

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 07 July 2025

**Report Title**

Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Housing Regulatory Compliance Update

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

The 2024/25 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) survey has concluded. Overall satisfaction now stands at 78.2% (+1.3% from last year). A key area of progress is tenant satisfaction with repairs: overall satisfaction has increased to 78.6% (a 4.5 percentage point rise), and satisfaction with the time taken to complete the most recent repair has improved to 77.6% (up by 5.5 percentage points) compared with 2023/24.

Encouragingly, all tenant perception measures are above the national median, with 10 out of 12 falling within or just outside the upper quartile based on 2023/24 data published by the Regulator of Social Housing. However, there remain areas requiring further improvement, particularly in satisfaction with complaints handling, the condition of communal areas, and anti-social behaviour (ASB) management, where scores have declined slightly from the previous year.

A number of actions have already been taken to address these areas, with further improvements planned for 2025/26. Key initiatives include:

- The launch of a tenant-led Learning from Complaints Panel
- A refreshed ASB policy and improvement plan
- An additional £135,000 investment in caretaking services
- Renewed focus on tackling ASB, with eviction proceedings already initiated against two persistent perpetrators in the current financial year (2025/26)

- The ten council-reported TSMs remain strong. Repairs performance is a particular strength, mirroring the positive perception survey results:
- 96.7% of non-emergency repairs were completed within target timescales (15 percentage points above the national median)
- 98.6% of emergency repairs were completed within target (3.5 percentage points above the national median)

In addition, the Council achieved full compliance on all health and safety-related measures, including fire, asbestos, lifts, and water safety. Notably, there has been significant progress on the Decent Homes Standard: the proportion of non-decent homes has reduced from 12.0% to 7.2% year-on-year. This improvement is expected to continue following the successful launch of the Stock Condition Survey programme in April 2025.

## **Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

1. Notes the contents of the report.
2. Agrees to receive a further update in six months' time.

## **List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Rotherham Council Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Appendix 2 Initial Equality Screening Assessment – part A

Appendix 3 Carbon Impact Assessment

## **Background Papers**

Reshaping consumer regulation: Our new approach

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reshaping-consumer-regulation-our-new-approach>)

Consumer Standards (April 2024)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/regulatory-standards-for-landlords>)

Consumer Standards Code of Practice (April 2024)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-consumer-standards/annex-4-consumer-standards-code-of-practice>)

Social Housing Regulator's Approach to Inspections

(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/our-approach-to-inspections>)

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tenant-satisfaction-measures>)

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

No

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Housing Regulatory Compliance Update**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Following the passing of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act in July 2023 the Regulator for Social Housing consulted on revised consumer standards for social housing landlords. The new consumer standards came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.
- 1.2 The Regulator of Social Housing (the Regulator) will gather evidence and assess providers' ability to deliver a housing service which meets the standards through inspections at least every four years and through desk-top reviews of performance data such as Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), a mixture of performance measures and tenant perception survey results. This proactive regime replaces the largely reactive regulatory framework that was in place prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.
- 1.3 To ensure regulatory compliance and inspection readiness, the Council has established assurance mechanisms, including a Housing Regulatory Assurance Board chaired by the Chief Executive, to oversee the collection and review of evidence demonstrating the Council's compliance with the new consumer standards.
- 1.4 The Council submitted its first year of TSM data covering the 2023-24 financial year in June 2024. Surveys for the 2024-25 financial year began in August 2024 on a weekly rolling programme and year-end results are now available. The Regulator of Social Housing has also published the first national dataset of TSM results. This data was provided in the last update and is contained in full at Appendix 1.
- 1.5 In addition to new consumer standards, an inspection regime and the TSMs, the Government has also strengthened the role of the Housing Ombudsman and consulted on the introduction of statutory minimum timescales for dealing with certain types of housing repairs (Awaab's Law) and proposed new competence and conduct standards for social housing managers.

### **2. Key Issues**

#### **Tenant Satisfaction Measures**

- 2.1 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) are a series of 22 performance measures, which must be collected by all social housing landlords with more than 1,000 properties. Data for ten of the performance measures is submitted directly by the Council. Data for the other 12 performance measures is captured through a Tenant Perception Survey. The performance measures, including the survey questions, are prescribed by the Regulator and cannot be deviated from.
- 2.2 KWest Research Limited were procured to complete the Tenant Perception Survey on behalf of the Council in accordance with the Regulator's requirements. Between September 2023 and March 2024 KWest surveyed 1,041 of Rotherham's tenants (equivalent to 5% of tenants which was the

minimum prescribed sample size). 85% of the surveys were conducted by telephone and 15% by email.

- 2.3 For the 2024/25 survey, the sample size increased significantly, with 3,337 tenants surveyed, approximately 16.5% of the total tenant population, substantially reducing the margin of error and increasing the representativeness across the whole tenant base. The same proportion of telephone (85%) and email (15%) responses was maintained. The larger sample size also enables more detailed analysis of the results, including breakdowns by geography, demographics, and other key factors.
- 2.4 In 2023-24, the Council reported that 76.9% of tenants were satisfied overall with the service. The equivalent national figure for all social landlords was 71.3%. The Council's position for 2024/25 shows a 1.3% increase in overall satisfaction, at 78.2%.
- 2.5 The 2023-24 TSM results (see appendix 1 for comparative data) found that 77.6% of tenants were satisfied that their home is well maintained, and 81.1% were satisfied that their home is safe.
- 2.6 The 2024/25 results show that all property-related satisfaction measures have either been sustained or significantly improved. While satisfaction that homes are well-maintained (77.7%) and safe (81.0%) have seen a slight increase or decrease of 0.1 percentage points respectively, other areas saw notable gains. Satisfaction with the overall repairs service rose sharply from 74.1% to 78.6%, and satisfaction with the time taken to complete the most recent repair increased from 72.1% to 77.6%.
- 2.7 Across all housing services, the percentage of tenants who feel generally well-informed has increased, from 74% to 76.8%, while those who feel they are treated with fairness and respect has decreased very slightly from 83.6% to 83.0%. The percentage of tenants who believe the Council listens to them and acts on their views has increased by 1.0%, from 70.5% to 71.5%. Satisfaction with complaints handling has dropped slightly from 36.2% to 34.5%. A new 'Learning from Complaints Panel' including tenants has been established and will meet quarterly to co-develop an action plan aimed at improving satisfaction with complaints handling.
- 2.8 In 2023-24, satisfaction with the way the Council deals with anti-social behaviour, at 64.9%, was lower than many of the other scores, albeit it was above the median score for other housing providers (58%). In the year-end results for 2024-25, satisfaction levels in Rotherham dropped slightly to 63.3%.
- 2.9 Another notable change between 2023-24 results and 2024-25 results is in relation to satisfaction with the cleanliness and maintenance of communal areas, which dropped from 71.6% to 68.1%. Again, these scores remain higher than the median for other housing providers based on data available.
- 2.10 The tenant perception survey is now a rolling programme and results will continue to be published in line with the regulatory requirements. The larger

sample size will remain for 2025/26 and the contract with KWest is due for review during this financial year. A six-monthly update will continue to be reported to Cabinet. The remaining ten TSMs evaluate the Council's performance in areas including anti-social behaviour, complaints handling, repairs and maintenance, and health and safety. The results are covered in this report under the relevant consumer standard.

## Consumer Standards

- 2.11 The introduction of the Social Housing Regulations requires landlords to meet four consumer standards through the delivery of their services. Each standard consists of 'required outcomes', which are listed below:

Consumer standard	Outcomes
Safety and Quality	Stock quality Decency Health and safety Repairs, maintenance and planned improvements Adaptations
Transparency, Influence and Accountability	Fairness and respect Diverse needs Engagement with tenants Information about landlord services Performance information Complaints handling Self-referrals to the Regulator
Neighbourhood and Community	Maintenance of shared spaces Local cooperation Safer neighbourhoods Domestic abuse
Tenancy	Allocations and lettings Tenancy sustainment and evictions Tenure Mutual exchange

The Regulator has also published its likely key areas of focus during an inspection (see below).

Component	Key Areas of Focus
<p><b>Service Outcomes</b></p> <p>Delivery of outcomes relating to stock quality, repairs and maintenance, health and safety compliance, local co-operation, anti-social behaviour and hate incidents, the management of domestic abuse and tenancy sustainment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence that the landlord is collecting and using stock condition data.</li> <li>- Evidence that landlord health and safety compliance risks are being managed properly with robust systems in place and operating effectively.</li> <li>- Assessing the effectiveness of the repairs service.</li> <li>- Evidence that boards, councillors, and senior officers gain assurance that ASB (anti-social behaviour) and hate incidents are being dealt with appropriately.</li> <li>- Extent to which landlords can evidence that they have a good understanding of their role with regard to handling domestic abuse.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transparency, Influence and Accountability</b></p> <p>The extent to which the landlord treats all tenants with fairness and respect, takes action to meet the diverse needs of tenants, provides meaningful opportunities for tenant-led engagement, collects, and uses performance information (including the TSMs), and handles complaints.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extent to which the landlord ensures that tenants have fair access to landlord services and that equitable outcomes are being achieved.</li> <li>- How the landlord seeks to obtain and maintain tenant information, and the use it makes of data and insight to improve services.</li> <li>- Evidence that there is a range of meaningful opportunities for tenants to influence and scrutinise the landlord's strategies, policies, and services.</li> <li>- Approach to collecting, processing, and publishing tenant satisfaction measures (TSMs) and extent to which this meets our requirements.</li> <li>- Assessing how the board, councillors and senior officers seek to understand performance and satisfaction information and can demonstrate action taken as a result.</li> <li>- Evidence that complaints are dealt with fairly and promptly, including the landlord's self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.</li> </ul>

### **Safety and Quality Standard**

- 2.12 The Council is continuing its Safety and Quality improvement journey through a series of key workstreams relating to the required outcomes of stock quality, decency, health and safety and repairs, maintenance and planned improvements.

- 2.13 Following its self-referral in June 2024, the Council has been engaging positively with the Regulator to review its health and safety compliance position. Through this engagement, the Council was able to provide assurance around key compliance areas, including fire safety, gas, electrical, lifts, asbestos, legionella and damp/mould. Significant improvements to the repairs service were also highlighted. While the Council acknowledged that a full stock condition survey including identifying hazard identification via the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) has not been undertaken since 2010, it confirmed that property knowledge has been maintained through ongoing internal surveys. Since February 2024, the Council has prioritised surveys for homes not assessed since 2010 and has finalised a comprehensive stock condition survey programme with an organisation named MLCS3. A pilot was completed in February 2025, with a full roll out in April 2025, completion of the programme is expected by 2029. The Regulator has confirmed that no regulatory action will be taken at this time and will continue to engage with the Council on a quarterly basis as it delivers this important programme of work.
- 2.14 Following the successful completion of the pilot programme in February 2025, during which 67 properties were surveyed, a major programme of stock condition surveys began in late April 2025. Around 6,000 properties are scheduled to be surveyed during 2025/26. The surveys will allow the service to gain a better understanding of the condition of the housing stock which will support the development of a refreshed asset management strategy and investment plan, as well as supporting stronger targeting of compliance and repairs improvement activities, backed by significant additional capital investment earmarked in the 2025-26 Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.
- 2.15 As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, the Council reported that 964 of its homes were classified as non-decent as they had reached their component lifetime age according to data held on the Council's asset database, meaning that 95.1% of properties met the Decent Homes Standard. This is a significant improvement on the previous year's position of 87.9%. The surveyors will continue to work through the remaining properties to assess their condition. Components which are identified as failing decency based on their age and condition are being prioritised for capital works during 2025-26.
- 2.16 The Council has a Housing Safety and Quality Improvement Plan in place which is focused on providing additional assurance on health and safety. The Plan was developed in response to issues identified following a series of deep dives within the service, internal audit recommendations and an external audit by a housing consultant. Key improvements delivered in the last six months include:
- The implementation of the Compliance Workbook—a digital tool designed to automate and systematise the collection, analysis, and quality assurance of compliance data—is progressing at pace. The upload and validation of gas safety and electrical certification documents are now in the final stages of completion. Once this phase is finalised,



the system will be expanded to include document uploads across all remaining areas of statutory compliance. This represents a significant step forward in enhancing the accuracy, efficiency, and oversight of landlord compliance monitoring across the Housing Property Service.

- SFG20 is a web-based software tool which has been procured and now available to the Compliance Team. It provides a comprehensive library of all compliance processes and all links to current legislation. Compliance Officers have started to cross reference all streams of compliance activity against SFG20 to ensure we are undertaking all statutory duties in accordance with current legislation. This provides an additional layer of compliance assurance.
- Following successful pilot of 'Safety Culture' web-based auditing software, this has now been purchased and allows Compliance Officers to undertake all desk based and field-based activity to be undertaken digitally. This has created a consistent approach, professional reports, time saving and improved record keeping.
- The introduction of a new performance framework including a quarterly compliance scorecard, highlights of which are published on the Council's website.
- Overdue remedial actions have also been added to the monthly Housing Performance scorecard, with updates provided including a narrative on current status and planned actions. The Compliance Team have also introduced evidence-based closure for all water hygiene and fire safety related actions.
- Water safety information is now provided to tenants to raise awareness of legionella risks and how to minimise them. The tenant welcome pack has been updated to include this guidance for both new and existing tenants.
- The Building Safety Act imposed duties upon the council in relation to Beeversleigh. These duties have been reviewed and all actions taken to ensure we are ready for audit by Building Safety Regulator. This includes creation of 'Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy', Building Safety Case Report, Mandatory Occurrence Reporting process and a simplified version of the Fire Risk Assessment. The residents of Beeversleigh have been provided with a copy of all documents and the inaugural building safety resident engagement meeting was held February 2025.
- Fire Risk Reviews have been conducted for over 1200 blocks for the first time with all evidence held in digital format. Fire risk reviews will continue to be conducted for all blocks on an annual basis in line with the Fire Safety Policy.

2.17

Housing Property Services are collaborating with the Programme Management Team to develop a dedicated damp and mould module within the dedication housing system named NEC. This enhancement will enable the service to monitor cases against the statutory timeframes mandated by Awaab's Law and automatically flag any instances where a case may be at risk of breaching legal requirements.

- 2.18 In parallel, work is underway to introduce an online reporting facility, allowing tenants to report damp and mould concerns directly through the Council's digital platform. This will enhance our triaging capability by capturing key information such as household medical conditions and vulnerabilities at the point of reporting. Furthermore, data and imagery obtained from stock condition surveys are being utilised to inform triage decisions and support early intervention.
- 2.19 The establishment of robust processes and clear procedures is essential to ensuring the Council meets its obligations under Awaab's Law. This includes the ability to differentiate between cases that fall within the legislative scope and those considered lower risk or outside its remit. These improvements form a critical part of our commitment to delivering a safe, responsive, and legally compliant housing service.
- 2.20 A key area of improvement in the repairs service remains the shift to a more tailored service that takes into account tenant circumstances and vulnerabilities. An initial procedure guide alongside a roadmap to more significant changes was completed by end of April 2025.

### **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard**

- 2.21 The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard looks at the relationship that landlords have with their tenants and prospective tenants. This includes if tenants are treated with fairness and respect, how the Council understands them and their needs and whether opportunities are provided for tenants to influence decision making and hold the Council to account. Much of the scope of this work sits within the Housing Service but support is also provided by the corporate function that sits within the Assistant Chief Executive's directorate, for example the Performance and Business Intelligence and the Complaints Service.
- 2.22 The Tenant Engagement Team manages the tenant engagement contract which commenced in April 2024 for a period of 3 years and is delivered by RotherFed. The Housing Involvement Panel, the Screen Team and the Tenant Scrutiny Panel provide valuable feedback on council performance, services, and communications.
- 2.23 The Scrutiny Panel is currently concluding its latest review, which has focused on the effectiveness of the Council's approach to tenant scrutiny. As part of this exercise, the Panel, in collaboration with Rotherfed, engaged with a consultant from Tpas (the national tenant engagement experts) to gain insights into best practice in tenant-led scrutiny. The Panel's final report and recommendations are expected to be submitted to the Council by the end of May 2025. Following this, the Tenant Engagement Team will work closely with Rotherfed to develop a response to the recommendations. This will include actions relating both to the operation of the Scrutiny Panel itself and the Council's approach to responding to future scrutiny exercises.
- 2.24 The Tenant Connectors Pool is a group of 163 diverse tenants actively engaged in housing services opportunities. Established in July 2024, the

Pool receives regular updates and participates in flexible engagement activities. To date, 83 tenants have participated in 13 different housing services initiatives. Tenants continue to be invited and encouraged to join the Pool. In the spring Home Matters magazine there will be a QR code that tenants will be able to scan to access and complete a form to join the Pool.

- 2.25 In 2025, the Council will prioritise re-accreditation of its Tpas Exemplar status and deliver a comprehensive refresh of the Tenant Engagement Framework, reinforcing its commitment to placing tenant voice at the centre of housing services and ensuring feedback and recommendations drive meaningful action. In March 2025, the Tenant Scrutiny Panel recommended that customers receive a clear, comprehensive document following affordability meetings with the Income Team, outlining key calculations and rent payment options. This recommendation has been successfully implemented by the Housing Options Team, who now provide each applicant with a personalised affordability assessment document as part of the Income and Expenditure Check process.
- 2.26 The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard also looks at the information the Council provides to tenants and prospective tenants, for example key policies and performance information. The service is currently reviewing key documents and policies and ensuring these are available and accessible for our tenants and prospective tenants, whilst also reviewing the website. Performance information about our services is now available to tenants, with the first reports published on the Council's website in October 2024. Tenants will also have the opportunity to influence the website redesign through the Screen Team in May 2025
- 2.27 As part of ensuring that data is collected and utilised around protected characteristics of tenants, the Housing Service has introduced a robust process to collect full data from new applicants and new tenants, to ensure the Council has a complete tenant profile. This information can then be used to help shape services. The Council is also finalising the development of stronger procedures to ensure information about tenant circumstances and vulnerabilities is collected, held and utilised effectively, again tailoring services to meet individual needs.
- 2.28 The Council has rolled out more operational satisfaction surveys to assess tenant satisfaction with key services, including damp and mould and tenancy support. Though engagement has steadily improved over Q4, it remains relatively low. Opportunities to increase engagement are being reviewed, including the timing of survey distribution, message personalisation, monetary incentives and the introduction of weekly follow-up reminders.
- 2.29 Like most landlords, tenant satisfaction with the complaints process remains low. To understand why tenants are dissatisfied, a focus group was held. Tenants raised service issues relating to repairs and transfer requests and were not happy with the outcome of these requests and how they had been dealt with. They also had concerns about several aspects of how the

Council had dealt with a range of enquiries relating to their tenancies. Some of the participants had made formal complaints and had concerns in respect of how they had been dealt with. Tenants made several suggested improvements linked to communication, contact channels, staff attitude and customer services. The Council's Complaints Team has worked in partnership with Rotherfed to establish a new online Learning from Complaints Panel. The Panel held its first meeting in March 2025 and will meet on a quarterly basis. Its purpose is to review tenant complaints and identify key learning and service improvement opportunities arising from them. The Complaints Team will also deliver targeted training and workshops across Housing to support a stronger complaints-handling culture.

### **Neighbourhood and Community Standard**

- 2.30 The Neighbourhood and Community Standard requires landlords to deliver safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods, shared spaces and communal areas, and to work with local partners to achieve compliance with the standard.
- 2.31 The Housing and Estates Service works closely with the Council's Community Protection Unit, Neighbourhoods Service, Street Scene and South Yorkshire Police to ensure partnership working is at the core of the regulatory approach. To continue to deliver effective partnership working arrangements, joint service protocols and multi-agency problem solving forums have been reviewed and where needed, improvements made.
- 2.32 The Neighbourhood and Community standard requires landlords to work with local partners such as the police and other relevant agencies to deter and tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) and hate crime. To ensure that the Council meets this outcome and to continue to improve the service offer, the Council has delivered an ASB Service Improvement Plan. Alongside this, the Council's ASB Policy has been updated following a review of operational arrangements between the Housing and Estates Service and the Community Protection Unit. Key policy changes include clearer definitions of ASB, particularly regarding behaviours that do not constitute ASB, improved online reporting tools, and a strengthened performance monitoring framework.
- 2.33 The Council's Housing and Estates Service is committed to tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB). The service works in partnership with other Council services, such as the Community Protection/ASB Service and South Yorkshire Police, to investigate and coordinate responses and make full use of available enforcement powers across services. The Council's ASB Policy has been refreshed and the Housing service improvement plan was implemented in 2024/25 and continues to be further developed. Whilst the Council takes all possible steps to tackle anti-social behaviour and to prevent unnecessary evictions, eviction proceedings are initiated where all other measures have been exhausted. The Council has evicted two ASB perpetrators in the current financial year (2025/26). Further improvement actions are underway, focused on strengthening service delivery including

support and communication with those reporting ASB and ensuring timely updates throughout the case management process. A cross-service approach has been adopted for managing complex ASB cases, ensuring a balanced response that combines both robust enforcement with appropriate support for both victims and perpetrators.

- 2.34 In the 2023-24 TSM return, one notable feature of Rotherham's results was the small number of reported ASB hate incidents for a landlord this size, which suggests under-reporting. Rotherham had an incident rate of 0.35 per 1,000 cases whilst the Yorkshire and Humber median was 0.86 per 1,000 cases. The Council is addressing this through issuing guidance to officers and delivering training. The 2024/25 results have seen the rate rise from 0.35 to 0.40 per 1000 cases.
- 2.35 Partnership working arrangements are also key to the Council meeting regulatory requirements with regard to domestic abuse related services. The Council is continuing to review its approach to ensure it is supporting victims of domestic abuse as effectively as possible, as well as referring perpetrators to appropriate support.
- 2.36 The 2024/25 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) results indicate a 3.5% decrease in satisfaction with RMBC's maintenance and cleanliness of communal areas. In response, a range of actions are being implemented, including the review, update, and enhanced monitoring of service delivery and repairs reporting processes. Service delivery arrangements have been established or are in the process of being finalised across key areas. Additionally, a further £135,000 has been allocated from the 2025/26 budget to support investment in the caretaking service, following a service review undertaken in 2024/25.

### **Tenancy Standard**

- 2.37 The Tenancy Standard requires landlords to ensure fair allocation and lettings of homes as well as sustain tenancies and prevent evictions where possible. The Standard requires providers to allocate and let their homes in a fair and transparent way that takes the needs of tenants and prospective tenants into account.
- 2.38 In June 2024 Cabinet approved a review of the Housing Allocation Policy, which is currently underway. The Council aims to complete the review by Summer 2025.
- 2.39 Monthly performance reports now include the number of mutual exchanges and measures to monitor compliance with the legal timeframes and decision outcomes. As at end of 2024/25, 100% of mutual exchange requests have been completed within target.
- 2.40 The Council continues to ensure that all tenancies offered are suitable for the needs of individual households. As part of the housing application process all new applicants, and those with a failed tenancy, complete a

tenancy ready course. An affordability assessment and individual needs are also taken into account prior to an offer.

- 2.41 The Housing Income and Support Service, alongside the Housing and Estate Management Service, continues to deliver a strong and effective tenancy support offer. Of 50 households at risk of eviction, the Tenancy Support Team successfully sustained 92%, resulting in just 4 evictions due to rent arrears in 2024/25. This is down significantly from 18 in 2023/24. Additionally, the Council's Financial Inclusion services, including Money and Benefits Advice, and Tenancy Support, have secured a total of £5,968,899 in additional income for tenants and residents. This includes successful benefits claims and appeals, Macmillan and other grants, as well as backdated lump sum payments.
- 2.42 The holistic approach to tenancy sustainment has allowed the Council to achieve consistent positive outcomes for our tenants and to continuously reduce eviction rates. The number of evictions is proportionally significantly less than other providers. For example, Hull City Council (22.5k stock) and Kirklees Council (21k stock) had evicted 14 and 45 tenants respectively by end of Quarter 3.

### **Governance**

- 2.43 The Regulator of Social Housing pursues a 'co-regulatory' approach, which means significant emphasis is placed on landlords having their own robust assurance mechanisms in place. The Housing Regulatory Assurance Board, chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by the Cabinet Member for Housing, forms a key part of Rotherham's assurance model alongside the broader governance and assurance framework. Cabinet will also continue to receive updates on the TSMs and compliance with the standards.
- 2.44 The Council has completed recruitment to additional housing governance and assurance posts and aligning this more closely with the service improvement, tenant engagement and programme management teams already in place, to ensure the capacity is available to support the wider improvement programme and continue to enhance the governance model.

## **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 No other options were considered as this report is an update on the work being done to meet the consumer regulations introduced following the Social Housing (Regulations) Act in 2023.

## **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 Consultation on the work set out in this report was not necessary as the Council as a social housing provider is required to meet these standards. The new consumer standards require social housing providers to involve tenants in shaping changes to service delivery and this will be a key focus of the programmed inspections. Providing a range of meaningful

opportunities for tenants to influence and scrutinise the landlord's strategies, policies and services is a requirement of the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.

## **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 Cabinet is asked to note the report. The Assistant Director of Housing, is accountable for implementing the actions in the report.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 The activity detailed in this report will be funded via existing staffing resources and budgets. Additional budget has been set in place in 2025/26 to fund the activity required such as Stock Condition Surveys detailed at paragraph 2.14.
- 6.2 Where newly arising budget requirements are identified these will be managed via in-year monitoring and governance arrangements and considered during the next budget setting and business planning process.
- 6.3 All activity where external suppliers are engaged to deliver the activity must be procured in compliance with relevant procurement legislation either the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act 2023 dependent upon the route to market selected to procure, as well as the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 The Regulator of Social Housing publication; Tenant Satisfaction Measures: Tenant survey requirements, provides the basis upon which providers of social housing are required to conduct tenant perception surveys to generate a subset of Tenant Perception Measures. The Consumer Standards Code of Practice sets out the standards expected of social housing and how those standards should be maintained. The recommendations will help to ensure compliance with the new regulatory framework for social housing, and aid in preparations for an inspection of the Council's Housing Services.
- 7.2 Compliance with the consumer standards is mandatory. As a social landlord the Council has a duty to provide a safe environment for those living in our homes. Failure to comply could result in negative outcomes ranging from customer dissatisfaction and criticism to a requirement to submit (to the Regulator) a Performance Improvement Plan, or to take particular remedial actions as set out in an enforcement notice. If necessary, the Regulator will be able to authorise an appropriate person to enter a social housing premises to take emergency remedial action, issue penalties such as unlimited fines, or require the provider of social housing to pay compensation. A provider of social housing will commit an offence if they obstruct access or work required to undertake remedial action. A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no Human Resources implications arising from this report.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 There are no implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults arising from the report.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 The Government's Equality Impact assessment has been considered when reviewing the work being done to make sure the Council is compliant with the new regulations. As the Government's assessment states, equality considerations were taken into account throughout the development of the new consumer standards. The work being done by the Housing service puts all groups of tenants at the heart of what we do understanding that we need to evidence that services are accessible to and offered in ways that meet the needs of those with protected characteristics.
- 10.2 The changes to the regulation of social housing are designed to improve services to tenants, the safety and quality of their homes and communal areas and give them access to information about how well their landlord is performing. In addition, it is a requirement of the regulations that tenants are involved in the shaping of changes to service delivery and revision of policies. The regulations are designed to improve equality of access to services for social housing tenants.
- 10.3 To ensure compliance with the new regulations Housing will be looking to reporting on the makeup of the tenant base in relation to protected characteristics and acting upon any issues identified. This will be part of the six-monthly updates to Cabinet on the social housing reforms.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

- 11.1 There are no implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change arising from the report.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

- 12.1 The report concerns the Council's functions as a landlord, but some of those functions are dependent on partners including contractors and other public sector agencies. The Strategic Housing Forum is the principal mechanism for bringing key housing partners together in Rotherham and the implications of regulation have been discussed there.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 The key risk is a failure to work to strengthen compliance with the consumer standards, which could lead to negative outcomes for tenants and residents,



a poor inspection outcome and potentially a negative judgement. The measures set out in this report are the mitigation against this risk.

#### **14. Accountable Officers**

14.1 John Holman, Interim Assistant Director, Housing

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp OBE	23/06/2025
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	12/06/2025
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	12/06/2025

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