




Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Housing Transformation and Improvement Programme (HTIP) Asset Management and Compliance Work Stream
Date:	7 th September 2022
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	None
Background papers:	None
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

Report Author / Responsible Officer Report Author – Mark Pinnell, Interim Assistant Director Responsible Officer – Sarah Pemberton, Deputy Chief Executive (Resident Services)   Sarah.Pembertong@dacorum.gov.uk

Corporate Priorities	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

Purpose of the report:	1. To provide an overview of the HTIP Housing Asset Management and Compliance workstream.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	1. To note the actions associated with the workstream, expected outcomes and progress to date.
Period for post policy/project review:	

1 Background

Our tenants and leaseholders are at the heart of the Housing Transformation and Improvement Programme (HTIP), seeking to improve their lives through the provision of excellent housing and homes that they are proud to live in and communities they can thrive in with their families and friends. This is a long-term piece of work linked not only to improvement but also transformation through the enabling element of the Target Operating Model (TOM).

The following five key areas fall under the HTIP:

- Strategic Housing.
- Housing Operations including resident services
- Finance, Technology and Performance
- Commissioning and Contracting
- People and Culture (including the Target Operating Model- TOM)

Strategic Housing delivers a service that is able to look forward and be able to set the tone for the Housing service in terms of home creation, development of environments in which people want to live, influencing developers as well as making sure that all homes and communities are safe for everyone.

Housing Operations and Residents Services has a range of projects which will ensure that our tenants and leaseholders live in the best possible environment possible. Another key element in this area is our ability to deliver improvements in our operations, for example, repairs and maintenance that deliver value for our tenants, where value does not just relate to money.

Finance, Technology and Performance are all key areas to help deliver HTIP. This element of the programme will ensure that we are able to deliver the digital capability needed for our tenants and leaseholders to be able to interact with Housing in a much more effective manner, where this is the best way for them to do so. If they prefer to still meet face to face, make a phone call or write a letter, that will of course still be available to them. In terms of Performance, we consider how the service measures what gets done and needs to get done. This applies not only to statutory areas, but also indicators that the service thinks will help it maintain its focus upon delivery, be meaningful as a part of its narrative within the Council and also to tenants and leaseholders.

Commissioning and Contracting is the way in which we buy services and products that impact on the lives of our tenants and leaseholders. It is about the choice we have for provision of services and products in the market and the value we can get from them. This workstream seeks to improve the way in which we contract and then manage some of our services.

People and Culture is important, as our people and the way in which they work helps to make sure that HTIP can be delivered in a way that is safe, legal and sustainable. There will be some key areas within the HTIP programme where we need to develop our people further and more quickly, for example in building safety and contract management. Additionally, this workstream owns the TOM, is responsible for its development, with Housing Operations, Strategic Housing, Housing Asset Management and Compliance service areas accountable for its delivery.

Under the banner of the HTIP there are a number of workstreams, one of which is the Housing Compliance and Asset Management workstream.

2. Housing Asset Management and Compliance Work stream

The core purpose of the Asset Management and Compliance work stream is to undertake activity which enables the Housing Services function to perform in a manner that is safe and legal. It is designed to enable and ensure that residents, tenants and leaseholders are safe in their homes by working in partnership with the council and its suppliers to ensure statutory compliance across the following key areas: Gas, Fire, Legionella, Asbestos, Lifts and Electricity. Additionally this work will focus on the data we hold relating to our social housing assets as we move to a more holistic strategic approach, knowing how our assets are performing being key to inform investment decisions.

Table 1 below provides members with an overview of key activities within the workstream and expected duration.

Table 1

Key Milestones	Description	Start Date	Target Date	% Completed (RAG)
1	Project Kick off	June 22	July 22	100%
2	As Is Investigation	June 22	Sep 22	60%
3	SOPS across 6 compliance areas	June 22	Oct 22	72%
4	Data collection and dashboards	May 22	Jul 22	100%
5	Asset Management Review	June 22	Oct 22	59%
6	Asset List	June 22	Dec 22	67%
7	Client Monitoring	Aug 22	Feb 23	35%
8	Service Scoping for H&S, Compliance, Carbon Reduction and Health Check	Aug 22	Dec 22	74%
9	Stock Conditions Survey	June 22	Oct 22	35%
10	Contract Management	June 22	Dec 22	31%
11	HR/ Training	June 22	Nov 22	68%
12	Governance/Management	Aug 22	Feb 23	26%
13	Finance (Budget monitoring)	Aug 22	Nov 22	30%
14	TOM (Target operating model)	June 22	Mar 23	0%

The 'As Is' investigation is process mapping all relevant activities to highlight duplication, inter-dependencies, areas of focus and risk. Data collection will review how we currently collect and store data, where the gaps are and what needs to be done to improve.

A comprehensive training needs assessment will be completed to assess current staff training levels, mapped against the essential and desirable training requirements of the role and any highlighted gaps in required skill set will be addressed. This is a key activity not only to ensure our teams are fit for purpose now, but also in preparation for forthcoming legislative change.

An in depth review of current working practices across the compliance area has been completed and improvements made. Of primary importance was to ensure senior DBC officers had oversight of key metrics across all areas of compliance and additional areas of risk. To facilitate this governance arrangement a comprehensive set of dashboards have been introduced, which are updated each week, and from which a monthly summary report is produced and discussed at the Residential Services Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

To complement the work completed thus far it is fundamental that a review of the systems by which the council delivers its compliance approach is undertaken across technology and non-technology process. DBC have commissioned our existing Housing Information Technology provider; MRI, to complete a 'Health Check' of the Orchard and Asset Pro systems. This will assess the current capability of the system, how DBC officers currently use the system, are there areas of the existing system that could be used better, do our staff require training and support to use the system and what improvements, additional capacity and efficiency could be gained if additional modules were purchased.

Following one workshop we have gained insight into the Asset Mobile product which DBC have access to but are not currently using, with the correct investment; in terms of equipment and training, DBC officers could start to do more on site activity without the need to log into a desktop computer. We can also improve the administration of our cyclical servicing programmes such as gas and electrical testing, with the introduction of a servicing module this would reduce our reliance on spreadsheets and lean towards a more integrated systemic approach.

A number of corporate documents referred to as 'Standard Operating Procedures' (SOPs) will be compiled covering all 6 areas of compliance activity. SOPs take account of regulatory requirements and provide a set of written instructions that describes the step-by-step process that must be taken to properly perform a routine activity. These documents will form part of a corporate catalogue and accompany policy and procedural documentation held in a central location.

Underpinning all activity of this workstream is the acceptance and understanding of all involved of the need to take our residents, tenants and leaseholders along the journey with us. We accept that in such an important area of activity that a one size fits all approach cannot be adopted and we fully intend to work with all stakeholders to understand what will work for them. This will involve; but not limited to, bespoke engagement activities, maximising opportunities to educate tenants, residents and leaseholders around the importance of compliance and associated responsibilities at a personal and corporate level, consideration of the terminology we use, regular updates on the HTIP and the production of corporate documentation that really resonates with the intended audience.

3. Expected Workstream Outcomes and Success Criteria

Members are asked to note the following expected outcomes –

- To provide customer centric services that exceed expectation
- To ensure all stakeholders are fully aware of their role and responsibilities
- To provide corporate visibility of performance, exception narrative and robust corrective action plans
- To create unified working processes that robustly meet the challenges of regulatory, operational and societal pressure.
- To create a culture of safety and compliance ensuring a priority for all, evidenced via external scrutiny and audit regime.
- To ensure we engage with our residents, their voice is captured, actions taken and lessons are learnt.
- To align investment with compliance requirements
- To keep our managed homes and buildings safe
- To develop a risk based approach to service provision
- To keep fully informed with regulatory change, swiftly assess impact and respond as necessary.
- Assurance that the Compliance function within Property delivers homes that are safe and legal
- Processes are embedded that underpin the delivery and recording of all inspections to time and quality
- That all systems work to enable the delivery of all compliance requirements – this entails not just technology but contract management and integration with supplier technology
- That technical systems are integrated, or have the ability to integrate across the council and with suppliers
- That system integration enables inputs/outputs to only be needed to be completed once leading to a reduction in time and improved service output.
- That training and development is fit for purpose across the council at appropriate levels
- That all risk is managed through a key element of compliance and contract management approach and is reduced through mitigated and tracked actions
- That the opportunities developed through a new operating model create a strengthened and joined up approach for residents.
- Educated residents with a clear understanding of the importance of being safe from a personal and residential perspective
- Evidence of compliance to stakeholders (e.g., members, residents, the regulator).
- Clear ownership of the compliance tasks and oversight by SLT

The above outcomes can be further summarised into a measure of project success:-

- Compliance across all key elements: Gas, Electricity, Legionella, Fire, Asbestos and Lifts is embedded and sustainable
- Improvements in contract management and supplier relationship management
- Technical solutions identified to improve systems and approach
- A well-trained work force, including supply chain
- Well informed residents who feel safe in the homes DBC provide

4. Risks

There are a number of risks which have been identified and considered as we embark on the HTIP journey, including:

- Staffing levels and competence
- IT Systems – not fit for purpose
- Finance – understanding and governance (ability to flex)
- Reputational damage – non-compliance and poor service performance
- Coherent and collaborative approach is limited due to silo working
- Adversarial relationships and blame culture
- Health, Safety and Risk culture is not visible / consistent
- Understanding of what 'good' looks like
- Pace of change and impact assessment

The nature of the HTIP project and individual workstream discipline, is one of constant risk review and mitigation. Each workstream has an Executive Sponsor a Senior Responsible Officers (SRO) and a Lead Officer allocation to ensure oversight of current and emerging risk.

5. Next steps

The Compliance and Asset Management workstream will progress as per the timeline provided in Table 1. Additionally we also have a particular focus on shorter term activities to improve the current customer service provision relating to the repairs service. These shorter term actions are balancing the current supply chain implications, currently experienced across the sector with available budgets whilst improving customer communication.