

## BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Meeting of the Executive on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025

### Housing Service Performance Update Q1-Q3 2024-2025

### Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing

<b>Classification</b>	This report is Public.
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Victoria Dawson, Assistant Director Housing Management

### PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to provide Members with performance information for Quarters 1 – 3 (2024/2025) to understand progress made in meeting actions under the Regulator for Social Housing Improvement Plan, as well as an update on specific areas of activity for the Housing Service.

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### REPORT DETAILS

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) has updated the Consumer Standards with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2024. These are designed to ensure tenants receive high quality services.
- 1.2 The Social Housing Regulation Act, which also came into effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2024, gave the RSH enhanced powers to inspect landlords to ensure they comply with the Consumer Standards.
- 1.3 The Consumer Standards fall into four main categories:

**Safety and Quality Standard** - requires we have an *“accurate, up to date and evidenced understanding”* of the condition of our homes, to ensure that these meet the Decent Homes Standard and well as ensure these meet health and safety requirements.

**Tenancy, Influence and Accountability Standard** - specifies the Council’s duties with regards to performance information, it states we must *“collect and provide information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord’s performance in delivering landlord services.”* That we must treat tenants with fairness and respect, as well as acknowledging their diverse needs. It also specifies that we must allow tenants to influence decisions and scrutinise policies.

**Neighbourhood and Community Standard** - The over-arching aim is to ensure tenants can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods, this includes the need to have a clear Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) policy and ensure ASB and hate incidents can be easily reported and promptly responded to with appropriate action. We must have a policy for how they recognise and effectively respond to cases of domestic abuse.

**Tenancy Standard** – requires we provide a fair and transparent service throughout a tenancy, from the allocation process through to preventing unnecessary evictions. We must also promote mutual exchange.

- 1.4 Bolsover District Council was one of the first Local Authorities to be inspected under the new inspection regime, receiving a C2 grading in August 2024. C1 being the highest and C4 the lowest, the C2 grade recognises that the Council has provided some assurance and met the Consumer Standards in many areas but identified some areas where improvement is need.
- 1.5 The Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) were introduced by the Government, in April 2023 and are designed to help monitor how well landlords are doing at providing quality homes and services, and to understand how they can make improvements. The Council, as a registered provider with more than 1,000 dwellings, is required to annually publish performance information regarding compliance with the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). This includes information which the Council holds, Landlord Management Information, and the Tenancy Perception Survey. In order to monitor compliance, we report these figures quarterly to the Housing Liaison Board (HLB) as well as the operational Housing Stock Management Group (HSMG).
- 1.6 The Council is also required to publish information on our complaint performance. The Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report must be published by June each year, and to ensure we monitor compliance with timescales and trend data, this information is also presented to the Housing Liaison Board (HLB) and Housing Stock Management Group (HSMG).

## **2. Details of Proposal or Information**

### **Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2023/2024**

- 2.1 As set out at above, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) were introduced in April 2023, with a requirement that we must submit our annual return for 2023/2024 in June 2024. We were also required to produce a report which set out the methodology of our approach as well as the performance information. This can be found on the Council's website at [Tenant Satisfaction Measures - Bolsover District Council](#)

- 2.2 In November 2024, the RSH published the results of the TSMs setting out the national average, with a lower, medium, and upper quartile figure for each measure. We have been able to undertake a benchmarking exercise to see how we perform against others. This is set out at **Appendix 1**. Of the 22 measures, Bolsover District Council exceeds the national average in 17, with only 2 measures where we fall below the national average, albeit they perform above the lower quartile, shown as amber in the link above with measures where we performed under the lower quartile, shown in red and they are as follows;
- NMO1 number of ASB cases relative to the size is calculated as a 'rate' for which there is no clear indication of what 'good' performance looks like.
  - RP01 is Decent Homes standard, we are aware that this may not be an accurate figure, and the Stock Condition Survey will provide a clearer indication of the Council's performance.
  - BS04 Water safety checks, we are aware due to the safe and warm upgrade works at two of the Independent Living Schemes, the anniversary date was pushed back, causing the non-compliance.
  - BS05 – Lift safety check, we are aware due to the safe and warm upgrade works at Valley View, the anniversary date was pushed back, causing the non-compliance.
- 2.3 The Council, and Dragonfly Management have worked with tenants to agree a tenant friendly version of the performance information for 2023/2024 which also measures the Council's performance against the national average. This is grouped into the themes the RSH split the TSMs into, as set out at **Appendix 2**.

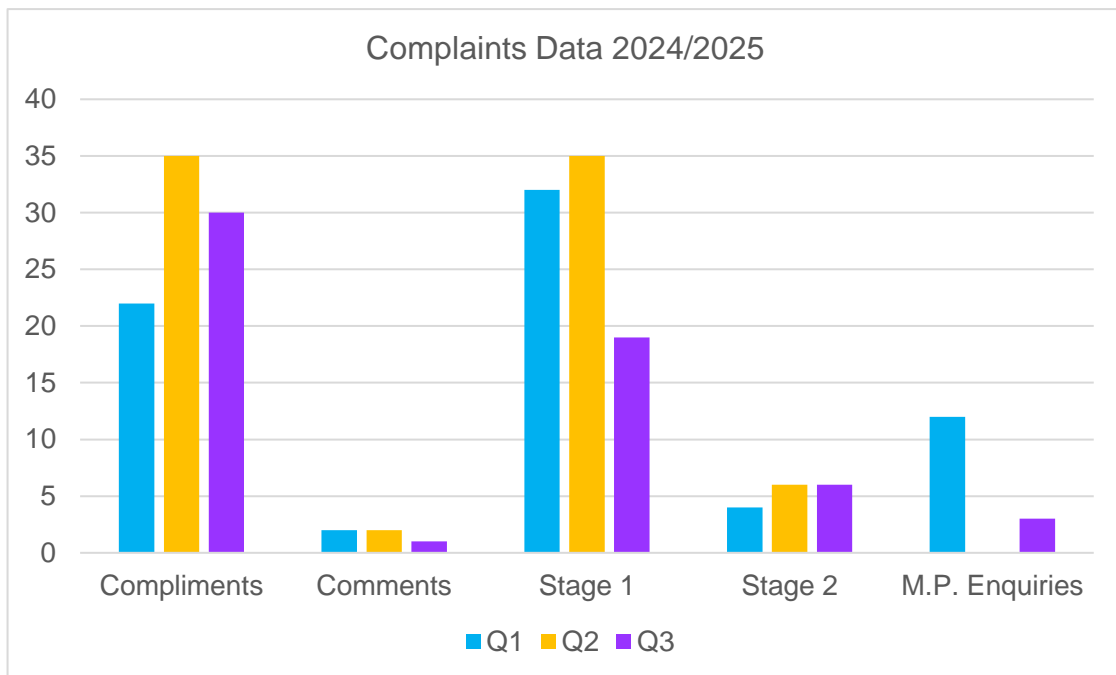
### **Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2024/2025**

- 2.4 The Tenant Survey for 2024/2025 is underway. This year we have taken the decision to survey all tenants rather than the 50% sample in 2023/2024. The first phase commencing in October 2024 saw us making contact with tenants using a number of contact methods. We sent 3,179 emails, 2,233 texts and 794 postal surveys.
- 2.5 The first reminder wave was carried out in December 2024, by text and emails and we have recently undertaken a further reminder in January 2025, just by postal surveys.
- 2.6 As at the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2025, we have received 513 responses. The results are shown in **Appendix 3**. The overall satisfaction is 85.1 % and all 12 of the measures exceed the national average for 2023/2024.
- 2.7 Management information is reported on a quarterly basis at HSMG and HLB. **Appendix 4** shows the data for Quarters, 1 2 and 3, alongside the final result for 2023/2024 for comparison They are RAG (Red Amber Green) rated for ease.

## Complaints Performance Q1-3 2024/2025

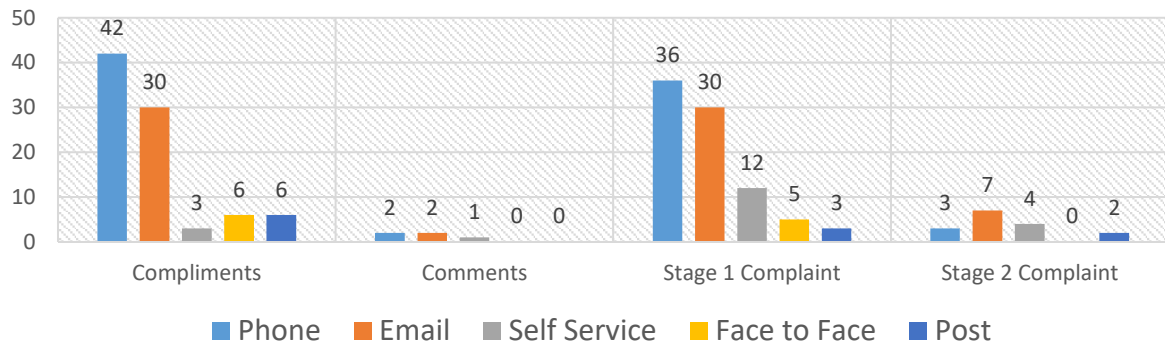
- 2.8 In April 2024, the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code became Statutory. This set out a single, robust set of standards which will result in best practice for complaint handling by the Council. That is to be fair, efficient, and accessible. The aims of the Code promote the progressive use of complaints to support effective complaint handling and prevention alongside learning and development.
- 2.9 Complaints are handled corporately, but with Housing Management working closely with the Customer Service, Standards & Complaints Manager we published an annual report which set out how we handle complaints and use knowledge from complaints to enhance the services we provide. The full report is at [Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report 2023-24](#) and a tenant friendly version is attached as **Appendix 5**.
- 2.10 Additionally, each year we are required to carry out an annual self-assessment against the code and to take appropriate action to ensure our complaint handling is in line with their Code. This is at [Self-Assessment for 2024](#).
- 2.11 The table below shows a breakdown of Compliments, Comments and Complaints received during the year 2024/2025 for the whole of the Housing Service, including Dragonfly Management.

	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q1-3 Totals</b>
<b>Compliments</b>	22	35	30	87
<b>Comments</b>	2	2	1	5
<b>Stage 1</b>	32	35	19	86
<b>Stage 2</b>	4	6	6	16
<b>M.P. Enquiries</b>	12	0	3	15



- 2.9 When reviewing complaints trends, it is noted there has been a large decrease in Stage 1 complaints from Q1 to Q3. The Dragonfly Repairs Team have received the most compliments over any team over all the three quarters, all have been regarding the Repairs Operatives politeness, efficiency, and excellent work. However, they have also received the most complaints, largely relating to failed appointments, attitude of operatives and quality of repairs.
- 2.10 Throughout Q1-Q3 it has been noted that tenants are reporting more compliments, comments, and complaints than residents. This supports the fact that the Housing Team have provide detailed information to tenants on how to make compliments, comments, and complaints, as was requested by the Regulator. All new tenants receive an information leaflet on how to make a complaint as well regulator articles in the Bolsover Homes newsletter to raise the tenant's awareness. This percentage has increased from a 58% tenant majority in Q1 to a 73% tenant majority in Q2 and has again increased in Q3 to 75%.
- 2.11 The Table below shows the method of contact used to report Compliments, Comments, and Complaints, phone and email are the most popular contact methods.

## Method of Contact used to report Compliments, Comments and Complaints 2024/25



2.12 Using the information we obtain from complaints the Housing Department and Dragonfly Management have made improvements for the benefits of tenants. These are reviewed regularly and documented within the Bolsover Homes newsletter. Some examples include the Dragonfly Repairs Team implementing a fully automated system for the fire alarm and CO2 detector dates, to ensure none can go out of date, and changes to the Annual Rent Statement to clearly explain various charges applicable to a tenanted property.

### Regulator for Social Housing Improvement Plan

- 2.13 As per paragraph 1.4 above, the Council was inspected in August 2024 and received a C2 grading. The Judgement stated that Bolsover District Council:
- has appropriate systems in place to manage its health and safety responsibilities,
  - uses information they hold on tenant's diverse needs when responding to service requests,
  - 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.

2.14 The Housing Management Team, working alongside Dragonfly Management, continues to work with the Regulator to develop an improvement plan to

address the key themes they have identified as well as looking at how we can continue to demonstrate continuous compliance with the standards and strive for a C1 grading.

2.15 The key areas of focus identified by the Regulator are:

- 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.

2.16 We have been meeting with the Regulator monthly to monitor progress against the Improvement Plan and will be meeting them bi-monthly in 2025. We must update tenants on the progress to date and have agreed a summary document with the Regulators. This is shared with tenants at the HLB meeting which meets quarterly as well as being published on the website in the minutes. This is included at **Appendix 6**. A more comprehensive version is discussed at the Operational HSMG meeting, which is held bi-monthly.

2.17 A key theme which fed through all the comments made by the Regulator was a lack of data analysis and that until this element is resolved we will not be able to improve our grading, This includes the need to collect data, store it, analyse it and use it to make service improvements for the benefits of tenants. Currently we do not have the resource to incorporate the level of data collection and analysis that is needed. A specific Housing Performance Manager post is required.

2.18 The proposed post would work across all areas of Housing, including working with Dragonfly Management Repairs and Maintenance and working alongside the Complaints team. The post could be funded within existing HRA budgets and a report will be brought forward in due course.

## **Stock Condition Survey**

- 2.19 In May 2024, the Council approved the budget to procure a comprehensive stock condition survey to ensure that we could meet the Safety and Quality Consumer Standard and provide accurate information about the Council's housing stock. The intention is that this will also allow the Council to assess the overall condition of its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) dwelling stock in an objective and evidence-led way, providing information that can be used to plan future investment and maintenance programmes to ensure that properties are maintained in good condition with optimal use of resources.
- 2.20 Savills were appointed and commenced the Survey in September 2024. At the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2025, we have surveyed 90% of all Council housing stock, with a further 4 weeks of surveys planned. The RSH has stated that we must achieve 100% and we are looking at a number of options for how we can complete the remaining properties and for a future rolling programme. A further report will be provided to Executive with options and costings.

## **Consultations**

- 2.21 In addition to the Social Housing Regulation Act, and the changes to the Consumer Standards, the previous Conservative Government consulted on several changes which had the potential to significantly impact on the Council's Housing service, asset management and management of resources. These include the Competency Standard for Housing Managers, Awaab's Law, and the new Decent Homes Standard.

## **Competency Standards for Housing Managers**

- 2.22 Between February and April 2024, the Government consulted on proposals to introduce a new, regulatory standard relating to the competence and conduct of social housing staff. It would ensure that staff have up-to-date skills, knowledge, and experience, and that they exhibit the right behaviours to deliver a high quality, professional service and treat residents with respect. This standard would require senior housing managers to hold a Level 4 Housing qualification and Senior Housing Executives to hold a Level 5 Housing qualification.
- 2.23 Bolsover District Council completed a consultation response in which it was accepted that there would be 14 posts who would need to undertake the additional training. Whilst Dragonfly Management did not complete a response, they also have a number of staff who would need to undertake this qualification. It takes 360 hours to complete a Level 4 qualification and 320 hours to finish a Level 5 qualification according to an impact assessment published alongside the consultation.
- 2.24 The proposed standards were to be introduced with effect from April 2025 with all staff to have completed or be working towards the relevant qualifications within 2 years of this being introduced. There has been no update from government on this proposal.



## Awaab's Law

2.25 Awaab's Law, was introduced in the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023. This followed the death of Awaab Ishak, a two-year old child living with his parents who sadly passed away from a respiratory condition, which was found to be caused by damp and mould in the flat. Awaab's Law will introduce two key requirements:

1. The implementation of specific timeframes and procedures for addressing hazards in the home.
2. An implied term within social housing tenancy agreements that Registered Providers will comply with those requirements.

2.26 Between January and March 2024, there was government consultation on the proposals for the implementation of Awaab's law. The proposals suggested that there would be proactive and timely investigation of any hazards (as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating Standards in the Housing Act 2004) as follows:

- **Initial investigations:** landlords will have 14 calendar days to investigate any hazards once they are made aware of them (including by telephone, email or by their own investigations).
- **Report following initial investigations:** after the 14 day period, a landlord will have 2 days to produce a report to the tenant upon the results of the investigation. This should include when and how the investigation took place, who conducted the investigation, if a hazard was found, how the hazard should be rectified, whether the hazard poses a risk to the tenant's health and safety and the estimated timescales for repairs.
- **Timescales to begin repairs:** landlords will then have 7 days to begin the relevant works or repairs.
- **Completing repairs:** repairs must then be completed within a 'reasonable' period. A 'reasonable' period is dependent both on tenant need and the nature and scale of the hazard.
- **Emergencies:** action must be taken within 24 hours after the 14 day inspection period, and there will be no requirement to wait for a written report. It is likely that emergencies will include gas leaks, lack of water supply, exposed wiring, broken external frameworks and prevalent damp and mould impacting a tenant's respiratory process.
- **Delays and decants:** where a landlord is unable to meet the required timelines (for example if there is a shortage of labour or materials) they must provide alternative temporary accommodation until the works or repairs are completed.

2.27 The consultation asked whether this should apply to all Housing Health and Safety Rating Standard (HHSRS) hazards or just damp and mould and asked specific questions on the cost implications to local authorities with regards to the implementation of the proposals.

2.28 Whilst there has been no formal response to the consultation responses, on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2025, the government announced that Awaab's Law would take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 and that social landlords will need to investigate and fix dangerous damp and mould in set time periods, as well as repair all emergency hazards within 24 hours. There will be a phased implementation of Awaab's Law, in 2026 the requirements will expand to apply to a wider range of hazards, excess cold and excess heat; falls; structural collapse; fire, electrical and explosions; and hygiene hazards. In 2027 the requirements of Awaab's Law will expand to the remaining hazards as defined by the HHSRS (excluding overcrowding).

## Housing Policies

2.29 The Safety and Quality Standard requires landlords to provide good quality homes and landlord services to tenants. It is explicit that we must ensure that all legal assessments are carried out, with any arising actions to be completed within appropriate timescales.

The "Big 6" compliance areas for housing are:

- **Fire safety:** Ensuring properties are safe from fire,
- **Gas safety:** Ensuring properties are safe from gas,
- **Electrical safety:** Ensuring properties are safe from electrical hazards,
- **Lift safety:** Ensuring lifts are safe to use,
- **Asbestos management:** Ensuring properties are safe from asbestos,
- **Legionella:** Ensuring properties are safe from legionella bacteria

2.30 The Housing Management team in conjunction with Dragonfly Management have produced two new compliance policies – Gas and Heating Compliance and an Electrical Safety Compliance Policy. We will continue to review the need for an overarching compliance policy document or a standalone policy for each of the 6 compliance areas.

2.31 In addition, we are looking to adopt a damp and mould policy which will set out the Council's approach to reports of damp and mould, ensuring a proactive and swift response. A further report and draft policy will be presented at a future Executive meeting.

2.32 The Neighbourhood and Community Standard requires we have a policy for how we recognise and effectively respond to cases of domestic abuse. A Domestic Abuse Policy for tenants is currently in draft form and a further report and policy will be presented to a future Executive meeting.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Regulate for Social Housing has emphasised there needs to be greater oversight of the Housing Service by Executive. This is an information report to keep Members informed of the Housing Services performance information for Quarters 1 – 3 (2024/2025) to provide an update regarding actions under the Regulator for Social Housing Improvement Plan as well as an update on the Stock Condition Survey.

### **4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 4.1 Not applicable to this report as providing an overview of performance and for information only.

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### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That the performance information, and updates against the Regulator for Social Housing Improvement Plan are noted.

Approved by Councillor Phil Smith, Portfolio Holder for Housing

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### **IMPLICATIONS:**

<b><u>Finance and Risk</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Details:</b>  There are not financial implications rising directly from this report.  <p style="text-align: right;">On behalf of the Section 151 Officer</p>
<b><u>Legal (including Data Protection)</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Details:</b>  <p style="text-align: right;">On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council</p>
<b><u>Staffing</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Details:</b>  <p style="text-align: right;">On behalf of the Head of Paid Service</p>

**Equality and Diversity, and Consultation**      Yes       No

*(Please speak to the Equality and Diversity Officer for advice)*

**Details:**

**Environment**      Yes       No

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment. *(Please speak to the Climate Change Officer for advice)*

**Details:**

**DECISION INFORMATION:**

***Please indicate which threshold applies:***

**Is the decision a Key Decision?**

A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:

Yes       No

**Revenue (a)** Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or **(b)** Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.

(a)       (b)

**Capital (a)** Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or **(b)** Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more.

(a)       (b)

**District Wards Significantly Affected:**

*(to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)*

Please state below which wards are affected or tick **All** if all wards are affected:

All

<p><b>Is the decision subject to Call-In?</b> (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>    No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If No, is the call-in period to be waived in respect of the decision(s) proposed within this report? (<i>decisions may only be classified as exempt from call-in with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer</i>)</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>    No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>Consultation carried out:</b> (this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>    No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Leader <input type="checkbox"/>    Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/>    Executive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>    SLT <input type="checkbox"/>  Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/>    Members <input type="checkbox"/>    Public <input type="checkbox"/>  Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>	

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing
<p>Ambition: Customers  Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Continuous improvement to service delivery through innovation, modernisation and listening to customers</i></li> <li>○ <i>Improving the customer experience and removing barriers to accessing information and services</i></li> <li>○ <i>Promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion, and supporting and involving vulnerable and disadvantaged people</i></li> </ul> <p>Ambition: Housing  Priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Building more, good quality, affordable housing, and being a decent landlord</i></li> </ul>

**DOCUMENT INFORMATION:**

Appendix No	Title
1	Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2023-2024 Benchmarking Data
2	Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2023-2024 Tenant friendly version
3	Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2024-2025
4	Tenant Satisfaction Management Information 2024-2025
5	Tenant Friendly Complaint Report 2023-2024
6	Tenant Friendly RSH Improvement Plan

**Background Papers**

*(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive, you must provide copies of the background papers).*

DECEMBER 2024