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Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Housing Liaison Board on 22nd October 2024

Agenda Item 3: Regulator of Social Housing Inspection, Judgement and Improvement Plan

Classification:	This report is Public
Report By:	Assistant Director of Housing Management & Enforcement

This report summarises the outcome of the Regulator for Social Housing Inspection of Bolsover District Council, and the Councils Improvement Plan moving forward.

Background

The Regulator for Consumer Standards revised Consumer Standards were effective from 1st April 2024, and were designed to protect tenants and to ensure they receive high quality services.

The Social Housing Regulation Act, which also came into effect from 1 April 2024, gave the Regulator Social Housing enhanced powers to inspect social landlords to ensure that they comply with the consumer standards.

The council was one of the first to be inspected under the new inspection regime, received a C2 Grading. C1 being the highest achievable level with C4 the lowest.

The inspection, which took place in May 2024, considered how well the authority was delivering the outcomes of the Consumer Standards. As well as observing a Customer Services Scrutiny Meeting, Tenant Participation Development and Review Group and internal councillor and officer meetings, the Regulators met with tenants, officers and elected members. They also reviewed a wide range of documents.

The Judgement

The Judgement, which can be found in full at Appendix 1 states that Bolsover District Council:

- has appropriate systems in place to manage its health and safety responsibilities,
- uses information they hold on tenants diverse needs when responding to service requests,

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- responds to complaints promptly,
- offers tenancies which are compatible with the needs of individual households and sustainability of the community, making efficient use of housing stock,
- works with partners to deter and tackle anti-social behaviour and hate crime in our neighbourhoods.

The C2 grade recognises the council has provided assurance and met the consumer standards in many areas, but identifies some areas where improvement is needed.

The Regulator recognised the council understands where it needs to make improvements and was assured work is already underway to improve these areas, including the full stock condition survey which is about to commence.

Improvement Plan

Following the C2 Grading we will work with the Regulator for Social Housing and develop a plan to drive improvement and show that weakness have been addressed so that outcomes for our tenants are improved.

The key areas of focus for the Council will be;

- Completing the full Stock Condition Survey and using this data to meet the requirements of the Decent Homes Standards. The results will show where we need to make improvements to our housing stock and will drive future capital spend.
- Delivering fair and equitable outcomes to tenants – We need to recognise and understand the individual and whole tenant base. We then need to use this data to shape the services we provide to benefit all our tenants. By understanding our individual and whole tenant base we can make sure the services provided are what our tenants need and ensure services are accessible.
- Complaint handling - We need to ensure the complaint process is accessible assess the outcome of complaints in more depth, recognise lessons learned, and where we have made changes to process and procedure, ensure these are explained to tenants.
- Performance - It is important that tenants can hold us to account and to do that they need to know how we are performing. Therefore, we need to publish information in an accessible way and in several different places. We will be working with the Tenant Groups to establish how tenants want to receive this information.

We will meet with the Regulators monthly to produce an Improvement plan and a suite of performance monitoring. These documents will be shared with the board and we will provide updates on the plan at future meetings

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RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That members of the Board note the judgement in appendix 1 and confirm agreement to the proposed Improvements.

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment and Housing

Ambition: Customers

Priorities:

- *Continuous improvement to service delivery through innovation, modernisation and listening to customers*
- *Improving the customer experience and removing barriers to accessing information and services*
- *Promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion, and supporting and involving vulnerable and disadvantaged people*

Ambition: Housing

Priority:

- *Building more, good quality, affordable housing, and being a decent landlord*

Target HOU04: Work towards compliance with the Social Housing Consumer Standards, ensuring tenants' voice is key when developing new council housing policies, procedures, and improvements.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title
1.	Regulator Social Housing Bolsover District Council Judgement