



**COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE**

**Date: Tuesday, 30 November 2021**

**Time: 6.00pm**

**Location: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete**

**Contact: Ramin Shams - 01438 242308**

Members: Councillors: S Mead (Chair), M Notley (Vice-Chair), M Arceno, S Booth, M Creasey, J Duncan, A Farquharson, L Harrington, C Parris and S Speller

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**AGENDA**

**PART 1**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 3 NOVEMBER 2021**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Community Select Committee held on Wednesday 3 November 2021.

Pages 3 – 8

**3. NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS PRESENTATION**

To receive a presentation on the role and work of the Neighbourhood Wardens.

Verbal Report

**4. DAMP AND MOULD UPDATE & PRESENTATION**

To receive an update and presentation on problem of damp and mould in the Council's housing stock.

Pages 9 – 34

**5. EMERGING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NEW TOWNS HERITAGE CENTRE**

The Committee are invited to consider the emerging recommendations of the review into the New Towns Heritage Centre ahead of the final review report to enable the Towns Deal bid process reporting timeline to be met.

Pages 35 – 40

## **6. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

To consider any Part I business accepted by the Chair as urgent

## **7. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

To consider the following motions:

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

## **8. URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

To consider any Part II business accepted by the Chair as urgent

**NOTE: Links to Part 1 Background Documents are shown on the last page of the individual report, where this is not the case they may be viewed by using the following link to agendas for Executive meetings and then opening the agenda for Tuesday, 30 November 2021 – <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/have-your-say/council-meetings/161153/>**

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

## COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 3 November 2021

Time: 6.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber - Daneshill House, Danestrete

**Present:** Councillors: Sarah Mead (Chair), Margaret Notley (Vice-Chair), Myla Arceno, Stephen Booth, Alex Farquharson, Claire Parris and Simon Speller

**Start / End Time:** Start Time: 06:00 pm  
End Time: 08:26 pm

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received from Councillors Matt Creasey and Liz Harrington.

There were no declarations of interest.

### 2 MINUTES - 21 SEPTEMBER 2021

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of Community Select Committee meeting held on Wednesday 29 September 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 3 HCC DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH PRESENTATION

The Director of Public Health for Hertfordshire updated the Select Committee on Covid-19. He advised Members that generally Stevenage had more interest in testing compared to other areas in Hertfordshire.

He provided the following key updates to the Committee:

- England came out of lockdown on June 19 2020, and the number cases rose again. Currently the virus was surging, but cases rate were dropping.
- The highest rate of infection was among the 14 year old age group. There were also a few cases in the 80s and 90s age groups, most of them believed to be vulnerable and unvaccinated. The numbers of cases were also slightly higher in the working age groups, people who were in their 30s and 40s.
- For Stevenage there were no death from Coronavirus between May and September 2021.
- The NHS was under a huge strain. The number of cases surged again after the half term, and the hospital admissions were up and surging with mechanical and ventilation beds occupancy going up again, in particular, it spiked in the last fortnight.
- Stevenage had been in the top 3 for the vaccine uptake in the County.

- The uptake rate was 88.3% for 60 year olds for their second jab. Bedwell had the lowest vaccine uptake in Stevenage.
- It was not known yet how long the vaccine immunity would last, and that the vaccine immunity protects but not all variants.

Members asked questions and the following answers were provided by the Director of Public Health:

- The anti-vaccine groups were minor and they were not winning. He advised the Committee that £30K was spent on marshals for outside schools to keep disturbance by the group away. The Internet was the main source of the misinformation, and this was provided by the people from outside the UK.
- There would likely be one of the following three scenarios in the next few months:
  - The virus would likely to mutate and go away.
  - Likely to remain endemic like Measles with vaccines and boosters.
  - New variants every so often.
- The government and local authorities needed to work more closely. Local authorities were at the forefront of the test and trace services. The Hertfordshire County Council had to bring back their own Health Protection Team, as they could not rely on the national agencies.
- The Director described long Covid as a complex disease which could last between few weeks to over a year. It could have psychological impact on the patient. It would also impact the respiratory system, heart and mobility problems.
- Financial help was also provided to communities to support them through the Covid19 pandemic.
- The booster jabs take up was 60 percent nationally and 54 percent for Hertfordshire.
- He suggested people could go to walk-in centres for booster jabs without an appointment, as primary care was under huge pressure and it was not sourced enough.
- Face mask did help containing the virus not just the vaccines.
- The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) did not recommend vaccines for under 11s, and likely that herd immunity would happen in the those age groups. There was strong evidence and benefits involved for vaccinating 12-15 years old age groups.
- There were still studies that needed to be done on children and the vaccine impact on them. 60 children died in the last six months in the UK.
- Lateral Flow Test (LFT) was not 100% perfect, and the result for it normally showed the level of infection, even if it's negative, you could still be infectious, on the other hand, Polymerase Chain Reaction Test ( PCR) was sensitive and intended to have negative results when viral load was low, however, frequent testing were needed to mitigate the risk.
- Children symptoms included diarrhoea, severe inflammatory syndrome and other general illness.
- Virus mutation could often happen, but some variants were more infectious than others. Delta was one of them. Currently there was a focus on the transmissibility rather than the lethality.

Children had been put into difficult situations where and when rules changes and restrictions in school was different to restrictions out of school. Children were confused and afraid when restrictions were lifted as there was no explanation for this. The Chair asked Director of Public Health to consider the ongoing effect on children's mental health and do whatever he could to help them. The Director of Public Health showed an example of a mental health online service for children and invited Stevenage to bid for funding should they wish to put together a similar project.

Director of Public Health agreed to provide update on which service areas were hit by the Covid19 pandemic, and details of the work would be circulated to Members outside of this meeting.

The chair thanked the Director of Public Health for the presentation and for the hard work his Team had done during the pandemic.

It was **RESOLVED** that the update on Covid19 be noted.

#### 4 **UPDATE ON REVIEW OF NEW TOWNS HERITAGE CENTRE**

Members provided feedback on their recent visit to Colchester Firstsite Arts Gallery/Community Hub and Colchester Castle, and suggested that some autonomy should be given to a future Heritage Centre for having an independent website and digital presence.

The Assistant Director for Communities and Neighbourhoods advised Members that he agreed that there should be some curative autonomy which could be linked to the Council through a micro-site. A strong connection between the Heritage Centre and the Council would benefit residents. He also mentioned that he would look further into the website options. It would be possible to explore a small project funding bid to the Arts Council or other funders to pilot a digital platform, similar to Bristol and this could form part of the Museum work plan for next year.

In response to a question, the Strategic Director advised Members that there is an element of funding available for the New Towns Heritage Centre, but not for the whole project, all funding options would be explored including funding for the digital infrastructure that needed financing. The website model could fit into the business case before it was proposed to the Development Board in February 2022. The Assistant Director, Communities and Neighbourhoods advised Members that there could be a separate community project bid, regardless of the main Towns Deal bid for the Hub building. This would help with work towards a £10 - 20K digital solutions including a website and QR codes around a 'museum without walls' concept, and could include a lot of stakeholders support for this bid which would likely be well received.

Members noted that there were already historical resources for the project such as the Story of Stevenage in 100 objects, and it could be an interesting attraction point to welcome people from all over the world. Members agreed that there should be a clear vision before Council explore funding options and have strong scope to make

a strong case for funding.

Members suggested that there could be a hub and spoke model inked to the Co-operative Neighbourhoods Management model, including the physical museum building, digital archives, museums without walls and other historical heritage like the Fairlands Valley farm house.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director for Communities and Neighbourhoods and his Team for the work they and Community Select Committee Members have done on the project.

It was **RESOLVED** that the update on the review of the New Towns Heritage Centre be noted.

## 5 **WORK PROGRAMME PLANNING**

The Committee received a suggested Work Programme Planning Document 2021/22. The Work Programme was a flexible working document that was subject to change as new issues arose. Members were encouraged to suggest items to be included in the Work Programme at any time.

The following items were on the Committee's Work Programme for 2021/22:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New Towns Heritage Centre</li></ul>	This item would be included in the Programme for 2022/23.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Crime and Disorder</li></ul>	Because of the Covid19 disruptions it had not been possible for partners to provide data. This was now due for a meeting in March 2022 .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Neighbourhood and Wardens</li></ul>	Due for the next meeting on Tuesday 30 November 2021.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complaints/Your Say System</li></ul>	Date to be confirmed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Damp and Mould</li></ul>	Due for the 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter – Tuesday 30 November 2021. The Housing Investment Programme Manager to provide update.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cultural Strategy</li></ul>	Date to be confirmed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Housing Allocations Policy Review</li></ul>	Date to be confirmed.

Members suggested that there were many issues connected to social housing, and it was worth looking at the Housing and the tenancy agreements for social tenants. The Chair also suggested adding the Community Centres back on to the future Work Programme, and inviting someone from the Community Associations to provide feedback on Council/Community Centre working relationship.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Work Programme Planning Document 2021/22 be noted.

## 6 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Not required.

7 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

**CHAIR**

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**Meeting** Community Select Committee  
**Portfolio Area** Housing  
**Date** 30 November 2021



## DAMP AND CONDENSATION TEAM UPDATE

### NON KEY DECISION

#### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To apprise the committee of the work that the Damp and Condensation Team have been doing to improve SBC's response to reports of Damp and/or Mould with its housing stock.

#### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee support the current approach which is in line with the Housing Ombudsman Service Report: *Spotlight on: Damp and Mould – It's not lifestyle* which focusses on moving from a reactive to a proactive and more holistic approach than has been common practice in the past.
- 2.2 That the Committee continue to support the team to deliver on its promise to tackle Damp and Mould issues by ensuring that sufficient funding is available.
- 2.3 That the Committee review the attached draft Mould Leaflet and Animation and communicate any changes they wish to see in the final versions.

### 3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Damp and Mould Team was formed as a specialist service to address Councillors concerns that there was a particular issue within the borough and the response was unsatisfactory. Progress was being made prior to the Covid 19 restrictions but the lockdowns and self-isolation of many of our more vulnerable clients – those who paradoxically might be most affected by damp and/or mould - meant that cases backed up.

The team only really started to resurvey and issue works from April 12<sup>th</sup> and with only a limited pool of contractors' available progress was initially slow.

As at the time of writing this report, the backlog has been cleared and cases are coming through but these are fewer than would normally be expected at this time of the year meaning that staff have more time to carry out post inspections and to develop a more customer focussed, case management strategy. This combined with the more holistic, healthy home approach means we are not getting the same volume of reports as the table below illustrates:

**NUMBER OF ENQUIRIES RECEIVED FOR DAMP AND CONDENSATION**

2019/20		2020/21		2021/22	
Apr-19	36	Apr-20	7	Apr-21	29
May-19	29	May-20	10	May-21	29
Jun-19	31	Jun-20	22	Jun-21	36
Jul-19	31	Jul-20	25	Jul-21	35
Aug-19	31	Aug-20	23	Aug-21	30
Sep-19	38	Sep-20	32	Sep-21	30
Oct-19	50	Oct-20	45	Oct-21	43
Nov-19	90	Nov-20	59	Nov-21	18
Dec-19	54	Dec-20	58	Dec-21	
Jan-20	119	Jan-21	65		
Feb-20	66	Feb-21	49		
Mar-20	41	Mar-21	25		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>616</b>		<b>420</b>		<b>250</b>

Table 1: 3 year comparison of reports to the Damp and Mould Team<sup>1</sup>

3.2 A new contractor called Mouldex, a specialist ventilation and mould treatment company was brought on board which has seen cost of fans reduce by approximately 45% while offering a 5 year warranty on mould treatment<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Low volumes in April and May 2020 can be attributed to the first lockdown. November 2021 is the first month that suggests reports are reducing indicating that the team are being effective.

<sup>2</sup> When used in conjunction with their fans

In August we entered into a 12 month framework agreement with Quality Eradication Services Today Limited (QEST) – a specialist topical treatment company.

More recently Envirovent have been taken on for their ventilation solutions following a CPD seminar that the company delivered in which their superb fans and Positive Input Ventilation systems were demonstrated. These have the added benefit of long manufacturer warranties and low maintenance requirements. Improvements in roof ventilation and dealing with localised plumbing issues have also delivered benefits to our residents' homes.

#### **4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The current strategy is proving to be an effective one in recognising the causes of damp and mould particularly in the creation of and management of the conditions that are at the root of most condensation issues.
- 4.2 The team have developed the skills and confidence to identify issues affecting the housing stock and residents' enjoyment of their home while being bold enough to own each case, dealing with the delivery of repairs such as leaks etc. that would normally be referred to our R & V team.
- 4.3 The team has developed strong interdepartmental relationships with other teams such as Project Support Team, Residents and Estates, Supported Housing, Lettings, MRC etc. which has helped with access issues, supporting tenants with mental health or other vulnerabilities, resolving cases that cross departments/teams and improving communication.
- 4.4 Once final versions are approved the new leaflet and animation will be available online to further inform residents on what they can expect from our service.

#### **5 IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Financial Implications**

- 5.1 Currently the original budget of £250,000 for 2021/22 is overcommitted but this was predicted and a further £200,000 has been sourced to continue the work of delivering real solutions rather than just painting over the problem.

The costs reflect the backlog of work from the Covid restrictions as orders from 2020/21 that were unable to be carried out so had to be cancelled and reissued. Also, surveys were put on hold while we were unable to visit residents in their homes and/or while residents were self-isolating. The condition of some properties therefore worsened during this hiatus increasing the remedial work required.

Coupled with the new holistic approach to the problems of damp and mould with Surveyors owning every part of the solution including most repairs has increased the costs of some jobs however, this has made for a better result.

In addition, the newer contractors are more cost effective and offer warranties on their work.

Year	Inspections completed	Work Orders completed	Budget Outturn (Integra)	Original Budget	Budget Variance
2019/20	293	225	£218,992.11	£150,000.00	-£68,992.11
2020/21	230	142	£214,267.74	£250,000.00	£35,732.26
2021/22 (YTD)	307	168	£176,743.85 <sup>3</sup>	£250,000.00 <sup>4</sup>	£73,256.15

Table 2: 3 year comparison of completed inspections and work orders

The above table clearly demonstrates the impact of Covid 19 on the deliverable inspections and work orders in 2020/21 and accounts in large part for the increases shown in both volumes and costs for the current year to date. In addition to the 168 orders completed by our contractors there are another 140 or so in the pipeline i.e. issued but not yet shown as complete and not paid. These are currently being reviewed by the team as part of our general housekeeping however it is believed that a much of this may be down to a lag in invoicing hence the next table should be viewed as indicative only.

TOTAL ENTRIES ON TRACKER	
SUMMARY OF D AND C CASES	
STATUS	TOTALS
Acknowledged	0
Appointment Booked	34
Contractor Instructed	140
Decant Required	2
Enquiry Closed	866
Enquiry Completed	1198
In Progress	85
Missed Appointment (staff)	0
Need to Rebook	1
No Access (tenant)	7
No Response	5
Received	1
Referred to Repairs	3
<b>TOTAL ACTIVE ENQUIRIES</b>	<b>222</b>

Table 3: Snapshot of Tracker information

<sup>3</sup> This figure only represents actuals in Integra at the time of writing. Within Northgate the total commitment is in excess of £300,000 hence the requirement of additional funding to support the work of the team.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to the £250,000 original budget the team have been granted a further £50,000 in September and £150,000 in November which should see the team through to the end of the financial year at the current rate of new and review cases.

## Comments:

- Appointments Booked, Contractor Instructed and In Progress are all currently being reviewed.
- Need to Rebook, No Access and No Response are all being followed up with either the tenant directly or via the Project Support Team and/or Housing Officer
- Received will become Appointment Booked once we can get hold of the tenant.
- Decant required relates to two properties – one is currently being followed up with the HO as an emergency case and the other is to be presented to Housing Panel on the 24<sup>th</sup> November for rehousing due to overcrowding.
- The latest position will be shared at the meeting.

## Legal Implications

5.2 While the new Housing White Paper and Housing Ombudsman Service Report: *Spotlight on: Damp and Mould – It's not lifestyle* have the potential to increase the Disrepair Claims, if anything the new approach improves our position in that we will be able to better defend our position. Our current caseload is coming down and our exposure is reduced due to the records we have been able to access and the robust manner in which we have responded to some of the more spurious claims from claimants experts as well as those Solicitors who have not followed the correct protocol. The team have identified a project for the New Year working with both our Repairs Team and our Legal Service to develop a consistent Disrepair process. In addition, the Legal Service have agreed to provide regular reports on our costs for legal services so we can understand the aggregated costs of any compensation to a claimant, their legal costs and our legal costs. Where possible any compensation to a claimant is offset against any rent debt.

Lastly, where we are required to pay the claimants legal costs, we have the option of using a legal costs draftsman whose job it is to check that these are “reasonable” and where excessive we will refuse to pay inflated costs. This strategy should reduce the speculative claims that we have seen emerging from some Solicitors.

## Risk Implications

5.3 Again risks are reducing as we move from a “wait and see” responsive service to one that is able to analyse data and pre-empt calls by revisiting previous cases, carrying out “belt and braces” interventions and developing better case management focussing on the customer rather than just the property. Exercising options such as more paint choices and introducing wallpaper options to previously papered and treated walls will improve customer satisfaction as well as reducing the chance of the problem recurring. Ensuring that where a problem does recur we recall the contractor under warranty will further improve both our success and reputation while protecting the Council from additional costs.

### **Service Delivery Implications**

- 5.4 The Service Delivery is and will continue to improve. Already we have seen a reduction in new reported cases allowing staff to spend more time on the softer elements of customer service – Work In Progress inspections, Post Inspections, Customer Liaison, Review of Previous Cases, Data Analysis etc.

Our contractor QEST has provided useful management information (available separately if required) which they are developing further to give more detailed breakdowns by month, quarter and YTD as well as helping identify those properties most at risk using computer modelling.

### **Information Technology Implications**

- 5.5 IT is crucial in further improving the way the team records and analyses data. We have already redesigned the survey form which captures the inspection record and we are working at getting this available through a tablet as a precursor to moving to RAPID.

### **Other Corporate Implications**

- 5.6 Ideally, the work that the team has been doing should filter into other teams such as the Void and MRC teams when specifying fans for example. We already have this in place with the Aids and Adaptations team who have negotiated preferential rates for Elta Mori dMEV fans saving over £100 per unit a saving the contractor can pass on to SBC so we get a better product for our money. The Investment Programme Manager ensures that all CPD seminars are offered to colleagues in other teams to broaden the cross departmental knowledge base with the intention that these will help to influence the choice of products in future.

## **6 Main body**

### **6.1 Damp and Condensation In Stevenage**

It has long been acknowledged that Damp<sup>5</sup> – particularly in the form of condensation within dwellings is an issue in Stevenage. It is for this reason that the decision was taken a few years ago to establish a specialist team to tackle the issue – a welcome response uncommon among housing providers.

### **6.2 Retrofit Improvements and their contribution to Damp and Condensation issues**

- 6.3 In attempting to improve the energy performance of existing properties from the point of view of thermal comfort (a HHSRS requirement), energy efficiency (SAP ratings and EPC's) and tackling fuel poverty, planned programmes have "sealed up" dwellings, reducing the air changes to a point where the internal environment can be quite unhealthy. We need to factor air changes/air quality and product reviews into our Major Works specifications.

### **6.4 Traditional Response**

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<sup>5</sup> Statistically Rising Damp is rare and probably accounts for only one or two cases per annum. Penetrative damp from leaks probably accounts for less than 20% of cases most of which would be down to Repairs to remedy the source of the leak.

Surveyors have generally focussed on encouraging residents to change their behaviours in order to reduce and control the amount of internal moisture produced by normal day to day activities which is a major factor in the formation of condensation which creates the conditions for mould growth.

Where interventions have been specified these have been largely limited to the introduction of air bricks or through the wall passive ventilators and sometimes topical treatments such as a simple mould wash.

While these interventions may provide short term relief, experience shows that they are a sticking plaster and a more holistic, whole house solution is a far more effective strategy where a combined treatment and ventilation approach greatly increases the chance of a successful outcome.

Occasionally and more recently, changing traditional purge ventilation fans in the kitchen and bathroom operated by switch (either light switch or dedicated switch/pull cord) for ones operated by a humidistat wired to the permanent live of the lighting circuit has had some success particularly when combined with topical treatments.

These humidistat controlled fans respond to an increase in humidity and are employed to provide both purge and trickle ventilation so as to encourage air movement thereby reducing migration of moisture to areas of cold or low air movement within the dwelling where it [the humid air] could condense and form mould colonies. These too are only effective some of the time and an experienced surveyor will be aware that fan isolators may be switched off by the tenant often due to either the noise that some produce (particularly at night) or because of concerns about running costs which with rising fuel costs and fuel poverty on the increase is a real issue.

#### 6.5 **SBC Position at the start of 2021.**

Although the specialist team had been in place for a while, the effectiveness of the team was questioned. Too many live cases, too many repeat cases and too many cases referred to Councillors by residents frustrated with their living conditions. A different way of working was required meaning new specialist contractors and a different mindset of the staff who needed to take charge and own each case.

#### 6.6 **New ways of working**

A review of the old project plan was carried out and found that it too needed reworking. The attached Damp and Condensation Project Plan provides more detail but in short a strategy of working with residents and tackling the issue by prescribing a series of interrelated remedies and ensuring that residents are fully engaged with these proposals together with reviewing repeat cases has proven to be effective.

#### 6.7 **Achievements to date**

- \* New Contractors specialising in ventilation and mould remediation
- \* New Plumbing and Roofing Contractor dealing with leaks and roof ventilation
- \* A more customer focussed service approach working with and around customer needs

- \* A more interdepartmental approach working with other teams<sup>6</sup>
- \* Regular In-Team case reviews.
- \* Regular checks of Surveyor Reports (QC and QA) and providing of feedback
- \* Referral to Housing Panel for severely overcrowded properties
- \* Review of Surveying Equipment and new purchasing
- \* New Report Format Created
- \* Mobile Tablet on trial
- \* New and improved paint choice and wallpaper option being developed
- \* New contractor management information report being created
- \* Weekly contractor job status reports being submitted by Mouldex and QEST
- \* New job completion pack being developed by QEST
- \* CPD seminars delivered.

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

**7.1 All documents that have been used in compiling this report, that may be available to the public, i.e. they do not contain exempt information, should be listed here:**

- BD1 CSC Action Update November 2021
- BD2 Damp and Condensation Project Plan

## **APPENDICES**

- A Condensation Mould Leaflet
- B Condensation Mould Video Draft

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<sup>6</sup> Project Support Team for access issues, Residents and Estates Team for enforcement and tenancy issues, Support Team for vulnerable clients, Repairs for defects unrelated or directly causing D & M issues unless we are able to resolve ourselves etc.

## Appendix CSC Action Plan November 2021 Update

CSC Action	Update
1. Provide update to CSC on progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update as at 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021 to be read in conjunction with full report and Project Plan.</li> </ul>
2. That officers who come into contact with people who report damp, mould and condensation all undergo adequate training to mitigate some of the previous inappropriate initial responses to tenants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness session at H&amp;I away day.</li> <li>• Customer Service training for all staff</li> <li>• Specialist training for D&amp;C team</li> <li>• Updates at team meetings</li> <li>• Continued CPD including session on disrepair</li> </ul> <p><b>November 2021 review update:</b> In-House Training in use of some of the more technical equipment (Speedy Moisture Test etc.) to be conducted on a VOID property as soon as a suitable one is available. Actioned 29 August 2021</p> <p>One Surveyor attended a 3 day specialist training Mid-June.</p> <p>Investment Programme Manager has connected with the British Damage Management Association and signed up for some free courses with the intention that we look to bring some best practice principles into the team. BS 12999. This is focussed on working with the families experiencing damp and mould. The Project Support Team and Estates and Tenancy Management Team are working with the D &amp; M Team to liaise with tenants particularly where access is an issue or where there are concerns about the work we propose.</p> <p>The team has specialist equipment – Damp meters, laser thermometers etc. The team are currently reviewing the</p>

## Appendix CSC Action Plan November 2021 Update

	<p>equipment and will be ordering additional tools such as Anemometers to accurately check the performance of fans etc.</p> <p>November update: We now have 1 thermal imaging camera used on Disrepair and complex cases by the Principal Surveyor while the Building Surveyors have new damp meters with in-built thermal imaging cameras. Anemometers are on order and will enable the surveyors to more accurately determine the effectiveness of fans in kitchen and bathroom locations. In addition, the team have access to Data Loggers</p>
<p>3. As part of a communications strategy to promote the new damp and condensation strategy, officers should invite tenants to come forward with current and historical cases</p>	<p><b>2021 review update:</b> Project Support Team have reviewed a number of cases where residents have reported 3 or more incidents of damp and mould so that these can be reviewed and if necessary revisited and any work project managed to a successful conclusion. The team have identified approximately 90 cases of which the first 30 or so have been worked through and have either had work carried out or are being actively case managed.</p>
<p>4. That the issue of damp and mould be included in housing matters events publicising how tenants can mitigate the effects of damp and mould in their properties, this should be linked to a Communications campaign with appropriate information and reporting on the web site.</p>	<p><b>2021 review update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New D&amp;C leaflet, website content, animations and social media content to be agreed in consultation with CSC.</li> <li>• As per attachments to the CSC report the draft animation and D &amp; C leaflet await comments from the Committee.</li> </ul>
<p>5. That officers all work to an agreed timeframe for responding to reports of damp and mould from the initial response and for a realistic timeframe for resolving these issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New process includes specific timeline agreed with CSC.</li> <li>• The 3 week response time to carry out the initial inspection and the 6 month target date to resolve the issue is now embedded in the delivery process.</li> </ul> <p><b>2021 review update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case backlog following Covid restrictions needs to be</li> </ul>

## Appendix CSC Action Plan November 2021 Update

	<p>dealt with. Backlog has now been cleared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The system for tracking progress needs further work and investment in IT system to support this. This is still a live project. The tracker has had improvements with additional categories. Surveyors are now responsible for ensuring updates are processed.</li> <li>• Discussions with Housing IT support the Investment Programme Managers view that the Corporate IT system can replace the tracker freeing up resource for more tenant interaction – telephone post inspections etc. Still a live project. Process Map being revisited in advance of Northgate upgrade.</li> <li>• The team are looking to triage cases and record them on Northgate as either Minor, Moderate or Major. This has yet to happen as this links in with the Northgate upgrade.</li> </ul>
<p>6. That through the HRA Budget process appropriate levels of resources is allocated to invest in repairs to alleviate cases of damp and mould. Specific housing blocks that officers are aware that suffer from structural defaults and cause these conditions, are systematically worked on to alleviate the problems, with particular emphasis during the void process. This would avoid subsequent complaints issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific budget for D&amp;C has been allocated (previously no budget) of £250k with a growth of a further £100k being requested through HRS business plan refresh.</li> <li>• Allocation of cyclical maintenance budget to clear a backlog of gutter clearances and other preventative maintenance.</li> </ul> <p><b>2021 review update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team looking to introduce a servicing contract for some of the more specialist condensation control ventilation systems. The Investment Programme Manager has been in discussion with Fusion 21 which has identified 4 companies interested in providing this service. The IMP has to produce a specification of our requirements and has identified an internal staff member who may be able to assist in this endeavour</li> <li>• Team about to engage a specialist mould treatment</li> </ul>

## Appendix CSC Action Plan November 2021 Update

	<p>company through a framework agreement giving cost certainty and speeding up the work ordering process. QEST started working for us in August and has to date carried out 39 jobs. Quality is good and the work is guaranteed for 2 years. QEST are responding to SBC feedback and extending their service to include a selection of paint colours as well as a wallpapering service for those residents who already have wallpaper but which in treating the mould has to be removed and destroyed. The IPM is conscious that residents should be put back to at least the level of decorative order that they enjoyed prior to the treatment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team exploring further frameworks for: Damp proofing, Decoration (post works) and Ventilation specialists. As above decoration no longer require and ventilation being worked on. Damp proofing probably not required as volumes do not warrant a procurement exercise.</li> <li>• Team anticipate a further £250K may be required however, some work the team will undertake would normally fall to the Repairs Team however, the team are conscious of the need to manage the customer experience and so wherever possible will manage all associated work. The team have been given an additional £50,000 and are awaiting a further £150,000 to support the service in its delivery. The team have embraced a can-do attitude, owning the problem where there is a damp or mould issue. However, it should be noted that the team have noticed an increase in reports of damp and mould that have only repair elements i.e. no damp or mould exists or where the damp is wholly resolvable through a a good quality repair and no intervention from the D &amp; M team is necessary.</li> </ul>
<p>7. That officers record the problems and state the process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following every initial site visit the Surveyors record</li> </ul>

## Appendix CSC Action Plan November 2021 Update

<p>of repair following the first visit and identify the cause rather than the symptom to be addressed.</p>	<p>their findings and the actions required to rectify the cause of the problem.</p> <p><b>2021 review update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reports are too lengthy so we have designed a new report which will be quicker to complete while capturing all the vital information. This is currently undergoing testing and if successful may be possible to load onto a tablet or laptop for completion in the field. This is a prelude to RAPID. The new report format is working well (only one Surveyor is using this) and is shortly to be tried on a tablet.</li> <li>• RAPID will enable staff to complete surveys and add photos and upload direct into the system.</li> </ul>
<p>8. That officers establish a tangible system of recording data which illustrates the priority/severity of each case.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracker has been put in place to monitor and cases are allocated priority following completed surveys.</li> </ul> <p><b>2021 review update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracker to be replaced with better use of the Corporate Housing Database once the new upgrade is rolled out.</li> <li>• A suite of desired KPI's is being developed and shared with the Housing IT team so that the correct fields can be built as part of the Northgate upgrade. This is outstanding and will follow the Process Map review.</li> </ul>
<p>9. We recommend that a system of allocating serial number/case number/ customer/property unique number reference be used to record first time complaints to avoid follow up complaints being logged individually and to avoid customer/tenants having to re-explain case/issue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracker has been put in place to monitor cases including reference numbers and UPRN's</li> </ul> <p><b>2021 review update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracker system is a short term measure that needs to be urgently replaced with a more robust system to</li> </ul>

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	<p>monitor and report progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is underway to set up and use Northgate to do this and this is seen as a key focus to improve the service.</li> </ul>
<p>10. That the housing department recognises the impact of damp and mould on people with respiratory conditions, particularly those with young children and the elderly, and this be considered as part of the planned forthcoming Housing Allocation Policy review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wherever possible it is the intention that the damp and mould problem will be resolved. However if this is not possible then the case can be referred to the Housing Panel for review and consideration seeking the Independent medical advisors advise. The team are due to present their first Housing Panel case on 24 November. The property is a severely overcrowded 1<sup>st</sup> floor, 2 bedroom flat with 2 adults, 4 children (2 boys and 2 girls) plus older children from the father's previous relationship who visit at weekends. There is insufficient room to carry out a full inspection nor is it possible to carry out any intervention given the amount of possessions.</li> <li>• There is a priority / severity rating system in place that recognises the impact of damp and mould on people with respiratory problems, the young and elderly. This will be refined to consider how the timescales can differ for high priority cases. This requires the new severity rating system mentioned above i.e. minor, moderate and major. This is still outstanding but very much on the agenda especially now that we have cleared the backlog and have more contractors available.</li> </ul> <p><b>2021 review update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team work closely with the Support Team and Estates and Tenancy Management for no access issues and general tenant liaison/relationship building.</li> </ul>

# Appendix CSC Action Plan November 2021 Update

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## Appendix Damp and Condensation Project Plan

### DAMP & CONDENSATION NEW PROJECT PLAN

Theme	Tasks	Start date	Finish date	Project Lead	Completion status	Task Comments
<b>Procedures</b>						
<b>End to End process</b>	Process maps	17-Apr-21	22-May-21	Keith Peirson	In progress	Completed main Process Map and No Access Process in May but needs to be built into Northgate configuration. Currently being reviewed to ensure that it reflects current practice as the team have made some changes and it is imperative that the Northgate process is designed correctly.
<b>Inspection Records and Data Capture</b>	New Survey Form Created	01-Jun-21	10-Jun-21	Keith Peirson	Complete	Currently on the third version but the report format appears to be working well as it captures more relevant data than the previous template which was more of a condition report. Surveyor trialling the form has now been given a Tablet which once properly configured will enable completion complete with photos and ability to email reports to the Damp and Mould Inbox and self. N.B. Only one Surveyor comfortable using this report format. Currently under test. Will save time in producing reports as won't have to convert hand written notes or download photos.
<b>At-A-Glance Caseload Management and Reporting</b>	Removal of Tracker			Keith Peirson	In progress	<b>UPDATE 17/11/2021:</b> Tracker to be moved to TEAMS as soon as possible enabling simultaneous multi user access. Additional fields added to capture information such as receipt of electrical certification, warranties etc. Also, new status categories added to identify no access (tenant) and missed appointment (staff) etc. <b>Original position:</b> Not possible until Northgate upgrade has been rolled out and the system updated to include all the information required to manage the service and produce KPI's.
<b>Complete Repairs Records</b>	Use of Northgate			Keith Peirson	In progress	KP has used the system quite effectively and met with the Housing IT team to discuss the team's requirements. Housing IT will these into the upgrade (links in with review of process map etc.).
<b>Ability to Analyse Data and Performance</b>	Business Objects for Reports	01-Oct-21		Keith Peirson	In progress	KP has access now. Some useful reports already exists (Inspection status by surveyor) which has enabled the team to do some housekeeping of records. New reports need to be written for which some training is required.
<b>Standardisation of process and harmonisation across teams</b>	Disrepair Review	03-Jan-21		Keith Peirson	Not started	Disrepair process to be reviewed and standardised across all teams. Representatives from Repairs and Voids, D & M and Legal to form a working group. Likely to start in the New Year. The team have purchased a book ' <i>Housing Conditions tenant's rights</i> ' as a tool to help better understand what we can do to better address disrepair claims.

## Appendix Damp and Condensation Project Plan

<b>Improved record keeping and auditing</b>	Electrical Certification	24-May-21		Keith Peirson	<b>In progress</b>	Electrical Certificates to be received from installation contractors, checked and stored on Keystone. We now have a folder for storing certificates and get them audited by an In House Clerk of Works (electrically qualified). Keystone KSI to be developed to record these.
<b>Regular Status Checks and Updates</b>	Monthly Case Status Updates by Surveyors			John Farquharson	<b>In progress</b>	New process started to ensure that the status of each case is updated and can be reported on. This was being left to the Technical Support staff but having looked at the process it is better that the surveyors own the management of information.
<b>Case Review/Audit of repeat cases</b>	Biannual audit of repeat D & M Cases			John Farquharson	<b>In progress</b>	We have already identified 90 such cases. 21 have been inspected and actioned with a further 15 being investigated. The Project Support Team will shortly commence more customer interviews with the remaining 54 cases.
<b>Creation of KPI suite and dashboard</b>	To create a standardised suite of KPI's aligned with those of the Repairs Team			Keith Peirson	<b>In progress</b>	To be developed with the Repairs Team as part of the new Contract Procurement and to be included in KPI Dashboard.
<b>Case review for urgent and severe cases</b>	Housing Panel	24-Nov-21		Keith Peirson	<b>In progress</b>	The team need to be able to present cases to the Housing Panel where cases that cannot be treated with the tenants in situ can be brought to a forum to ensure that the right alternative accommodation can be identified be it temporary to facilitate remedial works or permanent if in the households best interest. First case to be presented on 24 November 2021 is a 2 bedroom household with severe overcrowding: 2 adults and 4 children.
<b>Geographical Area Split</b>	To split Surveyors North and South to reduce journeys and carbon footprint as well as improve area knowledge			John Farquharson	<b>Not started</b>	Suggested by one of the Surveyors we will try splitting the Surveyors by area so that they have more control over the stock they manage. To be trialled for 3 months in the New Year.
<b>Commercial</b>						
<b>Contract for Topical Treatments</b>	Procure Mould Remediation Framework	30-Mar-21	02-Aug-21	Keith Peirson	<b>Complete</b>	QEST appointed and commenced surveys 02/08/2021. Work delivered to a good standard. All work carries a 2 year warranty.
<b>Improved Air Quality</b>	Procure Ventilation Framework	03-Sep-21		Keith Peirson	<b>In progress</b>	Fusion 21 have posted an Expression of Interest request to which four companies have responded. KP to work with Fusion 21 to develop the requirements for a mini tender under 15158 Building Safety and Compliance Lot 11 Electrical Works. Have discussed with our Clerk of Works who will be helping by sanity checking the specification
<b>Contract for Specialist Damp-Proofing</b>	Procure Damp-Proofing Company	-	-	Keith Peirson	<b>Not started</b>	<b>NOT REQUIRED</b>

## Appendix Damp and Condensation Project Plan

<b>Contract for post remedial works decorations</b>	Procure Decorating Company	-	-	Keith Peirson	In progress	<b>NOT REQUIRED</b>
<b>Plumbing and Roofing Contractor to remedy defects contributing to Damp and Mould Issues</b>	Bring In Roofer/Plumber	01-Apr-21	21-Apr-21	Keith Peirson	Complete	<b>UPDATE 14/09/2021:</b> KP to work with the Repairs Team on the Procurement of contractors to carry out this type of work enabling both teams to unify KPI's, hold joint contract meetings etc. Likely to commence before Christmas. <b>Original record:</b> Required to carry out repairs and alterations where roofing or plumbing defects are a factor in damp and mould cases such as roof ventilations, defective gutters and/or rain water goods, plumbing leaks etc. Enables the team to 'own' the job.
<b>Communications</b>						
<b>Tenant feedback</b>	Template letters and forms	03 May 2021	04 May 2021	Keith Peirson	Complete	Minor changes made to the follow up letter. New letter needed for post review cases.
<b>Customer Information</b>	Leaflet redesign	20-May-21		Keith Peirson	In progress	Draft complete awaiting submission to and recommendations from the CSC group.
<b>Customer Information</b>	Commission Animation	21-May-21		Keith Peirson	In progress	Draft complete awaiting submission to and recommendations from the CSC group.
<b>Training</b>						
<b>Records</b>	Northgate	28/07/2021	28/07/2021	Lynne Gittings	Complete	Staff now familiar with system especially in the correct completion of Inspections on the system and the use of notes.
<b>IT/Records</b>	RAPID			Keith Peirson	Not started	Not possible until system built.
<b>External Training</b>	Damp and Condensation	15/06/2021	17/06/2021	N/A	Complete	Training delivered to one Surveyor.
<b>In-House Training</b>	Specialist equipment training	29/07/2021	29/07/2021	John Farquharson	Complete	Some (speedy moisture test etc.) to be delivered by the Damp and Mould Manager. Awaiting a suitable void property. Use of Anemometer to be delivered by others.
<b>Contractor presentation</b>	QEST (Mould Remediation)	09/07/2021	09/07/2021	Keith Peirson	Complete	New framework contractor gave a presentation showing what SBC can expect from their service.
<b>Contractor presentation</b>	Mouldex	26/07/2021	26/07/2021	Keith Peirson	Complete	Mouldex concentrated on ventilation options such as dMEV continuous fans for kitchens and bathrooms as well as whole house solutions such as Positive Input Ventilation (PIV), Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery systems.
<b>Contractor presentation</b>	Mould Growth Consultants	24/08/2021	24/08/2021	Keith Peirson	Complete	Presentation covered traditional topical treatments, other products such as stain blocks, treatments to stop hygroscopic salts etc.
<b>Contractor presentation</b>	Environvent	02/09/2021	02/09/2021	Keith Peirson	Complete	Presentation was to show the range of extractors and PIV systems and the team have identified a number of properties for PIV trials. The benefits of such systems is to improve air quality to the whole property while providing a robust 10 year warranty.
<b>Equipment</b>						

## Appendix Damp and Condensation Project Plan

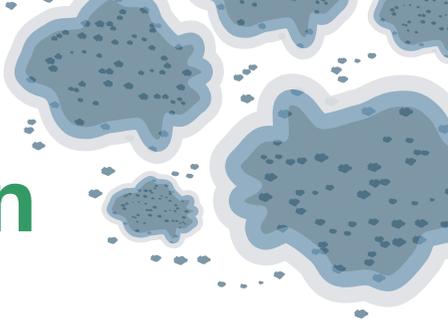
Ensure Surveyors are suitably equipped to carry out detailed surveys	Equipment Review	21/06/2021	12/08/2021	Keith Peirson	Complete	Update 17/11/2021: New Damp Meters procured which include Thermal Imaging Camera's to identify 'cold spots' where condensation is likely to occur. Anemometers on order complete with cones to accurately measure fan performance against Approved Document F.
Surveying equipment maintenance for accuracy	Equipment Calibration			Keith Peirson	Not started	All measuring equipment will require an annual check/calibration.
In dwelling fans and ventilation systems	Equipment Servicing			Keith Peirson	In progress	UPDATE 17/11/2021: Need to collate information on what fans, PIV and MVHR we have across our stock so this can be shared with contractors. Need to identify a budget and also to create a KSI on Keystone. UPDATE 14/09/2021: Prices received from Mouldex and used ad hoc as not in contract with them i.e. if a fan is identified as working but needing an overhaul. This is a stop gap until a contract can be entered into via a framework or full tender. Original statement: Principally for whole house ventilation systems such as Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery (MVHR) and Positive Input Ventilation (PIV). To be included in the Ventilation Procurement Project.
Beneficial Pricing for Elta Mori dMEV Fans	Discounted costs for SBC approved contractors	28/07/2021	04/08/2021	Steve Archer	Complete	The Principal Building Surveyor for Aids and Adaptations has negotiated preferential pricing for Elta Mori dMEV fans so adapted kitchens and bathrooms can receive higher specification fans at an affordable price point thereby reducing the risks of mould growth in newly adapted properties. These fans are currently the favoured product by Mouldex who currently carry out many of our fan installations to tackle condensation mould.
Visibility on Air Quality and Data Capture	Air Quality Monitoring Equipment			TBA	Not started	NEW: This is a project that is likely to have three outcomes: 1. a small portable Air Quality Monitor that Surveyors will take with them on their inspections. 2. A system that can be left in the home to monitor Air Quality for a predetermined amount of time, say 1 month with the ability to analyse the data via an App or data download. 3. A permanent system that will monitor temperature and humidity on an extended or permanent basis. Useful in cases where annual reports are made or there is a disrepair claim. Project currently being scoped.
<b>Warranties</b>						
Recording of Warranties/Guarantees	Recording of installations on Keystone and warranty information on Northgate.			TBA	Not started	Essential that staff can recall contractors and suppliers if a product or service fails within a given timeframe rather than issuing a new order to a contractor.
<b>Interdepartmental Working</b>						
Meet and greet and awareness	Visiting CSC	TBA		Keith Peirson	Not started	Staff to visit the CSC and offer to spend time working with the team to help them identify better the cases that need the Damp and Mould Team as opposed to Repairs. Planned for the New Year.

## Appendix Damp and Condensation Project Plan

<b>Staff development</b>	Job Shadowing	TBA		Keith Peirson	<b>Not started</b>	Offer to others to shadow D & M staff. Planned for the New Year.
<b>Case Conferences</b>	Identifying the correct staff/teams when discussing complicated cases and appointing a lead officer	Ad Hoc		John Farquharson	<b>In progress</b>	The principle is already established with one property - a case where a leaseholder complained about mould in their flat. The Case Conference included Resident and Estate Services, MRC and D & M team. The merits of each case will determine the membership of the conference and the lead officer based on the most appropriate service to liaise with colleagues and co-ordinate services.

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# Condensation Mould



**What is it? What causes it? How to identify Condensation Mould. How to get rid of it and how to stop it coming back. What you can expect from SBC officers.**

## What is it?

Condensation Mould describes mould that needs a water source to start to colonise and grow.

## What causes it?

Condensation occurs because moisture that is in the air as water vapour changes from a gaseous state to a liquid. It is the same as boiling a kettle and finding water droplets on the kitchen tiles or underside of the kitchen unit. The warm air rises and hits a surface that is colder causing the water vapour to 'condense' into a liquid. This is called Condensation which can be found on surfaces such as ceilings, skirtings, window reveals, window gaskets—anywhere that has a 'cold spot' or poor air circulation such as behind furniture.

The air also contains mould spores in the same way as it contains dust particles. Some mould spores will settle on the area where

condensation forms and use the water to grow spreading over a larger area and infesting clothing, soft furnishing and furniture.

So, if you have condensation and mould they combine for form Condensation Mould. It's like metals containing Iron can only rust if there is water and air.

Once Condensation Mould is present it needs to be treated before it becomes established and spreads.

## How to identify Condensation Mould

Condensation Mould can usually be identified by its colour which is black/green and is known by its Latin name *Stachybotrys Chartarum*. Typically found on the lintels of windows, around window reveals, in corners both high and low level, behind furniture – especially furniture placed against or close to external walls.

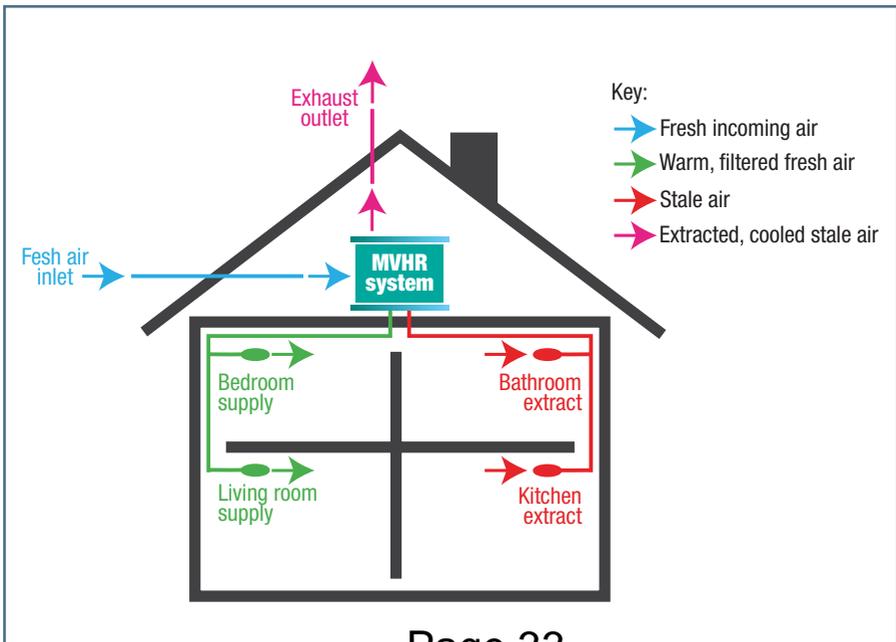
# How to get rid of Condensation Mould and stop it coming back

- Reduce condensation
  - » Use any extractor in your kitchen or bathroom for at least 20 minutes after bathing or cooking – DON'T switch it off by the isolator.
  - » Keep window trickle vents open and avoid heavy curtains or drapes that prevent air movement.
  - » Open windows to ventilate your home.
  - » Keep furniture away from the wall so air can flow.
  - » Avoid drying clothes on radiators – dry them outside if possible or use an ailer
  - » If you use a tumble dryer make sure it is a condensing type and empty the container regularly or vent it to the outside. In many cases SBC can provide a suitable core drilled hole to connect to.
  - » Wipe any moisture on windows, window boards etc. as and when it occurs.
  - » Try to keep your home to a constant temperature of between 18°C and 21°C to avoid sudden heating up and cooling down phases.
- Treat the mould with a fungicide and use a mould resistant paint or use an additive to prevent the problem returning. It is important to treat 1 metre beyond the area affected as infection may spread through microscopic filaments called hyphae.
- If you are decorating we can help by providing a mould eradication kit to be used in conjunction with paint or wallpaper paste.

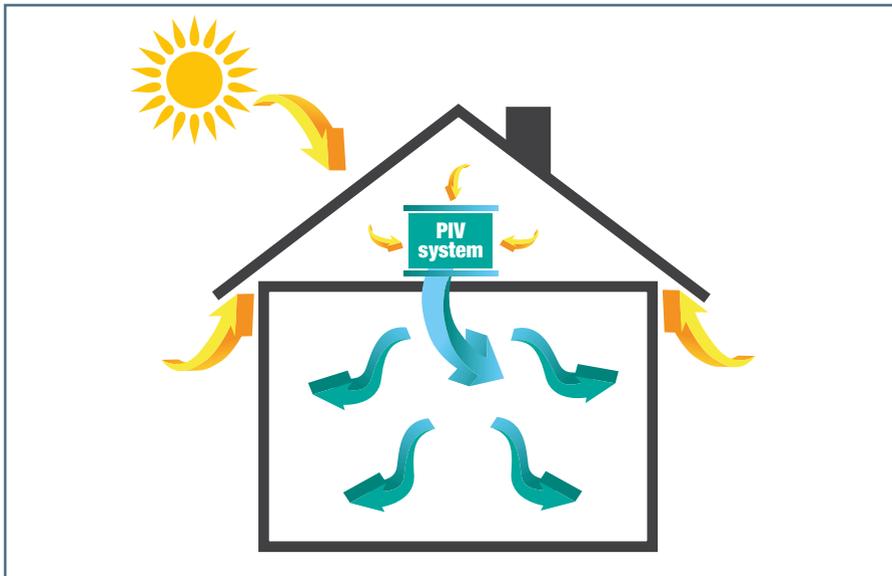


# What you can expect from SBC officers

- We will offer general advice.
- We will inspect your home.
- We will arrange any necessary work including any repairs which are contributing to the problem.
- We will write to you with our findings.
- We will contact you again after any work and check that the situation has improved.
- If you want to decorate we can help provide kits to treat the mould and to add to paint or paste to stop it returning.
- We can improve the ventilation in your home by installing humistat fans in the kitchen and bathroom which respond to elevated moisture levels. These must be on their own circuit and comes on as required independent of any light.
- In severe cases where multiple rooms are affected we can arrange for whole home ventilation solutions such as Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery systems (MVHR) see below for an illustration:



- We can also provide Positive Input Ventilation (PIV) which help to bring in fresh supplies of air such as below:



The solution will depend on our findings but we will work with you to reduce the causes.

Together we can beat the problem so you can live in a healthy home.

## **REMEMBER:**

**REDUCE,**

**VENTILATE,**

**HEAT AND TREAT**

**to control condensation**

**and keep mould at bay.**

**Please note that although the images depict houses solutions are available for flats too.**

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## Possible emerging recommendations of the Community Select Committee – New Towns Heritage Centre review

Following two formal Committee meetings, an informal meeting and two site visits to other arts centre/museums at Colchester and Milton Keynes the Committee have suggested the following draft recommendations and split them into 5 main key areas of (i) curation and arts programme linked to community engagement and governance; (ii) virtual museums and digital technology linked to the concept of museums without walls; (iii) the building design features linked to the use of technology in the building; (iv) the commercial activity/funding/cost point for entry and (v) developing a hub and spoke approach for arts & historical heritage across the town

From the Members notes of the two site visits on 15 & 22 October and the informal meeting of the Committee on 25 October and the formal meetings of the Committee on 21 September and 3 November 2021 the following suggestions and observations were made by Members, with possible recommendations in yellow highlighted area:

### Curation (Arts programme)/engagement with the community/ Governance structure

#### Curation

- *Curation - Whatever we come up with has to be a mix of: aspirational, informative, inclusive, accessible and affordable to Stevenage people. It is precisely the curating, archiving and sharing of our local new town heritage, the memories and stories, that is worthy of national and international interest.*
- Co-curating – MK Museum make use of this, but as well as getting ideas from the public they are keen to give over areas of the museum for the public to take on for a time to fill the space – this sounded like a very positive move that Stevenage Museum should look to investigate
- Arts Programme at MK – varied. Initially feedback was that the 3 main collections were too cutting-edge, following extensive public engagement have a more varied programme. Charge for the main exhibitions (£9.50 for adults - if it's free people don't value it – Free Tuesday for MK residents) and free access to café/shop and other non-exhibition areas of the building. – (Charging point discussion)
- *"I think it would be an asset to have a comparable film of Stevenage showing in the new Hub."*
- Having a unique selling point/exhibition (outside of the New Towns story) could be worth considering – e.g. Mars Rover Space Exploration

#### Possible Recommendation:

Stevenage Museum's curation should continue to be led by the expertise of the Museum Curator and engage with local residents through co-curation projects to provide a mix of: aspirational, informative, inclusive, accessible and affordable museum and arts offers to Stevenage people.

As well as a New Towns focus consideration should be given to having a unique selling point/exhibition, outside of the New Towns story, so could be worth considering – e.g. Mars Rover Space Exploration.

## Community Engagement

- *Community engagement - The museum fully embraces the beautiful diversity of Colchester. The inclusivity and diversity attract the community to get involved and contribute to the shows and event. The ideas are being drawn from the community of what they want for the museum. They have events for NHS and key workers, refugee action, religious group, people with disability and private groups.*
- *sense of pride and ownership of the museum from the community*
- *Engaged with the community about what they wanted – Important*

### **Possible Recommendation:**

It is important that whatever is offered at the Museum or any public art that is provided within the Hub that it is accessible to the whole of the community, so engagement with all members of the local diverse community should happen to see what would they like to have included.

## Management/Governance Structure

- *Management structure - That requires a Stevenage specific partnership approach between SBC as programme lead and arch facilitator, and arts and heritage voluntary and community groups.*
- *Governance structure - The Chair, Cllr Sarah Mead having heard the feedback from Members and the input from John Mead and Jo Ward stated that the success of future bids will depend on the autonomy of the Heritage Centre. The Chair has suggested that the answer to this could be an Arts Board made up of stakeholders similar to the model of The Town Centre board? In this way SBC would still be a major player but the independent voice of the board would assure investors that independent voices are given equal voice? To this end an Arts and Heritage Board on the lines of the Town Centre Board with a mix of stakeholders could be supported by panels of people who are independent and have specialist arts and heritage expertise from Stevenage, Herts and/or Eastern Region. These could be project or programme specific.*
- *Governance Structure - The museum being its own distinct identity, supported by the Council, needed looking at in detail, as it appears that the museum has had funding bids fail due a lack of independence*
- *Solely reliant on volunteers. Only a few members of staff on the payroll – Yes good to have volunteers but not as dependent as MK Museum*

### **Possible Recommendation:**

That serious consideration is given by the Executive to the New Towns Heritage Centre's governance arrangements, setting up an independent Arts Board to provide autonomy for the Heritage Centre made up of a mix of stakeholders, similar to the model with the Town Centre Board, an Arts Board could be supported by a panel of people who are independent of the Council and have a specialist arts and heritage expertise from Stevenage, Herts and/or the Eastern Region.

## **Museum without walls – Use of technology virtual museum and QR codes around the town**

- SBC should be thinking of the concept of “Museums without walls”

Narrative – & Recommendation – Stevenage should aspire to examples - Bristol Know Your Place / historyPin.co.uk / Coventry digital – This shows old maps overlaid over new maps and has various tabs and icons that when clicked on reveal local history of the place, who lived there (Blue Plaque), conservation areas, local authority planning history, audio archive of oral history, photos which the public can add their own records to so it democracies the process.

- A dedicated website for the Museum is vital
- The Chair stated that the walks/QR codes idea was excellent and officers should consider getting this started ahead of the outcome of the Towns Deal bid process to show the intent of the Council.
- Separate funding bid for website software - Jo Ward, Stevenage Museum Curator stated that duplication of effort was a danger as many websites overlap their offer. The cost of the software was in the region of £8.5k, the Chair stated that a possible route to this could be in part bids to Members Local Community Budgets (LCBs), and suggested that Jo contact Paula Mills to enquire about the details. Other routes could be approaching large companies based in Stevenage to see if they can support this heritage project.
- Digital collections via a web portal - Jo Ward stated that she was interested in the examples provided by John Mead to pull together digital collections via a web portal where people can access all they need for social history in one place
- The pandemic showed that people want to access info and some experiences online
- Only 10% of a museum's physical collection can be seen at a time
- There are reasons why you might want to not handle documents physically due to their fragile nature

#### Possible Recommendation:

That the Executive consider, as well as a physical New Towns Heritage Centre as part of the new Civic Hub building in the regenerated Town Centre, pursuing the concept of "Museums without walls". This should include providing funding from the Towns Deal fund or Members Local Community Budgets (LCB) towards a dedicated website for the Museum that is independent of the Council's website. It was quoted that this would cost in the region of £8.5k. This initiative could be pursued in parallel to the main Towns Deal bid/New Towns Heritage Centre, and would incorporate QR codes around the town. The "Museum without walls" concept would include a strong web presence similar to the examples shown at Bristol Know Your Place, which included digital collections via a web portal and was very interactive for users.

#### Building – design features – use of technology in the building

- *Design features - The wall dividers that can make the room smaller or bigger according to the needs.*
- *Environmental and Energy saving - It's expensive to run with the cost of energy bills due to materials used (lighting and others ) and lack of Solar Panel. This is something that was significantly highlighted for us to think and plan well.*
- *Design features - keen on the touch screen information that were in use at Colchester Castle Museum*

Design features –

- *The Museum space would have to be agreed in advance with the permanent exhibit areas well thought through so that the Museum doesn't get crowded out by other uses*
- *Having a mixed use/flexible building is very useful so moveable internal walls would be very favourable*
- *Had QR codes to give information of the gallery viewing you were entering. The gallery had tablets on the wall to give further information and to provide interactivity.*

Milton Keynes:

- *Gallery in city centre but in my opinion not well advertised around the shopping mall where it was next to - \*Signage and visual clues to where the building is and what's in it will be important*
- Design features - Cinema – Both sites visited at Colchester and Milton Keynes had a cinema which provided a great Arts asset and way of making income. Both have a contract with Curzon for the cinema – varied programme including family orientated programme as well as art house. If possible would be a very good feature for Hub/New Town's Heritage Centre as this makes money and pays for other activities.
- Design features – Environmental Carbon Neutral Building
- Key feature of the new build part of the Museum will be use of digital images – see below:



- **MUST HAVE A CAFÉ**

**Possible Recommendation:**

That the Executive consider as part of the New Towns Heritage Centre 21<sup>st</sup> Century design features. The building should have the highest possible environmental credentials and be a carbon neutral building and incorporate the use of technology in the building. The building should incorporate:

- Have a mixed use/flexible building with wall dividers that can make the room smaller or bigger according to the needs
- Provide touch screen information points
- Provide digital images as visitors walk through different spaces
- The Museum space should be agreed in advance with the permanent exhibit areas well thought through so that the Museum doesn't get crowded out by other uses
- A small seated cinema would be very desirable feature as a draw for visitors as well as an income stream. Members are aware that this would be an expensive capital outlay but could be a major asset in the future

- Lessons from the sites visited showed the value of having an on-site Café as a place for people to visit and provide a positive user experience

### Commercial activity/Funding/Cost point for entry

- Cost Entry Fee - free entry museum to encourage everyone to visit but there's a bank card tap station for donations. contactless payment/donation points
- Commercial activity - events, theatre (livestream) and other activities that raised money
- Commercial activity - There should be places in the building for commercial activity with a profit share with the Council. This could include small start-up linked businesses to provide spaces to sell their services such as on site catering etc. and spaces for new/young artists to display their work and sell it
- Hiring out of the building at specific times could be an option for extra income if it is seen as being a desirable space for events etc. so the design/architecture needs to be very attractive as well as environmentally friendly- (make this a selling point)
- Should run at least at break-even "wash its face" and not rely on a large subsidy such as Firstsite has

Narrative - The Community use of the building and engagement with content and activities was very good but the core activities/financial offer needs to be as secure as possible to make this possible

- Funding - go directly to the big companies, and major developers, under their corporate social responsibility agendas for grants and sponsorship
- Commercial activity - careful consideration of the future revenue funding options, some of this could come from commercial activity as well as private hire events and functions but she favoured the core offer to remain free with community activities supported and the option to seek support from the business community should be a recommendation to be pursued.
- **MUST HAVE A CAFÉ**
- Narrative - What we need is a successful Museum that provides a gallery, business incubator, cinema and café that enables us to tell the story of Stevenage.

### Possible Recommendation:

That the Executive consider the possible Commercial activities associated with the New Towns Heritage Centre. During the site visits Members were taken with the crucial role that various commercial activities can do to support the users of the building: This could include:

- Irrespective of the whether free or not for entry, contactless payment/donation points for bank card use should be provided at various points around the building
- events, theatre (livestream) and other activities that raised money for other non – commercial activities in the Heritage Centre

- There should be places in the building for commercial activity with a profit share with the Council. This could include small start-up linked businesses to provide spaces to sell their services such as on site catering etc. and spaces for new/young artists to display their work and sell it
- Hiring out of the building at specific times could be an option for extra income
- Officers supported by Members should go directly to the big companies, and major developers, under their corporate social responsibility agendas for grants and sponsorship
- There should definitely be a Café that either run in-house to provide income for the building or is run under licence by a tenant to bring in income
- Having a unique selling point/exhibition (outside of the New Towns story) could be worth considering – e.g. Mars Rover Space Exploration

### **Developing a hub and spoke approach for arts & historical heritage across the town**

- *Hub and Spoke - We should maybe adopt a hub and spokes model that makes best use of our CNM and Play Services infrastructure, i.e. in our neighbourhoods, as well as the few remaining historic structures like Fairlands Valley Farmhouse, even Rooks Nest (E.M. Forster)*

### **Possible Recommendation:**

That the Executive consider continuing a hub and spoke model which makes best use of our CNM and Play Services infrastructure, i.e. in our neighbourhoods which would support the main hub core offer at the New Towns Heritage Centre.