



## COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE

**Date: Tuesday, 16 September 2025**

**Time: 6.00pm**

**Location: Council Chamber**

**Contact: Gemma O'Donnell (01438) 242216**

**committees@stevenage.gov.uk**

Members: Councillors: E Plater (Chair), J Ashley-Wren (Vice-Chair), L Brady, K Choudhury, A Elekolusi, L Guy, M Humberstone, S Mead, C Veres and P Wilkins

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### AGENDA

#### **PART 1**

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

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - THURSDAY 3 JULY 2025**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Community Select Committee held on Thursday 3 July 2025.

3 – 8

**3. UPDATE ITEM ON SBC SOCIAL HOUSING DAMP AND MOULD**

To receive an officer presentation updating Members on the current position with the Council's housing regarding stock damp and mould cases.

9 – 24

**4. TENANT ENFORCEMENT & TENANCY AUDITS**

Members are invited to consider an officer report providing them with information on the formation of a procedure for staff and a policy for tenants to help all parties understand what behaviour is expected of tenants.

25 – 38

**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: Thursday, 3 July 2025

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

**Present:** Councillors: Ellie Plater (Chair), Julie Ashley-Wren (Vice-Chair), Kamal Choudhury, Mason Humberstone, Sarah Mead, Carolina Veres and Peter Wilkins

**Start / End Time:** Start Time: 6.00pm  
End Time: 7.00pm

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Leanne Brady and Lynda Guy.

#### 2 **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the Community Select Committee, as approved at the Annual Council Meeting held on 22 May 2025, be noted.

#### 3 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Community Select Committee meeting held on 26 March and 8 April 2025 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### 4 **COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2025-26**

The Chair introduced the Community Select Work Programme for 2025-26 and welcomed the Scrutiny Officer to provide an overview.

It was noted that items on the work programme were open to discussion, and members were invited to raise any questions as each item was reviewed.

##### Progress of the new Housing Allocations Policy

Members reviewed the progress on the new Housing Allocations Policy which was scheduled to return to the Committee in October 2025.

Members requested that the update included an emphasis on equalities, specifically addressing the needs of residents with mental or physical health conditions. It was noted that the policy was comprehensive and expressed the need for clearer

guidance such as a checklist to support both residents and members in navigating the application process.

Officers confirmed that additional work had been undertaken to strengthen the policy's approach to equalities and to better support care leavers. These developments were to be included in the October 2025 update.

#### Tenant Enforcement/Tenancy Audits

An update was provided on Tenant Enforcement, and it was confirmed that an update on Tenancy Audits was scheduled for the next meeting in September 2025. No further questions were raised.

#### One-off update item on Housing Damp & Mould

The Committee noted the need for an update on the Council's Damp and Mould policy, due to upcoming legislation coming into effect in October 2025. Officers advised that an update would be brought to the Committee in September 2025. Members were informed that partial government guidance had been received, and work had commenced to update relevant practices and policies.

It was acknowledged that the government had imposed a tight turnaround, and members expressed concern over the limited timeframe available to implement the changes. The Committee noted that further updates and scrutiny would likely be required beyond the September meeting. It was noted that Damp and Mould remained a longstanding challenge for local authorities, particularly in relation to older housing stock.

Officers confirmed that the Council's Damp and Mould policy had been updated and was currently compliant with existing requirements. The new legislation would also include additional hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). A briefing note would be circulated to members ahead of the September meeting to provide further details.

Members welcomed the Council's ongoing commitment to addressing this evolving issue and emphasised the importance of continued monitoring and review.

It was further noted that the Committee would be provided with tangible information on the impact of the recent integration of the Repairs and Voids services, including the benefits and outcomes of combining these facilities. This request was noted and would be addressed in the September update.

#### Equalities and Diversity

The Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that work had commenced on Equalities and Diversity. A draft report was scheduled to be presented to the Committee in November 2025.

## Older People

The Committee considered the Council's work in supporting older residents. While it was noted that Hertfordshire County Council were responsible for Older People's Services, Stevenage Borough Council had undertaken several important initiatives. These included the development of an Age-Friendly Community, and the organisation of a conference planned for Autumn 2025.

Members raised concerns regarding digital exclusion, with residents unable to access essential services delivered online. The Committee highlighted that while digital exclusion was a key issue, the broader and varied needs of older residents should also be considered in future planning and service delivery.

Members asked for some information on the Age-Friendly Agenda ahead of the upcoming conference. Officers confirmed that this information would be shared with members in advance of the event.

The Chair suggested inviting the relevant Portfolio Holders and SBC's representative from the Hertfordshire County Council Health Scrutiny Board Committee to a future meeting to provide information, participating in relation to access to GP services.

## Community Centre's

At this juncture, Officers advised that work was underway to explore potential funding allocations to support community centres across the town.

Members emphasised the importance of community centres in promoting the wellbeing and enrichment of residents.

The Committee highlighted the need for an update on this matter and requested that a formal agenda item be included at a future meeting to provide a clear statement on the current position and the future direction for the town's community centres.

## Statutory Item – Crime and Disorder Committee

The Committee noted its statutory responsibility to meet once a year as the Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee. Officers confirmed that the next meeting would be scheduled to align with the release of annual performance data from the Police.

It was noted that the previous meeting included contributions from partners including the Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) team, and that this engagement would continue in future meetings.

Members highlighted the safety and wellbeing of teenagers in the town, and the need to address youth related issues such as online safety and anti-social behaviour. It was agreed that these topics would be incorporated into the agenda for the next Crime and Disorder Committee Meeting.

The Chair noted the importance of involving Portfolio Holders in Committee

discussions wherever possible to ensure accountability and active engagement, while maintaining the Committee's independence and scrutiny focus.

A question was raised regarding the importance of addressing males suffering domestic violence and the Committee requested relevant reports and data on this issue in the next Crime and Disorder meeting.

### Public Health

The Committee received an update on revisiting Public Health as a work programme item. It was noted that the Committee had previously enjoyed a close working focus with the former Hertfordshire County Council Director of Public Health, and via this scrutiny focus the Council had previously received external funding for local projects. Members expressed a strong desire to retain Public Health on the Committee's work programme due to its ongoing relevance to the wellbeing of Stevenage residents.

Members highlighted the importance of access to relevant data to ensure transparency and accountability and welcomed local public health education initiatives such as the Healthy Hub.

It was acknowledged that Public Health linked with other areas of the Committee's work including with older people and digital exclusion.

Officers confirmed that a meeting with the Director of Public Health's office would be scheduled in the coming weeks to progress the matter.

### 2026 – 27 Work Programme

Officers informed the Committee that preparations were underway for the development of the Community Select Committee's 2026 – 27 work programme. It was noted that items would remain on the agenda due to outstanding actions from previous years. There were no current items for pre-scrutiny or policy development to report.

## **5 COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER 2025**

The Committee reviewed the action tracker to monitor the progress of past recommendations which included responses from the Portfolio Holders.

Members received updates on a number of review areas. It was confirmed that work on Equality and Diversity had commenced, and Members would be informed when the review was complete. Updates were also provided on Housing Repairs and Voids, and Members were invited to consider scheduling future updates on this area.

The Committee noted that the New Towns Heritage Centre Review remained in development alongside wider regeneration plans. The Housing Allocations review was confirmed to be returning to the Committee in October 2025. Damp and Mould was discussed during the meeting and a follow up was scheduled.

Members commented on the importance of maintaining a focus on Sports and

Leisure services. It was noted that the contract should be monitored to ensure it was meeting the needs of the community. The Committee discussed the difficulties with booking systems, limited space in the new facilities and the need for a clear vision due to recent changes in the Portfolio Holders. Members commented on the membership tiers offered by Everyone Active and emphasised that these services should be accessible to all residents.

Further discussions took place regarding the role of Portfolio Holders in the Community Select Committee meetings. It was agreed that Portfolio Holders would be invited selectively, where appropriate, to help ensure clarity and accountability while maintaining the integrity and independence of the scrutiny process.

## **6 URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

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

It was **RESOLVED**:

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 grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 to 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by SI 2006 No. 88.
2. That having considered the reasons for the following item being in Part II, it be determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

## **8 URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

## **CHAIR**

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# Damp & Mould

Denise Lewis - Assistant Director Building  
Safety and Housing Property Services

Asif Khan – Head of Repairs & Maintenance

# SBC: Damp & Mould

- Damp & Mould Factors and Mitigators
- Service Performance 2025 (Damp & Mould)
- Service Performance/Trend 2024 (Damp & Mould)
- New Legislative Requirements (Damp & Mould)
- Current Position (Damp & Mould)
  - Recruitment
  - Access
  - New Contractors
  - Budget
  - Data

# Damp & Mould: Factors and Mitigators

## Factors

### 1. Moisture Sources

- Leaks (roof, plumbing, gutters, windows).
- Rising damp from ground moisture.
- Condensation from daily activities (cooking, showering, drying clothes).
- Flooding or water ingress.

### 2. Building & Environmental Conditions

- Poor ventilation (no extractor fans, blocked vents).
- Cold surfaces / thermal bridging (external walls, windows).
- Poor insulation.
- Age and condition of property (older structures = higher risk).
- Materials that absorb/retain water (plaster, wood, carpets).

### 3. Occupant Behaviour

- Drying clothes indoors without ventilation.
- Under-heating or irregular heating.
- Blocking ventilation (covering vents, pushing furniture against walls).
- Not reporting leaks or signs of damp promptly.

# Damp & Mould: Factors and Mitigators

## Mitigators – Ways to Reduce Risk

### 1. Control Moisture

- Repair leaks quickly (roofs, pipes, gutters, windows).
- Maintain damp-proof courses and membranes.
- Use dehumidifiers in high-moisture areas.
- Ensure proper drainage around building foundations.

### 2. Improve Ventilation

- Fit and maintain extractor fans in kitchens/bathrooms.
- Open trickle vents/windows regularly.
- Consider mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR).
- Keep air flowing behind large furniture.

# Damp & Mould: Factors and Mitigators

## Mitigators – Ways to Reduce Risk

### 3. Manage Temperature & Insulation

- Maintain consistent indoor heating.
- Insulate walls, roofs, and windows to prevent condensation.
- Upgrade glazing (double/triple glazing reduces cold spots).

### 4. Materials & Finishes

- Use mould-resistant paints, plasters, and sealants.
- Replace absorbent finishes (e.g., carpets in damp rooms).
- Choose moisture-tolerant building materials in kitchens/bathrooms.

### 5. Occupant Practices

- Dry clothes outdoors or use vented tumble dryers.
- Wipe down condensation on windows/surfaces.
- Keep extractor fans running during and after cooking/showering.
- Regularly clean and maintain rooms to remove dust/nutrients for mould.

# Damp & Mould: Factors and Mitigators

## Factors (Causes)

**Moisture sources** (leaks, rising damp, flooding, condensation)

**Poor ventilation** (no fans, blocked vents, trapped air)

**Cold surfaces / poor insulation** (condensation on walls, windows)

**Age & condition of building** (old damp-proofing, degraded materials)

**Absorbent/porous materials** (plaster, wood, carpets)

**Occupant behaviours** (drying clothes indoors, under-heating, blocking vents)

**Neglected maintenance** (delayed repairs, unreported damp)

## Mitigators (Solutions)

- Repair leaks (roof, pipes, gutters, windows)
- Maintain damp-proof courses
- Improve site drainage
- Use dehumidifiers
- Install/maintain extractor fans
- Open windows/trickle vents
- Use mechanical ventilation (MVHR)
- Keep airflow behind furniture
- Maintain consistent heating
- Insulate walls, loft, floors
- Upgrade to double/triple glazing
- Reduce thermal bridging
- Repair/replace damp-proof courses
- Retrofit insulation
- Upgrade heating and ventilation systems
- Use mould-resistant paints/plasters
- Choose moisture-tolerant materials
- Replace carpets with hard flooring in damp-prone areas
- Dry clothes outside or use vented dryers
- Keep extractor fans on during/after cooking & showering
- Maintain steady heating
- Avoid blocking vents and allow airflow
- Regular property inspections
- Prompt repairs
- Encourage early reporting of leaks/damp signs

# D & M Service Performance: Inspections – YTD 2025

Damp and Mould KPI - Inspections										
	April		May		June		Q1		July	
No Inspections raised	52		56		42		150		96	
No completed	52	100%	55	98%	39	93%	146	97%	41	
Of which completed on time	46	88%	48	87%	36	92%	130	89%	38	93%
Outstanding							4	3%	59	24%
Of which overdue							3	75%	32	54%
					Overdue			No access		No access
					up to 1 week				13	
					1-2 weeks				7	
					2-3 weeks				8	
					3-4 weeks					
					4-5 weeks					
					5-6 weeks		2	1	2	1
					6-7 weeks		1		1	
					7 -8 weeks		1	1	1	1
							4	2	32	2

\*currently measured against a 10-working day target

# D & M Performance - Inspections

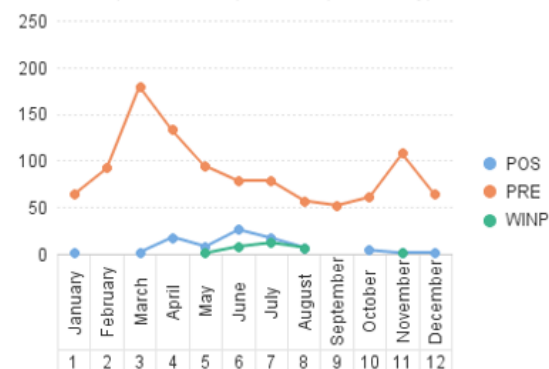
- Q1: 150 inspections raised as relate to Damp and Mould
- 97% of all raised were completed, with 89% of these completed in time (within the current internal 10 working day target)
- 4 are outstanding, with 3 overdue due to access issues
- July, surge in the number of inspections - anomaly? To be monitored



# D & M Service Performance/Trend 2024

Number of completed inspections by month and type	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Sum:
WINP						1	8	12	7		2		30
PRE	64	92	180	133	94	78	78	57	52	61	108	64	1061
POS	2		2	18	8	26	17	7		4	1	1	86
Sum:	66	92	182	151	103	112	107	71	52	65	111	65	1177

Number of Inspections by Month number completed date  
/ Month inspection complete / Inspection Type



- Pre-inspections: Busiest months in 2024 – March (180) and April (133). This year April 2025 = 52
- Q1 2024: 305 Vs 150 in 2025 Q1
- July 2024: 78 Vs 96 in July 2025
- 2024: 1061 Pre inspections vs Average 2025 YTD: 62 Inspections a month/744 projected annual
- Slower year thus far – Awaabs Law!

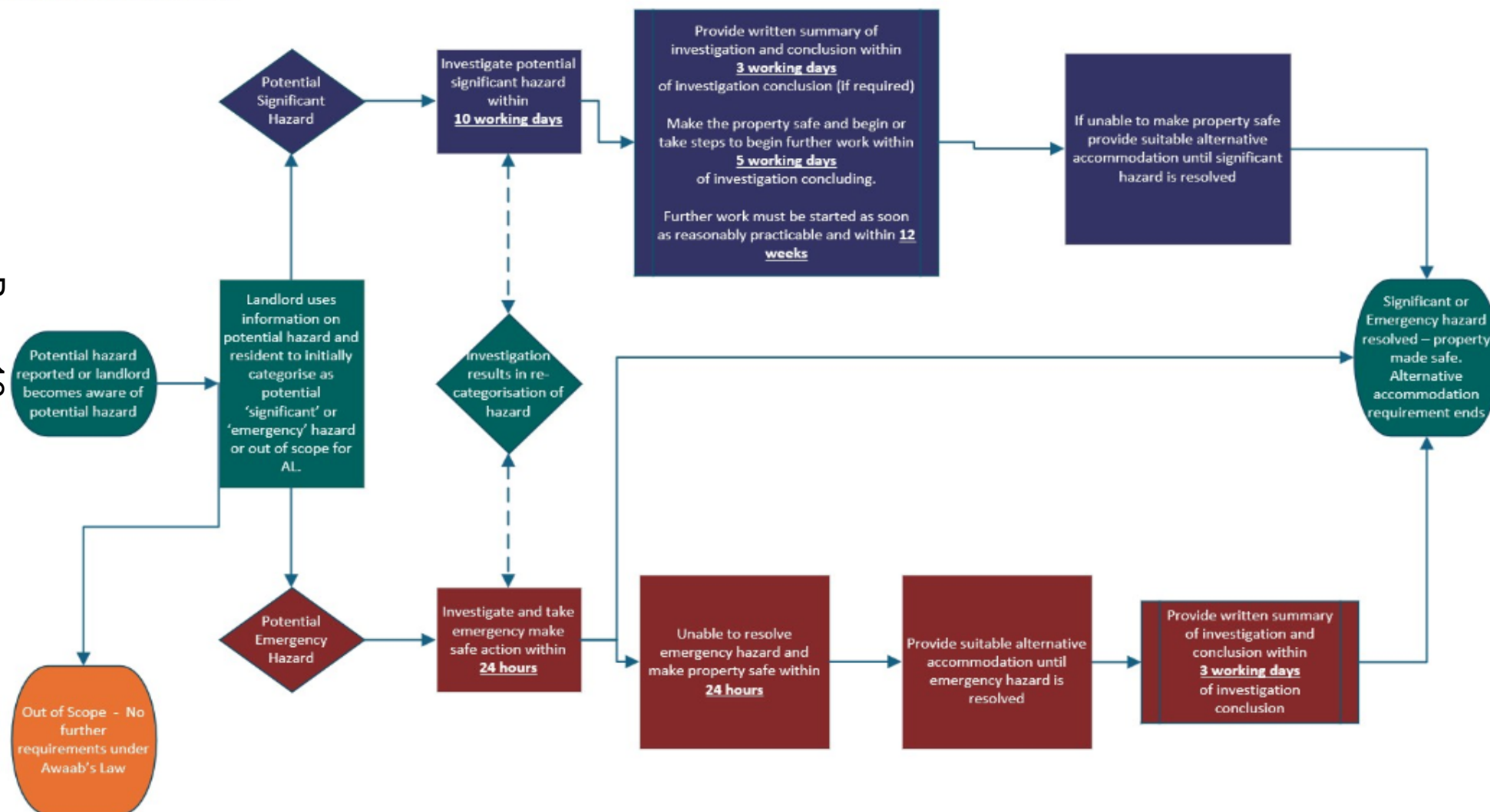
# D & M Performance: Repeat Cases/Current Tracking of live cases

- Repeat cases (2 or 3 a month on average) are re-surveyed to identify if this a reoccurrence of previously treated area or a new area that was not present at point of original survey, This could be due to a new defect such as roof leak or internal service leak, or even a change of environment within the property due to increased occupancy or room change of use. If this is a reoccurrence of previously treated area the contractor will be asked to re-attend to review and resolve under original works order if within the guarantee period. For example, 165 Trumper Road – D&M resolved, new windows, problem reported again, now to be inspected again.
- Tracking of live cases is monitored daily by an operational shared tracker where two-way communication within the tracker is carried out in real time between SBC and Contractor to ensure that any sticking points are addressed in a timely fashion to ensure the 'end to end' process of the case meets the timelines under current compliance.

# New Legislation (D&M)

Diagram 1 - Awaab's Law Process Flow

Note : Does not include, renewed and further Investigation timeframes



# New Legislation (D & M)

- Following primary legislation introduced via the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, Awaab's Law comes into force from **27 October 2025**
- All emergency hazards and damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to residents will have to be addressed to fixed timeframes.
- The Regulations mean landlords must:
  - investigate any potential **emergency hazards** and, if the investigation confirms emergency hazards, undertake relevant safety work as soon as reasonably practicable, both within **24 hours** of becoming aware of them
  - investigate any potential **significant hazards** within **10 working days** of becoming aware of them
  - produce a written summary of investigation findings and provide this to the named tenant within **3 working days** of the conclusion of the investigation
  - undertake relevant safety work within **5 working days** of the investigation concluding, if the investigation identifies a significant hazard
  - *begin, or take steps to begin, any further required works within **5 working days** of the investigation concluding, if the investigation identifies a significant or emergency hazard. If steps cannot be taken to begin work in **5 working days** this must be done as soon as possible, and work must be physically started **within 12 weeks***
  - satisfactorily complete works within a reasonable time period.
  - secure the provision of suitable alternative accommodation for the household, at the social landlord's expense, if relevant safety work cannot be completed within specified timeframes
  - keep the named tenant updated throughout the process and provide information on how to keep safe safety work within stated timeframes.
- NEW DATA POINTS, THEREFORE NEW REPORTS NECESSARY

# D& M: Works Completed

- Currently set up to record works completed within timescales
- Redeveloping the report in line with Awaabs – emphasis on when started and not completed
- Struggle with existing contractors/resources

## D & M Works Orders Completed on Time

Q1					
	April	May	June	Total	%
No Works Orders Raised	54	56	39	149	
No Works Orders Completed	34	46	54	134	90%
Of which:					
- completed on time	35	38	41	114	85%
- completed out of time	0	8	13	21	15%
No works orders outstanding	20	30	15		10%
Of which:					
- within target	16	22	4		27%
- out of target	4	8	11		73%

# D& M: Current Position (1)

- **Recruitment - Do we have enough? (Maybe)**

- New Damp & Mould and Disrepair Manager
- New Damp & Mould Lead Surveyor
- New Damp & Mould Surveyor x1, 1 vacant
- Business Support Officer (Damp and Mould) - vacant
- Data Analyst – new support role
- Ongoing review (Awaabs) – unknown volumes – growth pressure?

- **Access – Do we need to do more? (Yes)**

- Review of Damp & Mould policy and processes with the Housing Asset Management team (HAM)
- Review of No Access Policy in conjunction with Compliance Team.
- Ongoing collaboration with Housing and Investment Project Support Teams.

- **New Contractors – are they ready? (Yes)**

- Delayed, now mobilised. Positive start!
- KPI scorecards in place and being finalised
- Quality Control – timely completions – best use of Surveyor/SBC time
- Contractor Portal

# D& M: Current Position (2)

- **Data & Systems – are they fit for purpose? (No/Not Yet)**
  - End-to-end process review – KPI review/workshops with the HAM team.
  - Triaging of calls – in team vs CSC – first point of contact
  - Data reporting needs to only capture inspections raised from 1<sup>st</sup> April
  - Data reporting needs to be redeveloped in line with Awaabs:
    - Type of Inspection – staff script, is it an emergency?
    - Production of Report and type (desktop/physical)
    - Starting works (not completing the works) – at present vs raised date
  - System prohibitions – proactive interventions/ hot spots – technology an ally? GPS/Data analyst
  - Inspections – Safety Culture, enhanced product / desk top survey templates Vs NEC options
- **Budgets – Do we have enough? – Hard to know**
  - Current position Integra: £197k spend vs £625k yearly budget (31%) – busier months ahead?
  - Average cost per case: c.£1150 (for 167 jobs)
  - In-house works (Vs timely completion)
  - Monthly monitoring
  - Knock on effect of legislation and impact on Disrepair (ambulance chasers)

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# Tenancy Audits

## Resident Services

# Tenancy Audits

**Ensure the right people are in the right homes**

**Prevents fraud, misuse, and wasted resources**

**Builds trust through fairness and accountability**

We carry out tenancy audits for a number of reasons, these include:

- **Fraud Detection:**  
Tenancy audits provide direct visibility into what is going on in our properties – uncovering tenancy fraud, unauthorised sub-letting, abandonment and also helps us to ensure that tenant contact details are up to date.
- **Tenant Well-Being and Support:**  
The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) requires landlords to know their housing stock and their tenants. Audits can help to identify health and safety hazards, such as damp and mould, disrepair and also uncover tenant's support needs. When concerns are raised during an audit, safeguarding referrals can be made and support offered from other teams such as, tenancy sustainment and SADA.
- **Collaborative Working:**  
The audit findings can prompt close collaboration with internal teams such as Repairs, Damp and Mould, Asset Management, ASB and Tenancy Sustainment as well as external colleagues within the mental health team, social services and the Police.

# Legislation



The implementation of The Social (Regulation) Act 2023 the RSH has gained stronger powers to proactively inspect and enforce standards.



The introduction of new consumer standards, such as the Safety and Quality Standard, requires us to ensure tenant safety, service delivery and quality – this directly aligns with our target to complete tenancy audits on all of our properties over a 3 year period.



Additionally, part of this Act includes Awaab's Law, which mandates swift remedial action on hazards such as damp and mould – our tenancy audits help to identify issues promptly so that we are able to comply with these stricter deadlines.

# Carrying out a Tenancy Audit

Housing Officers send an appointment letter to the tenant advising them of the time and date the audit will take place – the letter sets out what the audit is for and that the tenant needs to be present.

A few days ahead of the visit, the Housing Officer will contact the tenant to ensure that they will be available for this.

The visit will then be conducted at the tenant's address, the tenant must provide ID for themselves as well as other household members, photos should be taken by the Housing Officer of each room and outdoor spaces, any repairs raised can be done via Rapid at the visit.

The Housing Officer will then update the housing file, save the tenancy audit document and follow up on any issues raised at the audit.

## Outcomes and follow ups

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Tenancy audits give Housing Officers an opportunity to gain a clear picture of our tenants and our housing stock. Some audits will not require any further action, however, there are a lot of times where follow up work is required of the Housing Officer. This can include:

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Referrals to Tenancy Sustainment, Welfare Benefits Team, SADA (Stevenage against Domestic Abuse) and Fraud. R&E meet regularly with these teams to review cases and best practise.

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Complex repairs and damp & mould issues that may require the tenant to be decanted. Depending on the severity of the repair or damp & mould, this can be from over night to a few weeks. We have seen a rise in decants, in the last 18 months and now have 4 ex warden properties that we can use and a dedicated decant officer that supports tenants and works with internal teams to minimise the impact on tenants going through the process.

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Complex cases in which hoarding or other mental health issues impacting the living conditions are identified and we work with other agencies at safeguarding individuals to receive the right support.

# Tenancy audit stats

- We have set a target for 160 tenancy audits per month to be carried out – a further look into the data reveals that of the 1280 audits which should have taken place between January 2025 and August 2025, 15% were unable to be carried out as access was not granted.

# Gaining access

- As 15% of our tenancy audits are not being completed due to the tenant not allowing access, it is important that the Housing Officers have a clear process to follow to ensure that we are gaining access into all of our properties to complete a tenancy audit.

## Access and Enforcement Process

- No access given on first attempt.
- Leave a calling card for the tenant to contact Housing Officer
- Send a 2<sup>nd</sup> appointment letter and follow the usual audit process of calling the tenant ahead of the scheduled visit.
- If still no access, leave a calling card and send a 3<sup>rd</sup> letter, following the process of contacting the tenant ahead of the visit.
- If still no access, a fourth letter is sent which warns that if access is not given a Notice of Seeking Possession (NSP) will be served.
- If we continue to not gain access the NSP will be served with a covering letter setting out that an injunction will be applied for access to the property.
- At this point, if no access is provided, the Housing Officer should then work alongside their senior & legal team to apply for an injunction and to take any necessary enforcement action against the tenant.

# Trends

"Tenancy audits offer a valuable opportunity to identify emerging trends across the borough, enabling us to adopt a targeted and strategic approach in addressing any evident issues or gaps."

Some of the trends which we have spotted include:

- Unauthorised works carried out by tenants. This has resulted in a rise of requests for retrospective planning permission.
- Household details not being up to date - tenants should ask for permission for someone to join their household, instead, a large amount of residents are not requesting this until there is an audit carried out.
- Queries relating to new windows, doors, bathrooms and kitchens.



# Case A:

During a tenancy audit, the Housing Officer identified unauthorised works carried out by the tenant, a high volume of waste in both the garden and inside the property.



# Case A:

The Housing Officer made several attempts before the tenant allowed access. The tenancy audit uncovered extensive, unsafe and unauthorised works to the property as well as poor living conditions.

## What we did:

- A structural engineer visited the property and following their advice, we temporarily decanted the tenant out of the property so that works could be carried out to rectify the unauthorised works and make the property safe.
- A Notice of Seeking Possession Warning served and the legal team consulted. The cost of works recharged to the tenant.
- When they return to the property- regular visits scheduled to monitor the condition of the property – if any further works without permission completed, legal action to be taken.



# Case B:

A tenancy audit was carried out, no concerns raised. A further audit will be scheduled in 3 years time.



Windows  
unable to open

Bathroom  
door hinges no  
longer  
attached.

Missing banister,  
smoke alarm not  
working,  
bathroom tap  
not working

Leak under  
bath

# Repairs Raised at a Tenancy Audit

At almost 100% of tenancy audits, Housing Officers are raising repairs via Rapid. Currently, we are looking into whether these repairs have already been raised by the tenant prior to the audit or whether they are waiting to raise them with the Housing Officer.

# Challenges

As we approach the colder months, we typically see an increase in seasonal issues such as boiler faults and damp or mould. However, in 2024, access rates declined sharply in December.

We believe this reduction is linked to school holidays, tenants' reluctance to disturb Christmas decorations, and changes in availability. A similar dip is observed during summer holidays.

To address this, our no-access process will support efforts to gain entry where needed.

# Next Steps.

Our Tenancy Audit Process and Procedure was launched in March 2024. Following the initial audits, key findings relating to property access and condition have highlighted the need for a more robust framework. In response, we are currently developing a Tenancy Audit Policy to underpin and support the existing process.

This policy will clearly define expectations regarding property standards and outline the actions to be taken where issues are identified. These actions may include, but are not limited to, the application of recharges and the potential refusal of property transfers where conditions fall below acceptable thresholds.

Tenant Satisfaction Surveys to be rolled out, this will help to identify any tweaks needed to the process and could also help to identify whether the repairs being raised are duplicates.

Further empowerment and training for Housing Officers to increase confidence and knowledge to take enforcement action when needed.

Work with the Communications team on providing “How To” guides for tenants, starting with; “How to raise a repair” and “How to add someone to my household”.

Introduction of additional performance management targets around the tenancy audits, which will in turn provide further data and stats on outcomes and follow on work coming from these.