wellbeing and it is essential that steps are taken to ensure homes are warm, safe, and secure. It is also reassuring to see issues that directly affect health conditions, like addressing damp and mould which are linked to the development or worsening of respiratory conditions, have been prioritised under these proposals.

- ***Environment and Climate action***

Since COVID we spend even more time in our homes, approximately 75% of our time is spent at home. The environment of our homes and the impact it has on lives is even more important.

- ***Affordability***

Much of the content in this report makes sure that the council provides viable, efficient, and well governed affordable social housing and able to deliver quality, safe homes and services for current and future tenants.

- ***Equalities and Human Rights***

A full EIA is included at Annex E which highlights some positive impacts for relevant protected characteristics.

- ***Data Protection and Privacy***

There are no data protection and privacy implications within this report.

- ***Communications***

To support the launch of the Housing Landlord Annual Report, communications will lead a clear, coordinated campaign to build tenant trust, support staff understanding, and demonstrate the Council's commitment to transparency and improvement. This will include producing an accessible summary, sharing key messages across digital channels, and promoting community walkabouts and drop-ins. Communications will also equip housing teams and partners with tailored materials to explain changes, such as the new Repairs Policy, and gather ongoing feedback. For elected members and stakeholders, briefing materials and media engagement will underline

the Council's proactive response to new Consumer Standards and tenant priorities.

- ***Economy***

Affordable housing not only provides essential roofs over people's heads it is also important to boost economic productivity. More so in York, due to proportionately higher house prices and scarce supply the Council's own affordable housing stock increasingly enables residents to live closer to employment, offers shorter commutes, less stress, and increased job/life satisfaction. On this basis the investment plans both in improving existing and providing new accommodation is welcomed.

Risks and Mitigations

78. Acting as the landlord for around 7500 families within council homes brings with it significant risk. This report seeks to respond to these risks to ensure all homes are safe, warm and good quality, that tenants are supported within their tenancies, and that colleagues across Housing, the Council, and wider partners have shared priorities in providing wider support to tenants.

Wards Impacted

79. *All*

Contact details

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Date:	25/04/2025

Annexes

- A - Responsive Repairs Policy for Tenants of Council Houses
- B – 2025-26 Capital Investment Programme
- C - Summary of Priorities for 2025-26
- D - Tenants Satisfaction Survey Results
- E - Equalities Impact Assessment