
Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee 23 September 2019

Report of the Head of Building Services

Update on compliance with the Decent Homes Standard.

Summary

1. To update the committee on our performance against the Decent Home Standard.
2. To update the committee on the current status of the council housing stock condition survey being carried out.

Background

The Decent Homes Standard

3. As part of the Home Standard, Registered providers are required to ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in section five of the Government's Decent Homes Guidance¹ and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard.

The Decent Homes Standard Definition

4. A decent home meets the following four criteria:
 - a. It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing. Homes which fail to meet this criterion are those containing one or more hazards assessed as serious ('Category 1') under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). See table in annex 1.
 - b. It is in a reasonable state of repair. Homes which fail to meet this criterion are those where either:

- i. one or more of the key building components are old and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair; or two or more of the other building components are old and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair.
 - c. It has reasonably modern facilities and services. Homes which fail to meet this criterion are those which lack three or more of the following:
 - i. a reasonably modern kitchen (20 years old or less)
 - ii. a kitchen with adequate space and layout.
 - iii. a reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less).
 - iv. an appropriately located bathroom and WC;
 - v. adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem).
 - vi. adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.
 - d. home lacking two or fewer of the above is still classed as decent, therefore it is not necessary to modernise kitchens and bathrooms if a home meets the remaining criteria.
 - e. It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. This criterion requires homes to have both effective insulation and efficient heating.

How we measure & report Decent Homes Standard performance

- 5. Our stock condition data is held on a piece of asset management software called Codeman. The system is regularly updated following completion of planned maintenance work, void works, and cyclical maintenance. We also use stock conditions survey to update the data held on the system. This data is then used to calculate compliance with the Decent Homes Standard. We then report performance to our regulator, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government via an annual Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) return.

Current Performance

- 6. Our most recent LAHS return in July 2019 reported that 9% of our housing stock did not meet the decent homes standard. This level of failure was almost entirely due to the absence within our records of

electrical certification less than 30 years old for 546 homes; meaning we could not confirm the condition of the electrical wiring without a subsequent condition survey or electrical test. Without this information it was necessary to make a presumption of 'failure'. A programme to carry out electrical tests on these properties is due to commence in October.

7. However, early indications from the stock condition survey carried out by Michael Dyson Associates suggests that the level of non-decency is far lower with 3.9% of our stock failing to meet the standard. With largest reason for failure being the condition of kitchen amenities and external doors. This data is based on a 17% sample of our stock broken down by 13 property archetypes, providing a 95% statistical accuracy level. This data will be used in combination with the existing condition data we have for our stock. Please note further analysis is required of the data, and it has yet to be uploaded onto our asset management software system. The outcomes however will inform the HRA Business Plan which will be completed during Q3 and Q4 of this financial year. (see appendix 2).

What we are doing to improve and then maintain performance

8. We have established a targeted programme of electrical testing to address the lack of certification records for the 546 homes mentioned above, and any remedial works required.
9. Uploading the stock condition data to our asset management system and completing the analysis of the data to inform the HRA business plan, asset management strategy and CRAM bids. This analysis will include undertaking a comparison exercise against our existing investment plans against. The data will greatly improve our understanding of our stock's condition and the corresponding investment requirements.
10. Reviewing our existing planned maintenance programmes to maximise the benefit of the additional £1m funding made available to speed up progress against the decent homes standard. Including bringing forward additional programmes of work; specifically in relation to electrical wiring, kitchens, and new doors.
11. We are in the process of pulling together additional planned maintenance programmes to maximise the benefit to tenants of the additional £1m funding approved by the new council administration to improve the energy efficiency, and reduce the fuel costs. This work has included

meeting with the Better Homes partnership, and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority’s Energy team, and discussing ideas around raising our stock’s existing energy performance to ‘C’ rating and above, and how we go about laying the ground to develop the local skills, knowledge, and capacity, necessary to deliver transformational retrofit programmes in the future.

Recommendations

12. The Housing and Community Safety Policy and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment on the contents of this report.

Reason: To ensure the Committee are informed and kept up to date on the council’s performance against the Decent Homes standards.

Contact Details

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Report Approved ✓ Date: 3 September, 2019		
Specialist Implications Officers:		
Wards Affected:	All	✓

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annex 1 – HHRS Risk Categories

Annex 2 – Stock Condition Survey Summary

Abbreviation

CRAM- Capital Programme Resource Allocation Model

HHSRS-Housing Health and Safety Rating System

HRA- Housing Revenue Account

LAHS- Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS)

WC – Water Closet