



Public Document Pack Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Agenda

Scrutiny making a positive difference: Member led and independent, Overview & Scrutiny Committee promote service improvements, influence policy development & hold Executive to account for the benefit of the Community of Dacorum

Wednesday 17 January 2024 at 7.30 pm

Conference Room 1 - The Forum

The Councillors listed below are requested to attend the above meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

Membership

Councillor Barry (Chair)	Councillor Pesch
Councillor Capozzi (Vice-Chairman)	Councillor Williams
Councillor Adeleke	Councillor Banks
Councillor Barradell	Councillor Link
Councillor Cox	Councillor McArevey
Councillor Johnson	Councillor Pringle
Councillor Mottershead	Councillor Link

For further information, please contact Corporate and Democratic Support

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes from the previous meeting

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest

A member with a disclosable pecuniary interest or a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered -

- (i) must disclose the interest at the start of the meeting or when the interest becomes apparent

and, if the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest, or a personal interest which is also prejudicial

- (ii) may not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter (and must withdraw to the public seating area) unless they have been granted a dispensation.

A member who discloses at a meeting a disclosable pecuniary interest which is not registered in the Members' Register of Interests, or is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the disclosure.

Disclosable pecuniary interests, personal and prejudicial interests are defined in Part 2 of the Code of Conduct For Members

[If a member is in any doubt as to whether they have an interest which should be declared they should seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer before the start of the meeting]

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An opportunity for members of the public to make statements or ask questions in accordance with the rules as to public participation

5. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL-IN

6. ACTION POINT FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 3 - 4)

7. HRA BUSINESS PLAN REFRESH (Pages 5 - 48)

8. DRAFT INTERIM ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (Pages 49 - 83)

9. BUILDING SAFETY POLICY (Pages 84 - 137)

10. FORWARD PLAN (Pages 138 - 140)

Housing and Community OSC

Actions arising – 2023

Date of meeting	Action point	Responsible for action	Date action completed	Update on action point
<u>13/09/23</u> <u>HC/52/23</u>	Member development – a visit to the adventure playgroup to view the activities that are happening.	D Southam	To arrange a member development session for summer next year.	With Member Support.
<u>11/10/2023</u>	Housing points training which was cancelled the other day will be re arranged	N Beresford		<i>Working with member support to get a date - I am waiting for Member Support to propose new dates for the Housing Needs team to lead this, if you could liaise with your colleagues and Paul Hunt that would be appreciated</i>
<u>11/10/2023</u>	Cllr Barradell asked when Diane's report (communities) would be coming to group as it was taken off the agenda. –	N Beresford/D Southam		<i>I'd like to suggest to the chair that I do an end of year report for March committee</i>
<u>11/10/2023</u>	Cllr Wyatt-Lowe said about the training meeting that was cancelled recently. Cllr Dhyani apologised and said it would be re arranged.	Cllr Dhyani		
<u>06/12/2023</u> <u>Budget –</u> <u>Item 6</u>	J Banks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What figure do we invest in (community assets, adventure playground etc how much do the assets cost and what is discretionary) 	F Jump to feed back		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would like to know tipping point for financial pressure.• What long Chaulden roof are you referring to line 15 appendix G			
	S Barry-Mears Would like the number of performing animal licences issued	F Jump to feed back		
	Cllr Adeleke wants to know about investments in new recreations like playgrounds. How much on houses and open spaces?	F Jump to circulate % figure		



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Dacorum Borough Council Housing Revenue Account 2024/25 Update
Date:	17 th January 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Simy Dhyani, Portfolio Holder for Housing
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix A HRA Business Plan 2024 Update Appendix B Acquisitions & Disposals Policy Appendix C Rent Policy
Background papers:	None
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	HRA - Housing Revenue Account

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Corporate Priorities	<p>The business plan supports all of the activities within the HRA leading to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clean, safe and enjoyable environment • Building strong and vibrant communities • Ensuring economic growth and prosperity • Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need • Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery • Climate and ecological emergency
Wards affected	ALL
Consultation	<p>The updated Business Plan has been consulted upon with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Senior Leadership Team • The Strategic Leadership Team • Housing Finance Associates Ltd (consultants supporting on financial modelling). • Portfolio Holder for Housing • Tenants & Leaseholders Forum (due to be discussed on 24th January 2024)
Purpose of the report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To present the proposed update of the HRA Business Plan. The Plan provides the financial context of the Council's HRA service over a 30 year period with a focus on the medium term (first five years). 2. To present the proposed Acquisitions and Disposals policy associated with the Business Plan. 3. To present the proposed Rent Policy. 4. To present proposed actions to allow the objectives of the Business Plan to be delivered.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide feedback on the Business Plan prior to its presentation for approval at Cabinet and Full Council in February 2024.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. To provide feedback on the proposed actions to deliver the objectives of the Business Plan set out in section 11 of this report. 3. To provided feedback on the proposed Acquisitions and Disposals policy and Rent policy prior to their presentation for approval at Cabinet.
Period for post policy/project review:	The Business Plan is refreshed on an annual basis.

1 Introduction

1.1 This report presents an update to the Council’s HRA Business Plan (Appendix A), setting out the financial implications of plans for new and existing Council homes contained in the Council’s Housing Strategy 2024-29.

1.2 The Business Plan covers a 30 year period, with a focus on the medium-term (the first five years) where there is greater certainty on costs, demands, resources and pressures.

1.3 The Business Plan demonstrates that the HRA can deliver its key priorities whilst remaining financially sustainable. It identifies the risks associated with maintaining this position and where these can be mitigated.

1.4 The HRA Business Plan sets a broad context for financial planning and investment decisions to support delivery of the Council’s strategies for housing. The plan takes account of the known financial information and issues, as well as assumptions made about variable elements impacting on the plan (e.g. inflation and interest rates). The financial model used helps to support the analysis of the impact of changes to the information used and the assumptions made.

2 Overview

2.1 This HRA Business Plan sets out our strategic plan for managing and maintaining our social housing stock.

2.2 It details our short to medium term plans and priorities for the housing and asset management services and provides a long term forecast on stock investment and financial planning.

2.3 It gives an economically sustainable strategy from which to go forward, meeting the statutory health and safety requirements, improving the decency of homes, providing more homes, and starting the journey towards carbon neutrality.

2.4 It is a good framework from which to make decisions on a daily basis moving forwards, aligned with Council corporate priorities.

2.5 It sets out how the housing service is delivered, including what it will cost and how the resources will be used.

2.6 It defines priorities for investment and summarises the key risks with actions to mitigate these risks.

2.7 It provides a framework for prioritising the delivery of new health and safety measures, the need for meeting demand for more social housing, keeping homes decent, and addressing the challenges of energy efficiency and climate emergency.

2.8 The plan supports improvement of the energy efficiency of our properties, tackling fuel poverty and inequality in our stock so that tenants benefit from warmer homes at the lowest cost where possible.

2.9 The plan will support the delivery of our Asset Management Strategy, meeting the requirements to keep the stock decent and affordable considering future changes to the Government's Decent Home Standard.

2.10 The plan will also promote the delivery of new social homes through new build or acquisition to ensure the Council continues to provide as many affordable homes as it can.

3 Acquisitions and Disposals Policy

3.1 The development of the Business Plan is an essential tool for delivering excellent Housing Services. All policy options have been considered in developing the plan.

3.2 As part of this work, an updated Acquisitions and Disposals policy for the Council's housing stock has been developed. This is attached at Appendix B to this report for comment, prior to presentation for approval at Cabinet. [Under the Council's Constitution, disposals of the assets valued over £500k and held by the Housing Revenue Account must be approved by Cabinet. A request to increase this limit to £750k will be taken before Full Council for approval.](#)

3.3 The Business Plan at Appendix A applies the principles set out in the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy.

4 Updated Rent Policy

4.1 An updated Rent Policy is presented at Appendix C for comment prior to presentation for approval at Cabinet.

4.2 This policy sets out the Council's position on rent levels and other charges for properties managed under the Housing Revenue Account.

4.3 The Business Plan at Appendix A assumes the approach to rent levels and other charges stated in the Rent Policy are approved and applied.

5 Options and alternatives considered

5.1 The Council is required to produce a business plan for the HRA. As part of the development of the plan, different scenarios have been explored and associated financial modelling undertaken. These are summarised at section 16.3 in Appendix A.

6 Consultation

6.1 Housing tenants and leaseholders are directly involved in decisions regarding service provision, both through the work of the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee and through regular and ongoing engagement with residents. The proposed Business Plan will be presented to Tenant and Leaseholder Committee on 24th January and their feedback has been incorporated within prior to presented to Cabinet in February 2024.

7 Financial and value for money implications:

7.1 The plan covers a 30 year period with a focus on the medium term, where there is greater certainty on costs, demands, resources and pressures, to enable the prioritisation of housing investment.

7.2 The plan remains affordable and viable throughout the life of the 30-year plan, and the Council is able to deliver on the priorities of the HRA, including those linked to the Corporate Plan.

7.3 A robust financial model underpins the Business Plan. It is a tool for testing existing priorities, the impact of changes in Government policies and changes in key business sensitivities to ensure plans remain affordable. Delivery of new build Council housing is achieved using grant funding, HRA cash resources and Right-to-Buy receipts (known as 1-4-1 monies). This ensures the HRA remains able to meet its debt repayment commitments.

8 Legal Implications

8.1 Section 167 of the Localism Act 2011 gave effect to Schedule 15 of that Act and, since the coming into force of Schedule 15, English local authorities have been required to be self-financing in relation to their housing stock, financing their housing stock from their own rents.

8.2 It is not a legal requirement to produce a HRA Business Plan; however, it is good practice and it helps to ensure that HRA-related statutory duties and financial requirements are met; that residents are fully engaged in the key investment and strategic decisions that impact on them; and it provides a good framework for long-term strategic planning and decision-making.

9 Risk implications:

9.1 All aspects of risk have been fully considered and the risk impact analysis and mitigation measures is set out in detail within the plan.

10 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

10.1 A Community Impact Assessment has been carried out and is set out in Appendix 2. The assessment does not identify any adverse impacts on any protected group.

10.2 Human Rights – There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

11 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

11.1 Carbon reduction measures will be implemented across the Council's existing housing stock and included within the design and construction of new properties.

11.2 A plan to get HRA stock to an EPC 'C' rating is in place. In addition to this retrofitting work, new-build projects are assessed individually to include the potential costs and benefits of strong carbon-friendly design. All new developments are expected to achieve an EPC A, as the aim is to have properties that are zero-carbon.

12 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

12.1 There are no Council infrastructure implications directly arising from this report.

13. Proposed actions to deliver the Business Plan objectives

13.1 The following actions are proposed for implementation in financial year 2024/25 in order for the Council to deliver the objectives of the Business Plan:

- Apply maximum rent increase allowed by government, currently assuming 7.7%
- Transition supported housing charges to full cost recovery over 5 years to limit impact on residents, commencing 2024/25.
- Apply rent flexibility (higher rents on relets) linked to improved energy efficiency.
- Dispose of high cost / high value / management issue voids - Target to be set for 24/25 to achieve a balanced budget and contribute to reserves. Target one disposal per month in line with the attached draft Policy on Acquisitions & Disposals.
- Demand management measures (reducing/removing non-essential expenditure on environmental and neighbourhood works) may also be required to achieve a balanced budget.
- Proceed with improvement work to the Council's housing stock to achieve EPC 'C' by 2035 .
- Longer-term considerations to seek a cost-neutral position on new development schemes

12. Conclusions and Next Steps

12.1 The Business Plan sets out how the HRA will utilise the resources available to it to deliver the plans and objectives set out in the Housing Strategy 2024-29.

12.2 The plan demonstrates that its objectives will be met in a way that is financially sustainable.

12.3 Next steps:

- 24th January 2024 – presentation to Tenants and Leaseholders Committee
- 13th February - presentation to Cabinet to recommend to approve to Full Council
- 28th February – presentation to Full Council for approval.

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2024 Update

1. Introduction

1.1 The Council recognises the part housing plays in making Dacorum a great place to live. Good quality and affordable housing is a vital part of the Council's long-term vision for the borough. The Council's Corporate Plan identifies this priority with a commitment to "providing good quality affordable homes, particularly to those most in need". The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan details the financial implications associated with plans for new and existing Council homes, as set out in the Council's Housing Strategy 2024-29.

1.2 The HRA Business Plan sets out the long term financial position of the HRA for a period of 30 years. The key focus is on the medium-term (the first five years) where there is greater certainty on costs, demands, resources and pressures. The HRA Business Plan does not include the activity financed by the Council's General Fund, such as homelessness and nightly paid accommodation.

1.3 This plan demonstrates:

- The sustainability of our existing homes supporting the Council's overall vision and priorities.
- How viable our current investment plans are in the long-term.
- The finances available for investment in new homes and investment in our existing stock and services.

1.4 The HRA Business Plan sets a broad context for financial planning and investment decisions to support delivery of the Council's strategies for housing. The plan takes account of the known financial information and issues, as well as assumptions made about variable elements impacting on the plan (e.g. inflation and interest rates). The financial model used helps to support the analysis of the impact of changes to the information used and the assumptions made.

2. Background

2.1 The Council's Housing and Property Service provides services to approximately 12,000 properties across the Borough. Of these, c1, 900 are supported housing and services are provided to around c1, 800 leasehold flats. The majority of the properties are general needs homes (c8, 300) and there are plans to develop new homes by the Council and in partnership with others.

2.2 The 12,000 properties provide a significant resource to meet local housing needs, although these needs are increasing due to the cost of living crisis, increasing private sector rents and increasing household formation. The services delivered also have a positive impact on the local economy. The provision of affordable housing, helps people into work, improves health outcomes and creates employment opportunities through our contracts with external partners.

2.3 The HRA is a ring-fenced account showing the income and expenditure incurred on the Council's housing stock. The cost of borrowing and an allowance for depreciation (i.e. capital charges) are also included.

2.4 The Council has continued to deliver a strong new homes development programme at social rent across the borough for local people, as well as temporary accommodation and a homeless hostel. To date, we have completed 366 new homes and have a further 183 currently under construction and then a further 88 in the pipeline, with plans in place to build more. A Strategic Asset Review is being carried out of all Council land and assets to consider new development opportunities.

2.5 The HRA Business Plan has been reviewed and updated to include the latest priorities and financial position of the Housing and Property Services directorate. This includes aligning the HRA Business Plan to the following areas:

- The Housing Strategy 2024 – 2029 and how the strategy’s delivery plan will be supported by the HRA Business Plan.
- The Asset Management strategy; the HRA Business plan will ensure investment supports the effective management of the assets.
- The Council’s corporate priorities as set out in the current Corporate Plan, including how the housing service can contribute to the net carbon zero targets.

2.6 The annual investment of over £30 million into existing homes and the new build programme, ensures we are able to provide good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need.

2.7 This updated business plan starts at the beginning of the financial year 2023/24 and extends over the next 30 years. It incorporates the latest budgetary forecasts, and contingency provision has been made for increased investment to meet challenges facing registered providers of social housing.

3. Financial Context of the HRA Business Plan

3.1 The HRA Business Plan reflects the plans the Council has to maintain a supply of good quality housing and to increase the local provision of affordable housing. Since the introduction of self-financing in 2012, a HRA Business Plan has been developed to enable long term planning. The plan is supported by a financial model that uses budgetary information and projections to outline the expenditure required. The model is supported by an external consultant and the model is based on insight gained from other stock holding Local Authorities.

3.2 The main sources of income and expenditure include the following:

- **Income** - There are 3 main areas of income for the HRA, including: rents, service charges (from tenants and leaseholders) and grants (e.g. new developments).
- **Expenditure** - There are 4 main areas of financial expenditure: maintenance, service costs (e.g. grounds maintenance), staffing and the repayment of loans and associated loan interest.

3.3 The HRA Business Plan considers the impact of changes on the plans and the ability of the Council to respond (e.g. inflation). Whilst there is significant change in the operating environment, it is proposed that the HRA Business Plan will be formally reviewed annually.

3.4 The plan is based on a financial model that enables scenarios of investment to be projected and varied based on the decisions that could be taken. For example, this helps the decisions to be made based on an appropriate balance between investment in existing homes and the new build programme, as well as variations on the operating environment (e.g. interest rates).

3.5 The financial model is reviewed regularly to take account of any changes in the assumptions used in the financial model, together with any fluctuations in costs that may be experienced. One example is the impact that external legislative changes can have on the availability of revenue, such as the level of rents that can be charged. Elements such as these can be modelled and help provide an assessment of the impact of the decisions made by the Council.

3.6 The current Business Plan is set out in more detail for the first five years of the plan and there are key areas of activity outlined in this plan that will help to clarify the longer term position (e.g. an

updated stock condition survey and the outcome of the Housing Transformation Improvement Programme- HTIP). As these areas of activity are completed, the plan will be updated to reflect this. The additional information will help to strengthen the Council's position and provide clarity on when decisions need to be made.

3.7 The Business Plan is reviewed annually in line with the Council's budget setting process, along with changes seen across the social housing sector. Recently there have been significant cost pressures in repairs and maintenance contracts due to increases in material and labour costs, along with additional building safety requirements. Reviewing the business plan annually during a period of change will help ensure the Council plans ahead for the future based on updated information. Quarterly checks on the plan's financial assumptions will be made because of the significant impact of any variations to these (e.g. maintenance cost inflation).

3.8 A review has been undertaken of charges relating to supporting people. The Business Plan reflects a move to full cost recovery for supported people charges over a 5 year period, sustaining valuable services to our tenants.

4. The Current Priorities

4.1 Within the current Corporate Plan and the work on the updated Housing Strategy, the priorities for the service are defined. The focus within the HRA Business Plan is on the financial consequences of the actions to be delivered.

4.2 There are a number of forthcoming developments within the housing service due to the changing environment in which the service operates. Decisions around responding to these challenges as well as continuing to improve the quality of homes provided and providing investment in new homes will need to be taken throughout the lifetime of this plan.

4.3 Given these forthcoming developments have been detailed within the Housing Strategy (2024 – 29), this financial plan has been linked to the commitments within the Strategy, under the following headings:

- To become an excellent social landlord, delivering services that meet the needs of our residents.
- Demonstrate dedication to tackling the climate emergency in Dacorum. Reducing energy consumption of our existing housing stock, and take steps to ensure that all new homes meet excellent thermal efficiency standards.
- Champion the provision of safe, warm and dry homes across the borough.
- Champion a culture of collaboration, both internally and with external stakeholders to deliver services and positive outcomes
- Seek to meet the diverse housing needs of everyone living in Dacorum

4.4 Similar to other Registered Providers of social housing, there are a number of challenges facing the service and some of these have financial consequences. The most significant of these are based around the costs associated with the service, in particular the inflationary pressures on the cost of the service and improving the portfolio of homes managed (e.g. inflationary pressure on staff costs, energy costs, maintenance costs, development costs and building safety measures).

5. To become an excellent social landlord, delivering services that meet the needs of our residents.

5.1 The budget has been set with current and emerging legislation in mind. The housing and property services must be future proofed to meet the demands from the Social Housing Regulatory Act which will introduce inspections from the Social Housing Regulator.

5.2 This framework and our own desire to improve services underpins our approach to delivering a housing service which will deliver the best service for our residents, and also how we will demonstrate our compliance with the Consumer Standards and Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

5.3 This means that finance has been made available for completing the housing transformation project and implementing the recommendations.

5.4 The Council is committed to the engagement of residents in delivering and improving the service. There are a number of areas where the Council is looking to improve the service, including:

- **Service Improvements** – The Housing Transformation and Improvement Programme (HTIP) will continue into 2024/2025 with the focus on transforming the service based around the needs and views of residents. Work is underway and completion of all the fundamental changes are anticipated in 2024/2025, with the new structure and support in place to deliver this activity on a continuing basis.
- **Estate Standards** – To improve the look and feel of estates' communal areas, the services to communal areas are being reviewed to deliver a standard that reflects both the needs of the area and feedback from residents. Work with teams across the Council includes: cleaning, grounds maintenance, fly tipping and pest control.
- **Neighbourhood Management Model** – the work of HTIP will identify the optimum operative model for service delivery. A neighbourhood management approach is required, which may result in the establishment increasing in this area. Work will be undertaken to see if equivalent savings can be made elsewhere, but there is likely an increased cost associated with improving performance.
- **Social Housing (Regulation) Act and the change in regulation** - Whilst the detail of the recommendations of the Social Housing White paper are understood and the Council is currently delivering many of these within the current service offering, there could be additional costs associated with demonstrating compliance or improvements against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures.
- **Productivity improvements** – To help utilise the existing resources and improve the value for money of the service, there are areas where productivity can be improved and a 2% reduction in costs or increase in income is assumed within the HRA Business Plan. The key areas that will be considered will include voids and occupancy rates where the performance can be improved.
- **Cost of living** – The increases in the cost of living have affected a number of households and the Council has taken the lead in helping to signpost and provide support. The impact of the changes in food and energy costs will be felt for some time and the Council will continue to review its approach to help tenants. The focus for the Council is to support residents with their tenancies and work with households where issues arise with the payment of rent. We aim to ensure that households are claiming all benefits to which they are entitled, managing their budget effectively and thereby avoiding a build-up of unmanageable debt.

- **Arrears and Bad Debt** – With the challenging economic climate and in particular where inflation is higher than wage increases, there is the potential for there to be an increase in the level of arrears. The level of provision for bad debt has been carefully assessed and reflected in the financial assumptions underlying the HRA Business Plan.
- **Service Charges** – The charges levied for services to tenants and leaseholders will need to cover the costs of the service and the cost of managing these. This will help ensure that the charges raised reflect the costs incurred and that the evidence is available to support this. For leaseholders this is particularly important and information on the planned investment on estates and blocks will need to be available to help leaseholders plan for the expected expenditure. The Council may also need to consider the existing range of payment options available for leaseholders to support payments, particularly if there are increases in maintenance costs.
- **Rent levels** – The rent increase for 2024/25 is currently modelled at 7.7%, in line with expectations set out on the Government’s Rent Standard. This is factored into the HRA Business Plan, both in the short-term and the assumptions about rent increase levels against projected inflation rates.

6. Demonstrate dedication to tackling the climate emergency in Dacorum. Reducing energy consumption of our existing housing stock, and take steps to ensure that all new homes meet excellent thermal efficiency standards.

6.1 Improving current homes and responding to the need to retrofit the properties will be a significant financial challenge for both the Council and for residents.

6.2 As part of achieving this objective, the Business Plan incorporates investment aimed to ensure required HRA properties meet the Energy Performance Certificate standard of at least C by 2035. This represents additional capital investment in the Council’s housing stock of £22.4m in the period to 2035.

6.3 A number of the decisions around the retrofitting of the properties will be driven by the performance of the assets, the cost of retrofitting and the current practicalities of doing so (including the availability of the technology and the companies to complete the work).

6.4 This area of activity and the funding required will become clearer as the information on stock condition becomes available. A key factor for the HRA Business Plan will be the availability of external funding from Central Government to support the retrofitting of the stock.

6.5 Our focus must be a firm commitment to deliver net zero carbon across all Council services by 2050 at the latest, with an aspiration for Housing and Property Services to achieve this earlier if budgets allow.

7. Champion the provision of safe, warm and dry homes across the borough.

7.1 A key focus for the Council is to focus on improving the homes that we manage and ensure that the feedback from residents shapes the homes we provide and meets their identified needs.

- **Safe Homes** – Following the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire, there has rightly been an increased focus on building safety. The Council has made effective progress and is able to demonstrate the approach to its management of assets. The HRA Business Plan reflects the expected future spend on maintaining this focus and to have the capacity to respond to changes in managing building safety.

- **Damp and mould cases** – The tragic case of Awaab Ishak has focused attention on the responsibility of Registered Providers to ensure that the homes they provide are well maintained and of a decent standard. The case has demonstrated the serious effects that having damp and mould in homes can have on people’s health, and the Council has responded positively to reviewing the current approach and identifying where improvements can be made. The increased awareness of properties with damp and mould is likely to increase activity on resolving highlighted cases and the associated costs.
- **Asset Management** – To help review the performance of the Council’s HRA assets, new stock condition surveys are being carried out. The new data will feed into the asset management strategy to create a plan of works required. We will consider the information in consultation with a range of stakeholders, including tenant led focus groups, intelligence gathered by our contractors, stock condition surveys and feedback from the Tenant Satisfaction Measures.
- **Change to the Decent Homes Standard (DHS)** – There is an expectation that there will be changes to the existing DHS to respond to increased focus on building safety. A new DHS would impact on the approach to investing in existing homes and is likely to impact the amount of funding required within the planned maintenance programme.
- **Investment** – The outputs of the stock condition surveys will also allow the Council to use an asset performance model to identify properties that should be retained in the long-term, as well as identifying properties which will be too expensive or unsustainable to manage and should be considered for disposal, refurbishment or redevelopment. Regenerating existing sites may provide the opportunity for additional homes and/or a mixture of tenures on the redeveloped sites. The Council will consider the models of delivery that support a sustainable financial position within the HRA and enable the required investment to be achieved.
- **New Repairs and Maintenance arrangements** - In 2014 the Council entered into a number of contracts for a 10-year period, for external service providers to deliver the repairs, cyclical maintenance and compliance works and planned improvement work to the Council’s properties. The options for future delivery models are being explored, to ensure that the next set of arrangements offers value for money to tenants and leaseholders. There will be costs associated with the commissioning of the new long-term repairs and maintenance contracts, as well as maintaining the existing arrangements until the new contracts can begin. There are also cost pressures within the existing contract due to the inflationary pressures being seen across the housing maintenance sector, compounded by increased demand.

8. Champion a culture of collaboration, both internally and with external stakeholders to deliver services and positive outcomes

8.1 Where partnering or joint venture opportunities offer greater value for money, then they will be considered appropriately.

8.2 A new Registered Partner Development Forum has been established, where opportunities will be explored to work with others to increase the numbers of social housing properties within Decorum to assist meet the local housing need.

8.3 Internally, HTIP has assessed the most effective use of staff resources via the recommended Target Operating Model.

9. Seek to meet the diverse housing needs of everyone living in Dacorum

9.1 The Council is committed to building new homes and this remains a priority because of the consistent demand for housing and the need for it to be affordable. Where possible, we will seek to work with partners and consider different models of delivery to ensure the Council provides support to increasing the number of new affordable homes in the Borough.

9.2 The lack of affordable housing is a key driver for approaches to the Council for assistance and homelessness. The Council plays a key role in helping others to provide housing, as well as providing new homes itself. A key issue for residents is the need for affordable housing that enables people to sustain their tenancies in the long-term.

9.3 We will continue to explore a range of different delivery options in order to maximise the number of new council homes we are able to provide. Options include building on the Council's housing land, acquiring homes for sale, purchasing "off plan" from private sector developers, acquiring properties from private developers, and acquiring land for the purpose of building new Council Homes

9.4 There is short term capacity within the HRA Business Plan and the Council will consider the options available to increase capacity within the medium to long-term. These options include joint ventures with other organisations that will help secure investment in the area and to make best use of the Council's assets.

10. Governance and Delivery

10.1 The HRA business plan is a live document, which articulates the medium and long-term strategies for the management, maintenance, improvement and delivery of new homes. The Housing and Finance teams review the financial position of the service on a regular basis, as well as the HRA Business Plan's financial model. This is to ensure it reflects changes to the new build programme, the impact of external factors and any changes approved by the Council's Cabinet.

10.2 The HRA Business plan is presented to elected members on the Council's Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, before being presented to Full Council.

10.3 Residents (and in particular the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee (TLC)) are involved in significant elements of the plan's content and the direction of travel. The TLC also receive feedback on the progress with elements of the plan that have a resident focus.

10.4 Each year we use the Council's annual report to residents to publish the top line figures from the HRA business plan. This will help to keep our tenants informed about the delivery and offer information around value for money.

10.5 Any fundamental changes to the HRA Business Plan, either to the costs or the activity included will see stakeholders engaged in these discussions

11. Risk Management

11.1 Since 2012 the HRA has operated on a 'self-financing' basis with local authorities funding council housing from the income generated from rents and other charges. Although 'self-financing' has provided the Council with more flexibility, it has also brought additional risk. Risks are collated and monitored via a risk register and are primarily concerned with threats to income and

expenditure that would compromise the viability of the HRA Business Plan. These risks are reviewed and regularly updated.

11.2 Along with other Registered Providers of social housing, there are a number of risks which will impact upon the HRA Business Plan, of which the main risks include:

a) Cost of Living Increases

The potential impact of the increase in the cost of living could be significant on the number of households in arrears and levels of rent arrears could increase. As a result of this, it is likely that additional resources will be required in order to deal with debt recovery and additional support to help our tenants. A number of mitigations are in place to help support tenants such as debt advice and a joined up approach from the different organisations working locally.

As well as providing support, the Council will be using the data on payments and arrears to help support early intervention with households. As well as helping to reduce arrears, these mitigations will also help tenants to sustain their tenancies.

b) Impacts of National Housing Policies

The impact of a number of national policy changes, particularly the new Social Housing (Regulation) Act, are likely to impact on the service and may require additional resourcing.

c) Fire Risk on Council Tower Blocks and Other High Risk Buildings

The Grenfell Tower fire and subsequent Review of Building Regulation and Fire Safety bring a number of operational and financial risks. The costs of these will require some degree of re-prioritisation of the 30-year Business Plan. There are likely to be other impacts as result, such as impacts on the repairs budget due to additional work to communal areas; the market capacity/capability to respond to the scale of need nationally and possible inflation of costs; more intensive management of tower blocks and other high risk buildings may be required at a higher cost and further resilience within teams to respond to the volume of enquiries.

d) Interest Rate Risk

The HRA's loan portfolio is made up of fixed rate loans. Any new borrowing required to support the HRA's capital programme is likely to attract interest payments. Interest on this borrowing will be determined by current interest rates. Part of the role of treasury management is to manage the HRA's exposure to interest rate fluctuation and the risk this brings.

e) Inflation Rate Risk

The HRA Business Plan makes an assumption about the inflation rate across the life of the plan. In the short-term the inflation rate reflects the recent changes experienced and mirrors the Bank of England projections.

If the assumed inflation rate were to change, this will have an impact upon the forecast income and costs into the HRA over the 30 years; however, the impact could be positive or negative depending on whether the actual inflation rate is higher or lower than the assumed inflation rate.

f) Repairs and Maintenance

Repairs and Maintenance risks which could impact on demand include: increased voids, stock deterioration rates, increasing expectations, changes in regulations post Grenfell, and changes to the maintenance provider.

g) Responding to Climate Change

Proposed building regulations, changes to the provision of gas in homes as well as higher thermal efficiency standards which are unsupported by additional external grant funding, would place additional burden on HRA resources available for elemental investment in homes (including new homes).

An increase in the frequency of severe weather events may require unplanned urgent investment in homes and disrupt the supply of homes.

h) Delivering a higher quality housing service

HTIP is reviewing the current service model. There is a need to ensure the service is future proofed in terms of staffing, systems and processes. It is possible that further investment will be required to ensure service delivery is at the required level.

i) Reputational Risk around the cost increases planned

There is a possibility of reduced satisfaction and challenge of the Council with costs increasing ahead of inflation. This is more acute in the Sheltered Schemes as the Council seeks to reverse the historical subsidy of the services provided in them. This will be felt less by the 54% of Sheltered tenants in receipt of housing benefit. The other factor that will be communicated with residents, is that there will be increased services delivered alongside the increases in rent and charges

12. Treasury Management Strategy

12.1 The treasury management strategy determines how the HRA Business Plan will be financed and considers the income and costs involved, as well as any changes in the expected or likely costs (e.g. inflation).

12.2 The level of borrowing for capital programmes covers the new build programmes and investment in the existing stock. The level of debt follows the level of investment made.

12.3 The total amount currently borrowed primarily reflects the amount of debt incurred with the HRA account was set up in 2012 ('scheduled debt'). The Council incurs the loans through the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb).

12.4 A key issue for the HRA's treasury management strategy is to ensure there are sufficient funds available to fund the day-to-day activities and repay the debt incurred, along with any conditions or dates associated with the debt.

12.5 Since 2022 interest rates have increased significantly from prior years. Current projections are that the rates will stabilise prior to potentially reducing during 2024. A reduction in interest rates would impact favourably should the Council need to take on additional borrowing, but would likely reduce the return on any cash balances invested. During 2022/23 and 2023/24 a combination of relatively high cash balances and high interest rate has made interest on investment a significant source of additional income for the HRA. Current rates of return are not expected to continue into the future and this additional income is view as providing temporary additional benefit for the HRA.

12.6 Based on the current projected income and expenditure, the HRA will remain balanced and fully funded. The priority is to ensure that the treasury management strategy reflects the priorities within the HRA Business Plan and that appropriate decisions are taken to support this. The level of financing will continue to be reviewed to support these aims and how the approach to treasury management can support these aims.

13. Stock Investment Requirement and Financing

13.1 The table below shows the projected capital spend requirement for the Council's housing stock to both improve and maintain it over the next 10 years.

13.2 All homes within the Council's new build programme that have been completed, started on site or have been approved are included in the plan. This business plan only has approved schemes built into it, and no aspirational ones.

13.3 The expenditure assumptions within the table includes the impact of inflation on the expected programme costs.

Table 1- HRA Stock Investment and Financing

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Description	2023.24	2024.25	2025.26	2026.27	2027.28	2028.29	2029.30	2030.31	2031.32	2032.33	
Capital Expenditure	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Capital Maintenance	29,167	20,301	27,510	26,639	29,211	29,732	30,439	31,287	32,157	33,052	289,496
Decarbonisation	0	1,050	1,865	1,921	1,979	2,038	2,099	2,162	2,227	2,294	17,637
New Build	28,688	36,890	15,572	2,328	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	89,477
Total expenditure	57,855	58,241	44,947	30,888	32,190	32,770	33,539	34,449	35,385	36,346	396,610
Financing											
Capital Receipts, Reserves and Grants	(11,770)	(10,605)	(2,951)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(25,325)
Major Repairs Reserve	(17,715)	(14,244)	(11,887)	(12,541)	(11,564)	(12,132)	(9,278)	(9,680)	(6,595)	(6,525)	(112,161)
141 Receipts	(4,827)	(7,139)	(3,114)	(1,974)	(2,054)	(2,138)	(2,226)	(2,319)	(2,417)	(2,519)	(30,727)
Borrowing	(23,543)	(26,253)	(26,995)	(16,373)	(18,572)	(18,501)	(22,035)	(22,450)	(26,373)	(27,302)	(228,397)
Total financing	(57,855)	(58,241)	(44,947)	(30,888)	(32,190)	(32,770)	(33,539)	(34,449)	(35,385)	(36,346)	(396,610)
Net (over)/ under financing	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0

13.4 The HRA finances its capital programme through different sources. These include capital receipts, capital reserves, grants and borrowing. In recent years the Council has successfully secured Grant Funding from Homes England to support delivery of its new build schemes.

13.5 The HRA can borrow to finance its capital programme and not for any other reason. Borrowing assumed in the business plan reflects loan maturity of 40 years, with one fortieth of outstanding borrowing being set aside each year in reserves to repay loans on maturity. This means loans can be paid off in full after 40 years if that was the best option at that time. These changes have freed up more capacity within the new plan which will help support the aims within the HRA. This has the added benefit of allowing additional flexibility within the plan to smooth out any peaks and troughs in the profiled spend and can be amended as appropriate.

14. Financial Assumptions

14.1 The 30-year business plan has been based on the approved budget for 2023/24.

14.2 In order to plan the expenditure on the planned activity, assumptions have been made to provide the basis for the projections. These are set out in Table 2 below.

14.3 There are a number of risks that impact on the housing service and these are reported on and reviewed on a regular basis.

- Cost Inflation – and the impact on maintenance costs and development costs.
- Interest Rates – and the impact on savings and borrowings.
- Staff salaries – and the agreements made for the Council’s employees (expected to be c.5%).
- Service costs – including any significant changes in costs, such as gas and electricity costs.
- Right to Buy sales – and any variations in the expected activity that impacts on the income to the HRA.

Table 2- Financial Assumptions in the HRA Business Plan

Item	Assumption
Current Debt (23.24)	£364m
Peak Debt	£862.79m in 2052.53
Minimum HRA Balance	Maintains 5% target
Major Repairs Reserve Balance	Utilised each year to fund debt and capital
Total Debt Repayments 2024/25 to 2035/36 inclusive	£114m scheduled debt
Rent Increases	Capped 7.7% increase for 2024/25 CPI + 1% for 2025/26 CPI (2%) for the remaining years throughout plan. New tenancies re-let at (social) formula rent.
Formula Rent	Increase of 7.7% in 24/25 and CPI + 1% in 24.25 and 2% beyond
Inflation- RPI	2024/25 6%, 2025/26 3.5% 3.0% for the remainder years throughout plan
Relet Rate	4% throughout model
Voids and Bad Debts	Voids: 0.95% of gross income Bad Debts: 0.79%
Interest Rates for new borrowing	4.7% in 24/25, redcuing to 3.7% 26/27 onwards
Efficiency Savings	Savings target of 2%pa of Supervision and Management for five years starting in 2025/26 (£376k a year)
Contribution to Bad Debt Provision	£500k per annum
Rent Flexibility	Rent Flexibility applied to an additional 210 units a year from 25/26
Supported Housing Charge	Additional charge included based on 5 year straight line
Total New Build Programme	£84.7m up to 2026/27
EPCC	EPCC included to 2035 - £18m
Right to Buy RTB Sales	Assumes 6 RTB sales a Quarter - 24 a year
Other Disposals	Includes provision for 12 non-RTB Sales in 24/25 and a further 12 in 25/26

15. Financial Analysis

15.1 The financial analysis within the HRA Business Plan is focussed on the areas which are subject to external factors and can have a significant impact on the financial impact on the agreed levels of activity.

15.2 When decisions are made which have a financial impact it is prudent to analyse the impact of this on the business plan, in particular if there changes to the balances and expenditure in specific years. This will help to demonstrate the impact of this and enables a focus on the long-term planning for the service.

15.3 Sensitivity analysis is of particular importance where there are changes in costs and in particular for the following areas:

- Maintenance Costs.
- Inflation and cost of living increases.
- Rent levels.
- Service Charge costs.
- Level and cost of new developments.
- Interest rates and the cost of borrowing.
- Staff costs

15.4 Detailed analysis through the HRA Business Plan's financial model has been used to understand the impact of changes to the above elements, and be used to demonstrate that this has been tested in the delivery of the presented plan.

15.5 Forecast HRA income and expenditure allows the HRA to meet: the cost of day to day management and repairs for our housing stock; manage interest charges; the depreciation charge that funds capital works through the major repairs reserve; and top up the funding for capital works through revenue contributions. A minimum balance has been set within this financial model to ensure the HRA working balance does not go below an agreed figure. This table shows the forecast net income/ expenditure on the HRA over the first 10 years of the business plan. It indicates that the HRA can remain balanced over the period projected.

Table 3 – HRA Revenue Income and Expenditure

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Description	2023.24	2024.25	2025.26	2026.27	2027.28	2028.29	2029.30	2030.31	2031.32	2032.33	
Income	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Rental Income	(61,569)	(68,022)	(70,084)	(72,697)	(74,514)	(76,354)	(78,005)	(81,191)	(81,377)	(83,099)	(746,913)
Service charge income	(2,246)	(2,358)	(2,417)	(2,466)	(2,515)	(2,565)	(2,617)	(2,669)	(2,722)	(2,777)	(25,352)
Other Income	(1,088)	(1,142)	(1,171)	(1,194)	(1,218)	(1,243)	(1,267)	(1,293)	(1,319)	(1,345)	(12,281)
Total income	(64,903)	(71,522)	(73,673)	(76,357)	(78,248)	(80,162)	(81,889)	(85,153)	(85,418)	(87,221)	(784,545)
Expenditure											
Management	19,918	20,917	22,408	21,913	21,906	21,877	21,839	22,276	22,721	23,176	218,951
Bad debt provision	492	500	513	530	542	554	566	590	591	604	5,482
Responsive & Cyclical Repairs	19,684	19,077	20,446	20,994	21,570	22,191	23,016	23,796	24,456	25,133	220,363
Other revenue expenditure	178	187	192	196	199	203	208	212	216	220	2,011
Total expenditure	40,272	40,681	43,558	43,633	44,217	44,826	45,629	46,874	47,984	49,133	446,806
Capital financing costs											
Interest paid	11,267	11,670	12,198	12,722	13,229	13,727	14,277	14,854	15,487	16,102	135,534
Interest received	(2,042)	(213)	(226)	(258)	(227)	(214)	(276)	(327)	(384)	(430)	(4,597)
Depreciation	15,620	17,579	16,329	18,178	16,674	18,471	16,943	18,769	17,216	19,072	174,850
Capital financing costs	24,845	29,036	28,301	30,643	29,675	31,985	30,943	33,296	32,319	34,743	305,786
Appropriations											
Revenue contribution to/(from) reserves	(214)	1,806	1,814	2,081	4,356	3,352	5,317	4,984	5,115	3,345	31,953
Appropriations	-214	1,806	1,814	2,081	4,356	3,352	5,317	4,984	5,115	3,345	31,953
Net (income)/ expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

15.6 The HRA will maintain a minimum working balance reserve of 5% of turnover throughout the course of the business plan. This assumption is reflected in the reserve movements in Table 4 above.

Table 4 – HRA Working Balance

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	2023.2	2024.2	2025.2	2026.2	2027.2	2028.2	2029.3	2030.3	2031.3	2032.3
Description	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Closing working balance £000	3,058	4,863	6,327	7,508	10,555	12,133	15,214	17,411	19,178	18,515
Closing working balance as a % of turnover	5%	7%	9%	10%	13%	15%	19%	20%	22%	21%

15.7 Table 4 summarises the closing HRA working balance at the end of each year of the business plan. Post- year 10 of the business plan, the working balance reduces as funding is set aside to support the repayment of borrowing. This does not compromise the principle of a minimum working balance of 5% of turnover, which is maintained throughout the life of the business plan.

16. Conclusions.

16.1 This is an exciting time for DBC to made meaningful improvements to the lives of the residents living in our homes. There are some challenges ahead, but also an opportunity to futureproof our assets and deliver excellent resident focused services.

16.2 We cannot make all the improvements and investments we would like as the financial plan does not allow it because:

- The demand for services significantly exceeds our income and this is not sustainable
- Our income is based on rents, capped at levels set by the government
- We must produce a balanced budget by law. If we over-spend, we can fund this from reserves but this is not sustainable. HRA revenue reserve balances have reduced in recent years through use to finance the HRA capital programme and to meet revenue pressures.
- We need to build up our reserves to provide resilience for the future. Useable capital and revenue HRA reserves including the working balance totalled £7.6m at the end of 2022/23.
- We need an approach to housing provision with financial sustainability a well as customer need at its core, which will be reviewed year on year and adjusted as finances allow.
- The focus will be on protecting services and targeting them to make the most effective use of resources
- Other measures to restrict or defer works may also be necessary in the short term to deliver a balanced budget

16.3 We can however prioritise what we focus on in terms of income maximisation and cost reduction. There are a number of variables we have stress tested against the base financial plan.

These include:

Income Maximisation	Cost Reduction
Apply maximum rent increase allowed by government, currently assuming 7.7%	Less development or make it self-funding and potentially moving to a 'Dacorum Affordable' rent model

<p>Transition supported housing charges to full cost recovery over 3, 5 or 7 years to limit impact on residents (the current plan assumes cost recovery over 5 years).</p>	<p>Potentially push back the improvement work to the stock to achieve EPC 'C' to 2050 and not 2035. However, the current plan assumes investment to achieve EPC 'C' standard across HRA stock by 2035.</p>
<p>Apply rent flexibility (higher rents on relets of general needs stock) linked to improved environmental performance across the stock. The current plan assumes this flexibility is applied to 210 units a year from 2025/26.</p>	<p>Demand management measures (reducing/removing non-essential expenditure on environmental and neighbourhood works) may also be required to achieve a balanced budget.</p>
<p>Dispose of high cost voids - Target to be set for 24/25 to achieve a balanced budget and contribute to reserves to ensure future financial resilience. The current plan assumes 12 disposals per annum in 2024/25 and 2025/26.</p>	<p>The HTIP will in the medium term lead to efficiencies in service delivery via a new structure and enhanced digital capabilities.</p>

There is a need to apply as many of these as we can to achieve a sustainable position for the HRA business plan. Careful consideration has been given to the impact of the decisions on the residents.



Acquisitions (Right to Buy: Buy Back) and Disposals Policy

1 Accessibility of Document

Our aim is to make our services easy to use and accessible for everyone.

We will take steps to make any reasonable adjustments needed for you to contact us, access our policies, or any requests to provide responses in other formats.

Depending on the individual's needs, these might include:

Using larger print, or a specific colour contrast

- Giving more time than usual to provide information or comments on a complaint
- Using the telephone rather than written communication
- Communicating with a person through their representative or advocate
- Arranging a single point of contact
- Having an 'easy read' version of the document

If you would like to contact us about reasonable adjustments or alternative formats, please email edi@dacorum.gov.uk or call us on **01442 228000**

If you prefer to write to us, send your letter to:

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team
Dacorum Borough Council
The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP1 1DN

You can find information on Advocacy support here:

<https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/do-it-online/contact-us/advocacy-support>

2 What is the goal of the policy?

This policy sets out Dacorum Borough Council's (DBC's) approach to buying back properties previously sold under Right to Buy.

The policy also outlines considerations in respect of the disposal of housing properties within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – the rationale for doing so, the options appraisal considerations and the approvals process.

3 Who and what does the policy impact?

This Policy allows the Council to make best use of its assets to help create a sustainable HRA.

4 How does the policy comply with the law and other requirements?

The legislation listed below will be complied with when implementing this policy:

- [Land Compensation Act 1973](#)
- [Housing Act 1985](#)
- [Planning & Compensation Act 1991](#)
- [Home Loss Payments \(Prescribed Amounts\) \(England\) Regulations 2008](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [Data Protection Act 1998](#)
- [General Data Protection Regulations \(GDPR\) 2018](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Local Government Act 2000](#)
- [General Disposal Consent \(England\) 2003](#)

5 Supporting Policies or Procedures

1. Procedures / Guidance / Impact Assessments	2. Dependent policies / strategies
<p>This policy links to and should be read in conjunction with the following policies and strategies:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leasehold Management Policy • Acquisitions Strategy • Asset Management Strategy • Development Strategy • Housing Strategy • Private Sector Housing Strategy
<p>The following appendices form part of this policy:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 1: Repayment of Discounts: Sliding Scale • Appendix 2: Disposals Policy information • Appendix 3: Review and Change Control

6 EDI Statement

The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity. The Council has procedures in place to ensure that all individuals are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

7 Policy Statement

This policy supports the council's corporate priorities which are set out in our Corporate Plan 2020 – 2025: 'Delivering for Dacorum'.

- Ensuring economic growth and prosperity
- Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular, for those most in need
- Delivering an efficient modern council

In addition, this policy supports the aims of the Council's [Housing Strategy](#), which will be refreshed in 2024.

7.1 Right to Buy: Buy Back

If the owner bought the property under Right to Buy within the last ten years and wishes to sell it, they must first offer the property back to DBC (see [Right of First Refusal](#)).

The owner must submit an offer notice to DBC including the information outlined below (see [Submitting an Offer Notice](#)).

DBC's decision to reject or accept the offer will depend on the buy back criteria outlined below. Financial considerations will apply (see [Buy Back Criteria](#) and [Financial Considerations](#)).

DBC and the property owner must follow the given timeframes when accepting/rejecting an offer and selling the property/completing the purchase (see [Accepting/Rejecting an Offer](#) and [Completion of Purchase](#)).

If the property is offered for sale within five years of Right to Buy completion, the owner must pay back a percentage of the discount applied (see [Re-Payment of Discounts](#)).

Owners can appeal by following the Appeals Procedure (see [Appeals Procedure](#)).

7.1.1 Disposals

The Council is subject to certain constraints when it comes to selling its property. Some of these are legislative, others arise out of a general expectation that the Council must be seen to act fairly when disposing of land and property.

The Council will therefore seek to:

- Sell any property within the HRA that helps the Council achieve its agreed goals to balance the demand for social housing with the associated costs in managing and maintaining it.
- Follow the Council's approved 'Method of Disposal' that ensures that the process is fair and transparent and that the Council receives the best consideration that, in the given circumstances, can be reasonably obtained, except where it has identified a legitimate and lawful exceptional circumstance.

- Achieve the best outcome with regard to the provision of affordable housing whilst balancing the required investment in existing stock.

7.2 Right to Buy: Buy Back Policy Detail

7.2.1 Right of First Refusal

If the owner of a freehold or leasehold property sold under the Right to Buy wishes to sell their property within ten years of purchase they are bounded by the 'Right of First Refusal' and must offer the property back to their former landlord.

7.2.2 Submitting an Offer Notice

The Housing (Right of first refusal) (England) Regulations 2005 set out the procedures that owners wishing to sell their property must follow.

The owner wishing to sell the property must submit an Offer Notice to the Council, which should:

- State the wish to sell the property and give its full postal address;
- State that there is a covenant requiring the property to be offered to the Council first; and,
- Specify whether the property is a house, a flat or maisonette;

The Offer Notice must also include the following information:

- The number of bedrooms
- Details of the heating system
- Specify any improvements or structural changes which have been made since purchase
- Specify contact details: email and telephone number

The Council will send an acknowledgement of receipt within ten working days. This acknowledgement will specify the date on which the Offer Notice was received and give more details regarding the Right of First Refusal. In accordance with the [Buy Back Criteria](#), DBC will decide whether to:

- Accept the offer and purchase the property
- Accept or Reject the offer.

7.2.3 Buy Back Criteria

When considering purchasing any former Council-owned property offered for sale, the following criteria are taken into account:

- Availability of the council's annual capital budget of £1 million for property purchases.
- Ground-level access to the property.
- Whether the property is part of a communal block owned by Dacorum Borough Council.
- The risk of homelessness if the property is purchased.
- Whether purchasing the property would free up land or provide easier access to a site suitable for developing affordable housing or existing housing stock.
- Demand for the type of property offered, based on current housing needs.
- The cost of any necessary refurbishment work required to bring the property up to the [Council's Standard for Letting Empty Homes](#).
- A financial viability assessment will be undertaken to assess whether the purchase is affordable to the Council and offers value for money.

DBC will only consider properties that meet the above criteria if the council has available funds to purchase a property.

Properties will be considered on a case-by-case basis and any decision to buy back a property will be subject to approval by the Strategic Director of Housing & Property Services or an Assistant Director, in line with the Council's scheme of delegation and subject to the values that will be determined from time to time.

7.2.4 Financial Considerations

The financial resources available for this policy depend on the ability of the HRA Business Plan to fund any acquisitions.

The cost of any works required to bring the sold property up to the Council's Standard for Letting Empty Homes will be deducted from the proceeds of the sale.

7.2.5 Accepting/Rejecting an Offer

The Council will notify the owner in writing to confirm acceptance of the offer within eight weeks of receipt of the Offer Notice. The nominated valuer will value the property. The value must be agreed by both parties. If no agreement can be reached, the District Valuer will determine the value.

If DBC has not served Acceptance/Rejection notice within eight weeks of receipt of the Offer Notice, the owner may proceed with selling the property as they see fit.

If the owner has not sold the property after 12 months and then wishes to do so, they must serve a new Offer Notice to the Council. This only applies if still within ten years of the property being purchased under Right to Buy.

7.2.6 Completion of Purchase

If the Council make an offer to purchase the property, they must enter into a binding contract with the owner:

- No later than 12 weeks after the date on which the Acceptance Notice is served on the owner or
- No later than four weeks after receipt of written confirmation from the owner that they are ready to complete. (Whichever is later)

7.2.7 Re-Payment of Discounts

If the property is offered for sale within five years of Right to Buy completion (in accordance with the Housing Act 1985), the Council may demand the pay back of a percentage of the discount applied on a sliding scale (see Appendix 1). This applies whether the property is sold to the council or another party.

If the owner cannot afford to repay part or all of the discount, then the Council can exercise discretion and not demand this payment. This will be subject to certain criteria and documentary evidence. Certain transfers are exempt from the requirement to repay the discount, e.g. transfers between certain family members or a spouse.

7.2.8 Appeals Procedure

Appeals must be received within 28 days of the decision letter. Appeals in respect of how the policy and procedure have been applied, and against decisions, will be considered by the Assistant Director of Strategic Housing and Delivery, whose decision is final.

7.3 Disposals Policy Detail

7.3.1 Criteria for Assessment

The following list provides the criteria against which each property is assessed:

- The property/block is in need of major structural works to ensure the long-term stability of the structure. Examples of these works include underpinning, extensive replacement of decayed or infested structural timbers, roof deflection or instability, etc.
- The property is in need of major works to remedy penetrating or rising damp especially if part of the property is below ground i.e. a basement.
- The property is in need of major work to remove any [Housing Health and Safety Rating System \(HHSRS\)](#) hazards or asbestos-containing materials that require a high level of ongoing management in conjunction with extensive works to comply with Decent Homes provision e.g. installation of a central heating system, rewiring, new kitchen and bathroom, new windows.

- Properties with an SAP rating below 35 or those below 55 where the construction, location and design make it difficult to thermally upgrade or improve the properties in order to improve the energy efficiency and thermal performance e.g. properties which do not have mains gas supply or which are of solid wall or system built construction, or are Listed Buildings
- Properties that due to their age, design and/or location command a higher than average market value, and due to their age and condition will incur higher than average costs to maintain over the 30-year Business Plan.
- Properties which due to their original design, location and designation are no longer fit for purpose and have associated level of difficulty re-letting. These criteria may affect more than one property, for example those contained in a Cat 2 sheltered schemes, so would therefore be considered on a scheme-by-scheme basis rather than individually.
- Properties, which if they were to be demolished, provide access to an identified development site in the case that lack of access would otherwise prevent that site from being viable for development.
- Block of flats where 100% of the flats are owned by leaseholders, thereby allowing the freehold to be disposed of to reduce future liability for the Council.
- Flats within blocks where sale of the flat would make the block 100% leasehold and allow the sale of the freehold.

7.3.2 Options Appraisal

Those properties identified as fulfilling any of the criteria outlined above will be subject to a full financial assessment. The financial assessment will be considered when determining a reserve price for those properties disposed of. The assessment includes the elements detailed below and will be used to support any recommendation for disposal:

- The market valuation based upon both internal and external valuations of the property when disposed of on the open market using the services of online estate agents. Costs associated with the fees for advertising or managing the disposal will need to be considered in the assessment, along with any decant costs/homelessness payments.
- Total costs of disposal to be considered in the assessment including any fees and loss of rent in the cases where the property is being disposed of due to a higher than average market value.
- To provide a transparent process, including a fair assessment of ongoing costs if the property were to be retained. In the event that the Council were to be faced with a disposal at less than market value, great care would need to be exercised to ensure that appropriate legislation, both UK and European where appropriate is complied with and Property Services will liaise closely and at an early date with Legal Department in such cases. In particular the provisions of Local Government Act 2000 or the 2003 General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 shall be followed.

The timing of any marketing of disposals will be considered against the background of the Housing self-financing budgetary requirements together with the current state of the market.

7.3.3 Approval to Dispose of a Property

The recommendation will initially be considered by the Assistant Director of Property in consultation with other relevant Assistant Directors/Heads of Service.

In the event of the recommendations being supported by the Strategic Director of Housing & Property Services, a report will be prepared for the Portfolio Holder for Housing to seek Council authority to dispose of a property.

As set out in 7.3.1, any proposal to dispose of property at a price below open market value may require the consent of the Secretary of State under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, although such disposals will usually be exempt if they fall within 'General Consents' rules applying to any land disposal to a Housing Association.

7.4 Roles and Responsibilities

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property Services:

- To sign off any disposal from £15k up to £750k on the advice of the Chief Finance Officer and recommendation of the Strategic Director of Housing and Property Services

The Strategic Director of Housing & Property Services:

- To support the recommendation of an Assistant Director to dispose of a property.

The Assistant Director of Property Services:

- Has responsibility for the Process and the development of the Asset Management Strategy and Business Plan, which will incorporate details of the required level of disposals to support the plan.
- Monitoring the timescale and effectiveness of the policy and make recommendations where required to fulfil the objects of the Business Plan.
- Make recommendations for disposals.

The Head of Service (Housing Operations):

- Provides advice on the housing management implications of any decision to acquire or dispose of a property. Has responsibility for ensuring the Housing management system is amended to reflect the sale.

Asset Manager:

- Is responsible for conducting the financial assessment in conjunction with the Head of Financial Services and responsible for ensuring that the processes are followed in accordance with the policy and supporting procedures.

Legal Team:

- Is responsible for the drafting of the legal documentation associated with the sale of the property and for undertaking the conveyancing.

Estates Surveyors:

- Are responsible for providing the open market valuation of the properties and providing details to the Asset Manager.

8 Compliance

Any disposals or acquisitions will be included in the HRA Business Plan narrative annually.

9 Review

The current version of this policy will be held on the Council's intranet (SharePoint).

Policies and strategies are continually monitored, and reviewed either at specified intervals or in response to changes to legislation.

10 Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1

Repayment of Discounts: Sliding Scale

Property sold within one year	100% discount must be repaid
Property sold during second year	80% of discount must be repaid
Property sold during third year	60% of discount must be repaid
Property sold during fourth year	40% of discount must be repaid
Property sold during fifth year	20% of discount must be repaid
Property sold after five years or more	No repayment of discount required

The amount of discount to be repaid if the owner sells within five years of purchase will be a percentage of the value of your home when you sell it, disregarding the value of any improvements. For example, if the property was valued at £100,000 at the time of purchase and the tenant received a discount of £20,000 that means their discount was 20%.

As illustrated by the table above, if the property was valued at £120,000 at the point at which the owner wished to sell and this was within 2 years of purchase they would be required to pay back 80% of the percentage discount they received i.e £19,200 (80% of £24,000 which is 20% of £120,000).

10.2 Appendix 2

Disposals Policy Information

Document Owner	Service	Approval Body
Mark Pinnell	Property Services	Cabinet
Author	Directorate	Date of Publication:
Mark Pinnell	Housing & Property Services	January 2024
Team	Version no.	Date of Review:
	1.0	January 2026
Non-executive partners: (any team, external body contributing to policy/strategy)		
Simon Walton, Interim Head of Service – SQA		
Matt Angus, Senior Manager – Strategic Housing, Investment & Regeneration		

10.3 Appendix 3:

List of Version Control

Revision Date	Previous Revision Date	Previous Revision Level	Summary of Changes	Approved By (e.g. named officer, SLT, Cabinet)	Next Review Date
DD/MM/YY	DD/MM/YY	0.0	What has changed? E.g. new personnel or positions mentioned, or substantive policy changes.	List all that apply	MM/YY
Add rows as necessary					

This Policy has amalgamated the standalone disposals policy with acquisitions. It is therefore a new policy and will be amended above as it evolves over time.



HRA Rent & Other Charges Policy

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1 Accessibility of Document

Our aim is to make our services easy to use and accessible for everyone.

We will take steps to make any reasonable adjustments needed for you to contact us, access our policies, or any requests to provide responses in other formats.

Depending on the individual's needs, these might include:

Using larger print, or a specific colour contrast

- Giving more time than usual to provide information or comments on a complaint
- Using the telephone rather than written communication
- Communicating with a person through their representative or advocate
- Arranging a single point of contact
- Having an 'easy read' version of the document

If you would like to contact us about reasonable adjustments or alternative formats, please email edi@dacorum.gov.uk or call us on **01442 228000**

If you prefer to write to us, send your letter to:

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team
Dacorum Borough Council
The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP1 1DN**

You can find information on Advocacy support here:

<https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/do-it-online/contact-us/advocacy-support>

2 What is the goal of the policy?

This policy is designed to set out the Council's approach to rent setting across its rented homes, within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

3 Who and what does the policy impact?

The Housing Revenue Account is the statutory account for Income and expenditure relating to the management and maintenance of local authorities housing stock. As law dictates, this account is separate from the General Fund (which is used for other fiscal purposes). This policy impacts on Council tenants of Dacorum Borough Council.

4 How does the policy comply with the law and other requirements?

The Council sets rent levels in line with central government policy and the Rent Standard. This policy covers the charges for tenants living in a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) property.

- Housing Act 1985 Section 24.
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.
- Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 (a) Section 197.
- Guidance on rents for social housing - Department for Communities and Local Government, May 2014.
- Rent Standard Guidance - Homes and Communities Agency, April 2015.
- Social Housing Rents (Exceptions and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2016.
- Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.
- Direction on the Rent Standard 2019.
- Rent Standard 2020 - Regulator of Social Housing, 1 April 2020.
- Rent Standard 2023 – Regulator of Social Housing , 1 April 2023 and associated Rent Policy Statement

5 Supporting Policies or Procedures

N/A

6 EDI Statement

The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity. The Council has procedures in place to ensure that all individuals are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

7 Policy Statement

The Council sets rent levels in line with central government policy and the Rent Standard. This policy covers the charges for tenants living in a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) property.

We offer a range of accessible ways for tenants to pay their rent and charges. We also offer several ways for tenants to check their current rent balance and we will send a printed statement on request. Information about paying rent, paying online and setting up a direct debit is available on the Council's website.

This policy is designed to set out the Council's approach to rent setting across its rented homes, within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The Council will ensure that it meets the requirements set out in the revised Rent Standard which came into effect on 1 April 2023. The Council must ensure that we understand and follow the requirements of the Rent Standard while ensuring affordability for our tenants and maximising income.

Failure to set rents correctly would put the Council at risk of non-compliance with rent and data quality requirements as set out by the Regulator of Social Housing ('RSH'), and impact on our ability recover rents and to maximise income, putting the services we provide to our residents at risk. We could also be at risk of breach of contract for non-compliance with the requirements of existing tenancy agreements.

This policy is overseen and implemented by the Housing Income Manager.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if there is a change in government policy or the Rent Standard.

Aim of the policy

The aim of this policy is to outline:

- How rent levels are set for the HRA's properties, including formula rents, affordable rents and the use of rent flexibility.
- How service charges and other charges are set.
- How an under recovery of service charges will be addressed.
- How heating charges from communal heating systems will be set.
- Guidelines for issuing refunds when tenants have not received the level of service covered by the service charge.

This policy contributes to the council's priority of "providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need", which is set out in the Corporate Plan.

Definitions

The following definitions are used in the policy:

- **Social housing** is low cost rental accommodation as defined in section 69 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. Social housing is let at a Social Rent (also often known as formula rent or target rent), which is based on a calculation derived from a 'formula' set by government and is substantially lower than an equivalent market rent (exclusive of service charges) or at an Affordable Rent, which is set at up to 80% of the equivalent local market rent and is inclusive of service charges. Properties are not permitted to be converted to another rent type, even on re-let without the appropriate permission and a focus on supporting the development of new homes.
- **Formula Rent (Social Rent)** is calculated from a government formula by using 30% of the property's relative value (based back to 1999), 70% of the relative local income levels (based back to 1999) and applying a weighting based on the number of bedrooms so that smaller properties will have lower rents. Information on how to apply the calculations is detailed on the Government's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/rent-standard
- **Affordable Rent** can only be charged where a property has been provided under an agreed housing supply delivery agreement between the Council and the Secretary of State. No Affordable Rent can be set higher than the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) which is the maximum amount of housing benefit available for a property of that size (in terms of bedroom numbers).
- **Rent Flexibility Level** allows Registered Providers (RPs) to have some discretion over the Social Rent set for individual properties, which takes into account local factors. This allows RPs to set rents at up to 5% above formula rent for general needs properties and 10% for supported housing if there is a clear rationale for doing so.

Policy Statement(s)

The Council will follow Government policy when setting rents, service charges and other charges for the HRA properties.

All existing homes are set at a Social Rent and checks are in place to ensure that no overcharging occurs.

The Council may apply rent flexibility to general needs tenancies and Supported Housing tenancies at 105% and 110% respectively.

The Council may apply affordable rents in new developments to support the funding of these schemes or in existing properties (with the appropriate agreement of the RSH). Where this is the case, Affordable Rents will not exceed the lower of 80% of gross market rent (including service charges) or Local Housing Allowance.

The Council will not implement any discretionary means-tested rent setting.

Where applicable, we will charge tenants the actual cost of the services charged through a service charge. Service charges are charged in addition to the rent to meet the costs of additional services that are provided and which are met via a separate service charge.

The cost of heating recharged to residents through the service charge at those sites with a communal heating system will either be based on actual use per property (determined by a metered system) or on an-equally-shared rate.

The Council will recharge tenants for any repairs, clearances and other costs where the cause of this is due to a tenant doing something or not doing something that causes the Council to incur expenditure. This includes (but is not limited to): rechargeable repairs, void clearances, fly tipping and the removal of items from communal areas. This is in line with the Council's tenancy agreement.

Rent increases and setting rent levels

The Council will follow government guidelines and policy when it comes to setting rents for our properties.

Rent increases on general needs properties and supported housing::

Rent increases are limited to the Consumer Price Index (CPI as at September of the previous year + 1%). This limit is subject to a cap, when applicable. This cap is not applicable to supported housing. The rent standard policy dictates that when calculating rent increases, it should take into consideration local market rates. The formula is in place until 2025 when it will be reviewed accordingly.

Rent setting for properties becoming vacant (with an EPC rating of C & above as of 01/04/2024).

For new build developments the rent will be set to formula rent levels in line with the Social Housing Rents (Exceptions and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2016, with rent flexibility applied as follows:

- 105% of target rent for general needs properties. This reflects the investment required by the Council to deliver these new homes. In addition, new homes meet the updated building standards for energy efficiency and are expected to reduce the relative costs for tenants compared to the Council's older housing stock.
- 110% of target rent for supported housing properties. This reflects the investment required by the Council to deliver these new homes and the additional features that are provided to support the needs of tenants.

Valuations will be obtained for all new homes using a method recognised by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

The Council also reserves the right to incorporate affordable rent tenancies within new development schemes to maximise scheme viability and promote sustainable communities. Further details are set out below.

Exceptions to this policy

The legal exceptions to the above approach include the following tenancy changes:

- Successions or assignments.
- Mutual Exchanges.

Affordable Rent Properties

Affordable Rent properties are accommodation which Homes England or the Secretary of State have agreed can be let at an Affordable Rent (including service charges).

Affordable Rents are higher than Social Rents. The council will enter into agreements with Homes England to build new homes at Affordable Rent to help fund investment in new council housing where it is appropriate to do so. At present, Dacorum Borough Council do not provide any affordable rented properties.

Conversion of Social Rent properties to Affordable Rent

A Social Rent property may be converted to Affordable Rent where it is agreed by Homes England or the Secretary of State.

Where appropriate to support the development of new homes, the Council will seek to enter into agreements with Homes England or the Secretary of State to convert existing general needs properties from Social Rent to Affordable Rent as they become vacant to help fund the construction of new council homes.

Property Valuations

Valuations for initial rent setting will be made in accordance with a method recognised by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in “Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Valuation – Professional Standards” (known as the Red Book).

When tenancies come up for re-issue or re-let, the Council will seek adequate comparable properties to re-set rents using a desktop review of recent transactions.

If comparable rents are not readily available the Council will commission a full valuation.

Rent Charging

Each property has an annual rent charge based on 52 (or 53) weeks of the year.

Currently the Council charges the annual rent charge based on 52 weeks over 48 weeks and 53 weeks (leap year) over 49 weeks, where there are a maximum of 4 weeks where a charge is not levied and these are referred to as “rent free” weeks.

Tenants paying by Direct Debit are required to make 12 equal monthly payments (each equivalent to four weeks' rent) so do not have a separate "rent free" period.

The Council may review the use of this approach and will take into account feedback from tenants and the agencies who support tenants with financial and debt issues.

Service charges

Service charges reflect additional services which are provided on an estate, in a block or to an individual property.

Service charges are limited to covering the cost of services provided to an estate, block or property, and ensure the charge reflects the service provided to tenants and any administration costs that are incurred in delivering this.

We aim to ensure our approach is transparent and an overview of service charges will be displayed in the offer letters at the start of the tenancy and in the annual rent and service charge review letter that is sent to all tenants.

We will set charges by taking into account the full cost of the service provided. Details of how each charge is allocated will be available on the Council's website and a copy can be requested by post.

Service charges to tenants will be fixed and not reconciled at the end of the financial year, therefore no adjustments will be made the following year where estimates are used (e.g. electricity charges).

Service charges will be reviewed annually. Where there is expected to be a significant increase to tenants the Council may stagger the increase over more than one year.

Where the service charge income from an estate, block or property is not covering the costs incurred, the Council may increase the service charge by applying the CPI + 1% formula to help recover the income. Any under recovery on service charges impacts on the amount of rental income available to cover services and the investment in the housing stock.

Where new or revised services are introduced, and an additional charge may need to be made, the Council will consult with tenants. If a change to the service level is implemented, tenants will be informed in writing, with at least one months' notice prior to any changes to an existing charge or implementation of a charge for a new service.

Communal Heating Systems

Where there is a communal heating system that services individual dwellings, tenants will be recharged the cost of energy used. There are two main methods that the Council will use to achieve this:

- Billing for the actual cost incurred for the heating used in the property by the tenant. This will be evidenced through the metering system used.

- Billing for a proportion of the heating cost incurred in the block. Please note the heating of communal areas is included in the service charge (as a Utility) and is eligible for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.

Recharges

The Council will take action to minimise any unnecessary costs being incurred by ensuring that tenants meet the full cost of any works required as a result of action, neglect or an accident involving a tenant, their household or a visitor.

The cost of this work will be charged to the tenant at cost plus an administration fee.

Examples of works that we will recharge to a tenant include (but are not limited to):

- Damage to fixtures and fittings.
- Clearance of items from communal spaces.
- Toilet or sink blockages caused by inappropriate waste.
- Clearing a home at the end of a tenancy.
- Breaking into a property to carry out essential safety checks or repairs.

Refunds

Our aim is to fully deliver the services our residents pay us to provide. We acknowledge, however, that we may sometimes fail to deliver a service in line with the service charge. We will always aim to resolve any problems initially and this may include providing an enhanced service where appropriate.

Where this is not possible - and in exceptional cases only - a credit for an amount not spent will be given on tenants' rent accounts. Any refunds would be credited to the tenant's rent account at the start of the following financial year.

8 Consultation and Review

The Council's Housing & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HCOSC) and Tenant and Leaseholder Committee (TLC) have been consulted on this policy and their comments have been taken into account when producing it.

The current version of this policy will be held on the Council's intranet (SharePoint) alongside supporting information, such as procedure guidance or impact assessments. Policies and strategies are continually monitored, and reviewed at appropriate intervals.

Policies and other key documents intended to be viewed publicly are published on the Council's website. If a policy has been updated or reviewed, these changes will be shown in the website copy. Internal policies are stored on the Council's intranet (SharePoint) alongside supporting information. All policies may be viewed on request.

9 Appendix

9.1 Appendix 1 Policy Information

Document Owner Dacorum Borough Council	Service Housing Operations	Approval Body HCOSC
Author Raj Patel	Directorate Housing & Property Services	Date of Publication: January 2024
Team Housing Income	Version no. 1.0	Date of Review: June 2026
Non-executive partners: (any team, external body contributing to the policy/strategy) N/A		



9.2 Appendix 2 List of Version Control

1. Revision Date	2. Previous Revision Date	3. Previous Revision Level	4. Summary of Changes	5. Approved By (e.g. named officer, SLT, Cabinet)	6. Next Review Date
02/01/24	01/07/22	0.0	Adoption of corporate policy template	D Welsh, Strategic Director	06/26



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Draft Interim Asset Management Strategy
Date:	17 th January 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Simy Dhyani, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Draft Interim Asset Management Strategy Appendix 2 – Draft action plan
Background papers:	N/A
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

<p>Report Author / Responsible Officer</p> <p>Mark Pinnell, Assistant Director, Property (Interim)</p> <p>Helen McGregor, Asset Manager (Interim)</p> <p> </p> <p>Mark.pinnell@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228731 (ext. 2731)</p> <p>Helen.mcgregor@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228550 (ext. 2550)</p>
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Corporate Priorities	
	<p>A clean, safe and enjoyable environment</p> <p>Building strong and vibrant communities</p> <p>Ensuring economic growth and prosperity</p> <p>Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need</p> <p>Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery</p> <p>Climate and ecological emergency</p>

Wards affected	All
Purpose of the report:	To provide an update with progress on developing a draft Interim Asset Management Strategy with associated action plan for the Council.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	Approve the Draft Interim Asset Management Strategy
Period for post policy/project review:	

1 Purpose

To provide an update for SLT on the development of a draft interim Asset Management Strategy for DBC.

2 Background

The social housing sector is facing a period of rapid change that will fundamentally reshape what we do and how we deliver strategic asset management services in the future.

There is more focus on, and wider expectations of, the social housing sector than ever before. Many residents are understandably worried about feeling safe in their home and neighbourhood, problems with damp and mould, rising energy bills and the cost of living crisis. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 brings new Consumer Standards for social housing, and the Regulator of Social Housing is taking a more active role in holding providers of social housing to account for their performance in delivering core landlord services.

Policy and regulation are requiring stronger governance and accountability not only to central government but also to residents. The Building Safety Act 2022 builds on the recommendations within Dame Judith Hackett’s independent review following the Grenfell Tower tragedy bringing new duties for housing providers. More broadly, government targets for the UK to become net zero carbon places the requirement on social housing landlords to decarbonise homes, with a current target of all properties meeting Energy Performance Band C by 2030.

We expect further requirements and expectations to emerge during and beyond the life of this interim strategy. This includes an updated Decent Homes Standard which is likely to set out more stringent requirements in key areas including damp and mould, disrepair, and thermal performance of properties

DBC has aging portfolio of homes, the majority of which were built in the years post WWII. There is currently a mismatch between the expenditure required to maintain the council housing stock in good condition and the income available through the ring fenced HRA. In addition to this challenge there are the requirements and costs associated with decarbonisation. The financial shortfall is further exacerbated by the 7% rent cap in the face of higher inflation, and by the increased cost of borrowing due to high interest rates.

3 Current position

With these challenges in mind, we need to better understand how our social housing stock performs. In response to this the Council have recently invested in this area and through the implementation of the ARK Strategic Asset Performance (ASAP) stock grading model, which combines multiple data sources to assess the performance of our assets.

The model came into operation of the 19th of October 2023 and informs us of the net present value (NPV) of each property and provides a sustainability rating which will help inform our investment decision making. We are also working with ARK to develop an ‘options appraisal tool’ so that we can model the impact of different approaches to our less sustainable properties. This moves away from the traditional ‘it costs a lot consider disposal’ to an

approach of modelling options such as investment v income, change of use, change of rent model through to outright sale.

To ensure that the ASAP model and options appraisal tool provide accurate and helpful insight we need to ensure that they are fed with accurate and up to date data from our 5-year rolling stock condition survey programme. Our 40% survey with data cloned to other similar homes has given us a good indicative view of the investment needs of our portfolio, however we must continue to capture survey data for the remaining 60% of our homes so that we can confidently make the right decisions and plans. In addition, we will be commencing a rolling 5 year programme of EPCs from 2024, to ensure that we have accurate data to support decarbonisation planning.

Whilst the data we gather matures and we gain a better understanding of asset performance we have developed an interim Asset Management Strategy (AMS) covering the next 2 years. This approach allows time for the council to better understand the current turbulent social housing landscape and embed a whole organisation approach in this area.

The strategy is being developed in tandem with the HRA business plan refresh and the new Housing Strategy as these are fundamentally interlinked.

The development of the strategy has been influenced by:

- An Asset Management Priorities Survey of 178 resident
- Asset Management stakeholders workshop to review an initial strawman document with DBC Managers and Leaders
- 1:1 conversations with relevant stakeholders
- Review of the draft action plan by HSLT
- The following documents
 - The Corporate Plan Draft Decarbonisation Strategy
 - Emerging Housing Strategy
 - Commercial Strategy
 - HTIP Plan and Programme
 - Draft Damp and Mould policy
 - Cabinet Report – Strategic Asset Review – June 2023

4 Approach

Appendix 1 - An initial draft of the strategy is provided for comment. The Interim AMS is being developed in tandem with the HRA business plan refresh and the Housing strategy and aligns longer term objectives with corporate strategy.

The AMS document is purposely entitled 'Foundations for the Future' which plays to the interim rationale previously articulated in this paper. The strategy is constructed around 6 key headings;

1. Putting residents at the heart of everything we do
2. Ensuring efficient, effective, and modern services
3. Providing good quality, safe and affordable homes
4. Responding to the climate emergency by reducing carbon emissions
5. Investing wisely to ensure our homes and neighbourhoods are fit for the future
6. A sustainable long-term financial plan

For each area the relevant background, challenges and opportunities have been shared.

The strategy then sets out the commitments that will be delivered between 2024-2026 to address the challenges, leverage the opportunities and set the foundations needed for the sustainable delivery of our key priorities.

Appendix 2- A draft action plan has been developed to support the strategy with dates and responsibilities, this will continue to evolve as the strategy is further developed over the coming months.

Key dates for the approval of the strategy are articulated in Table 1

Table 1

Action	Date
Draft Strategy presented to SLT with any feedback from HSLT incorporated	13/12/23
Draft Strategy presented to PH	21/12/23
Draft Strategy presented to SLT/PHG	04/01/24
Strategy presented to TLC	January 2024 (TBC)
Draft Strategy presented to OSC Chair	22/01/24
Draft Strategy presented to OSC	26/01/24
Interim Strategy presented to Cabinet for approval	29/02/24

5 Financial Considerations

The interim strategy highlights the funding gap in the HRA business plan and commits to identifying ways to close this gap during the 2-year life of the strategy.

6 Risk

The adverse financial environment, significant costs of achieving net zero targets, cost of maintaining older properties and reduction of ‘real terms’ income all create significant risk in creating a financial sustainable asset management strategy. The proposed 2 year interim strategy is intended to mitigate this risk by enabling a 2 year period in which DBC can gather and use asset data and business intelligence to plan solutions that increase the viability of the HRA and business plan enable an appropriate level of investment in the housing portfolio to ensure that it remains fit for the future and meets the needs and aspirations of our current and future residents.

7 Options and alternatives considered

This document is required for statutory and/or regulatory purposes.

8 Consultation

The Tenant and Leaseholder Committee will be consulted on the report and their feedback taken into account.

9 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

10 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

The Community Impact of adopting this Policy will be positive.

There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

11 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

Delivering the Council’s strategic priority of tackling climate change forms a key part of the strategy.

12 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

There are no Council infrastructure implications arising from this report.

13 Conclusions

The interim Asset Management Strategy (AMS) will cover the next 2 years. This allows time for the Council to better understand the current turbulent social housing landscape and embed a whole organisation approach in this area.

The strategy is being developed in tandem with the HRA business plan refresh and the new Housing Strategy as these are fundamentally interlinked with our approach to housing asset management and must support each other in delivering the Council's corporate objectives.



Foundations for the Future

Interim Housing Asset Management Strategy

2024-2026



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Foreword

Our two-year Interim Housing Asset Management Strategy shares our strategic priorities for our homes and property services.

We set out the actions we will take to enable us to navigate challenges confidently and make wise decisions about investment in homes and neighbourhoods to deliver positive outcomes for our residents and communities.

Name, Title

Executive Summary

Our interim Housing Asset Management strategy sets out our six key priorities. For each priority, we share the emerging challenges and opportunities for the Council and the actions that we are committing to deliver between 2024-2026. This strategy is supported by an action plan to ensure we can achieve these aims, both now and going forward.

-  Putting residents at the heart of everything we do
-  Ensuring efficient, effective, and modern services
-  Providing good quality, safe and affordable homes
-  Responding to the climate emergency by reducing carbon emissions
-  Investing wisely so our homes and neighbourhoods are fit for the future
-  A sustainable long-term financial plan

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We know that we need to continue to improve the quality of the homes that we manage, and ensure that they are fit for the future. Our homes must meet the changing needs of our communities and become more energy-efficient to keep bills low for residents, and combat climate change.

We must respond to the new consumer standards introduced by the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, and ensure that we provide effective and modern property maintenance services that work for our residents.

The financial environment is challenging; rent caps are leading to reduced income, high inflation is causing increased costs, and significant expenditure is needed on our homes to achieve energy efficiency targets. To address these challenges, our interim strategy focusses on increasing our stock condition data and developing our decision-making framework. This will enable us to make wise choices about when, where and how to best invest in our homes and neighbourhoods whilst resources are limited and also create a sustainable long-term financial plan.

A cornerstone of our strategy is to put residents at the heart of our decisions by employing a co-design approach. During the life of this two-year interim strategy, we will work with tenants and leaseholders to co-design a ten-year asset management strategy underpinned by reliable data, a clear approach for investment decisions and a robust financial plan. This will provide firm foundations for delivering our six priorities in the years to come.

Drivers for Change

The past few years have seen change on an unprecedented scale across society. Looking to the future, the social housing sector faces further challenges that will drive us to fundamentally reshape what we do and how we will deliver strategic asset management services.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 brings new Consumer Standards for social housing, and the Regulator of Social Housing will be more actively hold providers of social housing to account for their performance in delivering core landlord services, with an increased focus on accountability to residents

Over the lifetime of this strategy, we will see changes that will drive a need for increased investment in our homes. These include increased expectations in terms of building safety, new minimum housing standards, a zero-tolerance approach to damp and disrepair and the imperative to respond to the climate emergency by reducing our homes' carbon footprint.

External factors such as political and economic uncertainty may also affect our ability to invest sufficiently to meet future standards. Importantly, we need to respond to concerns about rising energy bills, the cost of living crisis and how this impacts our residents, particularly the most vulnerable. We are also seeing an increased media and societal spotlight on the social housing sector.

We recognise the importance of making best use of our stock to meet the housing needs and aspirations of local people. This means adapting homes to meet residents' needs, improving our performance on re-letting empty homes and taking opportunities to build new Council homes - for example where assets are identified as poorly-performing.



Putting residents at the heart of everything we do

We are committed to putting residents at the heart of everything we do so that our services meets the needs of our tenants and leaseholders and reflects their priorities. We already have a number of routes in place by which residents can be involved in influencing decisions and shaping services:

- Tenant & Leaseholder Committee
- Supported Housing Forum
- Tenant Improvement Grant Panel

Block Champions

In developing this strategy, we have begun community engagement to understand our residents' top priorities for improvements to their homes and neighbourhoods over the coming years.

Our recent resident priorities survey completed by 187 residents showed a range of asset management priorities that were important to residents, with the most common three being:

"Getting day-to-day repairs done"

"Safety in the home - gas, electricity, lifts etc."

"Facilities- kitchens and bathrooms"

We also asked residents to tell us their top priority and why. These more detailed responses showing strong links to comfort and mental wellbeing of the household and the individual. With phrases like "peace of mind" "need to feel safe" "mental health"

Residents' responses to the question "What is your top priority Asset Management Priority and why?"

"Getting day-to-day essential repairs done promptly and well-executed is most important to me for the reasons of safety, convenience and ongoing peace of mind."

"Safety in the home as I am now elderly and need to feel safe and secure."

"Local communities and green spaces as I feel it is beneficial to people's mental health and can be a social thing too"

"The energy & environmental performance of homes because it is already very expensive to run a home due to the current economic situation."

"Design and layout - It's very important to be comfortable in your home with the right amount of space for everything you need"

"A functional home is very important especially for me who is a parent of a special needs child."

Putting residents at the heart of everything we do

We recognise that - although the properties we manage are the Council's 'assets' - they are also our residents' homes

Around half of our tenants have lived in their property for over ten years*, and 75% of our tenants plan to stay in their current home for as long as possible.
(*Resident asset management priorities survey June 2023)



Our residents possess invaluable local knowledge, lived experiences and unique perspectives, making their input essential to shaping the future of our housing assets. It is crucial that residents are at the heart of our decision making. We will work collaboratively with residents through a co-design approach to ensure residents' priorities are addressed.

In Asset Management decisions we need to consider multiple and often competing priorities. This could be needs of existing and future residents, or multiple residents within a block of flats or wider neighbourhood area, including both tenants and leaseholders. Co-design will help us to navigate these decisions in a way that delivers positive outcomes for individuals and communities.

To put residents at the heart of everything we do we will:

- Co-design our long term Asset Management Strategy with residents and elected members.
- Co-design a Dacorum 'Fit for the Future' home standard, and consider to what extent we develop a fixed standard for every home or personalised approach based on the specific priorities of a household and their diverse needs.
- Co-create area improvement plans with our residents for their local neighbourhood.

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern services

Asset Management involves delivering the following services to keep properties continuously well maintained:

Repairs We mend or replace existing fixtures and fittings that are have become unsafe or are not working.

Planned Works We plan and deliver replacement and improvement programmes to keep our properties in good condition. These include replacement of windows, doors, kitchens, bathrooms, roofs and heating systems as well as redecoration of communal areas and upgrade work to estates.

Decarbonisation Works We have begun to deliver planned programmes of decarbonisation work supported by the government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

Adaptations We deliver adaptations such as wet rooms and stair lifts to support residents to live in their homes as their needs and mobility change. Referrals for this services are made by the County Council's Occupational Therapy team.

Empty homes We complete work to bring our empty properties up to our agreed lettings standard so that they can be quickly re-let to new tenants.

Asset Compliance We carry out regular safety checks and risk assessment within homes and the common areas of blocks of flats, carrying out any actions necessary to ensure that we continue to meet all current regulatory standards.



Ensuring efficient, effective and modern services

The Council's Housing Transformation and Improvement Project (HTIP) is currently in progress. This project transformation programme aims to improve the lives of tenants and leaseholders through the provision of excellent housing services and homes that they are proud to live in. Within the programme is a review of the structure and function of the teams involved in the delivery of Asset Management services to develop a new Target Operating Model that improves service standards.

Our Total Asset Management (TAM) contract for carrying out repairs and planned maintenance and investment works is due to end in 2026, which provides an opportunity to procure fit-for-purpose, value for money solutions that align with our strategic priorities.

Our Asset Management software "MRI Asset Management" has significant capability that we are not fully using. Leveraging the potential within this existing software system will support us in the effective and efficient delivery of asset compliance, stock condition surveys, works planning, mobile data access and document management.

To ensure efficient, effective and modern services we will:

- Complete the HTIP Project and implement a new operating model that increases customer satisfaction.
- Develop a workforce plan to attract, retain and develop our teams to ensure they have the skills we need.
- Focus on 'what residents want' and involve residents in the specification, procurement and on-going oversight of our repairs and planned works services.
- Use modern technology to improve resident's experience of interacting with us.
- Fully utilise the capabilities of our MRI Asset software to support Asset Compliance delivery and Asset Investment decision making.
- Provide support to ensure Councillors understand their accountabilities and collectively have the knowledge to provide clear leadership and effective governance of our housing asset and repair activities.

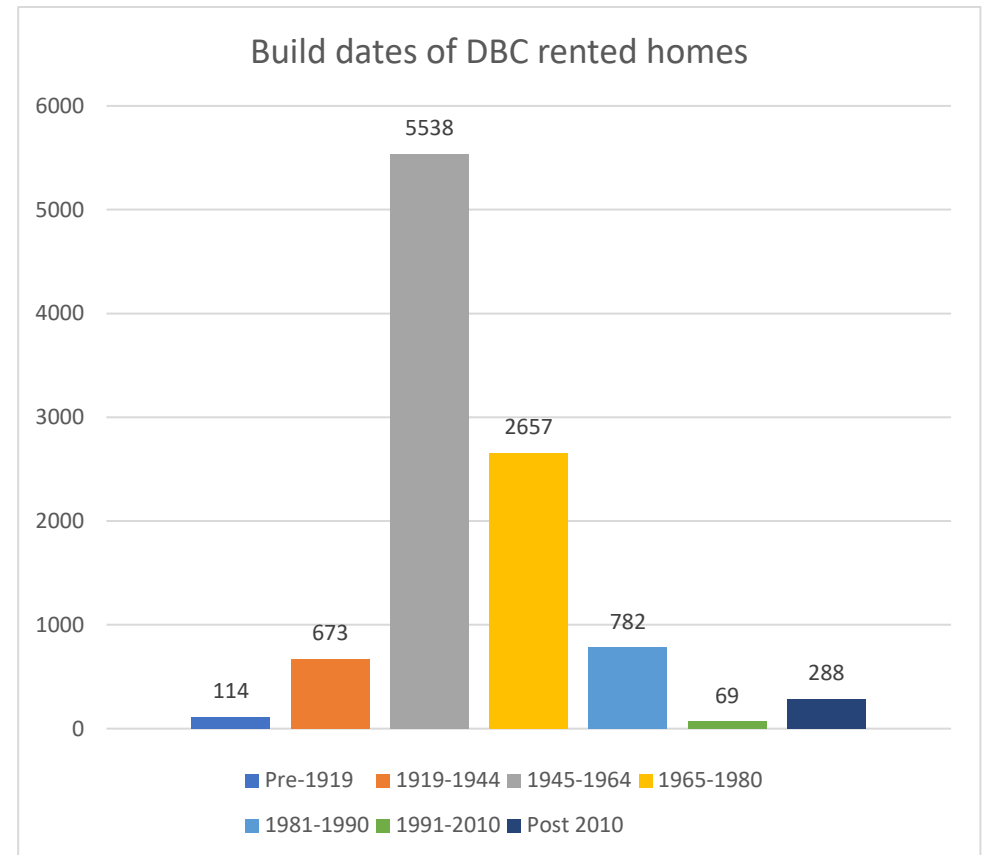
Providing good quality, safe and affordable homes

Dacorum Borough Council manages around 10,200 rented homes and the freehold for around 1,800 leasehold flats. Most homes are located within Hemel Hempstead, with around 2,500 in surrounding smaller towns and villages. Our rented homes are diverse a mix of houses, flats, maisonettes & bungalows with about half being houses. Within our portfolio we also manage supported accommodation for older residents, and temporary accommodation for people experiencing homelessness.

The age of the portfolio varies; from homes built pre-1900s to new housing developments completed during the last 12 months. However, just over half of our homes were built between 1945 and 1964 and a further quarter between 1965 and 1980. This ageing portfolio needs an ongoing programme of repairs, maintenance and improvement work to ensure that it continues to meet current standards and the evolving needs of our residents.

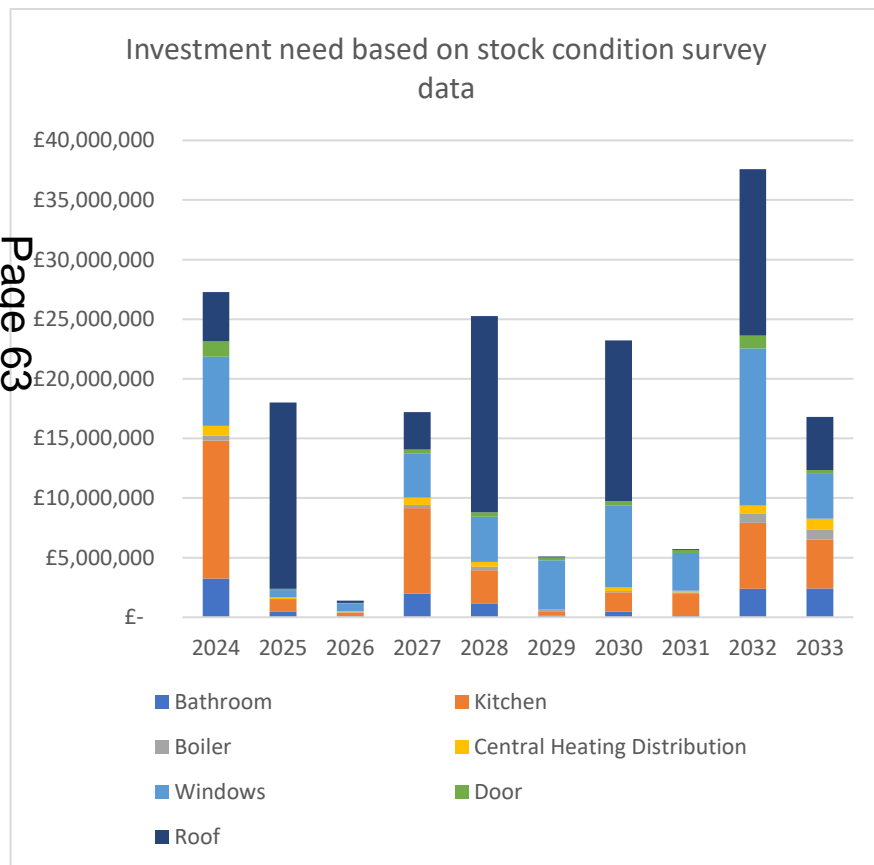
Our stock surveys have identified that around 9% of our homes require work to bring them up to the government's Decent Homes Standard. We are delivering a 'catch up' programme to be completed by March 2024 ensure that these are quickly brought up to the required standard.

Many of our properties are over 60 years old and prone to higher maintenance requirements. This ageing infrastructure presents challenges in terms of addressing maintenance issues promptly, ensuring the safety and well-being of residents, and complying with regulatory standards. We need to ensure that our portfolio is sustainable for us to maintain into the future.



Providing good quality, safe and affordable homes

Our stock condition survey data tells us the work that we should consider for each home during the coming years, the graph below shows the amount of investment needed in property components over the next 10 years with roofs, kitchens, windows and bathrooms showing the highest spend requirements.



Our 2 Year Investment Plan

Over the coming 2 years we will continue to invest in maintaining and improving the quality of our homes. Focussing on maintaining Decent Homes standard, and addressing the energy performance of our portfolio.

We will be continuing to improve our data, assess priorities and refine our programme of work to ensure that we invest in the right measures for the right home.

To provide safe, good quality and affordable homes we will:

- Identify and complete all outstanding Decent Homes work to achieve 100% decency, and continue to maintain this.
- Ensure all homes are safe by continuing to take a robust approach to managing all building safety, legal and regulatory requirements.
- Deliver a 2 year planned programme of capital improvement work

Responding to the climate emergency by reducing carbon emissions

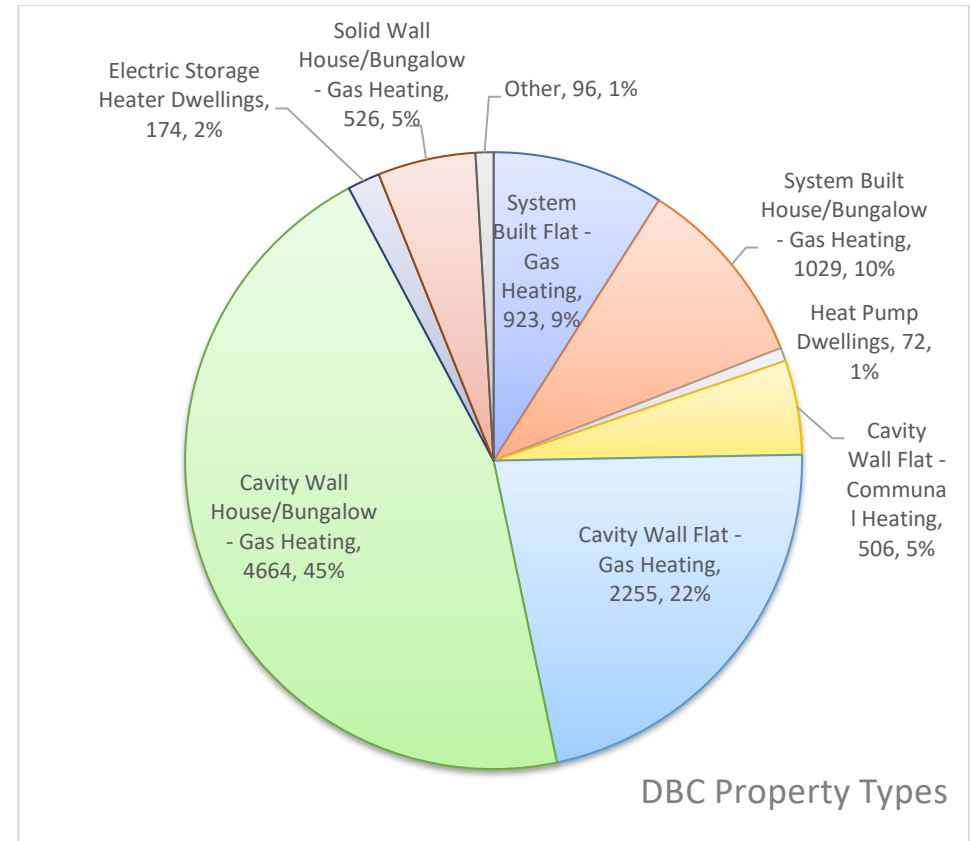
In 2019, the UK Government declared a climate and ecological emergency. This followed concerns about the increasing rate of man-made climate change. The UK government has set legally binding targets to meet net zero carbon by 2050.

In response to the 2019 UK Government Climate Emergency Declaration, the Council declared a subsequent Dacorum Borough Council Climate Emergency and published a strategy to deliver change at all levels to mitigate the consequences of climate change. A commitment was made to having a net-zero Council housing stock by 2050.

We have around 7,000 homes that require an estimated £19M investment to upgrade them to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) level C to achieve the government target of all rented properties being EPC C by 2035 (2030 for the most 'fuel poor' households). We have resources available to fully meet this target and plan to target those most fuel poor households first and aim to bring this target forward, should additional resources become available.

Further work will be needed to achieve the subsequent target for all our homes to be net zero by 2050. It's currently estimated to achieve net zero for all homes will require total additional expenditure of £255N

Within our portfolio we have a variety of different property archetypes of property which will require different types of solutions to achieve EPC C and net zero. The majority of our homes are cavity wall properties and but 19% of our homes are system built properties of various types including cross wall construction, and pre-cast concrete panel - these non-traditional construction types are likely to require bespoke solutions to achieve energy performance targets.



Responding to the climate emergency by reducing carbon emissions

We intend to take a fabric first approach to reducing the energy demand on our homes by improving insulation levels, then subsequently installing renewable technology such as air source heat pumps, and solar PV to further reduce carbon reliance, and will seek to use grant funding where available.

It is important that we have up to date information about the energy performance of our portfolio to inform our decision making. From 2024 we will be carrying out a rolling programme of 2000 new EPCs a year. Over the next 2 years we will start to use this data to understand the nature of the work that will be needed to each of our property archetypes so that we can plan, procure and mobilise programmes of work to deliver this.



To respond to the climate emergency by reducing carbon emissions we will:

- Complete 4000 new EPCs to provide up to date data about the energy performance of our homes
- Develop a road map to achieve net zero backed by a viable financial plan.
- Develop a planned programme of work to achieve EPC C for all Council homes by 2035. (2030 for the most 'fuel poor' households)
- Actively seek grant funding for decarbonisation and retrofit programmes.
- Integrate our net zero retrofit works programmes into void property and capital investment works.
- Ensure staff are equipped successfully develop and deliver larger scale decarbonisation programmes by building on the learning from our SHDF projects and investing in further pilots to improve our retrofit knowledge and skills.
- Work with Herts LEP and local colleges to support the building of local skills to help scale up decarbonisation programme delivery.
- Identify learning and adopt approaches from others - acting as 'fast followers' to accelerate learning and capacity building.
- Play our part in Dacorum's Climate Action Network, (Dacorum CAN) to make positive environmental changes that will reduce emissions and improve biodiversity.

Investing wisely so our homes and neighbourhoods are fit for the future

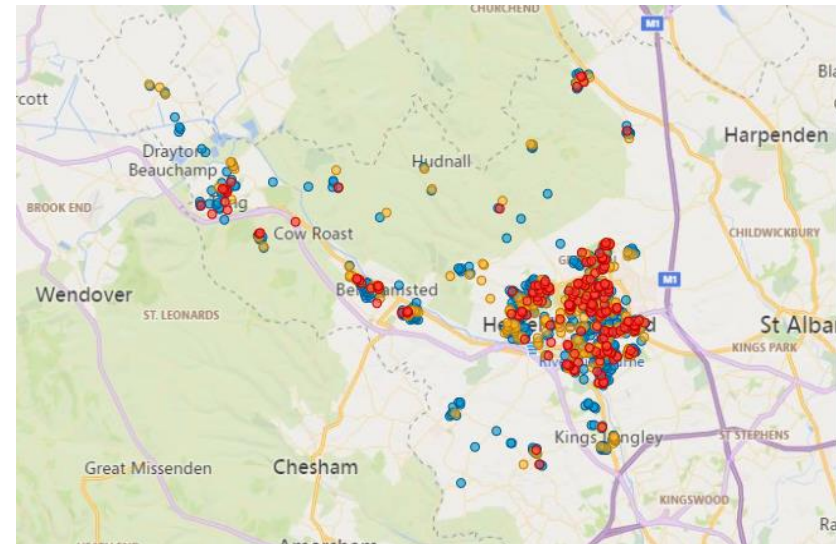
We have recently increased the volume of information that we hold about our homes through the completion of 4,000 stock condition surveys over the past two years. We will complete a further 6,000 surveys in the coming three years to provide an accurate picture of future maintenance needs. This will allow us to plan an integrated and intelligent approach to investment in properties and places.

We have also gathered a holistic set of data about our properties as part of our Asset Grading project, using the ARK ASAP model. In addition to financial metrics, this includes data to assess the social performance of our assets, such as ease of letting, quality of the neighbourhood, access to facilities and ease of management. The model informs us of the net present value of each property and provides a red, amber or green sustainability rating to help inform our investment decision-making.

- **Green Status** – homes that are flagged as sustainable core stock that perform well in financial and resident value terms. Full programme of improvement and investment works will be applied.
- **Amber Status** – homes that are flagged as not fully sustainable as some aspects do not perform well. Improvement and investment work to be considered against the components that are failing.
- **Red Status** – homes that are flagged as unsustainable as they do not perform well. Any major improvement and investment works will be subject to comprehensive further assessment and consultation on the future of these assets.

The table below shows the headline assessments for our 1227 ‘schemes’. Each scheme is made up of a group of properties located together and sharing similar characteristics. This information will help us investment wisely and consider alternative interventions where necessary.

DBC Schemes	Class A	Class B	Class C
Supported	607	227	203
Non-Supported	79	16	45
Total	786	243	248



Investing wisely so our homes and neighbourhoods are fit for the future

The ASAP model helps identify the properties and neighbourhoods which are not sustainable and where we should consider alternative options to enhance the quality of housing and meet the evolving needs of residents. Options may include upgrading, redevelopment and infill development.

We already know that some of our sheltered housing falls short of providing the right type and quality of accommodation to meet the current and future needs of residents, so we have begun the process of reviewing the future sustainability of each scheme.

We have an opportunity to use the insight from the ASAP model to inform our decision-making when considering planned investment and decarbonisation programmes.

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To invest wisely so our homes and neighbourhoods are fit for the future we will:

- Complete stock condition surveys for 100% of homes and use this data to inform our Planned Investment programme from April 2024 onwards.
- Develop cost-effective initiatives to make neighbourhoods greener, cleaner and safer in collaboration with residents, Council teams and other agencies.
- Use our Tenant Improvement Grant and develop other initiatives to encourage involvement and greater ownership among residents of their home and community.
- Make sure our investment work plans and programmes are readily available to staff and residents.
- Use our ASAP model to inform decisions about which buildings to continue to invest in.
- Conduct a first batch of option appraisals that explore all options to address the 'performance' of our poorest performing properties.
- Consider options for our supported housing to ensure that it meets the needs of current and future residents.

A sustainable long-term financial plan

The HRA (Housing Revenue Account) is the financial mechanism used by Local Authorities to manage housing stock. The HRA is a ring-fenced account that separates the income and expenditure related to the provision and management of housing services. It ensures that the finances associated with housing are accounted for separately from the Council's General Fund, allowing for transparency and effective financial planning.

The HRA operates by collecting income from rents, service charges, and grants where available, and uses these funds to cover the costs of maintaining, repairing, and managing the housing stock. This includes expenses such as property maintenance, repairs, improvements, and ongoing management services. The Council has a long-term HRA Business Plan which includes funding the repayment of debt and investing in housing development projects.

The HRA Business Plan will be refreshed annually and over the life of this Asset Management Strategy. During the next two years we need to identify ways to build additional capacity into the HRA to ensure that we can deliver our strategic priorities.



A sustainable long-term financial plan

The current environment presents several financial challenges for our Housing Revenue Account: Local Authorities normally increase rent annually by CPI +1%. However, in 2023 rent increases were capped by the government at 7%. Whilst this keeps direct rent costs lower for residents, it also creates revenue shortfall within the HRA, which can impact service quality and delivery.

The costs of achieving EPC C and Net Zero are not currently incorporated in the HRA Business Plan. Funding needs to be identified to meet these costs

Increased interest rates mean we face difficulty borrowing funds at affordable rates, which limits our capacity to deliver necessary improvements and upgrades to the housing stock and embark on new development projects.

We hold land and housing stock in some high-value locations. This includes garage sites and sheltered housing sites. By capitalising on the demand for housing in the area, there is the potential to leverage resources associated with new housing development to fund asset management projects.

The Council will be completing a Strategic Asset Review. One of the aims of this is to secure long-term income streams through regeneration and development programmes, which will support our ongoing financial sustainability and allow continued delivery of the corporate vision and objectives. There is an opportunity to consider as part of this review whether there are any cross-funding opportunities that could benefit the HRA.

The Council has been successful in achieving SHDF funding through the Greener Herts partnership. There is the opportunity to explore further public and private section partnerships to access funding schemes to supplement our financial resources.

To have a sustainable long-term financial plan we will:

- Develop a robust and sufficiently resourced HRA-funded 30-year investment and decarbonisation plan that focusses our investment on homes that are sustainable in the long-term.
- Maximise existing income streams such as service charge income.
- Identify cross funding opportunities that could benefit the HRA.
- Collaborate with existing and new partners to attract further funding and investment to improve our homes and neighbourhoods.



Foundations for the Future

Interim Housing Asset Management Strategy Action Plan

2024-2026

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Interim Housing Asset Management Strategy 2024 – 2026

Draft Action Plan

The Housing Asset Management Strategy will be supported by an effective action plan and governance arrangements to deliver outcomes needed. The following groups will oversee the delivery of relevant actions.

Housing Service Leadership Team	HSLT
Property Leadership Team	PLT
Strategy, Quality & Assurance	SQA
Climate & Ecological Emergency Board	CEEB
Clean, Safe & Green Team	CSG

Putting residents at the heart of everything we do

Action Details	Timescale	Responsibilities
Co-design our long term Housing Asset Management Strategy with residents and elected members.	April 24 – September 25	HSLT, SLT, PHGB
Co-design a Dacorum ‘Fit for the Future’ home standard, and consider to what extent we develop a fixed standard for every home or personalised approach based on the specific priorities of a household and their diverse needs.	September 23 – November 24	HSLT, PLT
Co-create area improvement plans with our residents for their local neighbourhood.	January 24 – October 24	HSLT, SQA, PLT

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern services

Action Details	Timescale	Responsibilities
Complete the HTIP Project and implement a new operating model that increases customer satisfaction.	September 23 – March 24	HSLT, PLT
Develop a workforce plan to attract, retain and develop our teams to ensure they have the skills we need.	November 23 – March 24	PLT
Focus on ‘what residents want’ and involve residents in the specification, procurement and on-going oversight of our repairs and planned works services.	September 23 – January 24	HSLT, SQA, PLT

Use modern technology to improve resident's experience of interacting with us.	September 23 – May 24	PLT, SQA
Fully utilise the capabilities of our MRI Asset software to support Asset Compliance delivery and Asset Investment decision making.	November 23 – March 24	HSLT, PLT
Provide support to ensure Councillors understand their accountabilities and collectively have the knowledge to provide clear leadership and effective governance of our housing asset and repair activities.	January 24 – March 24	HSLT, SLT, SQA, PHGB

Providing good quality, safe and affordable homes

Action Details	Timescale	Responsibilities
Ensure all homes are safe by continuing to take a robust approach to managing all building safety, legal and regulatory requirements.	Ongoing	PLT, HSLT, SLT
Identify and complete all outstanding Decent Homes work to achieve 100% decency, and maintain this on an ongoing basis.	October 23 – March 24	PLT
Deliver a 2 year planned programme of capital improvement work	April 24 – March 26	PLT

Responding to the climate emergency by reducing carbon emissions

Action Details	Timescale	Responsibilities
Complete 4000 new EPCs to provide up to date data about the energy performance of our homes	April 24- March 25	PLT
Develop road map to achieve Net Zero backed by a viable financial plan.	October 23 - ongoing	PLT, HSLT, SLT, CEEB
Develop plan to decarbonise Sheltered Housing scheme communal areas by 2030 (tentative pending SAR project)	October - ongoing	PLT, HSLT, SLT, CEEB
Develop a planned programme of work to achieve EPC C for all homes by 2035 (2030 for the most 'fuel poor' households)	October - ongoing	PLT, HSLT, SLT, CEEB
Actively seek grant funding for decarbonisation and retrofit programmes.	Ongoing	PLT, CEEB
Integrate our net zero retrofit works programmes into void property and capital investment works.	Ongoing	PLT, CEEB
Ensure staff are equipped successfully develop and deliver larger scale decarbonisation programmes by building on the learning from our SHDF projects and investing in further pilots to improve our retrofit knowledge and skills,	Ongoing	PLT, HSLT, SLT, CEEB
Work with Herts LEP and local colleges to support the building of local skills to help scale up decarbonisation programme delivery.	Ongoing	PLT, HSLT, SLT, CEEB
Identify learning and adopt approaches from others - acting as 'fast followers' for decarbonisation to accelerate learning and capacity building.	Ongoing	PLT, CEEB
Play our part in Dacorum's Climate Action Network, (Dacorum CAN) to make positive environmental changes that will reduce emissions and improve biodiversity.	Ongoing	PLT, CEEB

Investing wisely so our homes and neighbourhoods are fit for the future

Action Details	Timescale	Responsibilities
Complete stock condition surveys for 100% of homes and use stock condition survey data to inform our Planned Investment programme from April 2024 onwards.	December 2026	PLT
Develop cost effective initiatives to make neighbourhoods greener, cleaner and safer in collaboration with residents, council teams including Neighbourhood Operations, and other agencies.	Ongoing	PLT, HSLT, CSG
Use our Tenant Improvement Grant and develop other initiatives to encourage involvement and encourage greater ownership among residents of their home and community.	Ongoing	PLT, HSLT, SQA
Make sure our investment work plans and programmes are readily available to staff and residents.	Ongoing	PLT, SQA
Use our ASAP model to inform decisions about which buildings to continue to invest in and conduct a first batch of option appraisals that explore all options to address the 'performance' of our poorest performing properties.	Ongoing	PLT, HSLT, SQA
Consider options for our sheltered accommodation to ensure that it meets the needs of current and future residents	Ongoing	PLT, HSLT, SQA

A sustainable long-term financial plan

Action Details	Timescale	Responsibilities
Develop a robust and sufficiently resourced HRA funded 30-year investment and decarbonisation plan that focusses our investment on homes that are sustainable in the long-term.	Ongoing	PLT, HSLT, CEEB
Increase VFM and efficiency savings through process improvement & procurement (tentative – possibly for procurement strategy)	Ongoing	PLT, HSLT
Maximise existing income streams such as service charge income.	Ongoing	PLT, HSLT
Identify cross funding opportunities that could benefit the HRA.	Ongoing	PLT, HSLT, SQA
Collaborate with existing and new partners to attract further funding and investment to improve our homes and neighbourhoods.	Ongoing	PLT, HSLT, SQA



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Interim Housing Asset Management Strategy 2024 – 2026

HCOSC 17 01 2024

Overview

- Why an Interim Strategy?
- Feedback to date
- Key points
- Action Plan
- Timeline

Why an interim strategy?

- Interim strategy to allow sector to stabilise and data to mature – circa 8000 Stock condition surveys will be complete.
- Aligned with Repairs and Maintenance procurement timeline
- Aligned with HRA Business plan refresh process
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 – New consumer standards – need to be agile
- Incorporate findings from the ASAP model to inform future investments

Feedback to date?

- Overall positive
- Need to make the link to Consumer Standards more explicit and earlier in the document
- Need to state that we have an ongoing commitment to achieve 100% decent homes year on year – rolling investment, informed programmes.

Key Points

- Foundations for the Future – purposely named to highlight approach.
- 6 Key headings
 - Putting residents at the heart of everything we do
 - Responding to the climate emergency by reducing carbon emissions
 - Ensuring efficient, effective, and modern services
 - Providing good quality, safe and affordable homes
 - Investing wisely to ensure our homes and neighbourhoods are fit for the future
 - A sustainable long-term financial plan
- Under each heading the document includes background, challenges and opportunities.
- Commitments stated for 2024-2026

Action Plan

- Same corporate branding
- Developed to support the strategy
- Drives accountability and can be reported against
- Metrics can be added or amended without the need to re-write the strategy
- Adds value and brings the strategy to life without making the strategy too long and word heavy.

Timeline

Action	Date
Draft Strategy presented to SLT with any feedback from HSLT incorporated	13/12/23
Draft Strategy presented to PH	04/01/23
Draft Strategy presented to SLT/PHG	04/01/23
Strategy presented to TLC	25/01/24
Draft Strategy presented to OSC	17/01/23
Interim Strategy presented to Cabinet for approval	19/03/24
Print Hard Copies & Post on Webpage etc	March 24
Go Live	April 24



Thank You



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Building Safety Policy
Date:	17 th January 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Simy Dhyani, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Draft Building Safety Policy December 23 V1
Background papers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Safety Act 2022 • Monthly Compliance Dashboard
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

Report Author / Responsible Officer

Mark Pinnell, Assistant Director, Property (Interim)



Mark.pinnell@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228731 (ext. 2731)

Corporate Priorities	<p>A clean, safe and enjoyable environment</p> <p>Building strong and vibrant communities</p> <p>Ensuring economic growth and prosperity</p> <p>Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need</p> <p>Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery</p> <p>Climate and ecological emergency</p>
Wards affected	All

Purpose of the report:	To introduce a draft Building Safety Policy and provide clarity on the role of the duty holder / Accountable person with regards to any building regulated by the Fire Safety Order amended by the Building Safety Act 2022.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	To note the report and approve the draft building safety policy to move forward through the approval process.
Period for post policy/project review:	

1. Background

1.1. The principal fire safety legislation applicable to England comprises:

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the 'Fire Safety Order').
- The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022.
- The Fire Safety Act 2021.

1.2. The Fire Safety Order came into force in 2006. It replaced all previous fire safety legislation.

1.3. The Fire Safety Order applies to virtually all premises, other than single residential dwellings (bungalows, houses, flats, etc.) – in particular, with very rare exceptions, it applies to all premises used as a workplace.

1.4. The Fire Safety Order also applies to the common parts (communal corridors and stairways) of blocks of flats and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).

1.5. The Fire Safety Order applies to the building's structure, external walls (including windows, balconies, and other attachments), and any common parts. The common parts include plant rooms, communal rooms, and doors (including doors between the dwelling and the common parts).

1.6. In multi-dwelling premises, it is only the dwellings (i.e. individual flats) themselves that fall outside the general scope of the Fire Safety Order.

1.7. The Fire Safety (England) Regulations make additional requirements for fire safety measures in blocks of flats, particularly those blocks over 18 metres in height.

1.8. The Fire Safety Order was amended by the Building Safety Act 2022 to ensure residents have relevant fire safety information that they can understand, co-operation is improved between people with responsibilities under fire safety legislation and that there is a continual record throughout the building's lifespan of fire safety information.

1.9. The broad scope of the Fire Safety Order means that very few premises in which people are employed to work fall outside the scope of the Order.

2. Background to Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022

2.1. The Building Safety Bill received Royal Assent in April 2022 and became the Building Safety Act 2022. The new legislation has the effect of amending the Fire Safety Order to:

- require that all Accountable Persons (APs) must record their completed fire risk assessment, and in full (where previously only specific information was required to be recorded)
- require that all APs must record the identity of any individual (their name), and/or if applicable, their organisation (name) engaged by them to undertake/review any or all of the fire risk assessment, and share this with residents of multi-residential unit premises where applicable;
- require that all APs must record their fire safety arrangements (demonstrate how fire safety is managed in your premises)
- require that all APs must record (and as necessary update) their contact information, including a UK-based address, and share this, along with the identified fire safety risks, preventative and protective

measures, any competent persons nominated to assist with fire-fighting and detection measures, with other Responsible Persons and residents of multi-domestic unit premises where applicable

- require that all APs must take reasonably practicable steps to ascertain the existence of other Responsible Persons who share, or have duties in respect of the same premises, and of APs (which are a new legal entity made under the Building Safety Act (BSA) in the case of higher-risk residential buildings) in relation to the premises – they must then identify themselves to said persons and cooperate with APs so that the duties imposed by the Building Safety Act 2022 can be completed;
- require APs of a Higher Risk Buildings (HRBs) containing two or more sets of domestic premises to provide residents with relevant fire safety information in a format that is easily understood by the residents
- increase the level of fines for some offences
- strengthen the status of statutory guidance issued under Article 50 of the Fire Safety Order

2.2. There is also a legislative requirement that, where the APs appoints a person to make or review the fire risk assessment, they must be competent. This legislative requirement will be brought into force at a later date, and it is expected that relevant guidance will be provided ahead of the commencement date.

2.3. In the meantime, it is a recommendation that associated staff are competent, in terms of having sufficient training and experience or knowledge. It remains the case that the Responsible Person has a duty to make sure that a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment is completed.

3. Draft Building Safety Policy

3.1. **Appendix 1** – Draft Building Safety Policy articulates how DBC will meet the requirements of the Building Safety Act 2022 and also provides clarity of role and responsibilities.

4. Risks

4.1. Associated risks and mitigating actions are listed in table 1.

Table 1

	Risk	Impact	Mitigation
1	Failure to meet the requirements of the Building Safety Act (BSA) 2022	Reputational Financial Legal	Clear identification of the Principal Accountable Person (PAP) and subsequent Accountable Persons (APs) Appropriate oversight and governance by the APs to ensure compliance with all elements of the BSA Assurance reporting from APs to PAP (frequency to be approved) Building and Resident Safety Management group meetings.
2	Failure to appoint to the post of Safe Homes Team Manager	Reputational Financial Legal	Aligned requirements with that of HTIP and the wider TOM work. External recruitment campaign should standard approach fail to fill the post. Regular check in with agency staff to ensure longevity and if/when applicable appropriate comprehensive handover Building and Resident Safety Management group meetings.
3	Failure to provide sufficient funding	Reputational Legal	Regular financial planning to consider future requirements.

			Regular in year monitoring to review need against budget, taking appropriate actions as required. Regular review of training needs assessments to prioritise training need.
4	Failure to promote strong partnerships to deliver BSA requirements	Reputational	Resident engagement strategy and promote awareness. Building and Resident Safety Management group meetings.
5	Failure to consider the impact of the BSA on existing and revised policies and procedures	Reputational Legal Financial	Senior Leadership Team Meetings Housing Leadership Team Meetings Corporate Health and Safety Board Building and Resident Safety Management group meetings. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meetings

5 Options and alternatives considered

This document is required for statutory and/or regulatory purposes.

6 Consultation

The Tenant and Leaseholder Committee will be consulted on the report and their feedback taken into account.

7 Financial and value for money implications:

There are no financial implications directly arising from this report as all management of Housing related building safety matters is met from within existing budgets.

8 Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report, however the failure to align with legislative requirements could result in legal implications against the Council.

9 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

The Community Impact of adopting this Policy will be positive.

There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

10 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

11 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

There are no Council infrastructure implications arising from this report.

12 Conclusions:

Building Safety is a priority for the Council. The draft Building Safety Policy articulates how the Council will meet the requirements of the Building Safety Act 2022 and it also provides clarity on roles and responsibilities and ensures that there are strong and transparent governance arrangements in place.



Building Safety Policy

V2 – December 2023

Policy Name	Building Safety Policy
Version	V2
Date	December 2023
Lead Officer	Darren Welsh
Author	Mark Pinnell
Document Status	Draft
Approved By	
Date of Next Review	

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1. Table of Definitions

DBC	Dacorum Borough Council
BSA	Building Safety Act 2022
FSA	The Fire Safety (England) Act 2022
RRFSO	The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 – Amended by Fire Safety Act
HRRB	High Rise Residential Building – Over 18 Metres in height
SHS	Sheltered Housing Scheme
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
BSR	Building Safety Regulator
FRA	Fire Risk Assessment
PIB	Premises Information Box
HFRS	Herts Fire & Rescue Service

2. Statement of Commitment

Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) are committed to providing a safe place to live for our residents and a safe place to work for our staff and contractors. To ensure this we will implement all aspects of The Building Safety Act and deliver a “Best Practice” approach to the management of our buildings and fire safety assets that are critical to managing the buildings.

3. Buildings in Scope

The Building Safety Act (BSA) clearly defines the scope of buildings to which it applies, these are identified as being over 18 metres in height. **Appendix A** – List of buildings in scope.

Whilst the BSA is clear on instructing us to manage buildings over 18 Metres in height in a different way than other buildings, DBC are aware that the BSA is enabling legislation and at some point, in the future, DLUHC will lower the height (expected to be 11m) of buildings to be included within scope of the BSA.

To meet the current requirements of the act, we must register five High Rise Residential Buildings (HRRBs) and complete the building safety cases for them. We will also manage two further HRRB’s that fall just below the stated 18m and our Sheltered Housing Schemes in the same way as we will our HRRBs as we consider them to be High Risk buildings, at this time we do not need to register them or develop building safety cases.

4. Legislation and Guidance

We have given regard to the following legislation and guidance in preparing this policy.

- The Building Safety Act 2022
- The Fire Safety (England) Act 2022
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 – Amended by Fire Safety Act
- LACoRS – Fire Safety Guidance (Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services)
- Fire Safety in Specialised Housing – National Fire Chiefs Council Guidance
- Fire Safety in Purpose Built Blocks of Flats – Local Government Association
- Housing Act 2004, which introduced the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002
- Furniture and Furnishing (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994
- Equality Act 2010
- Building Regulations – Approved Document B
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 – As amended
- Management of Health & Safety at Works Regulations 2006
- Workplace (Health Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992

5. Supporting Documents and Policies

- Dacorum Borough Council Health and Safety Policy
- Dacorum Borough Council Fire Safety Policy
- Dacorum Borough Council Tenancy Agreement

6. Golden Thread

The Building Safety Act, creates a legal duty on duty holders and Accountable Persons to create, obtain, store and share documents and information about our buildings in a prescribed format, this includes the six main principles of:

- Kept Digitally
- Kept Securely
- A Building's Single Source of Truth
- Available to people who need the information to do a job
- Available when the person needs the information
- Presented in a way that people can use

A more detailed breakdown of information required for the Golden Thread is attached as **Appendix B**

7. Roles & Responsibilities

The Building Safety Act identifies new duty holders, who will be known as “Accountable Persons”.

The Roles & Responsibilities for key stakeholders across DBC are detailed below:

- **Principle Accountable Person (PAP) / Accountable Person (AP):** In relation to this policy and the implementation of the Building Safety Act, the AP is the Body-Corporate, Dacorum Borough Council. In a structure such as that of the Council, it is recommended that The Council Leader be known as the Principal Accountable Person (PAP) and subsequent delegated responsibilities be made to the Senior Leadership Team. **Appendix C** provides further detail.
- **Chief Executive:** Will need to ensure that adequate resources are made available to ensure we are able to comply with the requirements of legislation. For existing properties that fall within the BSA and for properties under construction and yet to be completed, the Chief Executive will delegate their responsibilities to the Strategic Director, Housing and Property Services.
- **Senior Leadership Team (SLT):** Will review and record a consolidated report that provides progress updates to ensure that DBC is meeting the requirements of the Building Safety Act, Fire Safety Act (England) 2021, this policy and the DBC Fire Safety Policy.
- **Housing Service Leads:** Will work closely with the Head of Safe Homes and others to design and implement suitable projects within their respective service responsibilities to ensure DBC is compliant with legislation.
- **Head of Safe Homes:** Is responsible for the overall implementation of this policy and the development and delivery of associated projects. They will monitor and track performance to ensure the council remains compliant with current legislative requirements, future legislation and best practice guidance. They will work closely with all departments across the Council to ensure buildings within the scope of the BSA remain safe. Along with the Safe Homes Team Manager and Compliance Officers they will ensure that all day to day operations are completed and provide regular comprehensive updates to SLT, and the Building and Resident Safety Group.
- **Safe Homes Team Manager:** Is responsible for managing all compliance activities, contract management and informing the Head of Safe Homes of any compliance related issues which may affect the safety of buildings in scope.
- **Compliance Officer:** Will support the Safe Homes Team Manager with relevant day to day activities. They will undertake and record completed fire door inspections, ensuring that they are uploaded to a central IT system (Currently Propellor), and that outcomes and issues of concern are immediately shared with the Safe Homes Team Manager and as required with the Head of Safe Homes.

8. Fire Risk Assessments

Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) will be conducted annually across all buildings in scope of the BSA. The Compliance Officer will liaise directly with the appointed contractor to ensure suitable access is available. The appointed contractor will ensure that any urgent issues identified are recorded and raised directly with the Safe Homes Team Manager who will then ensure mitigation or remedial actions are implemented. Any issues of concern will also be raised directly with the Head of Safe Homes and escalated as required.

9. Mandatory Reporting

We acknowledge our responsibility under the BSA to give prescribed information that relates to building safety to the regulator by the prescribed time and in the way specified, and we will establish and operate an effective reporting system which complies with the prescribed requirements. At the time of writing this policy, the Building Safety Regulator had not published the final details and format of their requirements for Mandatory Reporting. Once this information is published it will be adopted into the next version of this policy.

10. Vulnerable Residents

During resident engagement events DBC will ask residents to self-refer vulnerabilities relating to the ability to self-evacuate a higher risk building if required to do so. Where we are informed that a resident may have difficulty in safely evacuating their home, we will complete a Person-Centred Fire Risk Assessment (PCFRA). PCFRAs help to identify residents who are at higher risk from fire in their own home, due to their ability to respond and escape from a fire, for an example a resident with disabilities. The PCFRA focuses on three key areas;

- 1 An increased fire risk. Example might be of a resident with mobility issues who is a careless smoker.
- 2 Ability to react to a fire or fire alarm
- 3 Ability to respond and escape a fire

PCFRA's will be conducted across our Sheltered Housing Schemes and in general needs properties as we are advised or learn of residents who may be of increased risk from the items list above. Following the completion of a PCFRA, there may be a need to implement mitigation measures to ensure additional safety for identified vulnerable residents.

11. Fire Door Survey and Management

Legislation requires us to undertake regular inspections of all Fire Doors within our housing stock, this includes the following categories of Fire Door:-

Flat Entrance Doors – Including Leasehold Flats

Riser Cupboard Doors

Storage Cupboard Doors (If they open onto common parts)

To fulfil our duties in this area the DBC Compliance Officers; who have completed the relevant competence training, will conduct quarterly inspections on all Fire Doors in common parts and an annual inspection of Flat Entrance Doors. As part of this process we will build an additional "No Access" policy for the inspection of Flat Entrance Doors, the act provides legal measures to compel residents to provide access.

The Compliance Officer will at the time of the initial survey of each door, install an RFID tag and define each door a unique reference number. Date relating to the door and inspection outcome will be stored on the

Propeller compliance system. If following the inspection of a door, it is found not to meet a “Notional” status, we will carry out repairs to the door, to bring it up to the required status and performance, if this is not possible, due to damage as an example, we will replace that door, with a new door set.

12. Premises Information Boxes

It is a requirement that all of the buildings that are in scope of the act, have a Premises Information Box fitted, that can easily be located by the Fire & Rescue Service upon attendance. These boxes must contain:-

- Current Floor Plans for each floor, with key information clearly identified
- A list of vulnerable residents, with additional information about flats that may contain medical gases.
- Keys / Fob to all doors on all floors, other than Flat Entrance Doors

We will regularly review and update the information stored within the boxes.

13. Fire and Rescue Service Liaison

The act mandates that we have a relationship with the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) and that we co-operate with all requests for information. This may also include supporting site visits from various FRS staff to facilitate a clear understanding of the building layout and how FRS would manage any emergency.

There is now a requirement to notify FRS if a fire safety asset, including any Fire Fighting or Fire Fighters Lifts are or will be out of service for more than 24 hours. This is to ensure that FRS can make alternative arrangements in the provision of equipment or for SBC of HFR to carry out additional mitigation measures, until the equipment is back in service.

The FRS attend the DBC Building and Resident Safety Group meeting and we will develop a reporting mechanism with the FRS to advise of any asset issues, along with a clear timeline to bring that asset back into operational performance.

14. Fire Signage / Wayfinding Signage

To support the implementation of this act Approved Document “B” of Building Regulations has been updated to clearly define what type of Fire and Waypoint Signage is required in buildings in scope of the act.

In addition to existing Fire Action Notices, we must install clear Wayfinding Signage, pointing residents in the direction of Fire Exits. We must also install floor number signage at low level in stairwells, to assist FRS in identifying which floor they are on, if the stairwell is engulfed in smoke.

15. Contractor Management

The act specifies that only “Competent Contractors” can work in or on buildings within the scope of the BSA.

The Safe Homes Team and DBC contract managers will ensure that all contractors and operatives are competent to carry out specified works on our buildings. We will develop and implement a “Permit to Work” scheme on all in-scope buildings, which will ensure that Method Statements for each piece of work have been reviewed and approved, prior to commencement of any works.

If works are required to pass through or compromise existing compartmentation, then an appropriate Fire Risk Assessment must be carried out and an inspection by a suitably qualified person, check that the compartmentation has been suitably completed.

No “Hot Works” will be allowed in any in scope buildings, without prior approval. A detailed Method Statement will be required, which must include how a small initial fire in the local area will be extinguished.

16. Resident Communication

We must display, in a conspicuous part of the building a notice board containing all the information prescribed in the act. In addition, this includes information about dates of servicing of all compliance and fire safety assets. This is to provide assurance to residents that all the fire safety equipment and assets are working as they should.

The BSA also provides a requirement for DBC to communicate with all residents to ensure that they are aware of what to do in the event of a fire, aware of what Fire Safety Assets / Equipment is in place and the part that it plays in providing fire safety to residents, visitors, and the Fire & Rescue Service in the event of their attendance.

DBC will deliver its responsibilities in this area by ensuring: At the time of onboarding a new resident / family, we provide a site-specific document that highlights all this information, along with providing detailed information of how to report any concerns to DBC if a Fire Safety Asset is not working.

Once a year, DBC will write to all residents in blocks that are in scope of the BSA and provide the above information again. The aim of this is to regularly remind residents about Fire Safety information.

In addition to the physical notice board, we are also developing the use of QR codes for those residents with smart devices. The QR code will provide a broad range of information not just limited to Fire Safety.

17. Resident Engagement Strategy

The BSA requires DBC to develop a resident engagement strategy specifically for all residents and any person who owns a residential unit in a building in scope of the BSA. The BSA places a legal obligation on the Accountable Person “Dacorum Borough Council” to ensure residents are involved in all “Building Safety Decisions”.

A building safety decision is a decision made by DBC about the management of the building in connection with the performance of our duties as the accountable person or under regulations contained in the BSA. To meet our requirements under this part of the act, DBC will:-

- Develop and implement a resident engagement strategy that promotes residents’ engagement and involvement in decision making about safety issues.
- Establish a complaints system that ensures residents’ safety concerns are heard and dealt with.

- Residents can also escalate complaints to the Building Safety Regulator.

Once developed we will provide a copy of our resident engagement strategy to all residents in the building that are over 16 years of age.

To support a focused complaints system, for complaints that relate to building safety, we will establish and operate a system for investigating relevant complaints regarding a building safety risk.

18. Resident Obligations

The BSA not only introduces duties on DBC as the landlord / building owner, but for the first time introduces obligations on residents, to:

- Not act in a way that creates a significant risk of fire or structural failure.
- Not interfere with any relevant safety item.
- Comply with a request by the Accountable Person for information or access to reasonably perform their duties to assess and manage building safety risks.

Where a resident or owner of a residential unit contravenes their duty not to interfere with a relevant safety item, we will take action to include written notification that specifies how we believe they have interfered, tells them what they should do to remedy their contravention giving them a reasonable time to do so, tells them what they must not do in the future to avoid repeating the interference, and tells them what we may do further if they do not comply with the notice.

We may include a requirement for the relevant person to pay us the necessary cost to repair or replace the relevant safety item to rectify their interference. The cost we charge will not exceed the reasonable cost of repairing or replacing the relevant safety item.

Where we require access to some part of the building to assess or manage a building safety risk or to determine whether the duty on residents and owners of residential units in the building not to interfere with relevant safety items has been breached, we will request access in writing setting out the purpose for which we are requesting access, we will explain why it is necessary for us to enter the premises for that purpose, we will make a request to access at a reasonable time, and will give at least 48 hours' notice.

If we are denied access, the act provides us powers to make an application to the county court for an order to grant us access.

19. External Wall Assessment

It is a requirement of the BSA that we undertake an intrusive External Wall Assessment, to establish the entire makeup of the external wall system. DBC appointed specialist external consultants to carry these out on our behalf.

Remedial actions arising have been completed and any additional outputs from these surveys, will be used to support our Building Safety Case for each of our HRRBs.

20. Building Safety Case

Under the Building Safety Act, DBC will have to provide a Building Safety Case for each of our HRRBs every five years. The Safety Case will evidence how DBC have ensured that the building is safe and is required before the Regulator issues a licence.

Whilst this licence is needed to occupy the building, DBC can continue tenancies within a block, whilst the licence is pending. We will prepare a building safety case report containing our assessment of the building safety risks and a brief description of any steps we take to manage or mitigate those risks.

We will update that building safety case where we make further assessment of building safety risks and when we add further steps to our management of building safety risks.

We will notify the regulator as soon as is reasonably practicable after we prepare or revise a safety case report, and if the regulator asks us to, we will provide a copy of it to the regulator as soon as reasonably practicable.

At the time of compiling this policy the sector estimate that it will take the BSR around three years (from October 2023) for them to be at a point to evaluate safety cases.

21. New Build Development of Buildings over 18m

The golden thread will hold the information that those responsible for the building require to identify, understand, manage, and mitigate building safety risks to prevent or reduce the severity of the consequences of fire spread or structural collapse throughout the lifecycle of the building.

The information stored in the golden thread will be reviewed and managed so that the information developed and retained, clearly identifies all elements of safety to achieve the purpose of providing clear evidence of materials and workmanship.

The golden thread covers both the information and documents, and the information management processes (or steps) used to support building safety. The government (DHULC) has defined the information as including all the information necessary to understand and manage risks to prevent or reduce the severity of the consequences of fire spread or structural collapse in a building.

The golden thread information should be stored as structured digital information. It is to be stored, managed, maintained, and retained in line with the golden thread principles. DBC will apply for a completion certificate before occupation of a newly constructed higher risk building or carry out works that cause a building to become a higher-risk building.

22. Emergency Evacuation Alarms

It is a requirement of the BSA that in all new build residential properties over 18 metres, that a full emergency evacuation alert system is installed. This will allow HFRS in the event of an emergency to manage an evacuation of a property, in phases according to floors and or call a full evacuation.

DBC will ensure that all new build properties in scope of the BSA will have such an alert system installed during the build phase and will be handed over to the Safe Homes Team to ensure that regular servicing, maintenance, and testing is carried out.

At the point of developing this policy, it is not a requirement to retrospectively install an emergency evacuation alert system to existing buildings. We will continue to monitor any changes to legislation in this area and will update this policy should requirements change.

23. Review Frequency

The BSA is intended to be enabling legislation and as such is subject to update and change, following guidance or regulation changes from DHLUC or the Building Safety Regulator.

To support this and ensure that this policy is kept up to date with any changes in guidance or legislation, the Resident and Building Safety Group will review this policy on a six-monthly basis.

Appendix 1 In Scope Buildings

Name of Building	Address	Type
Kylna Court	1-79 Kylna Court, Wood Lane, HP2 7TG	HRRB
Pelham Court	1-38 Pelham Court, HP2 4UP	HRRB
Pelham Court	39-76 Pelham Court, HP2 4UP	HRRB
Fennycroft	43-89 Fennycroft Road, HP1 3PD	HRRB
Gade Tower	1-40 Gade Tower, HP3 8AE	HRRB

This list of blocks is correct as of November 2023. DBC will continue to review our housing stock in line with any amends to the BSA to establish if they are in scope of the act on a six monthly basis.

The below information is extracted from DHLUC publication “Golden Thread Definition”

Full Definition

1. The golden thread will hold the information that those responsible for the building require to identify, understand, manage and mitigate building safety risks in order to prevent or reduce the severity of the consequences of fire spread or structural collapse throughout the lifecycle of the building. The information stored in the golden thread will be reviewed and managed so that the information retained at all times achieves this purpose.
2. The golden thread covers both the information and documents, and the information management processes (or steps) used to support building safety. The government has defined the information as including all the information necessary to understand and manage risks to prevent or reduce the severity of the consequences of fire spread or structural collapse in a building.
3. The golden thread information should be stored as structured digital information. It will be stored, managed, maintained and retained in line with the golden thread principles (see annex below). The Government will specify digital standards which will provide guidance on how the principles can be met.
4. The golden thread information management approach will apply through design, construction, occupation, refurbishment and ongoing management of buildings. It supports the wider changes in the regime to promote a culture of building safety.
5. Building safety should be taken to include the fire and structural safety of a building and the safety of all the people in or in the vicinity of a building (including emergency responders).

Annex: Golden Thread Principles

1. **Accurate and Trusted:** the duty holder/Accountable Person/Building Safety Managers (BSM) and other relevant persons (e.g. contractors) must be able to use the golden thread to maintain and manage building safety. The Regulator should also be able to use this information as part of their work to assess the safety of the building and the operator’s safety case report, including supportive evidence, and to hold people to account. The golden thread will be a source of evidence to show how building safety risks are understood and how they are being managed on an ongoing basis. The golden thread must be accurate and trusted – it will not be used unless people trust that the information in the golden thread is accurate and up to date. The information produced will therefore have to be accurate, structured and verified, requiring a clear change control process that sets out how and when information is updated and who should update and check the information.
2. **Residents feeling secure in their homes:** residents will be provided information from the golden thread – so that they have accurate and trusted information about their home. This will also support residents in holding Accountable Persons and Building Safety Managers to account for building safety. A properly maintained golden thread should support accountable persons in providing residents the assurance that their building is being managed safely.
3. **Culture change:** the golden thread will support culture change within the industry as it will require increased competence and capability, different working practices, updated processes and a focus on information management and control. The golden thread should be considered an enabler for better and more collaborative working.
4. **Single point of truth:** the golden thread will bring all information together in a single place (potentially a Common Data Environment) meaning there is always a ‘single point of truth’. It will record changes (i.e.

- updates to information/plans), including the reason for change, evaluation of change, date of change, and the decision-making process. This will reduce the duplication of information (email updates and multiple documents) and help drive improved accountability, responsibility, and a new working culture.
5. **Secure:** the golden thread must be secure, with sufficient protocols in place to protect personal information and control access to maintain the security of the building or residents. It should also comply with current GDPR legislation where required.
 6. **Accountable:** the golden thread will record changes (i.e. updates to information), when these changes were made and by who. This will help drive improved accountability. The new regime is setting out clear duties for the duty holders and the Accountable Person for maintaining the golden thread information to meet the required standards. Therefore, there is accountability at every level – from the Client/Accountable Person to those designing, building, or maintaining a building. This will mean that changes can more easily be tracked, and this will support better building safety.
 7. **Understandable/ Simple to access (accessible)/Consistent:** the golden thread needs to support the user in their task of managing building safety. The information in the golden thread must be clear, understandable, and focused on the needs of the user. It should be presented in a way that can be understood and used by users. This also should consider that users have different needs. The information should be accessible so that people can easily find the right information at the right time. This means that the information needs to be stored in a structured way (i.e. like a library) so people can easily find, update and extract the right information. The Government will set out the digital standards which will apply to the golden thread. Storing information to digital standards would mean the information is stored in a structured way. To support this duty holders/Accountable person should where possible make sure the golden thread uses standard methods, processes, and consistent terminology so that those working with multiple buildings can more easily access, understand, and use the information consistently and effectively.
 8. **Longevity/ Durability of information:** the golden thread information needs to be formatted in a way that can be easily handed over and maintained over the entire lifetime of a building. In practical terms this is likely to mean that it needs to align with the rules around open-source data – so that information can be handed over in the future and still be accessed. Information should be able to be shared and accessed by contractors who use different software and if the building is sold the golden thread information must be accessible to the new owner. This does not mean everything about a building and its history needs to be kept, the golden thread must be reviewed to ensure that the information within it is still relevant and useful.
 9. **Relevant / Proportionate:** preserving the golden thread does not mean everything about a building and its history needs to be kept and updated from inception to disposal. The objective of the golden thread is building safety and therefore if information is no longer relevant to building safety it does not need to be kept. The golden thread, the changes to it and processes related to it must be reviewed periodically to ensure that the information comprising it remains relevant and useful.

Appendix C Principle Accountable Person / Accountable Person Duties.

Accountable Person

In a structure such as that of the Council, it is recommended that The Council Leader be known as the Principal Accountable Person (PAP) and subsequent delegated responsibilities be made to the Senior Leadership Team as Accountable Persons (AP).

The Accountable Person (AP) is a new role (distinguished from the Responsible Person under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005) for residential high-rise buildings (HRBs).

The AP will have a duty to take all reasonable steps to:

- Prevent a building safety risk happening, with building safety risk defined as ‘spread of fire and/or structural failure’
- Reduce the seriousness of an incident if one happens

For all premises that fall within the scope of the Fire Safety Order, there will be an identifiable AP, which also includes a workplace.

If the premises is a workplace, and the premises (i.e. the workplace) is, to any extent, under the control of the employer, they will be an AP. In some cases, the AP may be the Building Owner (landlord) or depending on the lease agreement there may be joint responsibility between the employer and the landlord.

The employer is, the ‘person’ who employs the employees in the premises that are under the employer’s control. The AP is often an organisation, and relevant to Dacorum; would be the Council.

If prosecuted, as an employer, for offences under the Fire Safety Order, it is not a defence to claim that the offence was the fault of one (or more) council officers. It is therefore important that relevant officers are properly instructed and trained in fire safety. Completion of mandatory fire safety training demonstrates the Council’s commitment.

The sole duty holder role in respect of occupied HRBs is again the Council given the ultimate responsibility for repairing any of the common parts of any occupied HRB.

In the case of HRBs there are a set of statutory obligations that must be complied with, aimed at ensuring that the fire and structural risks associated with any HRB are appropriately controlled and managed.

Summarised duties of the Accountable Person

When AP has assessed the Building Safety Risks they must prepare a Safety Case Report, and notify the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) that it has been completed. The Safety Case Report is completed as early as possible, and kept under review.

The BSR can direct AP to apply to it for a building assessment certificate at any time, and the Safety Case Report will be the mainstay of that application, along with any other prescribed information. The AP must respond to the BSR with their application within 28 days of being directed (and failure to do so is a criminal offence).

If the BSR is satisfied that the building safety risks are being managed properly, it grants a building assessment certificate, which must be displayed in a prominent place alongside details of the AP.

If the BSR is unsatisfied it issues a notice which must also be displayed in a prominent place alongside details of the AP. If the requirements in the notice are not promptly addressed, this would result in the refusal of a building assessment certificate. It could also result in the BSR applying to the First Tier Tribunal for a Special Measures Order under which the management of building safety risks is transferred from the AP to a Special Measures Manager, at the cost of the PAPs, until the BSR is satisfied that those risks are being addressed.

Principle Accountable Person (PAP) Summary	
1	<p>Ensure that the fire and structural risks are identified and assessed for each HRB building and these are effectively managed (spread of fire and/or structural failure) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that they do not happen and • the severity of any incident that does happen is reduced
2	Ensure relevant safety information for each HRB building is kept, updated and available, as required for life of building.
3	Ensure a reporting system is in operation to report certain fire and structural issues or incidents
4	<p>Ensure there is effective measures in place to engage with residents about each building's safety including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operating a complaints system to investigate concerns about the building's safety risks or the performance of an accountable person • displaying required information and documentation clearly within the building • preparing and updating a residents' engagement strategy so that residents and owners can participate in making building safety decisions
5	<p>Notify the Building Safety Regulator if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is a change to the single point of contact for the BSR • building's safety risks • there are any changes to registration information, including copies of any updated certificates, within 14 days of becoming aware of the change safety case report
6	<p>Register the building with the Building Safety Regulator between April 2023 and October 2023. As part of the registration process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • submit structure and safety information about the building • notify the Building Safety Regulator of any changes to the information submitted at registration • register all new buildings before occupation.
7	Ensure BSR is provided with further key building information (KBI) as required by the Higher-Risk Buildings (Key Building Information etc.) (England) Regulations 2023 within 28 days of applying for registration.
8	<p>Prepare a safety case report for the building. This should show that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all building safety risks (fire and structural) have been assessed and that all reasonable steps to control them have been taken
9	Give the safety case report to BSR on request – BSR will examine it during the building assessment
10	Apply for a building assessment certificate when directed by BSR

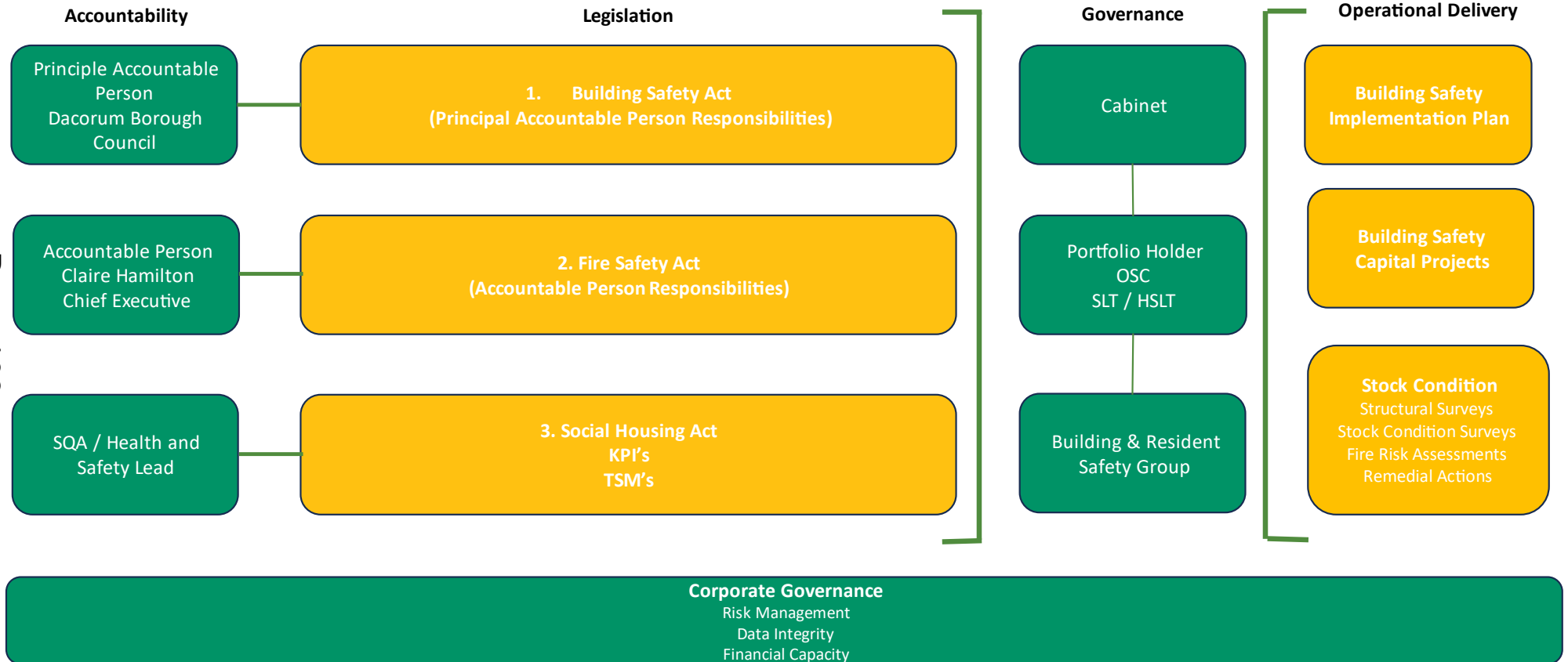
Accountable Person Summary		
1	Fire Risk Assessment	Has a suitable and sufficient FRA been completed for each building(s) in the housing stock?
2	Fire Risk Assessment	Can competency of the fire risk assessor(s) be demonstrated?
3	Fire Risk Assessment	Have the actions arising from the FRA's been addressed or are they in progress? (As far as is reasonably practicable)
4	Fire Risk Assessment	Has the progression of the FRA actions been documented?
5	Fire Risk Assessment	Was the review of the last FRA within the acceptable timeframe? (If no, detail why not)
6	Fire Plans & Evacuation Strategy	Is there a suitable fire plan and evacuation strategy in place for each building(s) and has this been shared with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents • The local fire and rescue service (by electronic means e.g., email)
7	Fire Plans & Evacuation Strategy	Is a copy of the fire plan and evacuation strategy held on location in a suitable place (i.e., premises information/secure information box to prevent it being moved, tampered with and protected from damage).
8	Fire Plans & Evacuation Strategy	Have checks been completed to ensure that fire safety instructions are displayed in obvious parts of the building(s)?
9	Fire Plans & Evacuation Strategy	Is there a secure information box (Premises information box) in place and does it contain the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name, address and telephone number of the PAP/AP • Name and contact information for the other persons who are permitted and able to access the building(s) on behalf of the PAP/AP • Copies of the floor and building(s) plans

10	Fire Plans & Evacuation Strategy	<p>Is the secure information box (Premises information box);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained in a readily accessible location in or on the building(s)? • Inspected at least annually, to ensure it remains secure, accessible and that the information therein is accurate and up to date?
11	Fire Plans & Evacuation Strategy	<p>Has the local fire and rescue service been given the necessary details to gain access to the secure information box?</p>



Building Safety Assurance

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Building Safety Policy

**Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
17 January 2024**

The Building Safety Act 2022



Building Safety Act
2022



Will focus on the following key areas:

- The safety and standards of all buildings.
- Assuring the safety of higher-risk buildings, both in construction and occupation.
- Improving the competence of the people responsible for overseeing, managing, and delivering works to higher-risk buildings.
- Ensuring clearer standards and guidance.
- Putting residents at the heart of a new system of building safety.

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Who does the Building Safety Act 2022 apply to?

- The requirements set out in the Building Safety Act 2022 will affect building owners/managers and the built environment industry. This includes those who commission building work and who participate in the design and construction process, including clients, designers, and contractors.



The Building Safety Act 2022

From 1st October 2023:

- Duty holder responsibilities are now in force, with their new duties being to plan, manage, and monitor their activities in relation to building regulations.
- The Building Safety Regulator becomes the building control authority for all high-rise buildings.
- A 'Golden Thread of Information' is now required for each higher-risk building.
- A Mandatory Occurrence Reporting System is now required for each higher-risk building to ensure that the BSR can capture any risks that could have a potential impact on fire and structural safety and assess the relevance of these risks to other buildings.
- Changes to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 under Section 156 come into force, strengthening fire safety regulations by improving cooperation and coordination between Responsible Persons.
- Registration opens for new high-rise residential buildings.



The Building Safety Act 2022



From 1st April 2024:

- Transitional arrangements for higher-risk buildings end.
- Deadline for registering as Building Control Approvers and Building Inspectors.
- Building control bodies and professionals must follow mandatory codes and standards for building control.
- The Professional Conduct Rules for Registered Building Control Approvers (RBCAs) and Code of Conduct for Registered Building Inspectors (RBIs) come into force.
- The Building Safety Regulator can now issue building assessment certificates. The introduction of a “gateway” system, under which the BSR will assess whether risks, roles, and responsibilities are understood at different stages of construction.

Summary

- The Building Safety Act 2022 Applies to new or existing occupied buildings over 18 metres high or seven storeys or more, which contain at least two residential units.
- Creates a universal change in responsibility and culture within the building industry.
- Establishes a more effective regulatory and responsibility framework for the construction industry and introduces clearer standards and guidance.
- The Building Safety Act 2022 will establish a New Homes Ombudsman scheme for new build properties, to hold developers to account.
- Puts residents at the heart of a new system of building safety
- Clarifies who has responsibility for fire and building safety throughout the life cycle of a higher-risk building.
- Parts of the Act will have implications for ALL buildings as it will make the BSR responsible for the performance of the building control sector to ensure standards are met, and for setting building standards.
- The Act in full can be found - [The Building Safety Act - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

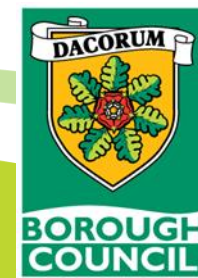
Introducing the Draft Building Safety Policy – Dec 2023



Building Safety Policy

V1 – December 2023

Policy Name	Building Safety Policy
Version	V1
Date	December 2023
Lead Officer	Darren Welsh
Author	Mark Pinnell
Document Status	Draft
Approved By	
Date of Next Review	



Principals and Approach

Principle Accountable
Person
Dacorum Borough
Council

Definition

Principal accountable person

- Each building must have one clearly identifiable accountable person, known as the principal accountable person.
- The principal accountable person is usually an organisation, like a commonhold association, local authority or social housing provider.
- In some circumstances, an individual can be the principal accountable person. For example, the individual is:
 - the owner of the building
 - named on the leasehold as responsible for the maintenance of common parts

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Accountable Person
Chief Executive

Definition

Accountable person

An accountable person is an organisation or individual who owns or has a legal obligation to repair any common parts of the building. Common parts are used by residents, such as:

- the structure and exterior of the building
- corridors
- lobbies
- staircases

Accountable persons and the principal accountable person can employ an organisation or individual, like a managing agent, to carry out duties on their behalf. However, the accountability for making sure those duties are carried out and the liability for a building's safety remains with the accountable persons and principal accountable person.

The Principle Accountable Person

Principle Accountable Person (PAP) Summary	
1	Ensure that the fire and structural risks are identified and assessed for each HRB building and these are effectively managed (spread of fire and/or structural failure) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that they do not happen and the severity of any incident that does happen is reduced
2	Ensure relevant safety information for each HRB building is kept, updated and available, as required for life of building.
3	Ensure a reporting system is in operation to report certain fire and structural issues or incidents
4	Ensure there is effective measures in place to engage with residents about each building's safety including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> operating a complaints system to investigate concerns about the building's safety risks or the performance of an accountable person displaying required information and documentation clearly within the building preparing and updating a residents' engagement strategy so that residents and owners can participate in making building safety decisions
5	Notify the Building Safety Regulator if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is a change to the single point of contact for the BSR building's safety risks there are any changes to registration information, including copies of any updated certificates, within 14 days of becoming aware of the change safety case report
6	Register the building with the Building Safety Regulator between April 2023 and October 2023. As part of the registration process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> submit structure and safety information about the building notify the Building Safety Regulator of any changes to the information submitted at registration register all new buildings before occupation.
7	Ensure BSR is provided with further key building information (KBI) as required by the Higher-Risk Buildings (Key Building Information etc.) (England) Regulations 2023 within 28 days of applying for registration.
8	Prepare a safety case report for the building. This should show that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all building safety risks (fire and structural) have been assessed and that all reasonable steps to control them have been taken
9	Give the safety case report to BSR on request – BSR will examine it during the building assessment
10	Apply for a building assessment certificate when directed by BSR



Building Safety Policy

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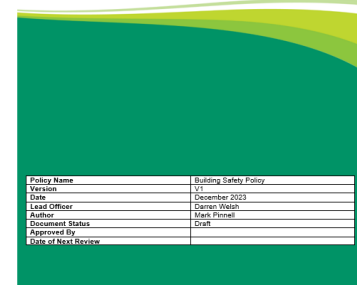


The Accountable Person

Accountable Person Summary		
1	Fire Risk Assessment	Has a suitable and sufficient FRA been completed for each building(s) in the housing stock?
2	Fire Risk Assessment	Can competency of the fire risk assessor(s) be demonstrated?
3	Fire Risk Assessment	Have the actions arising from the FRA's been addressed or are they in progress? (As far as is reasonably practicable)
4	Fire Risk Assessment	Has the progression of the FRA actions been documented?
5	Fire Risk Assessment	Was the review of the last FRA within the acceptable timeframe? (If no, detail why not)
6	Fire Plans & Evacuation Strategy	Is there a suitable fire plan and evacuation strategy in place for each building(s) and has this been shared with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents The local fire and rescue service (by electronic means e.g., email)
7	Fire Plans & Evacuation Strategy	Is a copy of the fire plan and evacuation strategy held on location in a suitable place (i.e., premises information/secure information box to prevent it being moved, tampered with and protected from damage).
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11	Fire Plans & Evacuation Strategy	Has the local fire and rescue service been given the necessary details to gain access to the secure information box?



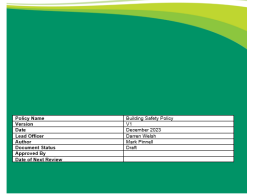
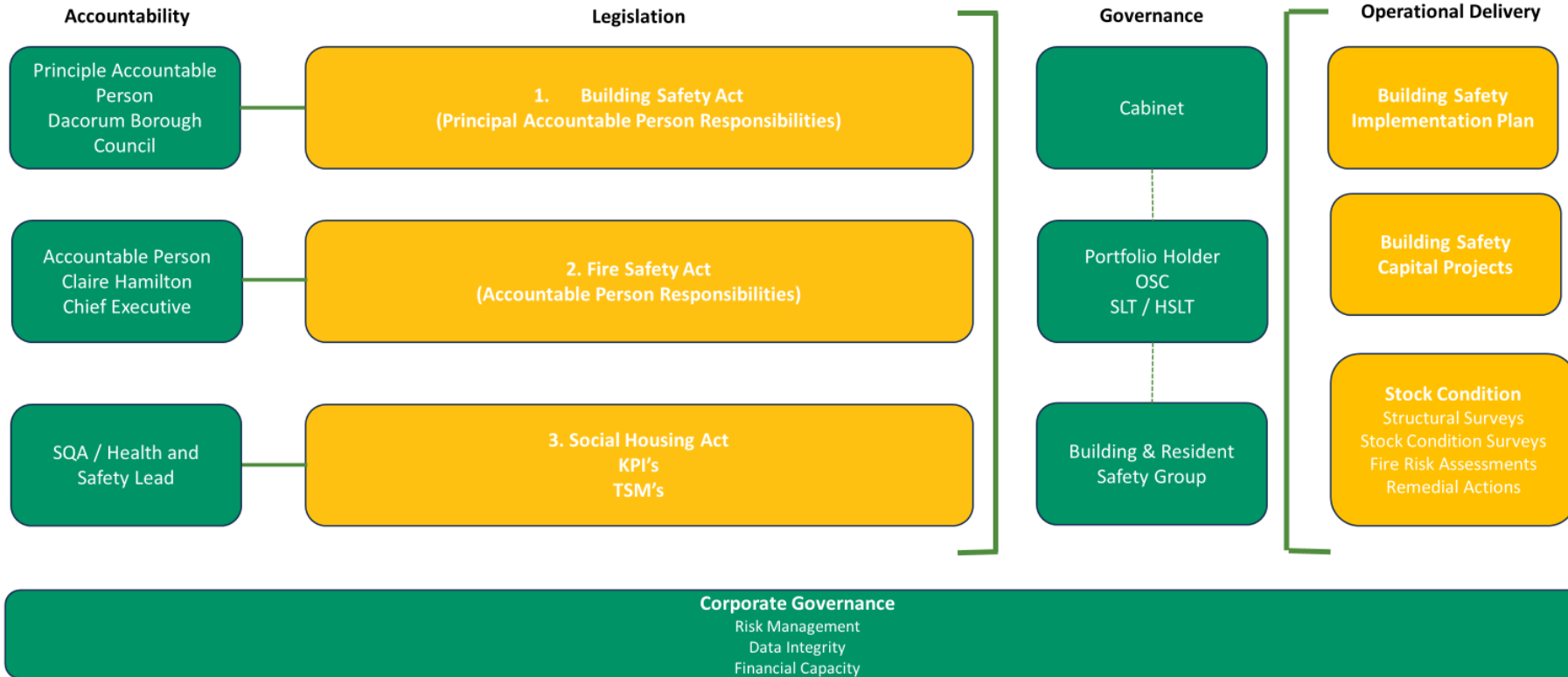
Building Safety Policy
V1 – December 2023



Assurance



Building Safety Assurance



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Page Approved Date	Building Safety





Questions

Compliance Report November 2023



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HOUSING

Overall RAG Rated summary of the
7 reported metrics

Direction of travel from
previous month

0



2



5



General Fund

Overall RAG Rated summary of the
6 reported metrics

Direction of travel from
previous month

0



0



6





Performance Summary November 2023

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Ref	Compliance	Target	YTD Result	
GD	Percentage of properties with valid gas certificate - Domestic	100.00%	99.98%	↑
GC	Percentage of properties with valid gas certificate—Communal	100.00%	100.00%	↔
ED	Percentage of properties with satisfactory EICR	100.00%	99.65%	↓
FS	Percentage of non domestic assets covered by valid FRA	100.00%	100.00%	↔
AND	Percentage of known asbestos locations re-inspected (communal areas)	100.00%	100.00%	↔
WH	Percentage of water installations covered by risk assessment	100.00%	100.00%	↔
LI	Percentage of communal lifts that require examination (LOLER)	100.00%	100.00%	↔
Items of Additional Oversight				
FRA	Number of Fire Remedial actions		1854	
AR	Number of Asbestos Remedial actions		0	

Points for noting

Area of compliance	Comments
Building Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major improvement works at Gade Tower and Lagley House progressed in November; completion due in December. Remedial works for balconies at Kylna Court have been completed. The roof terrace remedial works commenced in October with the non-compliant decking stripped and the scaffolding was struck in November. Work will continue in December Resident Engagement Strategies are being developed for high rise residential buildings with resident engagement events concluding in November. They were well received and the feedback will be used to inform the final strategies Quarterly door inspections at buildings over 11m are being completed by the Compliance Team with all activity captured using the Propeller software DLUHC have requested further information relating to buildings over 11 metres. We have until December 31st to provide Fire Safety Remediation Surveys for our 15 buildings in scope
Asbestos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will complete all non-domestic re-inspection surveys this calendar year and the outcomes of these surveys and remedial actions are captured in the report. 99% (1069 blocks) of the required surveys have been completed since April
EICR Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outstanding five no access properties continue to be the hardest to access and have numerous failed appointments. Three of the properties have been progressed to Legal proceedings as we continue to follow a robust six stage auditable access process to support legal proceedings. An additional 349 properties where the EICR is out of target was reported as non-compliant in May, this stands at 35 in November including the 5 no access properties. The additional contractor and dedicated Lead Officer are focusing hard on these properties in line with the agreed no access process
Gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Heating and Ventilation tender was carried out in November with five contractors progressing to ITT stage. The process will be concluded in December with mobilisation commencing in January 2024 for an April 2024 start date. We will bring in agency cover to focus on this whilst permanent recruitment processes are completed.

Percentage of properties with valid gas certificates

100%	Target
99.97%	Previous period (Oct 23)
99.98%	Current
	YTD trend

Narrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two properties were non compliant at the end of November All properties were subsequently serviced and compliant by 4 December

Percentage of properties with satisfactory EICR

100%	Target
99.67%	Previous period (Oct 23)
99.65%	Current
	YTD trend

Narrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10,206 properties require an EICR and in November we have 5 dwellings without an electrical test There are a further 30 properties where the EICR requires renewing. These 35 properties in total remain the focus of the team to access whilst ensuring future EICR's do not fall out of target - There are only 245 EICR's due in 2024 so we will be smoothing out the programme to prevent this peak in numbers. 4041 properties were due for EICR's this year, of which 546 are yet to be completed. For additional information so far this year the number of EICR inspections completed is 4932, which includes voids & mutual exchange properties. There are adequate resources to complete the required number for this financial year.



No access EICR Properties

Narrative

- Safer Homes and Tenancy teams collaborate on no access properties to gain access.
- If the tenant misses a booked appointment then they will be referred back to the 6 stage Tenancy process, picking up at the last stage relative to the case.

No Access Process

Stage 1 Phone call between 9am- 5pm and 1st tenancy review audit
 Stage 2 Phone call after 6pm
 Stage 3 Phone call between 9am - 5pm and 1st letter
 Stage 4 Phone call after 6pm and 2nd tenancy review audit
 Stage 5 Phone call between 9am - 5pm and 2nd letter
 Stage 6 Phone call after 6pm, 3rd tenancy review audit and 3rd letter

Legal proceedings

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	Current	Previous Month
Stage 1	10	7
Stage 2	1	5
Stage 3	0	4
Stage 4	5	0
Stage 5	2	1
Stage 6	3	0
Appointment Booked	6	11
Void	4	1
Follow On Works	0	0
Legal	4	3
Other *	0	1
To be progressed *	0	0
Total	35	33

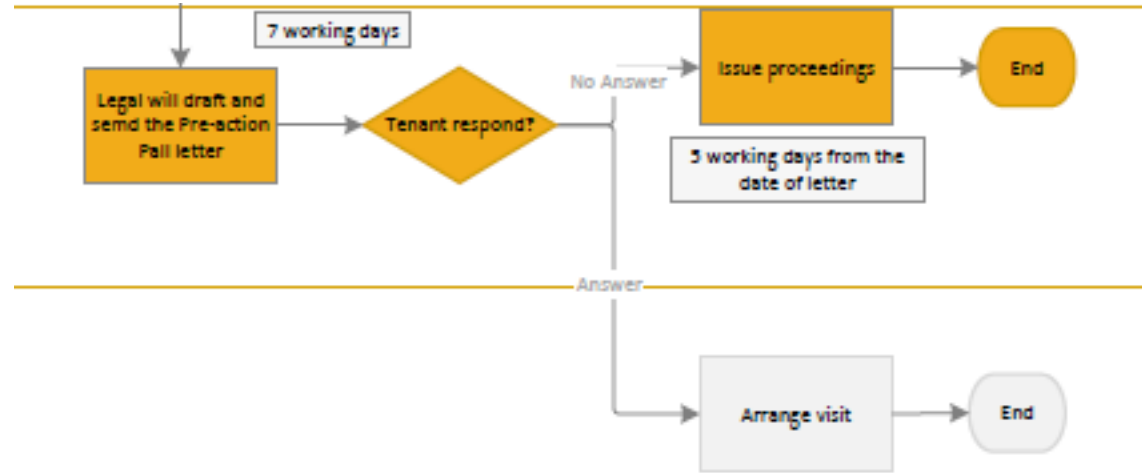
- * Hoarding or wider welfare issues that may require multi agency approach
- * Three stage contractor process has been completed, now with Lead Officer to commence No Access process.

Legal Cases

2 - Injunction secured
 0 - Court date agreed
 2 - Court date pending

No access Legal Process (Slide in development)

Legal Cases
 2 - Injunction secured
 0 - Court date agreed
 2 - Court date pending



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14 Quatermass Close – injunction obtained and access gained.

Elderly vulnerable lady.

Arrangements being made to transfer her to supported housing. NOK found and is assisting.

25 Rosebery Way – injunction obtained but no access gained.

Will be serving a NoSP.

78 Eastwick Row – court hearing 22/12/23.

14 Candfield Road – sent to DBC legal 6/12/23. .

166 Great Elms Road – sent to DBC legal but subsequently **cancelled as access gained**.

Percentage of non domestic assets covered by valid FRA

100%	Target
100%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current
	YTD trend

Narrative	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All buildings (1,102) have an in date FRA 	

Percentage of known asbestos locations re-inspected (communal areas)

100%	Target
100%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current
	YTD trend

Narrative	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1069 blocks, 99% of annual requirement have been surveyed 	

Percentage of water installations covered by risk assessment

100%	Target
100%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current
	YTD trend

Narrative	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 42 properties have an in date Water Hygiene Risk Assessment In the month of November 86 Planned Preventative Measures (PPM) were all completed within target 	

Percentage of communal lifts that require examination (LOLER)

100%	Target
100%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current
	YTD trend

Narrative

- 42 passenger lifts were serviced on schedule



Asbestos Non-Domestic Survey Status

Pre 2000 Non-domestic assets	Completed Compliance Surveys	Compliance Surveys Outstanding	Access Issues
1,074	1069	5	0

Total number of actions to date	High Risk Actions	Medium Risk Actions	Low Risk Actions	Very Low Risk Actions
2,425	0	0	716	1709

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Narrative

- With 1069 surveys completed this year we are 99% through the programme and on track to have all surveys completed before 2024. The consultant has had issues accessing all areas of the five remaining blocks and DBC are working with them to resolve this issue
- To date we have only identified 20 remedial actions. Two actions were identified in November's surveys and these have been issued to the LARC with an expected completion date of December. These low numbers are really positive and provide assurance that our processes are robust and that the buildings are managed well
- The 2,425 actions are classed as low or very low risk, meaning the Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) can remain in situ as long as it is monitored and managed, which is what the annual re-inspection programme achieves

Number of Fire remedial actions

Priority High	Oct	Nov	Timescale to complete
For Review	0	0	1 Month
In Progress	60	37	3 Months
Planned	23	14	12 Months
Deferred / Further Investigation	0	0	3 Months
Total	83	51	

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Narrative

1854 live actions within the system:

- 195 In Progress (issued to contractor)
- 0 Open (to be reviewed/issued)
- 1659 Planned (planned programme)
- 0 To be Planned (further investigation required)
- 0 Deferred

Of the live actions 51 are classed as high priority:

- 37 In Progress (issued to contractor)
- 0 Open (to be reviewed/issued)
- 14 Planned (planned programme)
- 0 Deferred/To Be Planned

Narrative

Building Classification:

- Category 1 - High rise residential buildings and large supported housing schemes
- Category 2 - Medium rise buildings and dispersed supported housing schemes
- Category 3 - Low rise buildings
- Category 4 - Buildings with no common parts

Buildings with no common parts do not require an FRA under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Number of buildings per category

Building Priority	Number	Fire Risk Assessment Frequency
Category 1	44	Annual
Category 2	427	Every three years
Category 3	321	Every five years
Category 4	310	No requirement
Total	1102	

High Priority Actions by building classification

Building Classification	Deferred	In Progress	Planned
Category 1	0	13	10
Category 2	0	24	4
Category 3	0	0	0
Total	0	37	14



Number of FRA Actions Completed

Completed in November	High	Medium	Low	On-going	Total
Category 1	9	49	5	1	64
Category 2	50	345	11	23	429
Category 3	4	45	0	0	49
Total	63	439	16	24	542

	Jobs Raised	Jobs Completed
Aug	92	144
Sep	154	225
Oct	114	393
Nov	121	542
Total	516	1820

FRA Actions

- On average we would expect to see approximately 100/150 FRA actions per month with the number of actions completed in month to be greater than the number created
- We are undertaking some closer analytical work of the outstanding actions in partnership with Manifest Consultants. This will allow us to better track and progress the medium risk actions
- SLT approved an additional programme to tackle historical actions that will commence in January 2024 - further information on next slide

Narrative

- In November SLT approved a short term FRA action remediation plan designed to target our oldest outstanding actions. This is in addition to the existing planned works programme that manages high risk actions as early as possible.
- Following SLT approval the Safe Homes Team have developed a remediation programme that focuses on moderate actions dating back to 2020 and have engaged Wates, who are the number one ranked contractor on our FRA framework, to undertake the work.
- 39 medium and low rise blocks have been targeted where there are approximately 200 actions. We are in the process of undertaking site visits with Wates to agree the full scope of works before agreeing prices and releasing orders. We have allocated an initial £500k of capital funds to the project. This allocation is subject to confirmation that the works required meet the capitalisation definition which will be established following the site visits and discussion with finance colleagues.
- Purchase orders will be issued to Wates in December so that materials can be ordered with a planned project start date of January 2024
- Wates have recently successfully completed works at Douglas Gardens and Lagley House and are competently managing the remediation work Kylna Court

Fire Safety Remediation Surveys - DLUHC letter



Narrative

- The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) the Regulator of Social Housing are seeking assurance from all registered providers (RP's) and Local Authorities (LA) that all buildings over 11 metres have the following:
 - ◆ All relevant parts of the building have been risk assessed in line with the Fire Safety (Regulatory) Order 2005
 - ◆ Where there are risks the RP/LA understands how they should be addressed, particularly in relation to cladding
 - ◆ Where life critical safety fire risks have been identified the RP/LA has plans in place to remediate them in a timely manner
- In order to capture this information DBC are required to complete a Fire Safety Remediation Survey for all buildings in scope
- In total this is relevant for 15 Council owned buildings where we are the landlord; five of those buildings are over 18 metres
- The submission portal launched on 1 December and the deadline is 31 December. We completed a similar exercise in September for the Regulator so this deadline will be achieved with the results being captured in December's Compliance Report.

TA Compliance Figures

	Gas Domestic
100%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current (122 assets)
	YTD trend

	Gas Communal
100%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current (7 assets)
	YTD trend

	FRA's
100%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current (8 assets)
	YTD trend

	Asbestos Surveys
100%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current (6 assets)
	YTD trend

	Water Hygiene RA
100%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current (2 assets)
	YTD trend

	Domestic EICR's
100%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current (129 assets)
	YTD trend

	Communal EICR's
100%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current (8 Assets)
	YTD trend

Narrative	
•	A strong compliance performance across all areas achieved by collaborative cross-departmental working



Damp and Mould Update

	Pre-2023	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Total
Cases Reported	93	45	73	194	119	75	52	51	43	26	82	123	976
No of Inspections Carried Out	29	14	20	56	59	79	134	172	112	59	77	130	941
Open Cases	0 (1)	0 (6)	12 (18)	82 (93)	46 (50)	27 (43)	33 (51)	30 (38)	34 (37)	25 (26)	72 (81)	121	482

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Narrative

The number of cases are starting to significantly increase as expected as we move into the winter period, we are currently receiving approx. 30 call per day

- B&D Civil Engineering have been appointed to support on damp and mould works and monthly meetings are in place to monitor performance.
- Recruitment has commenced for 2 x permanent Damp and Mould Surveyors and interviews should be taking place in January 2024
- Osborne are starting a recruitment exercise in January 24 to employ operatives to complete low level damp works
- All new reports have continued to have inspections carried out within 7 days of being reported (unless customer is not available)
- The new Damp and Mould Policy has been approved by Housing OSC on the 8 November 2024



Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) Update

	Pre-2023	Jan 23	Feb 23	Total
Properties Identified	49—61 Pheasant Close	1—29 Hilltop Road	33 –51 Hilltop road	3
Remediation Works Timescales*	7 working days	7 working days	7 working days	
Remediation Works Complete	31 January 2024	19 March 2024	28 February 2024	

Narrative

- Precautionary works were completed 11 September, safety platforms have been installed in all blocks where RAAC has been identified
- Weekly inspection continue to be carried out to ensure there is no deterioration in the condition of the building
- There will be non on-site activities prior to the end of the calendar year
- Full programmes have been finalised and target completion date for remedial works have now been agreed and remain on target
- Scaffold will be erected on the 15 January at Pheasant Close to enable RAAC remediation works to be completed by 31 January, and it is expected the estate improvement works will follow on immediately after
- Progress is being monitored at Bi-weekly operational meetings
- Remedial works have been programmed as part of estate improvement works which are scheduled for completion by 13 June 2024 and are currently subject to S20 processes.

General Fund Portfolio



Performance

Area	Description	Target	Performance	Trend
Fire	Percentage of properties covered by valid FRA	100.00%	100.00%	
Legionella	Percentage of water installations covered by risk assessment	100.00%	100.00%	
Asbestos	Percentage of known asbestos locations re-inspected	100.00%	100.00%	
Gas	Percentage of properties with valid gas certificate	100.00%	100.00%	
Electrical	Percentage of properties with satisfactory EICR	100.00%	100.00%	
Lifts	Percentage of passenger lifts with current examination certificate	100.00%	100.00%	

Key Points

- Excellent performance across all areas of compliance.

Commercial Portfolio FRA - Total number of assets 149 — (106 Council maintained, 43 leaseholder responsibility)



100%	Target
100%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current
	YTD trend

Narrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going process of reviews

Legionella Risk Assessments Total number of assets 149— (109 Council maintained, 40 leaseholder responsibility)

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100%	Target
100%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current
	YTD trend

Narrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On going Review

Asbestos Inspections - Total number of assets 149 - (111 Council maintained, 38 leaseholder responsibility)

100%	Target
100%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current
	YTD trend

Narrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual re-inspection surveys on 43 properties are near completion. No significant findings, minor remediation tasks have been completed by Cablesheer

Gas Safety — Total number of assets 149— (123 Council maintained, 26 leaseholder responsibility)



100%	Target
100%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current
	YTD trend

Narrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going process of servicing and inspections

Electrical Testing Total number of assets 149— (107 Council maintained, 42 leaseholder responsibility)

100%	Target
100%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current
	YTD trend

Narrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are developing a rolling programme of cyclical electrical inspections

Passenger Lifts - Total number of assets 9, all Council maintained

100%	Target
89%	Previous period (Oct 23)
100%	Current
	YTD trend

Narrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct contact is now being made with local HSB engineers, to ensure inspections are completed on time

Agenda Item 10

Housing & Community OSC Work Programme 2023/2024

OSC Chairs Meeting to discuss the forward plan:

16:00-17:00 – 24 Jan via Teams

Meeting Date	Report Deadline	Items	Contact Details	Background information
Wed 17 Jan 2024	Friday 5 Jan 2024	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Kayley Johnston	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
		HRA Business Plan Refresh	Strategic Director – Housing & Property Services Darren.welsh@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Draft Interim Asset Management Strategy	Mark Pinnell – Assistant Director Property and Place Mark.pinnell@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Building Safety Policy	Mark Pinnell – Assistant Director Property and Place Mark.pinnell@dacorum.gov.uk	
Wed 7 Feb 2024	Friday 26 January 2024	Action Points (from previous meeting)		<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
		Joint Budget <i>Ideally no further</i>	Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and</i>

		<i>items to be added</i>	ov.uk	<i>scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
		Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards Update	Simon Walton Interim Head of Strategy, Quality and Assurance Simon.walton@dacorum.gov.uk	
		New KPI'S	Head of Transformation Shaj.choudhury@dacorum.gov.uk	
Wed 13 March 2024	Friday 1 March 2024	Action Points (from previous meeting)		<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
		Q3 Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report	Fiona Jump – Head of Financial Services Fiona.jump@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
		Q3 People and Communities Quarterly Reports	Natasha Beresford – Assistant Director Housing Operations and Safer Communities Natasha.beresford@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
		Q3 Housing (Property, Strategic & Delivery, Operations) & Safe Communities Reports	David Barrett – Assistant Director – Strategic Housing and Delivery David.barrett@dacorum.gov.uk Mark Pinnell – Assistant Director Property and Place Mark.pinnell@dacorum.gov.uk Natasha Beresford –	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>

		Assistant Director Housing Operations and Safer Communities Natasha.beresford@dacorum.gov.uk	
	Anti-Social Behaviour Policy	Natasha Beresford – Assistant Director Housing Operations and Safer Communities Natasha.beresford@dacorum.gov.uk	
	Local Connections Policy	Julie Abbey-Taylor Head of Investments and Delivery Julie.abbeytaylor@dacorum.gov.uk	
Pending approval by the chair (jan committee)	Communities	Diane Southam	

Public place protection order Revision -. Date tbc

Old Town Hall Review – Diane – TBC

Adventure Playground Review - Diane – TBC

Sports Strategy - Diane – TBC

Cultural Strategy - Diane – TBC

Leisure Contract Management – Diane - TBC

Rent Policy Update – Oliver Jackson – TBC

Add climate change (from Oct minutes)