

# Public Document Pack



## COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE

**Date: Tuesday, 2 October 2018**

**Time: 6.00pm,**

**Location: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete**

**Contact: Lisa Jerome**

Members: Councillors: S Mead (Chair), A Mitchell CC (Vice-Chair), S Barr, J Brown, L Harrington, R Hearn, J Mead, S-J Potter, S Speller and T Wren

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## AGENDA

### PART 1

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

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Community Select Committee held on 4 September 2018.

Pages 3 – 6

**3. DAMP AND MOULD SCRUTINY REVIEW**

To consider the Executive Member response to the Damp, Mould and Condensation Scrutiny Review.

Pages 7 – 28

**4. RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW**

Members are invited to interview the Digital Transformation Manager regarding the steps the Council is taking to make its services accessible via digital platforms and how residents will be able to interact with the Council in the future. Members are also invited to provide some feedback to the Committee on the areas that they have agreed to lead on and on the Resident meetings they have attended.

**5. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

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

**6. 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.

**7. URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

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

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

## COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 4 September 2018

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

**Present:** **Councillors:** Sarah Mead (Chair), Adam Mitchell CC (Vice-Chair), Sandra Barr, Jim Brown, Liz Harrington, Roni Hearn, John Mead, Sarah-Jane Potter and Simon Speller

**In attendance:** Councillor Rob Broom (Executive Portfolio Holder – Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Working)

**Start / End Time:** Start Time: 6.00pm  
End Time: 7.45pm

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

Apologies were received from Councillor T Wren.

There were no declarations of interest.

### 2 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Minutes of the Community Select Committee (CSC) meeting held on 4 July 2018 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to amending all references of "Fairland Valley" in Item 5 to "Fairlands Valley".
2. That the Minutes of the Community Select Committee (CSC) meeting held on 12 July 2018 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 3 **RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW - PRESENTATION**

The Chair welcomed Rachel Eden (Holy Brook Associates) who had been engaged to support the Community Engagement review. Rachel provided the Committee with a report and presentation outlining the Council's the current community engagement approach and recommended steps to improve community engagement activity. The report for the period up to March 2018 followed a review and analysis of community engagement across Stevenage. Rachel felt that the Council already took community engagement seriously and some teams demonstrated a mature understanding of the importance of the topic.

Case studies included in the research revealed that there were good relationships between residents and officers. However, there were notable barriers to maximising

the benefits of communication and engagement with the community. These included the need to improve digital access channels to enable online sharing and tools / measures to evidence the progress of communication and how engagement made a difference. It was observed that there was occasionally a lack of pace in community engagement and the Council could be reactive rather than proactive on some projects.

The report highlighted that it should be standard practice to consider community engagement requirements and benefits with regards to relevant policies and developments and that stakeholders should be asked to contribute when drafting engagement plans. Members, residents and officers should be encouraged to explore community engagement options and build relationships with residents including those who live elsewhere but work in the Borough.

The consultant recommended that the Council:

- Creates a community engagement toolkit that included case studies, contacts, checklists and templates
- Integrates communications planning into community engagement work
- Works to agree and implement a set of measures for effective engagement
- Expands the approach to people not currently involved in community engagement

The Executive Portfolio Holder (Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Working) informed Members that the Council is working hard to improve the information technology (IT) infrastructure. There were plans to provide a consultation platform on the SBC website and to make the website more user-friendly.

An informal poll of 53 residents that was carried out by the Chair revealed the following:

- The majority of those polled contact the Council by telephone
- The Council website and Comet were the main sources of information for the respondents
- None of the young respondents were aware that the Chronicle was a Council publication
- The respondents contacted the Council primarily about refuse collection, parking, shops and town centre regeneration

It was acknowledged that due to the community engagement methodologies used, the views of a significant number of the Borough's demographics were excluded from the Stevenage residents' survey and Members' informal surveys. Members indicated that the Council appeared to be slow in embracing some of the new community engagement tools. Members felt there was a risk that residents perceive some consultations are designed to suit pre-determined Council objectives. It was noted that informal community engagement such as the use of social media and community events was beneficial to residents, Members and officers.

Members were asked by the Chair to highlight their key recommendations for consideration in relation to this review. Members recommended that:

1. The Council's information technology (IT) system be upgraded and the website be revamped
2. The Council provides micro-websites for Wards with details such as outstanding community actions
3. The Council commissions community-driven applications (apps) and social media tools such as Twitter surveys and increases the use of mobile devices
4. The Council considers digital engagement via touchscreens and other devices at Council offices and in the town centre
5. Members and officers improve face-to-face engagement with residents and manage expectations of residents during community engagement work
6. The Council integrates communications planning into community engagement work for each business unit
7. The Council decentralises community engagement to individual business units and sub-units
8. Customer feedback method used by the Repairs & Voids team be rolled out to other Council services
9. The Council widens the base for consultations so as to reflect the demographics of the Borough
10. The Council puts in place measures to demonstrate the benefits and effectiveness of community engagement
11. Formal Council reports include community engagement as part of the criteria for sign off at officer and Member level
12. The Council increases the number of neighbourhood wardens to at least one per county council electoral division
13. The Council creates a community engagement toolkit to enable Members and officers to follow a standard approach to community engagement

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Stevenage Community Engagement Report is noted
2. The recommendations made by Members be included in the Executive Portfolio Holder response to the Community Engagement Review

#### 4 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

5 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Not required.

6 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

**CHAIR**

Executive Member Response To Damp, Mould & Condensation Scrutiny Review

**Date Recommendations agreed by Scrutiny Select Committee:**

Community Select Committee, Wednesday 11 January 2017  
(circulated Friday 13 January 2017)

**Date responses should be made by:**

Executive responses on behalf of the Executive Portfolio Holders for Housing, Health & Older People should be received by Friday 10 March 2017

**Recommendations:**

**Executive Response March 2017:**

**Executive update October 2018:**

1. That the Community Select Committee considers the findings of the review, contained within this report and the recommendations below be presented to the Portfolio Holder and the Strategic Director (Community) and that a

Agreed that the implementation of the strategy would be fed back to the CSC in Autumn 2017.  
  
Scrutiny Officer to advise of available dates for CSC from September 2017.

Following the appointment of the Housing Operations Manager early this year and the strengthened management support, a review has been undertaken of the previous recommendations and what progress has been made. An improvement and action plan

<p>response be provided from these and any other named officers and partners within two months of the publishing of this report. In addition, the Community Select Committee will consider an update report on the performance of the service following improved monitoring arrangements and delivery of the Damp and Condensation Strategy (which largely was instigated as result of the review investigation) in the autumn of 2017.</p> <p><b>Action: Matthew Partridge/Neil Wilson-Prior</b></p>		<p>(attached) has been developed that incorporates these recommendations, aspects and the outcomes of the Damp and Condensation strategy and further actions identified to ensure continued improvements. Initial priority has been given to dealing with the backlog cases and ensuring that the cause of the problem is dealt with.</p> <p>The plan continues to be updated and developed to ensure continued ongoing improvement.</p>
<p><b>2.</b> 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. This training to include moving away from the previous default position of citing tenants lifestyle as the primary cause of damp, mould and condensation in properties. Officers must demonstrate a sympathetic approach to tenants who report problems with damp and mould, following a corporate, agreed script. The Tenant Feedback Form should also be redesigned to include the issue of damp</p>	<p>This is an action in the damp and condensation strategy. A suitable training programme will be devised. Neil Wilson Prior will publish the training schedule. Neil has already given training to the customer scrutiny panel and had positive feedback.</p> <p>The first session of training will be delivered to HILT (Housing and Investment Leadership team). Training will then be rolled out to the teams by end of March 2017.</p> <p>As the housing management transformation programme is reviewing how we interact with our customers, pushing a more digital</p>	<p>General awareness training and briefings have been carried out to ensure that the Surveyors are fully aware of how they should conduct themselves in a sympathetic way when visiting our tenants. They are also tasked to take ownership of the enquiry and to ensure that they deal with the cause of damp and condensation.</p> <p>Experiences and lessons learnt are also discussed at the regular team meetings to ensure continued improvement.</p> <p>Some specific training and attendance at</p>



<p>and condensation/ mould.</p> <p><b>Action: Matthew Partridge/Neil Wilson-Prior</b></p>	<p>approach to service delivery the team will review whether capturing this information on a form is the best way to record this. The outcome of this will be fed back in Autumn 2017. In the short term a question will be added to the tenancy Audit form.</p>	<p>seminars have been carried out to help improve diagnosis and implementation of appropriate solutions and actions. Training and development needs of the team will be continually reviewed through discussions and during the 'REAL conversations' process</p> <p>During the initial visit the Surveyors will help and give advice to the customers / tenants on how they may be able to manage Condensation. If necessary the leaflet 'How to avoid Condensation and Mould in your home' is left with the tenant.</p>
<p><b>3.</b> 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 of damp and mould to help the authority to record the number of properties with damp and mould for accurate analysis. This data to then be recorded/classified for stock condition data.</p> <p><b>Action: Matthew Partridge/Neil Wilson-</b></p>	<p>As part of the "connecting with our customers" FTFC work stream we will work with colleagues around a customer portal that will enable customers to report damp and condensation (Time scales yet to be determined).</p> <p>We will be organising an event for customers to come along and meet with technical officers about their individual cases.</p> <p>We will use the rent charge notification – going out in the third week of February 2017 to advertise this and encourage customers to feedback to us. We will develop a form on the website that is easily found giving customers an idea about what information</p>	<p>Not all of the recommendations have been implemented and/or the proposed timescales met. Please see progress update above – item 1</p> <p>The council website is in place that includes guidelines on reporting damp and Mould.</p>

<p><b>Prior</b></p>	<p>we require from them so that we can capture this. This will be by the end of February</p>	
<p><b>4.</b> 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. Tenants who suffer from this problem need to know it's appropriate to highlight concerns (and expect that something will be done about it where possible) and they should also know what to expect with transparent procedures in place.</p> <p><b>Action: Matthew Partridge/Neil Wilson-Prior</b></p>	<p>No Housing matters events are currently planned, however if there is a need to run one this will be included.</p> <p>Information recorded through the actions identified above, may provide evidence that a larger event is required and if this is the case this will be organised. We intend to publish the damp and condensation strategy and presentation on line by the end of February.</p> <p>The strategy will be clear that officers and customers will be honest about how the situation has arisen to ensure that the appropriate remedial activity is specified. This will include the use of data loggers to see how properties are being used, and how the property is responding to this use.</p>	<p>Not all of the recommendations have been fully implemented and/or the proposed timescales met. Please see progress update above – item 1</p> <p>The council website includes guidelines on reporting and dealing with damp and Mould and FAQ's. Additional information is also available to download via a leaflet on 'how to avoid condensation and mould in your home'.</p> <p>Data loggers are available and being installed where the use of the property will assist with the resolving the issue / problem. The data logging process is rigorous and provides comprehensive information which is analysed on an individual case basis to formulate realistic proposals for possible solutions and improvements. This data will also highlights the environmental conditions and tenants lifestyle, providing us with a balanced view of the condition in the property.</p>
<p><b>5.</b> 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</p>	<p>Northgate will be used to monitor this.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this will be set up by end of January 2017 and will from part of the</p>	<p>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</p>

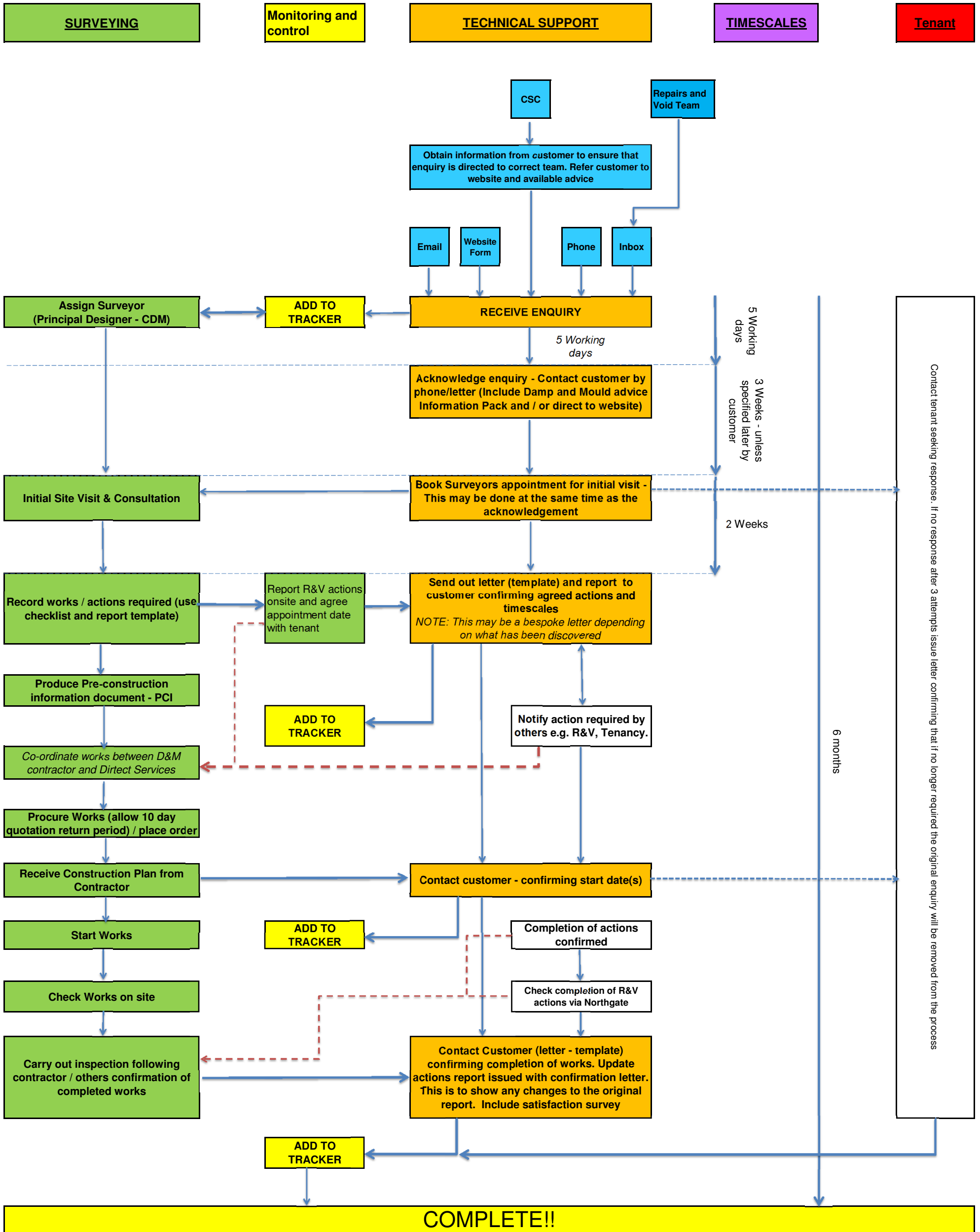
<p>these issues. An initial target of 3 weeks is set as the response time to carry out an initial inspection and a 6 month target period be set for resolution to the issue, subject to the complexity of the repair. There should also be a flagging mechanism in place for those repairs taking longer than 6 months.</p> <p><b>Action: Matthew Partridge/Neil Wilson-Prior</b></p>	<p>performance monitoring of the team, and individuals.</p>	<p>delivery process. This is currently monitored via the tracker and is flagged when these timescales are not met. This is monitored at the regular team meetings.</p> <p>The development of Northgate to capture this and other data relating to improving Damp and Mould monitoring and management arrangements needs to be carried out.</p>
<p><b>6.</b> 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> <p><b>Action: Matthew Partridge/Neil Wilson-Prior</b></p>	<p>This will be built into the flat block programme and the link to void properties will be picked up through the training programme.</p>	<p>The Major Refurbishment Contract (MRC) programme has commenced. The MRC and Damp and mould teams are working closely together learning from historic and new damp and mould cases that will inform the programme of works to the flat block and other properties. Feedback of information is ongoing.</p>
<p><b>7.</b> That officers record the problems and state the process of repair following the first visit and identify the cause rather</p>	<p>Agreed and built into the procedure.</p>	<p>Following every initial site visit the Surveyors record their findings and the actions required to rectify the cause of the problem. This</p>

<p>than the symptom to be addressed.</p> <p><b>Action: Matthew Partridge/Neil Wilson-Prior</b></p>		<p>includes identifying any actions the tenant may also be able to undertake to assist in resolving the problem and help reduce the conditions that will help minimise the conditions that may lead to damp and condensation. This data is included on the tracker. It is the intention that the data will be contained in a report format and will be issued to the tenant following the initial visit.</p>
<p><b>8.</b> That officers establish a tangible system of recording data which illustrates the priority/severity of each case.</p> <p><b>Action: Matthew Partridge/Neil Wilson-Prior</b></p>	<p>Links to the use of Northgate to identify the severity and priority. In place by the end of Jan.</p>	<p>The priority / severity of each case is established at the initial visit / inspection (within 3 weeks of the enquiry) and recorded on the “live tracker”. This is monitored at the weekly meetings to consider the actions and procurement options that are required to meet the priority rating. There is currently a 6 month target date set to resolve the enquiry / issue. We are looking to develop the priority classification to see if this target completion date is reduced depending on the priority rating.</p> <p>The development of Northgate to capture this and other data relating to improving Damp and Mould monitoring and management arrangements needs to be carried out.</p>

<p><b>9.</b> 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> <p><b>Action: Matthew Partridge/Neil Wilson-Prior</b></p>	<p>We will use the Northgate system to record complaints from customers cross referenced through the Yoursay records on complaints.</p> <p>Portfolio holder to meet AD on a regular basis to go through customer complaints.</p>	<p>All Damp, mould and condensation enquiries are entered onto a live Tracker and each enquiry is assigned a unique reference number, this is cross referenced to any complaint cases Yoursay ref number. This keeps track of all enquires and complaint's providing progress updates if requested from customers / tenants and minimising any duplication of enquiries.</p> <p>Further development of the Northgate system will follow to implement cross reference between systems</p>
<p><b>10.</b> 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> <p><b>Action: Matthew Partridge/Neil Wilson-Prior</b></p>	<p>The Independent medical adviser will be asked to comment on the impact of the living conditions for the tenant or a member of their household and will award medical priority as appropriate.</p>	<p>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 Allocations panel for review and consideration seeking the Independent medical advisors advise.</p> <p>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.</p>

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# DRAFT DAMP & MOULD DELIVERY PROCESS



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## Damp and Mould improvement and action plan 2018

### Community Select Committee recommendations (January 2017) and Executive Member responses (March 2017) - included in items 1-10

Ref	Issue	Recommendation	Action plan	Planned Timescales	Progress	action by
1	Consultation	Community Select Committee (CSC) recommendations (January 2017) to be presented to the Portfolio Holder and Strategic Director (community) for comment by March 2017.	Receive Executive responses on behalf of the Executive Portfolio Holders for Housing, Health and Older People. Responses are incorporated in the following action plan			
2	Staff engagement	All officers require sufficient knowledge on the causes and remedies relating damp and mould ensure appropriate responses are given to the tenants	A training programme shall be devised. Neil Wilson Prior will publish the training schedule. Training shall be rolled out by end of March 2017	Ongoing	Training of the original damp and mould team has been carried out. Training and awareness continues during the regular team meetings where experiences, knowledge solutions etc. are discussed and shared by the team. The introduction of REAL conversations with staff provides the opportunity to discuss damp and mould issues and challenges and training and improvement needs.	
			Training for new staff to be carried out as part of the induction and also consider wider awareness / training across Housing. Review training needs and prepare plan	Sep-18	Briefing of new staff is carried out that includes highlighting the actions contained in this improvement plan and the individuals responsibilities and actions necessary for this plan to be implemented. Training needs are identified during the REAL conversations process carried out during the year	AS

		<b>Officers must demonstrate a sympathetic approach to reported problems</b>	Develop and agree corporate script that officers can use during the initial contact / site visit. Highlight approach to be embedded in the team meetings	June - Aug 2018	Through initial training and review meetings carried out during the set up of the new team, all are now fully aware of how they should conduct themselves in a sympathetic way when visiting our tenants. This is further reviewed during team meetings and will be monitored through tenants satisfaction / feedback (to be set up) and complaints process. The corporate script is still to be developed.	AS
		Ensure that the Tenant Feedback includes issues surrounding damp and mould.	Consider the best way of capturing and recording this information as part of the Housing Management Transformation programme. (Outcome to be feed back to the CSC in the Autumn 2017 update). Look at the possibilities of capturing information through the Big Knock 2 and MRC contract customer satisfaction	Oct 2018 - Ongoing	The Autumn 2017 feedback was not carried out. This is still to be organised.	AS/Greta.G
		Briefing new starters	During the induction process	June - Oct 2018	Ongoing	HR/AS
3	Data gathering	Gather information from tenants on current and historic cases of Damp and Mould for analysis and recording the stock condition data	Develop the customer portal to enable customers to report damp and mould issues	Completed	Website page available for reporting damp and mould problems.	
			Further develop and refine Web page to ensure that it is kept up to date (incl GDPR)	June - Oct 2018	Ongoing	RO
			Organise an Annual (?) event inviting customers to come along and meet the technical officers to discuss their individual cases. Review ways to engage customers through other open days	Ongoing	Review required	Greta.G
			The rent charge notification will be used to encourage feedback (Commence third week in February 2017)		This has not been actioned	
			Develop a form for the website that will allow customers to easily provide this information - complete by the end of February	Completed	Website page available for reporting damp and mould problems. Also see item 3 above	

			Recording historic and current cases of damp and mould.	Ongoing	All historic and current damp and mould initial enquiry and compliant cases are captured on a tracker spreadsheet. This is a live documents that is constantly kept up to date.	MHo
			Use Northgate to capture damp and mould for recording data	01/07/2018 Dec2018	Northgate is currently used to record details of damp and mould and associated repair works orders. Following an initial review Northgate system will require software development and upgrades if other Damp and mould data is to be recorded. Further investigation required.	MHo
4	Communication	Publish how tenants can mitigate the effects of damp and mould in their properties and made aware of the procedures that are in place	The damp and condensation strategy will be published by the end of February 2017		Outcomes of the strategy incorporated in this action plan	
			Review Draft strategy to ensure that is current and up to date	01/08/2018 Jan 19	To be carried out. Also consider review of policies / procedures	AS/AC
			Produce transparent procedures	Jun-18	Process map produced - see attached	AS/RO
			Use of data loggers to review lifestyles and how properties are used.	Ongoing	Data loggers are currently being deployed on a case by case basis	KO.MHa.R O
			Produce new education and literature package for tenants	Completed	Website includes pamphlet "how to avoid condensation and mould in your home" This information is also issued to tenants when an enquiry is received ( site visit and initial letter).	
			Develop website to allow presentation of strategy guidance and online reporting	Completed	Online reporting of damp and mould issues is in place and included on the councils website	

	Sharing of findings and action plans with the tenants. Ensure that problems are recorded and the process of repair is confirmed at the initial / first visit this identifies the cause rather than the symptom	To be included in the newly refined procedures	Oct-18	In line with the new procedures/process map (see attached), tenants will be issued with a letter outlining the findings and what actions the council will be carrying out, and what the tenants can carry out to assist in reducing the conditions that can lead to condensation . It is proposed that this will be included in a standard formatted letter issued to the tenant following the initial visit. Notifying tenants has commenced but his now needs to be cemented in line with the process. Review of the existing resources is now required to ensure that this is sufficient ensuring that the process can be fully implemented.	RO / Mho
	Initial site visit shall also include a consultation session with the resident	To be included in the newly refined procedures	Ongoing	Surveyors consult with the tenants wherever possible explaining the cause and solutions proposed. If necessary and the tenant is not aware the "how to avoid condensation and mould in your home" pamphlet is left with the tenant.	KO.MHa.R O
		Currently carried out. Review to ensure that there is a consistent approach	Nov-18	Review success of the consultation.	RO
	Inform all residents that are known to be in "Back Log"	Write to tenants informing them that they will be seen (giving timescales) but to inform us if the issues are still present	Jun-18	Surveyor dedicated to deal with the Back log Cases and has now contacted all tenants (with exception of 23 requiring a visit)	MHo / Mha
	Produce procedure for dealing with back log	In addition to notifying backlog tenants the standard procedure will then apply	Jun-18		
	Dealing with lack of response from tenants to book appointment and/ or allowing access to carry out initial inspection	Leave call back card / letter. If no response after 2 attempts write to the tenant enquiry of status of the original enquiry and the lack of response will mean the need to close the original enquiry	Nov - Dec 18	Card / letter issued, however there is now a backlog to chase. Review resources required to administer this process	AS/RO
4A	Informing new tenants	Include damp and mould literature in new tenants introduction packages	Sep-18	This is now included in all future new tenants packs	Tenancy

5	Timescales	An agreed timeframe shall be put in place for responding to reports of damp and mould. 3 weeks for the initial inspection and 6 moth target for the resolution of the issue	This will be included in the procedures and identified on the project tracker	In Place	Tracker updated to include timescales and target dates	Mho
			Flagging mechanism shall be put in place	In Place	The tracker identifies if these target dates are not met. These cases are reviewed at the team meetings	Mho
6	Resources	Appropriate levels of resources are allocated to invest in repairs to alleviate cases of damp and mould	Adequate budget to be included in the HRA.	Ongoing / Dec 2018	In an effort to try and resolve the cause of the problem first time we have identified that there has been an increase in the number of cases requiring more comprehensive improvements to resolve complex and significant issues putting pressure on the budget. This needs to be reviewed to assess the proposed budget required to deal with these issued and to be monitored ongoing	AC/RO
			Adequate staff resources required to deliver the agreed process	Nov-18	Review the staff required to ensure that the is sufficient level of management resource to implement and drive the actions outlined and deliver continued improvements. Also to ensure sufficient adequate and support staff	AS
		Blocks that are known to suffer form defects shall be specifically identified and worked on	This will be picked up during the Major refurbishment contract (MRC) This is being factored in when advising tenants of the programmed works that will be carried out to alleviate the problem.	Ongoing	Discussions between the MRC and D&M Teams are ongoing	All. MK

7	Procedures	Problems are recorded stating the process of repair following the first visit. Dealing with the cause rather than the symptom	To be incorporated in the process/procedure		Following every initial site visit the Surveyors record their findings and the actions required to rectify the cause of the problem. This includes identifying any actions the tenant may also be able to undertake to assist in resolving the problem and help reduce the conditions that will help minimise the conditions that may lead to damp and condensation. This data is included on the tracker. It is the intention that the data will be contained in a report format and will be issued to the tenant following the initial visit.	
8	Priority / severity classification	Establish a tangible system identifying the severity of each case and therefore the priority of the response		Completed	The priority / severity of each case is established at the initial visit / inspection (within 3 weeks of the enquiry) and recorded on the "live tracker". This is monitored at the weekly meetings to consider the actions and procurement options that are required to meet the priority rating. There is currently a 6 month target date set to resolve the enquiry / issue.	Surveyors
			Appropriate timescales linked to the priority / severity of the case	Nov-18	We are looking to develop the priority classification to see if this target completion date can be reduced depending on the priority rating.	AS
			Links in with Northgate To be in place by end of January 2017?	Mar-19	The development of Northgate to capture this and other data relating to improving Damp and Mould monitoring and management arrangements needs to be carried out.	AS/Mho
			Link with initial enquiry	Dec-18	Consider whether severity / priority can be established at first point of enquiry at CSC. Review script	AS

9	Referencing	Each compliant shall have a unique number referencing system to avoid follow up complaints being logged and to avoid repeat explanation of the case / issue	To include on the Tracker	Completed	All Damp, mould and condensation enquiries are entered onto a live Tracker and each enquiry is assigned a unique reference number, this is cross referenced to any complaint cases Yoursay ref number. This keeps track of all enquires and complaint's providing progress updates if requested from customers / tenants and minimising any duplication of enquiries.	Mho / BO're
			Northgate developed to record the complaint and cross referenced through Yoursay	Mar-19	The development of Northgate to capture this and other data relating to improving Damp and Mould monitoring and management arrangements needs to be carried out.	AS / Mho
			Portfolio Holder and AD to meet on a regular basis to go through customer complaints.	Ongoing		
10	Health and safety	Recognition of the impact damp and mould may have on people with respiratory conditions particularly the young and the elderly.	To be considered as part of the planned forthcoming Housing Allocation Policy review (Requested relocation by the tenant - damp cause will still require resolving)	Ongoing	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 be differ for high priority cases.	Tenancy
			Independent medical advisor will be asked to comment and will advise setting the priority of the case	Mar-19	Investigate how Medical advisor can be put in place	AS
11	Relying on a limited number of suitable contractors able to undertake the volume of work, causing delays in completing works leading to customer dissatisfaction. Currently a small list of local contractors quoting for works now at risk of contravening Contract standing orders due to the aggregated amount of orders placed.	Seek suitable additional competent contractors	Procure a new framework agreement (local ) to undertake repair works for damp and mould. This can also be extended to other housing repairs for example Aids and Adaptation. Check if existing frameworks already exist (Scape)	Jan-19	Initial discussions held with Framework provider to deliver repairs and maintenance work. Discussion to be held with R&V team to consider their ability / capacity to carry out this type of work in the future.	AS/AC
			Use existing compliance contract to deliver repairs.	Completed	This was implemented but unfortunately the contractor did not perform as expected. This work was assigned to an alternative contractor(s)	

			Identify competent local contractors from the "constructionline" list	01/06/2018 - ongoing	Contractors identified from list. Additional contractors now appointed and carrying out works, however capacity still an issue to deliver the volume of work. Ongoing investigations to seek new suitable contractors	AS/AC
12	Improving contractor performance	Seek suitable additional competent contractors	As above		As above	
		Provide the contractor with clear instructions and the requirements necessary for delivering the works	Issue contractor with appropriately detailed specification (at tender and / order stage) outlining the requirements for the works, including timescales. Ensure that the contractor issues a "construction phase plan" before commencing works on site	01/06/2018 - Nov 18	This is partially in place requiring full implementation asap	RO
			Instruct contractor to notify D&M team when timescales have been agreed with the Customer	Jun-18	This is partially in place requiring full implementation asap. Weekly progress updates requested from Contractors.	KO/Mha/RO
			Produce Contractors protocol for dealing with Customers	Jan-19	To be included in the new framework contract	AS/AC
		Ensure contractor is provided with access to carry out work	Review process for dealing with tenant not providing access following confirm appointment	Jan-19	To be reviewed	AS/AC
13	Monitoring progress - Tracker not being kept up to date	Ensure that the tracker is up to date reflecting current process	Refine the tracker to include current process for both backlog and new enquiries, and assign officer to take ownership for the management and ensure this is updated	Completed	Additional resource Technical support officer now in place, and tracker operational	MHo
14	Dealing with Backlog enquiries	Currently approximately 750 backlog of enquires - 550 are live cases at various stage of completion and 175 cases dating back to 25th January 2018 that have not received any response / initial visit requiring urgent attention	Review current backlog list and write to all tenants explaining current situation and target date when they will be seen. Enquire whether the problem still exists	Jul-18	One Surveyor assigned to visit / contact all back log cases, this is now completed.	Mho
			Additional resource required to assist with current backlog		Commencing 29/5/18	RO
			Identify reason for the enquiry and refer to R&V as necessary. Meet with R&V to discuss	Aug-18	Initial meeting held 23/5/18. Good close working relationship with R&V resulting in improved resolution of enquiries and coordination relating to damp and mould and repair works	D&M, R&V



			Based on resolving 10-15 cases per week this will take 4 months to resolve	Completed	Surveyor (Mike) currently dealing with the backlog cases. Additional support required to reduce the backlog quicker?	MH, RO
15	Dealing with large number of complaints	Identify source of the complaints to target these areas with a view on reducing the number received	Check records identifying any similar complaints. Then review process to try and reduce reason for the compliant	Jul-18		MHo/Ro
			Refer compliant to R&V if solely disrepair. This is to be agreed with R&V	Aug-18	Agreed, complaints received that require R&V input is referred directly to R&V to resolve	AS
			Involve R&V if damp and mould is a consequence of a disrepair	Aug-18	Meeting held with R&V 23/5/18. Complaints that refer to damp and mould and are as a consequence of a disrepair are forwarded to R&V	
		Ensure that complaints are dealt with comprehensively at the earliest stages and within the timescales	Ensure that the tracker is up to date and information from Northgate is available	Ongoing		MHo
			Officer to be assigned and take ownership of the complaint . Currently covered by Principal Building Surveyor until permanent Officer identified to take on this role	Nov-18	Additional resource appointed commenced 29/5/18. However this is being reviewed to ensure that the level of management required to deal with complaints is in place. Currently now covered by the Principal Building Surveyor	AS/AC/
			Review to ascertain the main causes of the complaints received. The team responsible for the main cause of the compliant shall take ownership . Where necessary forward onto the responsible person / department to respond giving any details relating to D&M. Inform yoursay and the customer?	Sep-18	Appropriate team to deal with a take responsibility for the complaint.	AS/AC/RO/ Mho
16	Dealing with new enquiries	New Enquiries shall be dealt in accordance with the agreed processes, meeting the agreed timescales	Officer to be assigned	Ongoing	The new process was implemented in May 18 and all new enquiries assigned to one of the Surveyors ( currently on long term sickness) now temporarily assigned to the Senior Surveyor	KO
			Identify reason for the enquiry and refer to R&V as necessary.		In place	
			Respond to initial enquiry within 3 weeks	In Place - Ongoing	In place and timescales achieved.	Mho

			Discuss with CSC the possibility of providing initial advice on damp and mould (Booklet) and to call back if problem persists. At this point this will become a formal enquiry	Jun-18	New script developed with CSC and currently in place	AC, RO, Mho
			Produce checklist / report to ensure all information is collected at the initial site visit and confirmed with the customer.	01/08/2018 - Nov 18		RO
			Produce new process flow chart	Jun-18	Completed. Ongoing refinement as required	AS
		CSC Informing customers and directing enquiries to the correct team(s)	Work with CSC developing a script and obtaining important key information from customers to help deal with the enquiry. R&V involved in the discussions		Meeting held with CSC 1/6/18 and new script is in place	Mho/AC/AS
		R&V involvement	Damp and Mould surveyor initial visit identifies work required by R&V. Where works are solely R&V then ownership passes to R&V to manage and complete works		This is in place and working well. Regular update meetings held between R&V and D&M	RO
		Repeat enquiries from tenants for similar and reoccurring problems (e.g. cleaning mould)	Identify and focus on dealing with the cause and not just the symptom.	Jul-18	There is now a focus to deal with the cause of the problem and not just the symptom.	All
17	Customer communication	Ensure the customers are kept informed during the process	Follow the new process. communication and response to the customer now introduced at stages - a) receipt of enquiry b) identifying action taken following initial visit - c) confirming start date - d) at completion	Dec-18	Trail process now in place. Formal communication via letter etc. to be implemented asap, subject to review of the resources required to undertake this part of the process	
			Provide report to the tenant confirming the works / actions that will be carried out. This will be issued with the second letter (to be produced)	Dec-18	Report framework in place and applied to all new cases. Formal template to be developed for issuing to customer / tenant - see above	RO
			Customer kept up to date with timescales either via stage letters, email or telephone. New process to be implemented	Dec-18	Part of the new process, - Wherever possible tenants are advised of timescales, issuing stage letters to be fully implemented - see above	AS,Mho
18	Close working with R&V	Close working relationship required between D&M and R&V teams	Meeting arranged		Meeting held with R&V team on 23/5/18. Ongoing regular meetings are now in place	AS

		Many of the damp problems are the result of outstanding repairs. Many occasions the repair is not reported until damp and mould occurs	Proposal that R&V carry out the making good (resulting damp) following a repair, for example repair damaged/damp ceiling that was the result of a roof leak.	Aug-18	Agreed with R&V.	AS
			Enquires / complaints received that include repair items shall be referred to R&V for action	Jun-18	Agreed and now in place	AS
19	Managing cases	Assigned surveyor shall take responsibility for the works from inception to completion	Provide details to the technical support officer so appointments can be made and project details are recorded		In Place	Mho, KO,Mha,RO
			Surveyor shall record the works agreed with the tenant. Produce report template	01/06/2018 - Dec 18	Use of formal report template to be implemented	AC/Mho, RO
			Surveyor shall ensure that the customer has been made aware of the start and finish dates . In the majority of cases the start dates are arranged between the contractor and customer. The Surveyor must ensure that this essential information is re-laid back to the D&M team (Technical support) .	01/07/2018 Dec 18	Further investigation required that this is working and fully in place	RO
			Surveyor to check works on site and at completion. This is currently limited due to the high level of resources required to carry out checks on all properties. A 10% audit check plus any works requiring special attention will be carried out.	Dec-18	The target is all works are checked on site and at completion.	Surv. Mho
			Send letter to customer at completion of the works including satisfaction survey (Produce satisfaction form)	01/08/2018 Dec 18	Trial process now in place. Formal communication via letter etc. to be implemented asap, subject to review of the resources required to undertake this part of the process	RO
		Damp and Mould staff briefings	Arrange during regular project team meetings	Ongoing	Regular weekly meetings are now in place	All
		Obtaining property repair history / inspections	Gather data from Northgate and R&V	Ongoing	This is carried out	Mho

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## Connected to Our Customers – Digital transformation and community engagement briefing 02/10/18

### **New website**

Our new mobile responsive website procurement process has now concluded and we appointed Zengenti on the 28<sup>th</sup> September;

The new website will focus on better customer journeys and include more self-service and self-assessment options. This will take the pressure off our Customer Service Centre (CSC) so we can spend more time with customers who need our extra help.

Councillor Rob Broom has organised a member engagement group to be involved every step of the way of the web development project. Our first meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> October will focus on design and our website testing and engagement strategy.

HCC have offered to run a user research workshop for us - setting us up with the same tools they recently used for the launch of their website – this would enable us to involve up to 500 volunteers (staff, customers and members) testing the website remotely.

We also plan to run some face-to-face user testing sessions.

At the end of Q3 we will be running some assisted digital workshops for our CSC so they are equipped to support our 'less digitally confident' customers better.

We will also support our community engagement team to promote 'internet clubs' see attached guidance. We will also work closely with our housing team and other services to identify where we can promote digital assisted support and improve digital inclusion in our communities.

We plan to have a live new website in June 2019.

### **Consultation portal**

We will also have a consultation portal in the new website and we hope to scope this in October. Please feedback your requirements to me as soon as possible. HCC who use the same web provider have developed the below solution that we could replicate quite efficiently:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/Consultations>

Consultations | Hertfordsh x

https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/About-the-council/

Home Our services About the council

Hertfordshire Search... Hertfordshire County Council

About the council Consultations

## Consultations

We want to know what you think about the issues that matter to you.

We run consultations on a wide range of new ideas, proposals and reviews so that you can have your say on the decisions that we make.

Sometimes consultations will take the form of face to face conversations, focus groups, invitation only or are publicly available to anyone to have their say.

We aim to follow up and publish a response to each consultation that summarises the wider views of the public and the decisions that they inform.

### Help to shape our services

We're looking for volunteers to join our:

[Citizen's Panel](#) - give your views on local issues and council services. You'll help to influence council decisions and matters that affect you.

[Website testing panel](#) - see early versions of council web pages and services. We'll use what you say to make improvements.

### Open consultations

[ACS Information and Advice Strategy 2018-2021](#) >

We welcome your views on the ACS Information and Advice Strategy 2018-2021

[Baldock Station, Baldock, proposal to install pedestrian Crossing](#) >

We welcome your views on the proposal to develop pedestrian facilities at Baldock Station, Baldock.

[Draft Hertfordshire Cybercrime Strategy Consultation](#) >

We invite your views on our Cybercrime Strategy

[Hertfordshire's Learning Disability Strategy 2019 – 2024](#) >

We are proposing how we can make things better for adults with learning disabilities in Hertfordshire.

[Permanent expansion of St Peter's Primary School, Cottonmill Lane, St Albans Consultation](#) >

We invite your views on the permanent expansion of St Peter's Primary School as part of the Primary School Expansion Programme

### Closed consultations

- Adult social services
- Children's services
- Our budget
- Environmental

## **Digital Platform**

Whilst the above developments are very much customer facing we will also be doing a lot of work behind the scenes in the next 18 months and beyond. The tool our CSC uses to log and track customer enquiries and requests (CRM) will not be a secure supported system in 2020, so we are replacing it next year. This is a great opportunity for us to review all our processes and make sure we're working in the most efficient way with our new system. This will not only generate efficiencies in CSC but will also identify where we can easily bring more customer contact into the CSC from our back-office services.

At the end of next year we plan to have a customer account linked to our new CRM where customers can access all their SBC accounts with a single sign on.

Our Environmental Service Team will also be implementing a new back-office system next year; this will connect people delivering services in the community who will then be able to respond in 'real time' to customer requests. One of the advantages of this new technology is that it will enable better management of waste collection routes using 'in-cab' technology. For example, a customer will go to the website to report a missed bin and in 'real time' they will be told if their round has been collected or is delayed, minimising unnecessary reports. If there is a genuine missed collection it will generate a recollection request to the nearest vehicle.

We plan to involve customers and members in testing and evaluation at regular stages during all these new developments.

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# Are some people in your community being left behind in the internet revolution? Could you set up and run an internet club?

Increasingly as technology moves forward fast, some people are being left behind. They may not own or have access to any internet connected devices, or they may have difficulty learning how to use them. It may be that they would just like someone else to perform some task for them every month or so. A community Internet Club can help those who are currently excluded from on-line activities either by helping them to learn to use the devices, or by carrying out internet tasks for them.

## Benefits:

- Accessing information and services which are increasingly online-only
- Keeping in touch with family especially if they live far away
- Ordering and having shopping delivered at home
- Benefiting from online discounts
- Online banking
- Ordering prescriptions
- Connecting with and shaping the local community e.g. example, responding to online consultations, local news, email groups
- Finding and keeping in touch with people who share your hobbies
- Sharing experiences

**How it works:** In a welcoming environment the emphasis is on social interaction and increasing confidence with peer support. Operating on a drop-in basis members bring their own device or borrow one to try.

**What you need:** A room (hired or otherwise), use of Wifi, people with confidence and patience to advise (only basic IT skills needed). A printer and a couple of devices, which members may use or try are useful to have. Any expenses can be met for equipment hire by requesting a small (e.g. £2) donation.

## Useful links:

<https://www.learnmyway.com/>

<https://www.digitalunite.com/what-we-do/local-authorities>

<https://www.barclays.co.uk/digital-confidence/eagles/>

<http://www.argos.co.uk/getconnected>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/digital-inclusion-strategy-helping-everyone-to-get-online>

<https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/>

<https://hodigital.blog.gov.uk/2017/09/29/researching-and-designing-assisted-digital-services-for-ukvi/>

<https://www.thetechpartnership.com/news/get-digital-heatmap-highlights-digital-exclusion-across-the-uk/>

<https://www.onlinecentresnetwork.org/>

Please contact us at Stevenage Borough Council if you want some help and advice:  
Hannah Brunt, Digital Transformation Manager  
E: [hannah.brunt@stevenage.gov.uk](mailto:hannah.brunt@stevenage.gov.uk), T: 01438 24 2509

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