

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 SEPTEMBER 2018

Title:

**DRAFT STRATEGY FOR RESPONDING TO REPORTS OF DAMP, MOULD AND
CONDENSATION IN COUNCIL HOMES**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Carole King]
[Wards Affected: All]**

Summary and purpose:

This report sets out the Housing Service's draft strategy for responding to reports of damp, mould and condensation in Council homes.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The report supports the following corporate priorities: People, Place and Prosperity

Financial implications:

Implementation of the draft strategy is likely to incur maintenance expenditure on both capital and revenue works. Budgets are in place for damp works in capital and revenue. However due to increased tenant awareness and a new procedure, additional spend may well be incurred. Budgets for damp works will be reviewed as part of the upcoming budget setting process to ensure sufficient provision is put in place.

Increased investment in properties to tackle dampness across the stock will help ensure value of stock is maintained which is identified as a key objective for the HRA.

Legal implications:

The strategy addresses internal management and operational issues for Officer/tenant clarity. The legal aspects are set out within the strategy document and non-compliance with relevant provisions will leave the Council open to challenge or complaint. In addition, the Decent Homes Standard is relevant as a measure of general housing conditions introduced by the government. The standard was updated in 2006 to take account of the Housing Act 2004 and the implementation of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The standard has four requirements and local authorities are required to ensure that housing stock; (i) meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing; (ii) is in a reasonable state of repair; (iii) has reasonably modern facilities and services; and (iv) provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

1. Introduction

1.1 The report on the interim review of the HRA Asset Management Strategy 2015-20 was presented to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 July 2018. In this report, it was noted that within the 5 year action plan, the following objective had not been achieved:-

“Develop a strategy for tackling dampness across the Council’s stock, including developing a policy/procedure for dealing with damp related issues reported by tenant.”

1.2 The report further commented that:-

“Damp related issues continue to be dealt with on an ad-hoc basis which is inefficient and potentially ineffectual. Going forward, there will be a systematic management of cases so that they are monitored and measures assessed for effectiveness.”

1.3 In response to the report, a draft strategy has been compiled that outlines the Housing Service’s response to reports of damp, mould and condensation. This is shown as **Annexe 1**.

2. Key features of the draft strategy for responding to reports of damp, mould and condensation

2.1 The aims of the draft strategy are outlined and include the following:-

2.1.2 Provide and maintain dry, warm and healthy homes for our tenants.

2.1.3 Work in partnership with tenants to resolve issues of damp and mould in their home. This will include advising them on ways to reduce condensation.

2.2 The draft strategy incorporates a definition of and responsibility for damp and condensation. This includes the three main categories of damp: Penetrating damp, rising damp and condensation.

2.3 The legal aspects of dealing with damp and mould in tenants’ homes are incorporated in section 3 of the draft strategy. This includes the relevant sections of the tenancy agreement.

2.4 Section 4 of the draft strategy details the most common causes of damp and mould within Council properties.

2.5 Section 5 of the draft strategy highlights information gathering and actions in respect of responsive damp repairs. The focus of the Housing Service’s approach will be to continue to accurately establish the cause(s) of damp, mould and condensation. This is to make sure that either the tenant takes appropriate action to deal with any condensation, as shown in **Annexe 2**: the ‘tackling damp, mould and condensation in your home information guidance sheet.’ Or the Housing Service is able to raise an order for the most beneficial type of repair to alleviate or eliminate damp or mould in the tenant’s home.

2.6 The concluding section incorporates preventative and monitoring work that includes the following:-

2.6.1 Further promotion to tenants as to how they can prevent and reduce condensation and report damp/mould in their home.

2.6.2 All damp and mould jobs to be reviewed by the Asset Manager every six months, to assess whether the proposed solution has been effective.

2.6.3 The Repairs and Voids Manager identifying a list of components most likely to cause damp and liaising with the Council's main repairs contractor and any other contractor to monitor these items.

2.6.4 Work to alleviate damp in tenants' homes identified by the Stock Condition Surveyor within the Asset Management team when carrying out stock condition surveys.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee:-

- Considers and supports the Housing Service's draft strategy for responding to reports of damp, mould and condensation.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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