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Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Housing Liaison Board on 29th July 2025

Agenda Item 12: Housing Sector Update

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

This report summarises some key changes that have been announced recently with regards to the Housing Sector.

Background

Electrical Safety in the Social Rented Sector

Following the formation of the Electrical Safety in Social Rented Homes Working Group in 2021, a consultation in summer 2022, invited views on proposals to introduce mandatory checks for electrical installation, bringing parity with the private rented sector, and requiring mandatory checks of appliances provided by social landlords.

On 25th June 2025 government issued a response to the consultation with the conclusion being that there would be mandatory electrical safety checks at least every five years in the social rented sector and made it a requirement that a copy of the EICR report is issued to social tenants within 28 days, or to any new tenant before they occupy the property. A copy of the EICR report can be issued to the tenant in person, by post or electronically.

It was noted that the EICR reports are technical and potentially confusing for tenants and so landlords are encouraged to provide a summary sheet or cover letter alongside the report that explains the content to tenants. We will consult with the RANT group on the content and format of the explanation to tenants, in due course.

It is proposed that these changes will commence in November 2025 for new tenancies and May 2026 for existing tenancies. We are currently working towards achieving an EICR every 5 years by the end of this financial year.

Decent Homes 2

The Decent Homes Standard (DHS) was first implemented in 2001, and last updated in 2006, acting as a technical standard specifying minimum criteria that social landlords must meet to ensure their properties are decent.

Beyond basic health and safety requirements, the DHS defines the features of a decent rented home, including effective heating and insulation, the facilities that should be available, and the general state of repair. The DHS is structured to provide clear thresholds for social landlords to take action to improve their stock over time, for example by requiring landlords to upgrade kitchens and bathrooms after a stated period to keep facilities up to a reasonably modern standard.

In the social rented sector, the RSH regulates the DHS through its Safety and Quality Standard. Should the DHS be updated following the consultation, it is proposed the government will issue a direction to the Regulator of Social Housing to set a new standard requiring social housing providers to meet the new DHS.

On 2nd July 2025, the government launched a 10-week consultation on proposed changes to the Decent Homes Standard. The proposed changes are:

- Updating the definition of disrepair – removing the age requirement and updating thresholds.
- Revising the list of building components which must be kept in a reasonable state of repair.
- Revising our approach to facilities so that landlords need to provide three out of the four facilities listed in proposal 2.
- Introducing a window restrictor requirement.
- Considering a new home security requirement.
- Considering a requirement for floor coverings for new tenancies.
- Streamlining and updating the thermal comfort requirements.
- Introducing a new standard for damp and mould.

Housing Management and Dragonfly Management will work together to provide a comprehensive response to the on behalf of the Council. Tenants are also invited to respond to this consultation either individually or as part of a group.

Competency Standards for Housing Managers

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.

On 2nd July 2025 government announced that the Competence and Conduct Standard for Social Housing will be implemented from October 2026, with a three-year transition period for most providers. Further details are expected to follow but it

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is anticipated the Housing Management team will have 14 members of staff who require the qualification, and a further 12 within Dragonfly Management repairs and asset management teams.

Further Reforms to Right to Buy

The Government has also announced that following the reduction in maximum right to buy discount last Autumn, and a period of consultation, that there will be further reforms to the Right to Buy. These include:

- increasing the length of time someone needs to have been a public sector tenant to qualify for Right to Buy from 3 to 10 years.
- reforming discounts so they start at 5% of the property value, rising by 1% for every extra year an individual is a secure tenant up to the maximum of 15% of the property value or the cash discount cap (whichever is lower); and
- exempting newly built social homes from Right to Buy for 35 years, ensuring councils are not losing homes before they have recovered the costs of building them.

Legislation will need to be implemented to bring these reforms into force, however it was announced they will reform the receipts regime and extend existing flexibilities on spending Right to Buy receipts indefinitely. Councils will also continue to be able to retain the share of the receipts that was previously returned to HM Treasury. In addition, from 2026-27, Councils will be able to combine receipts with grant funding for affordable housing to accelerate council delivery of new homes.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That members of the Board note the update.

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

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

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.
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