

# Housing Asset Management Strategy 2022-2030



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## Foreword

This strategy has been developed to guide the council in the efficient and effective management of its homes as a core requirement of meeting its Landlord Services function.

It provides a framework under which the investment detailed in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2021 – 2050 and strategic priorities within the Corporate Plan 2020 – 2025 can be achieved.

The Housing Asset Management Strategy is not only required to direct our investment priorities but also demonstrate how we will deliver excellent services to our tenants, leaseholders and wider stakeholders. It will identify how we will ensure that people living in our homes remain informed, involved, safe and secure.

The strategy outlines the approach and commitments the council is making under the following key themes:

**1. Understanding our service, homes, tenants and stakeholder requirements**

**2. Providing modern homes across the borough**

**3. Proactively decarbonising the homes**

**4. Ensuring homes are safe and secure for tenants and leaseholders**



Over the period of this strategy our principal aim is to address the Climate Emergency, declared in September 2019, which is supported through our Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, with the Built Environment (homes) being one of the key strands of our approach. Whilst this is addressed as a key theme within our Housing Asset Management Strategy, meeting our carbon neutral target across all council activities by 2030 will be addressed through all areas of the strategy. In addition to working towards decarbonising our housing stock we will also support our tenants and leaseholders in reducing fuel poverty to mitigate the projected increase in energy costs over this period. We will ensure that any measures we take to reduce the carbon output of our homes does not have a negative impact on our tenant's energy costs.



The strategy has been designed to provide additional guidance beyond our 'business as usual' activities, delivered through both Responsive Repairs and our Core Capital Programme. Each theme within the strategy has a strategic objective, which is supported through individual commitments. These are captured in our Strategy Action Plan and will be used to inform future Property Services Service Planning.

The strategy has been developed in consultation with our tenants and leaseholders through discussions with our Tenants Panel and engaging with tenants at consultation events in Autumn 2021. Additionally, we have reviewed our current service standards, performance indicators, complaints and feedback to identify areas of improvement and current best practice. Our Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR, June 21) has also helped inform our future thinking.

This strategy was agreed by the council, in April 2022, following advice from our Landlord Services Advisory Board in March 2022. The Board will support the ongoing governance and delivery of the strategy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Rivers".

**Cllr Paul Rivers**

Co-Portfolio Holder for Housing (Operations)

## Introduction

The previous Housing Asset Management Strategy (2015 – 2020) focused on the effective and efficient management of resources and assets to meet housing need. This principle remains and will be required to support a key objective of the Corporate Plan (2020 – 2025); in providing ‘good quality housing for all income levels and age groups’.

Since 2015, the landscape in which the council operates has changed significantly and remains, to an extent, in a state of flux. Following the 2017 Grenfell Tower tragedy, changes to the investment planning and delivery of building safety works continues to test the capacity of the social housing sector. Now with the additional and increasing focus on energy efficiency, decarbonisation, affordability and the outcomes of the White Paper highlighting the need to hear the resident voice, local authorities are under enormous and perhaps unprecedented pressure to understand and implement these emerging and occasionally conflicting agendas.

This strategy sets out our asset management philosophy and key objectives to guide and monitor progress through the next eight years. Our stated objectives illustrate our intentions and expectations. Detail around activities and investment required to deliver these objectives is provided in the supporting action plan and will be monitored through individual project plans.

Asset management is becoming increasingly complex and changeable, so this strategy is agile to accommodate further changes in the external environment as current thinking, regulation and technological solutions evolve. It also needs to adapt to reflect changes in wider investment priorities and strategic objectives of the council.

We remain committed to collect, maintain and interpret quality data and adopt robust planning methods to develop a more proactive and preventative asset management service, continually learning from our operations and using tenant and leaseholder engagement to drive continuous improvement.

By creating a Modern Homes Standard for our homes, we will set clear expectations for our residents, as well as providing consistency in investment and service across our portfolio. We will collaboratively work across our operational teams, using local knowledge and asset intelligence to inform how, when and where we deliver investment to maintain and improve our housing stock to optimal effect.

We also aim to further improve the contractual management of our contractors and their sub-contractors to provide greater visibility of performance, better monitor our collective progress, achievements and outcomes, as well as increasing the Social Value our partners offer the council and its residents.

By making intelligent use of data, experience and drawing upon best practice, this strategy will ensure the council continually improves its overall Asset Management to drive best value outcomes.

## Our Homes

The council owns and manages 4800 homes, 10% of which are leasehold. These provide a well-balanced mix of property. The majority, 90%, of homes are let as general needs, with some of these allocated specifically to older people.

There are no high-rise residential buildings (over 18m) within the stock, which greatly reduces risk in terms of building and fire safety in comparison to other local authority landlords. Even so, the building safety agenda remains a key priority for the council, as for all social landlords over the coming years, regardless of building height.

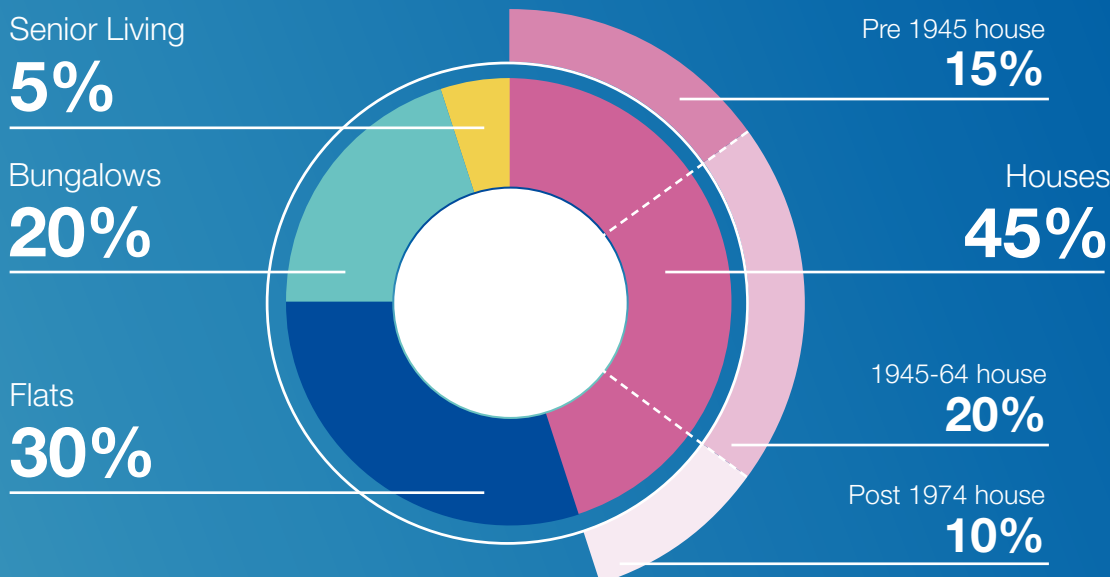
The nature and requirements of leasehold properties does vary to that of General Needs properties and this has been considered when developing this strategy.

The council also owns 785 garages which are rented to both council tenants and local residents. The council has reviewed

the condition and overall demand for its garages but this has been on individual garage sites, rather than taking a holistic view. Consideration has been given to the use of less popular garage sites for future development opportunities and assessments have been carried out to understand the current condition and future maintenance liability to improve the letting of garages.

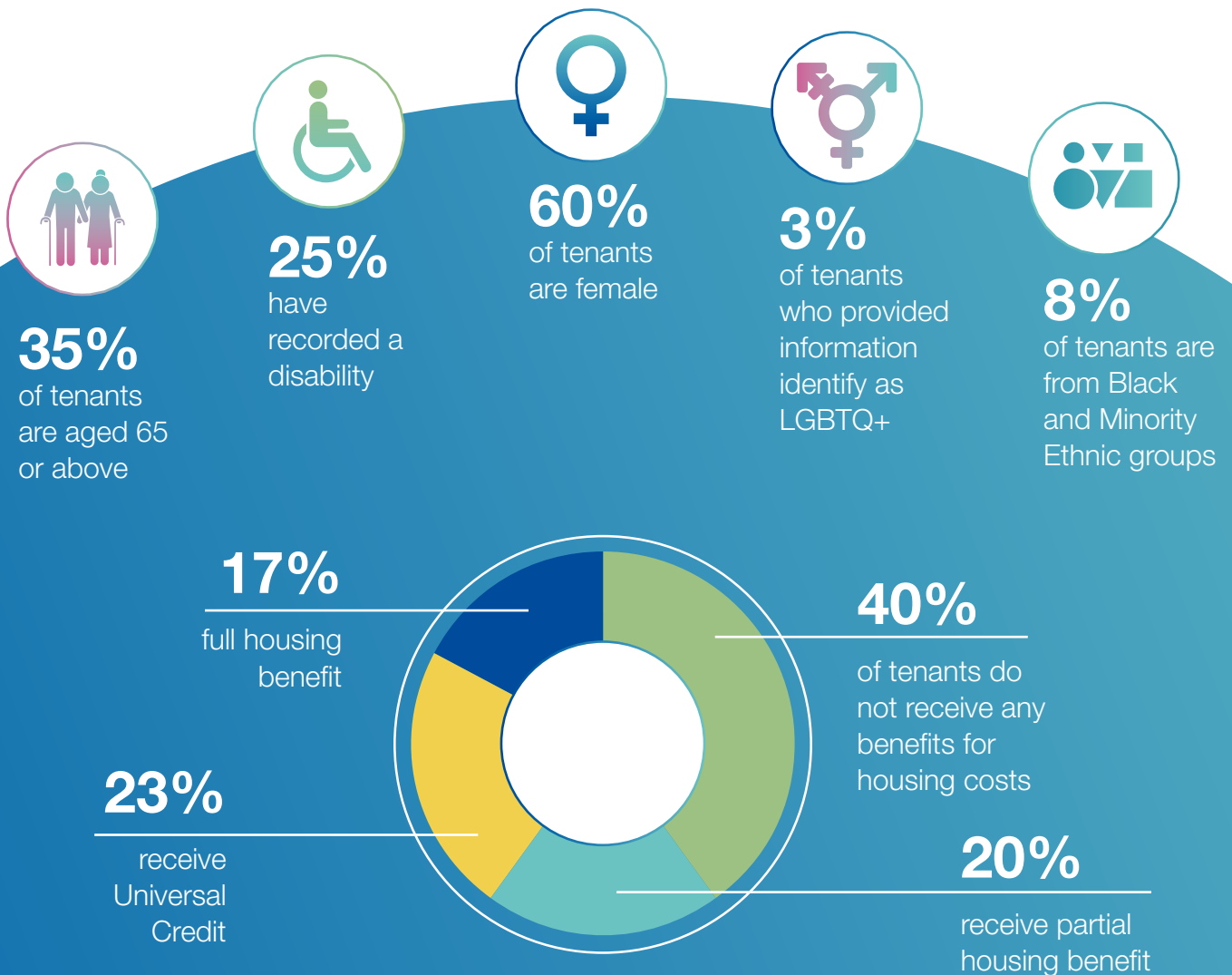
Whilst a garage strategy has not specifically been developed as part of this Asset Management Strategy the standard, safety and use of garages is an important factor of good Asset Management and is considered as part of the provision of Quality Homes.

### Our homes by type



# Our Tenants

Waverley's tenants reflect the demographics of a borough with an aging population.



The housing services team has limited data on protected characteristics but promotes equality, diversity and inclusion to deliver accessible services.

\*Data from internal Housing Management System November 2021

# Background

## Housing Asset Management Strategy 2015 - 2022

The previous strategy, written in 2015, largely focused on key workstream areas (responsive, planned, cyclical) and building skills and capacity within the service. The supporting action plan identified several areas for review and improvement, which have been taken forward in this strategy.

Over the past seven years, the context and landscape within social housing has changed greatly, introducing a host of complex and competing priorities as well as creating both financial and resourcing challenges. To meet this demand, a more holistic and data-driven approach is required to further develop the service to tenants and leaseholders.

Business as Usual (BAU) elements of the previous strategy remain valid and, as a core

element of Asset Management delivery should be taken as included within this strategy. BAU activities should continue to be delivered, subject to continuous monitoring and periodic review.

A full review of the previous strategy has been carried out to identify those projects which have been completed, those still in progress and areas where further review or attention is required. Relevant actions have been passed through to this strategy and are included within the supporting Action Plan.

In developing this Strategy, feedback has been sought across the council identifying areas for improvement in terms of strategy management, monitoring and reporting. This has informed the approach of the 2022 – 2030 strategy.

## Lessons Learnt

- Better communication of the Asset Management Strategy across Property Services and the council
- Detailed action plan which can be disseminated into Team Plans and Individual objectives: with targets
- Improved data and planning activities to ensure delivery and meeting commitments to tenants and leaseholders
- Continual updating of strategy in line with external changes and financial priorities
- Using the strategy as a 'working document' which helps drive change, culture and communication across the organisation
- Providing regular updates to tenants and leaseholders and ensuring that consultation is carried out to understand the Resident Voice
- Improved engagement with Internal and External Stakeholders on delivery and outcomes



## STAR Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2021

During May and June 2021, we conducted our most recent STAR tenant satisfaction survey. The outcomes of this have informed our learning and approach in developing this strategy. Due to the timing of this survey, it has also helped us understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how this has affected both our tenants and the services that we provide.

The survey included a focus on the quality of homes, our repairs and maintenance services and how we communicate and keep our tenants informed. We feel these are all critical factors to ensuring that our tenants are satisfied with their home and housing service. To inform this strategy we have considered all aspects of the STAR survey results but have given more focus and review on some of the core indicators.

We can see from the results and associated feedback that we have improved the quality of our homes and that residents feel secure within their homes. These areas are also performing well against sector benchmarks. Around a third of our tenants felt energy efficiency improvements were a higher priority than other capital investments.

Our main challenges are associated with our repairs and maintenance services and the quality of the repair. We know, as a sector that this area of service has been impacted by COVID-19 and most landlords have seen a dip in this area over the past 24 months. Nevertheless, we accept that we need to improve our repairs services to tenants as this is the major cause of overall dissatisfaction. The introduction of our new Repairs and Maintenance contract in 2022 will be a driver for improvement in this area.

	Benchmark	2017 Result	2021 Result
Quality of Home	82%	79%	81%
Safe and Secure Home	84%	N/A	83%
Repairs and Maintenance Service	78%	76%	70%
Quality of Last Repair	86%	81%	73%
Easy to deal with	84%	N/A	78%
VFM for Rent	85%	83%	84%
Overall Satisfaction	84%	83%	76%

Whilst our tenants acknowledge that we are 'easy to deal with' – there is some valuable feedback within the survey which tells us we need to better use technology to communicate quickly with tenants and at a time that suits them, improving 'self-serve' through an on-line portal. We also need to ensure that we always respond to our tenants' enquiries and issues quickly, and this is also the case for our contractors.

When asking our tenants where and how we can improve there was clear feedback in that our core areas of focus should be our approach to customer service and satisfaction.

We will embed this within the strategy and work with tenants and leaseholders to identify where we can drive this improvement and better capture their feedback, suggestions and ideas.

# Influencing Factors

## Meeting Local Housing Need

Similar to other local authorities, we have a core strategic objective to meet the housing needs of our residents. This is reflected in our Corporate Strategy 2020 – 2025 with a clear ambition to provide ‘Good Quality Housing for all income levels and all age groups’. This is to ensure that we have a mix of housing solutions which meet the needs of the whole community and can support people in creating happy, healthy, and diverse communities within the borough.

The overall average rent for a property in Waverley is £1,257 per month which is close to the Surrey average. A household with an ‘average’ Waverley workplace income renting a 2-bedroom property privately can expect to spend 44% of their income on renting in the private rented sector. This rises to 57% where all property sizes are considered. Therefore, the provision of truly affordable housing is critical; and largely addressed in our Affordable Homes Delivery Strategy 2022 – 2025.

We must also make sure that our existing homes are meeting the needs of local communities within the borough. This can be highlighted or addressed in a range of different ways, and it is important that we are constantly monitoring the performance and suitability of our homes for our tenants. Some examples of how we wish to make sure our homes meet the needs of our tenants are that:

- we have a mix of property sizes and types that are suitable for all tenants
- we have a proportionate geographical spread of affordable housing across the borough to create mixed tenure communities
- our homes are affordable for our tenants, in that they are not too expensive or challenging to heat, maintain or manage due to their construction or location
- we are maximising the property – ensuring that the property is the right size for them and/or their family
- we are maximising our land assets and where possible identifying those properties/land holdings which may support our Affordable Homes Delivery Strategy



## National Context

The Social Housing sector is currently facing several key external drivers that will influence this strategy over its delivery period.

Over the past 12-18 months, there has been widespread consultation and debate, but in many areas, there remains a lack of absolute clarity around what future regulation, standards and funding regimes might look like.

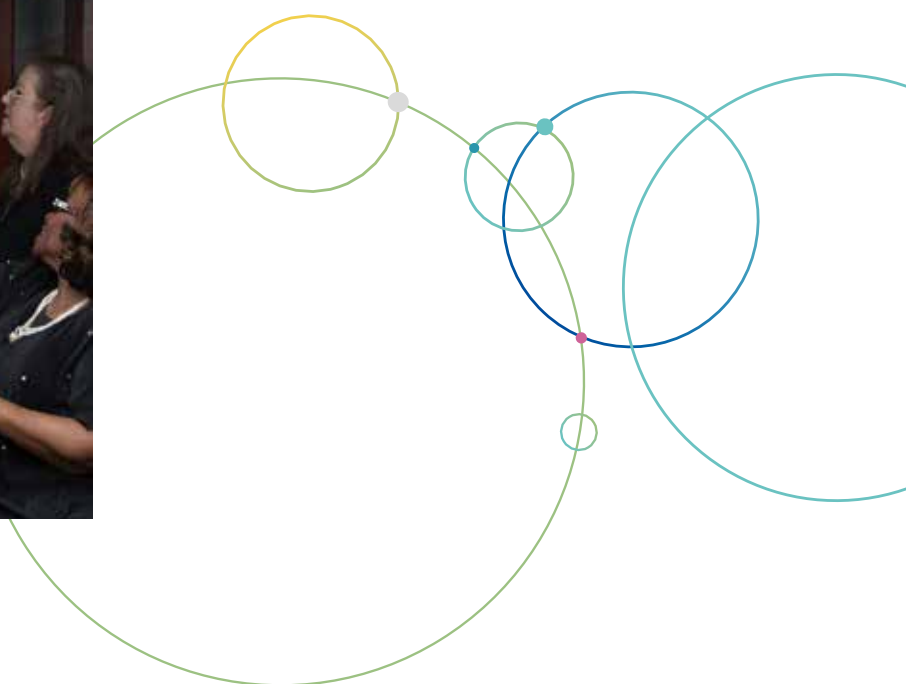
It will be critical for the council to maintain a 'watching brief' around these topics, and it can be expected that the strategy, actions and business plan will require review and changes from time to time.

The areas currently identified as key over the life of this strategy are:

- Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Bill 2021
- Social Housing White Paper 2020
- Clean Growth Strategy 2021
- Quality Lifetime Homes – the future of the Decent Homes Standard
- Future Homes Standard 2025
- Regulator of Social Housing Sector Risk Profile – 2021

This strategy and the supporting action plan must remain agile to account for pending clarifications around these key policy issues.

Within the supporting action plan, review points are included which will ensure that the strategy and action plan can be revised to reflect any financial and operational impacts arising from any material changes to the assumptions made at the time of drafting this Strategy.



## Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

The HRA 30-year Business Plan is updated annually, providing a long-term income and expenditure profile based upon the latest data and business priorities.

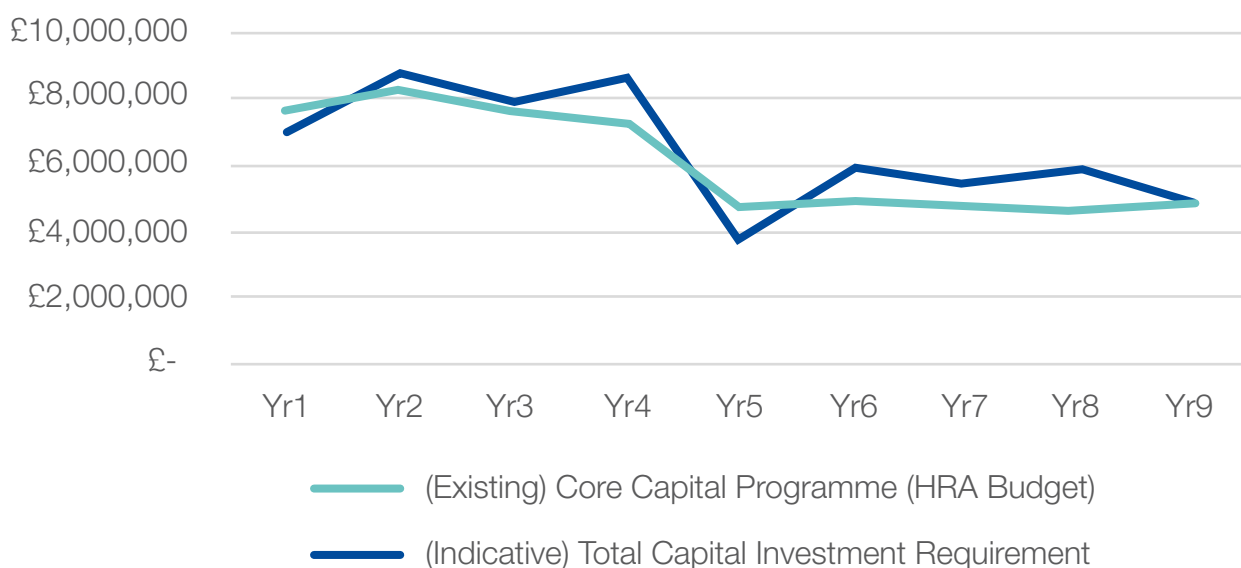
**A strategic review of the HRA Business Plan is planned to be undertaken in Autumn 2022 and this will inform future investment priorities over the life of the strategy and beyond.**

To ensure that the asset management strategy is deliverable, it is critical to understand this business plan and profile this against known and identified additional investment. For the purposes of this strategy, the latest HRA Business Plan (Budget Review Feb 22) has been used.

Analysis of the HRA Business Plan and the investment profile has been carried out. This shows that during the strategy period the budget projection for the Core Capital Programme is in line with investment need up until Year3 (2024/25) after which there is a shortfall between budget provision and investment requirement.

In addition to this variance there are further risks that could potentially impact the balance between the business plan and actual investment needed. The primary factors are considered as:

**Capital Investment requirement vs Core Capital Programme (HRA) 2022-30**



**1. Investment identified** – this may result in a variance to the investment need over the strategy period and 30 year long term plan. This is largely associated with replacement kitchens and bathrooms with the data needing to be validated through a borough wide stock condition survey. This backlog is due to investment programme being frozen in response to the rent reduction during 2016-20. For the purposes of this strategy it has been estimated that 40% of these identified components will require replacement, with the remainder being resolved through data validation. This historic investment has been modelled over the strategy period.

Component	Backlog (£mil)
Bathrooms	4.90
Boundaries & Outbuildings	4.12
Kitchens	4.55
Roofline	3.59
Wall & Roof	3.30

**2. Energy Efficiency Improvement** – as recognised within the strategy there is a range of unquantified spend or ‘new’ investment required which will sit outside of current investment projections; largely associated with Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation changes within the sector.

**3. Labour Shortages and Cost Increases** – the social housing sector is experiencing a disproportionate increase in the cost of materials associated with construction and property maintenance; this has been further heightened by wider economic factors and labour/skills shortages. It is expected that component costs will increase and potentially inflation might rise higher than assumptions included within the business plan. This is also expected when labour demand outstrips supply and costs increase particularly where there will be peaks of similar activity as the sector works towards the short-term 2030 Energy performance Certificate (EPC) target.

### Investment needed to meet Decent Homes Standard and EPC C By 2030

Spend Area	Assumptions	2022 – 2030 (000's)
Stock Maintenance (Responsive Repairs)	As identified in HRA Budget	£62,014
Future Capital Investment	As identified in Keystone	£41,386
Historic Component Replacement	Taken as Pre-2021 Component Replacements (potential £26m) - 40% requiring replacement	£11,700
Energy Efficiency	Additional cost outside of business plan to meet EPC C by 2030	£4,952
Labour and Cost Increases	Assumed cost increases at 4% on materials	£603
<b>Total Required</b>		<b>£120,655</b>
HRA Budget Provision	Taken from 2022 Business Plan	£121,270

Moving towards a more active asset management solution through the gathering and use of accurate data will allow the council to quantify the potential risk areas above and ensure these are factored into overall investment plans.

By developing closer and more collaborative relationships with key contractors, the understanding of labour and skills shortages will help the council identify such risks as early as possible.

## Strategic Vision

The overall Strategic Vision for Landlord Services within the council is directed by the Corporate Strategy 2020 – 2025.

It is appreciated that when the Corporate Strategy is revised in 2025, priorities and objectives may change, however it is not currently expected to fundamentally reshape the themes and approach of this strategy.

This strategy is also strongly linked to and influenced by the council's Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy 2020 – 2030, with the objective to be carbon neutral across all the councils' activities by 2030.

The Corporate Strategy also establishes the ambition for Waverley to be the best council landlord in the South-East by:

- Ensuring all our tenants have a safe, warm, high quality, energy efficient and affordable home
- Providing services and support that our tenants need
- Ensuring all new homes on council land achieve an energy rating of EPC A
- Ensuring that the service is financially robust to support services



## Strategic Dependencies

A key focus of this strategy will be on capacity building to be able to manage increases in investment, skills and resources, both within the council and its contractors.

A key consideration and dependency on delivering this strategy will be the associated costs and investment needs. As identified, to meet the energy decarbonisation targets and to address any historic component replacement will require additional funding. This will require financial capacity building through more efficient delivery, better data

understanding and improved organisation for planned investment to maximise economies of scale and avoiding unnecessary investment in those properties where it does not add value.

Some of the areas below highlight the dependencies and considerations that will need to be understood and addressed throughout the strategy period.

### Financial Capacity:



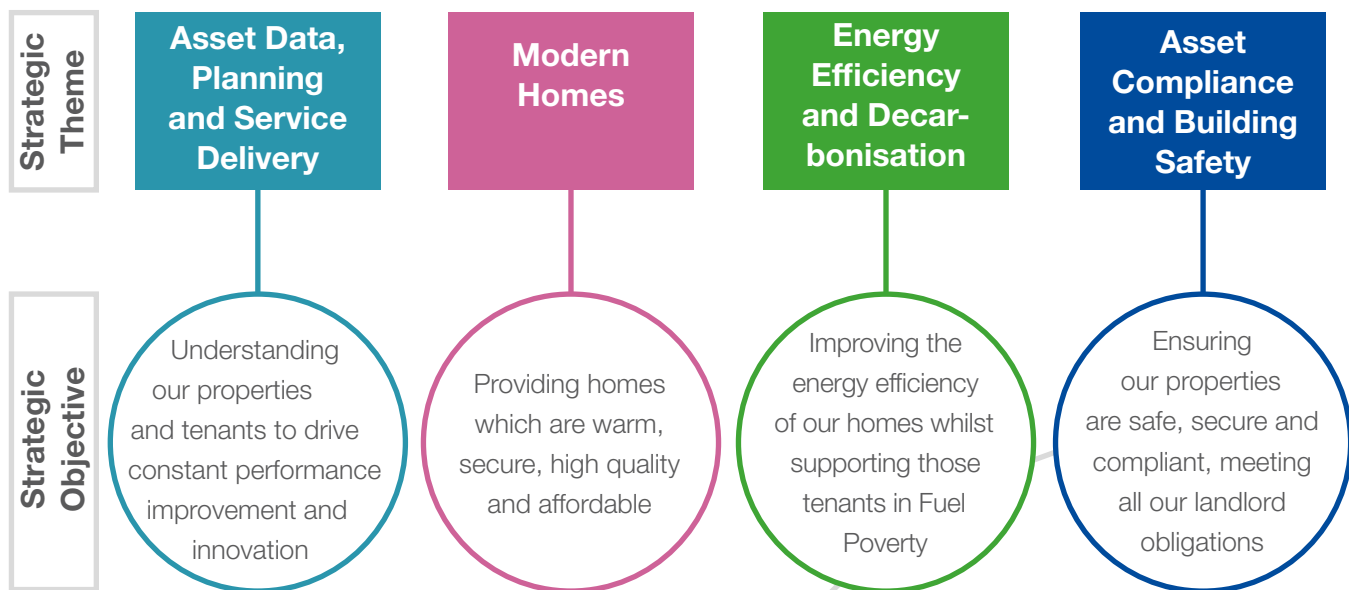
- HRA Business Plan
- Investment Planning
- Divestment/Disposal Planning
- Specification and Service Delivery Efficiency
- Shared Services with partners
- External Funding Availability
- Service Charge and Major Works recovery

### Resources, Skills and Training:



- Skills, Knowledge and Training
- Resource and Succession Planning
- Culture and Communications
- Sector Skills and Labour Shortages
- Social Value Initiatives
- Procurement
- Supply Chain Capacity

# Strategic Objectives



This Strategy concentrates on four key themes, each with an overarching strategic objective. These themes contain a range of activities, some which will be considered as ‘Business as Usual’ and others which will drive innovation, cultural change and moving the council into a more pro-active asset management position.

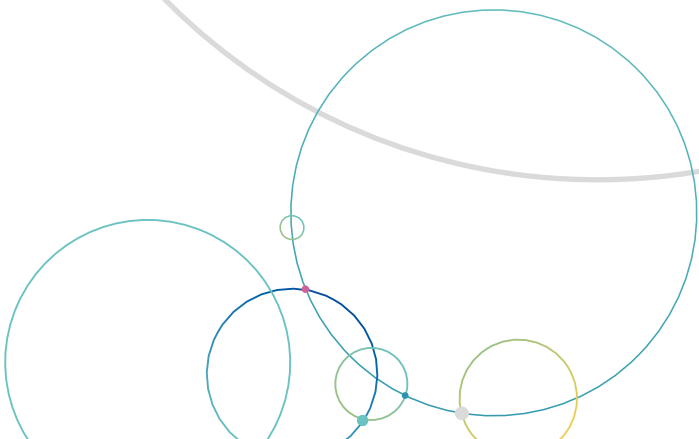
Each theme is designed to be cross-cutting, in that it will be addressed through all workstreams and contributed to by all areas of the Property Services team and wider organisation. Due to the current environment where there are competing priorities and resources it is critical that any investment considers all facets of the asset rather than be driven by a particular programme or budget.

Actions resulting from this Strategy will be linked to one of these key themes, with a clear target. These actions will be used as a Golden Thread, reflected in service, team and individual objectives, giving clear responsibility and accountability for delivery.

## Strategic Links

This strategy has been developed considering the following, existing, council strategies:

-  Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy 2020 - 2030
-  Corporate Strategy 2020 - 2025
-  Housing Strategy 2021 - 2025
-  Tenant Engagement Strategy 2021 - 2024





# Asset Data, Planning and Service Delivery

## Strategic Objective

**Understanding our properties and tenants to drive continual performance improvement and innovation**

There is a requirement for additional investment to improve energy efficiency, as well as the ongoing investment in key components (kitchens, bathrooms & windows) and building safety. To effectively balance and manage these priorities we must ensure that we have a strong approach to understanding our assets, the service expectations of our tenants as well as the data to support our decision making. Additionally, this must be clear and well communicated to ensure that we take a co-ordinated and consistent approach to our investment in the housing stock.

We see this being managed through an improved approach to both asset and service data and intelligence, so we know as much as we possibly can about our tenants and their homes.



## Asset Data

Having accurate and up-to-date Stock Condition Surveys will be vital to understanding the current standard of our properties, as well as being able to carefully project the investment requirements over the 30 year business plan.

Following a recent Data Health Check, we feel confident that the elements of data we collect and the system (Keystone) that we use is robust. Even so, it has been identified that we need to refresh, update and improve the accuracy of the data collected, as well as increase the proportion of properties inspected recently. We will work closely with our Responsive Repairs contractor, interrogating their data to identify materials or components which are more costly to maintain or where we are seeing repeat failures. This will be used to continually improve our quality standards and specifications. We will also look to use this data to inform our New Build Design Standards.

We will implement the recommendations provided in the Data Health Check and develop a rolling programme of new stock condition surveys. We will also undertake a review of Keystone including future development and the investment required.

### Asset Data – Commitment 1

Implement the recommendations from the 2021 Data Health Check by March 2023.

Develop and deliver a rolling programme of Stock Condition Surveys to improve data validity and confidence – with 100% External Surveys and 70% Internal Surveys undertaken by March 2023.

## Performance Monitoring of our homes

We have developed a bespoke Asset Appraisal Model (AAM). This allows us to identify performance trends between property types, relationships between planned investment and responsive maintenance and a range of indicators which will help us understand and target our investment. It will also highlight those properties that are not contributing to our Corporate objective of meeting local housing need. We will review and further update the model and increasingly use the insights from the AAM to identify areas where more detailed data analysis and options appraisal are required.

This will allow us to better understand the performance of homes and the optimal investment strategies going forward. The appraisal process will allow us to identify alternative opportunities for those properties, examples being remodelling, redevelopment or disposal.

## Planning

We aim to create an efficient service so we can do more for our tenants and leaseholders. We recognise the need to better plan works and services, to achieve optimal value and return on the investment, especially where we anticipate using new technologies to meet our energy efficiency targets.

Not only will this allow us to create longer term budgets but also develop programmes of work which maximise our supply chain's economies of scale and productivity.

Using data from our Stock Condition Surveys and Repairs service analysis, we will develop a five year Procurement Plan identifying the required packages of work. Through market engagement, we will understand how these can be appropriately instructed to suit both local and larger contractors and deliver best value to the council.

The Procurement Plan will also identify where Leaseholder (Section 20) consultation will be required. Our improved stock condition data will provide Major Works recovery estimates so we can better communicate to our leaseholders about their future service charging liabilities.

### Asset Planning – Commitment 2

Develop 5-year Works and Procurement Plan by Dec 2022.



## Service Delivery

We accept that due to the upcoming expected changes in our external environment as well as the ambitious challenges we have set; we need to ensure that our internal resources are experienced, knowledgeable and operating at the highest level. We also want to embed a culture of cross-team working, shared learning and personal development. Based on the commitments within this strategy and supporting Action Plan we will carry out a full team and service review to confirm that we have the a robust structure in place. This will provide a range of opportunities for our current team and also potentially bring new people to Waverley who can bring new perspectives to our approach.

During this Strategy period, we will begin a new relationship with our Responsive Repairs partner and secure new contracts to deliver our planned works investment and energy efficiency measures. To support this, we will create a robust Contract Management and Reporting Framework which will provide a consistent and auditable measurement of our contractors’ performance. We will review our contract management processes, Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s) and satisfaction feedback methods to improve the way in which we manage our contracts. Working with our supply chain we will identify ways in which we can better use technology to capture tenant and leaseholder feedback, so as to improve contractor performance.

**Asset Service Delivery – Commitment 3**

Undertake a capacity review of internal staff resources by Nov 22.

**Asset Service Delivery – Commitment 4**

Create Contract Management and Reporting Framework to improve service delivery and feedback for all key contracts by March 2023.



Many of our services are delivered through Contractor partners, who are key to providing excellent services to our tenants and leaseholders. Creating collaborative relationships and ensuring monitoring of their services will help us continually drive improvement and innovation.

We will identify similar organisations where we can benchmark our services, costs and performance to gain best practice knowledge across the sector. This will be used to create improvement plans for our key contracts and set realistic KPI’s within our contracts and as commitments to our tenants.

This information will be shared with our tenants and leaseholders to provide a transparent view of service delivery.

## Modern Homes

### Strategic Objective

To provide homes which are warm, secure, high quality and affordable and meet the needs for tenants of all income levels

### Modern Homes Standard

A key priority is to provide quality homes. To support this, we will develop a Modern Homes Standard. This will communicate our commitments to tenants and leaseholders, what they can expect from us as their landlord and understand how they can support in maintaining their homes. We will ensure that this standard will include our approach to building safety, energy performance and the Decent Homes Standard but also the idea of lifetime homes, changes in lifestyles for example homeworking. The Modern Homes Standard will be developed alongside tenants and leaseholders to capture their thoughts, ideas and requirements.

### Proactive Maintenance

As well as providing safe and modern homes, we also need to ensure that our homes are not detrimental to our tenant's health and wellbeing. Over the past few years, we have been actively managing and understanding the challenges we have within our homes around Disrepair, Damp, Mould and Condensation (DM&C). We will create a range of remedial solutions which can be implemented quickly and easily, minimising disruption to tenants.

Through our asset data and repairs history we will identify property archetypes or trends which may lead to future disrepair cases and develop longer term strategies to implement pre-emptive maintenance.

#### Modern Homes – Commitment 5

Develop a Modern Homes Standard, in partnership with tenants and leaseholders, which will be used to set our quality standards, by March 2023.

#### Modern Homes – Commitment 6

Creating a clear management and resolution framework for Disrepair, Damp, Mould and Condensation to be implemented by September 2023

## Meeting Decent Homes Standard

One way in which we monitor the quality of our homes, is through their 'decency'. This is largely aligned with the Decent Homes Standard and highlights any properties which have several key components such as kitchens, bathrooms, windows etc. that may require replacement.

We acknowledge we have not performed as well as we would like to have done in this area and have seen delays to programme delivery due to a range of external factors including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and in response to rent reduction measures taken by the council in 2015. This has resulted in a current level of non-decency of 15% (LAHS 2021), meaning that this proportion of our properties has a number of major components over-due for replacement (for example kitchen, bathrooms and windows).

We estimate this backlog of component replacements to be in the region of £26m and therefore we will need to take careful consideration as to the impact of this within the Housing Revenue Account.

This is a key area of focus for the council over the next two to three years to ensure that all our properties meet our standards. We will also consider any regulatory changes to the Decent Homes Standard following completion of the government's consultation in September 2022. The outcomes of any changes to the Decent Homes Standard will be incorporated within an agreed Modern Homes Standard.

We will review all component replacements dates that are identified for replacement Pre-2021 and use our programme of Stock Condition Surveys to validate the condition of these components. Where replacements are overdue we will develop a focused programme of works to improve our overall levels of 'decency'.



### Modern Homes – Commitment 7

Reviewing the key component replacements due or overdue and develop a 2-year programme for replacement by Dec 2022.

Develop a plan to meet the Decent Homes targets of 100% Decency by the end of the strategy (2030).

## Housing for Older People

Waverley currently has 236 properties specifically designated for tenants who are over the age of 55 years old – Senior Living homes. In addition, we have a large number of residents over this age who live within our General Needs properties.

Aligned with our Aging Well Strategy, we will work to support tenants who wish to live independently in their own home through the use of assisted technologies and home adaptations.

Some tenants may be better suited to downsizing into one of our eight Senior Living schemes. We will continually review our schemes to ensure that they suit the needs of older people and are desirable to free up larger family homes. We will develop a specific sub-strand of this strategy for Older People, which will focus on:

- Reviewing of bedsit and small studio accommodation
- Ensuring schemes are Wi-Fi enabled and support those tenants still working
- Review digital upgrade requirements for warden call equipment
- Providing attractive and useful communal areas and amenities to provide Value for Money for tenants' service charges
- Ensuring adequate services are in place such as disabled parking access, accessible waste provision and scooter storage



## Adapting our homes

At times we are required to adapt our properties to meet the changing health or accessibility needs of our tenants. Where possible, we try and support this to allow our tenants to remain in their home and community as long as they can live independently, according to our Aids and Adaptions policy.



We work across the council with the housing, social care, and occupational therapy teams to develop solutions which will meet tenants' specific needs. Some of these adaptations may be minor such as installing handrails, access ramps or external railings and the cost of these improvements will be funded through usual stock maintenance budgets.

In other cases, more extensive major adaptations are required – this could include:

- Full property conversion
- Installation of through-floor lifts
- Widening of doorways and access points
- Level flooring throughout

Again, we work to support these requirements but sometimes the budgets available do not meet the full cost of the work. Where this occurs, we must be sensible in assessing both the property and tenant to ensure that this investment is both sustainable for us and the tenant.

Where we are asked to carry out major adaptations, we will work with the tenant to understand their longer term needs to feel confident that the tenant will gain future benefit in this investment. In some cases, this may be through a formal property appraisal.

The risk to Waverley is that once the investment is made – the tenant may need to move home, for several reasons. We are committed to avoiding removal or decommissioning these major adaptations to let the property to another tenant without these requirements.

Where we have adapted properties, we aim to work with our tenants and other providers in the borough to designate these homes as 'adapted' and retain these for future tenants with similar needs. We feel that this will allow us to gain long term benefit where we carry out major adaptations.

## Leasehold Properties

Whilst we have a relatively small proportion of leasehold properties, ensuring that we manage our services and relationships is vitally important. We hold a legal responsibility with leaseholders to maintain and renew the communal areas and external envelope of their homes. We must meet the requirements of the leases held and ensure that we are providing value for money.

We feel that we can improve our services by providing leaseholders with a greater level of detail and foresight into upcoming major works investment. This will allow leaseholders to financially prepare for any payments they need to make under the terms of their lease. We will not only do this through statutory Section 20 consultation but also by providing forward investment plans.

We will continue to monitor the government's approach to Leasehold Reform and adapt our operational and management processes accordingly.

## Property Appraisals

A critical part of our Strategy is to ensure that we have the 'right homes, in the right location, for the right people'.

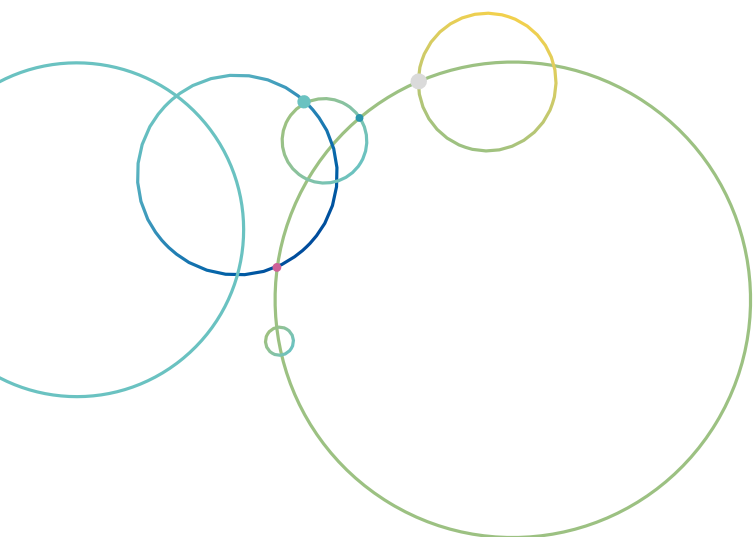
Providing quality homes does not only relate to the condition of the property but also ensuring that it is the correct home for the resident; for example it has appropriate access, families are not over-occupied and single people are not having to heat and maintain a property too large for them.

We will identify those properties that may not be considered as a 'traditional' construction and therefore cost proportionately more to maintain for both the council and the tenant.

Through Stock Condition Surveys and the Asset Appraisal Model (AAM) we will continually review our portfolio to improve its overall performance. We will use and further develop our AAM to assess each property against a range of metrics (both financial and non-financial); showing us how our properties perform against a benchmark standard.

Annually, we will provide a statement as to our strategic approach to the council's housing stock. We will identify those properties or blocks which require further review and individually appraise properties to develop longer term strategic asset management solutions. This may be to remodel, refurbish or dispose of properties. We will also identify land 'in-fill' development opportunities to deliver further new homes.

As well as helping us identify investment return, these alternative opportunities will ensure our housing stock is continually meeting housing need.



### **Modern Homes – Commitment 8**

Annual strategic appraisal statement to be issued for 2022/2023; with appraisals/reviews to be delivered throughout the financial year.

## **Garages**

Our Garage stock is under constant review but, as with most landlords, the strategic and operational management is shared between Property Services, Housing Management and our Development Team. We must bring together the existing work that has been carried out to create a more robust Garage Strategy. This will focus on those areas where we can identify development potential to build new homes on HRA land, as well as creating improvement programmes to bring up the standard of our garages, maximise rental income and reduce localised ASB. It will also consider the potential for disposal.

### **Modern Homes – Commitment 9**

Create longer term Garage Strategy, which will address challenges for all areas of the council as well as identifying opportunities for new homes by December 2022.

## **Tenant Engagement**

It is important that we work alongside our tenants and leaseholders to continually develop our quality standards and services to meet their requirements. We have identified that we need to further develop our communication and feedback from tenants and leaseholders, as well as providing opportunities for them to be more involved in our Asset Management function. It is critical that our tenants and leaseholders are informed at all stages of planning, delivery and completion of major works. This has been highlighted within our 2021 STAR survey which we will aim to improve within the first two years of this strategy.

This has been clearly defined in our Tenant Involvement Strategy 2021 – 2024 and we will use this as our framework for consultation with those living within our homes.

We will identify core aspects of our service delivery to be reviewed by our Tenants Scrutiny Group and work with them to identify challenges and improvements to our current service offer. We will also discuss the possibility of creating a sub-group of our Tenants Panel with specific focus on asset management and property maintenance.

Working alongside our Tenants Panel, Responsive Repairs and Planned Maintenance contractors we will also review all tenant facing documentation and communications to make sure that these meet best practice guidelines as well as being easy to understand and accessible to all.

We will improve the use of technology to allow tenants and leaseholders to book, track and feedback on repairs and planned investment, allowing for easier access to our services when it is convenient for them.



## **Modern Homes – Commitment 10**

We will carry out a review of our current engagement and feedback opportunities to develop a specific action plan for improvement by September 2022.

We will also identify core service areas to be reviewed by our Scrutiny Panel by September 2022.



# Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation

## Strategic Objective

To contribute to our Carbon Neutral target for our homes, blocks operations and Supply Chain by 2030.

Through the council's Climate Emergency Declaration in 2019 and supporting Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy 2020; we have set an ambitious target to be a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030. This means that our property portfolio, our contractors and our own operations will all be delivering at this level.

This corporate objective is also partly supported through the governments Clean Growth Strategy, which has set a target for social housing providers to attain the minimum rating of EPC Band C for rented properties by 2035, and 2030 for 'fuel poor' households. The government see this as an important milestone towards the longer-term requirement of all homes being 'carbon-zero' by 2050, in the UK.

We are committed to being a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030 and this a clear priority within our asset management function. Critical to meeting this target is to understand our current position and to develop a clear baseline which we can work against.

We also need to work across the council and with our tenants to ensure that there is a standardised definition, terminology and understanding of what our corporate targets are.

## Energy Efficiency – Commitment 11

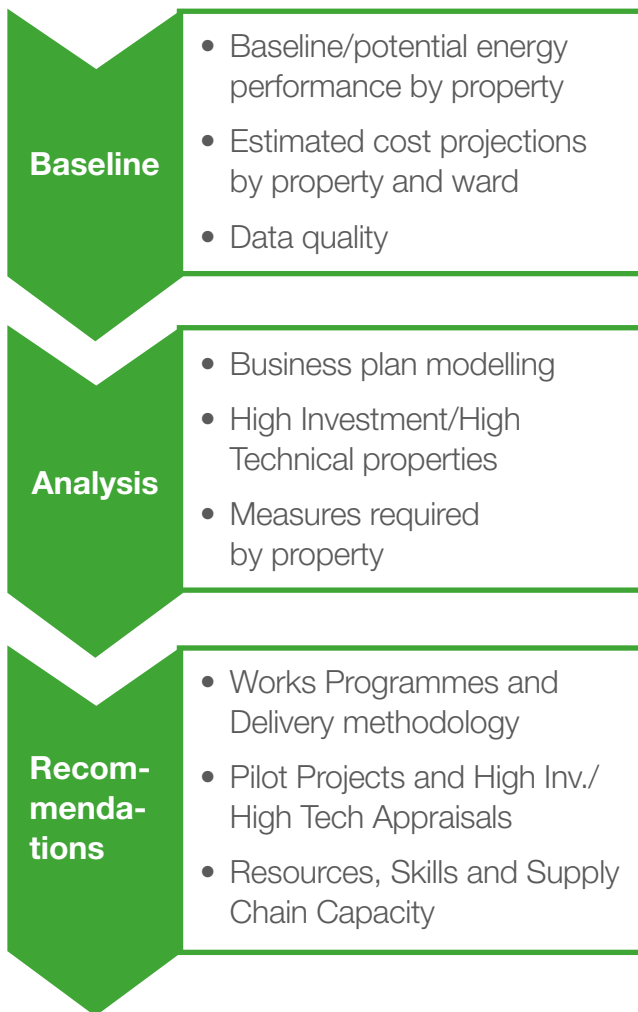
Clear definition and terminology of EPC Ratings, Net Carbon Zero, Carbon Neutral and Decarbonisation consulted and communicated with our tenants and leaseholders by September 2022

To meet this strategic objective we have undertaken an Energy Study against our housing portfolio; which has begun to develop our thinking and technical approach to devising a longer term strategy to becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030.



## Energy Study – Our Baseline Position

From this study we now have a good understanding of what measures we need to carry out, as well as the long-term financial implications of this required investment. The study comprised of:



We manage the energy efficiency of our portfolio through Intelligent Energy software – this provides us with a high level of information about the current and potential efficiency of our homes.

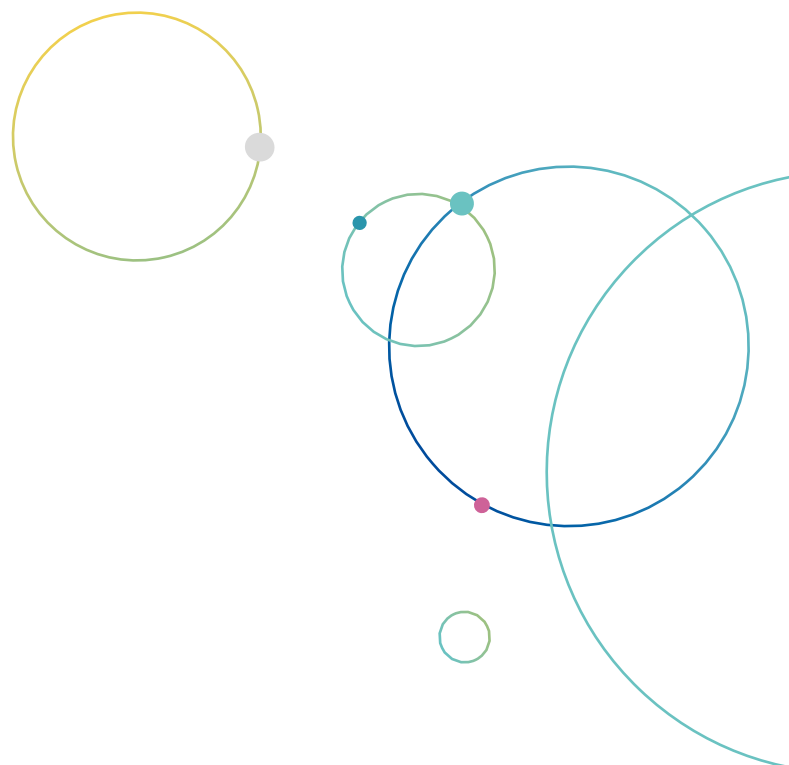
We will work with the Climate Officers Group to provide outcome reporting on both the EPC levels and progress towards our overarching target as well as reductions in CO<sup>2</sup>.

## Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Baseline

Approximately 83% of our homes meet or exceed the government’s 2030 EPC Band C target. Work is however required to improve the portfolio through retrofit measures, this may be to properties which fall below this rating or have high carbon emissions.

EPC Band	Current	
A	2	N/A
B	452	9.47%
C	3535	74.05%
D	763	15.98%
E	22	0.46%

As at March 2022, there is the potential that 83% of our homes can meet the EPC C government target, with the required investment. We can also see there are several properties which, regardless of investment, largely due to their construction will never meet the required standards or become Carbon Neutral. Therefore, we will need to consider alternative long-term strategies with these properties.



## Carbon Saving Baseline

To become carbon neutral by 2030 will largely be associated with decarbonising our properties. This is a significant challenge for Waverley: with 99% of our homes currently heated by gas boilers, the investment required to ‘convert’ to renewable heating systems including the necessary associated fabric improvement works is likely to require very high levels of investment.

From our Intelligent Energy software we estimate that our carbon emissions baseline is:

**Houses 8,472 Carbon Tonnes**

**Flats 3,000 Carbon Tonnes**

We will be working against a carbon saving of 11,472 tonnes target from our housing alone.

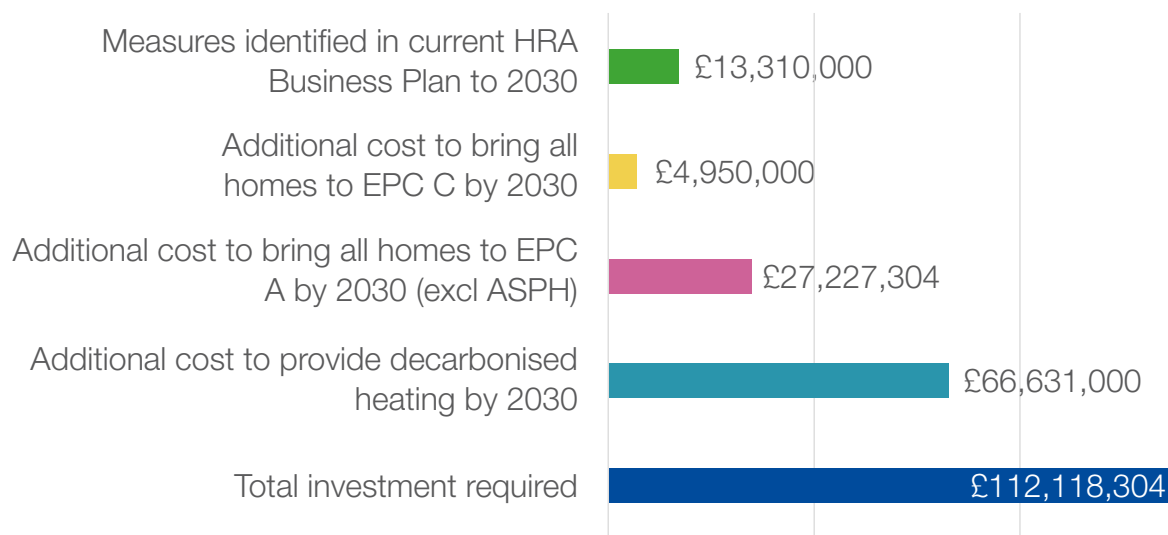
As stated, this is an estimate as every tenant will heat and run their home differently. Therefore, over the period of the strategy, in the move towards becoming carbon neutral we will work with our tenants to better understand the specific carbon emissions associated with their home.

### Energy Efficiency – Commitment 12

Implementation of the Energy Study recommendations including development of a Property Services Energy Strategy, and reporting and monitoring framework, focusing specifically on our properties.

Including clarifying our EPC and Carbon Tonnage baselines by September 2023.

### Cost of Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Improvements



One area that we need to improve visibility of and gain a better understanding of the baseline position, is the carbon output from our contractor activities. Realistically a high level of carbon emissions, associated with our operations, is driven by our contractor partners. As our aim is be a carbon neutral council by 2030 then this carbon output must be factored into our overall baseline.

Aside from the baseline position, we need to work with our partners to incorporate their net carbon zero strategies into our activities and ensure that these a key contractual arrangement. We also need them to share knowledge, experience and best practice from their other clients, to constantly grow our understanding in this area.

We will actively pass on our carbon neutral targets to our contractors and by March 2022 have Carbon Reduction Key Performance Indicators included in all of our current contracts.

## Investment Requirements

As with any financial projections relating to assets, detailed surveys, a strong understanding of the contractor market and identification of external funding is required. We have identified the properties that require improvement, have established budget costs and are now developing the detail and working on options to consider the optimal approach to delivery.

We will need to attract funding to support this investment and must develop designs, specifications, procurement and delivery models over the life of this strategy.

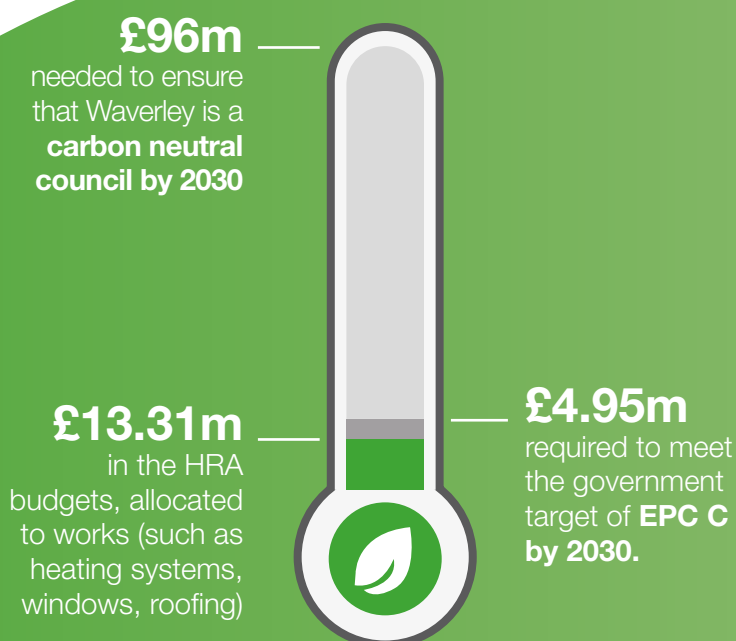
This shows that we have identified that we have currently £13.31m in the HRA budgets, allocated to works (such as heating systems, windows, roofing) which will contribute to meeting our carbon neutral targets. An additional £4.95m would be required to meet the government target of EPC C by 2030.

To ensure that Waverley is a carbon neutral council by 2030 then an additional £96m is estimated to move all properties away from fossil fuels and towards carbon neutrality position.

### Energy Efficiency – Commitment 13

To develop baseline carbon outputs generated through our supply chain partners and operations by September 2022.

Create and implement a Contractors Carbon Reduction Plan across all contracts and areas of operations by December 2023



## Technical Philosophy and Approach

Our intention is to always take a 'Fabric First' approach when investing in our properties, to meet a carbon neutral position. Not only does this provide the most sustainable and cost-efficient improvements for our tenants but is also aligned to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund principles.

Examples of this may be cavity, loft or wall insulation, replacement windows and doors or more efficient lighting (especially in the case of communal areas in blocks and Senior Living Schemes).

To reach a carbon neutral position more intrusive and complex measures may need to be taken. This may include:

- Replacement of gas heating/hot water systems from >95% of the stock, and replacement with electrical/other low carbon fuels/systems
- More extensive and complex insulation of roofs, walls, floors and external fenestration
- A whole-house retrofit strategy most probably following the principles of PAS2035

When developing works and investment programmes we will review all measures to understand both their Lifecycle/Whole Carbon cost to the council and our tenants. This is to ensure that firstly we are achieving the best levels of improvements (in terms of carbon savings and EPC ratings) for the investment required. Secondly, we will project the impact any new or replacement measures will have on the end costs to our tenants.

We will also identify the long-term maintenance, replacements (such as invertors on Solar PV Panels) and lifecycles for any measures to embed this into our Stock Database, Keystone, and our HRA business planning process.

## Gas Boiler Replacement

A key element of meeting our carbon neutral target by 2030 will be the replacement of existing gas boilers or other solid fuel heating systems. It is also expected that as part of the revised Decent Homes Standard which is due in 2023 will be the directive that no new gas boilers can be installed in existing properties post-2035.

The council is committed to phasing out gas boilers as soon as possible but recognises that there needs to be a balance between provision of heating equipment to our residents and the short to medium term challenges of non-gas alternatives. These include cost, availability and deliverability at scale.

Whilst we need to carry out further tenant and internal consultation, our initial principles when replacing gas boilers are:

- We will in every case explore the option for a non-gas alternative to installing gas boilers
- We will aim no longer install any new gas boilers after March 2027
- From April 2022 we will reduce the lifecycle of a gas boiler to 8 years
- We will only install gas boilers from April 2027 to March 2035 where there are no cost-effective solutions available, which must be specific to an individual property

There are several considerations and impacts of changing our approach to the installation of gas boilers and we will develop a specific gas boiler replacement strategy to help inform our approach.



### Energy Efficiency – Commitment 14

Develop gas boiler strategy, with detailed consultation within the council and with tenants by March 2023. Strategy should contain detailed cost benefit/ impact assessment to both the council and tenants.

We also need to investigate and understand the alternative heating provisions within the market. Previously we have carried out a small installation pilot of Air Source Heat Pumps and we are working with tenants to understand the benefits, challenges and costs of these to apply to a wider roll out. We will also continually monitor the outcomes from the Ockford Ridge Retrofit Programme where a range of energy efficiency measures have been applied and we can apply learnings to existing housing stock.

### External Funding

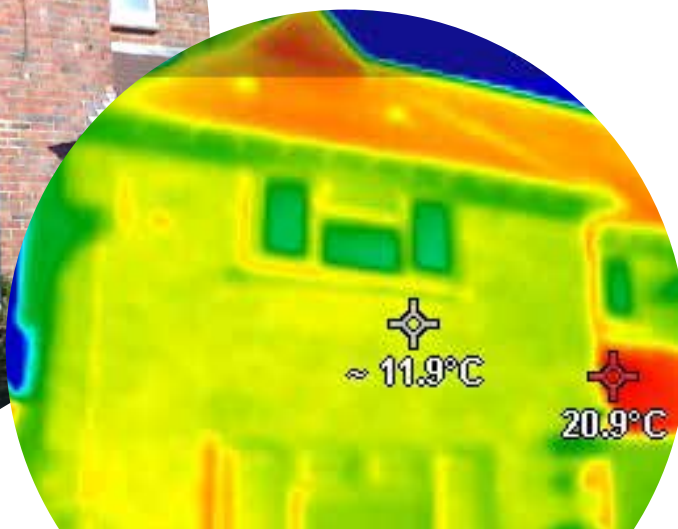
To support the Clean Growth Strategy, the government has realised the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) to be accessed over a 10-year period. This will provide funding to encourage and enable social housing providers to accelerate their energy efficiency and decarbonisation plans. The fund aims to:

- Upgrade a significant amount of the social housing stock currently below EPC rating C up to that standard,
- Deliver warmer and more energy-efficient homes,
- Reduce carbon emissions,
- Reduce energy bills, and tackle fuel poverty and support the creation of 'green' jobs

### Energy Efficiency – Commitment 15

We aim to submit a funding application in Spring 2022 for Wave 2 of Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

Using our improved data we will aim to secure funding for eligible projects working towards our over-arching objective.



## Resources, Skills and Contractor Capacity

The installation and ongoing maintenance of energy efficiency measures will be, in some cases, new to the council and the social housing sector as a whole. It is important that a skills audit and resource gap analysis is carried out for the council and their contractors. Where required contracts may be required for additional servicing and repair of complex Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) systems.

It may be necessary to identify new resources, training and upskilling to further develop the council's technical capacity, project management and delivery. We will provide training to our teams to gain better knowledge in carbon awareness, technical solutions and cost management for new technologies entering the market.

## Tenant Education and Knowledge

Reaching a carbon neutral position by 2030 will have an impact on our tenants and we are responsible for ensuring that any changes to people's homes are clearly explained and supported. This will be delivered through a suite of tenant training on new technologies, as and when they are installed. We will also work with tenants to help them understand how behaviour and lifestyle can also have a positive reduction on their energy costs. We will identify partners to whom we can signpost tenants, who are able to give further support on both energy efficiency and managing their energy expenses.

There is the potential, working alongside our Community Development colleagues, for us to create skills and training opportunities to further develop the Green Economy in Waverley. As we will be at the forefront of

meeting carbon neutrality by 2030 we will be able to help our tenants find employment and training within this emerging marketplace.

We will work alongside our contractor partners to create and deliver these skills, training and employment opportunities through their social value commitments.

## Addressing Fuel Poverty

Alongside the investment in our properties, we also will support our tenants in addressing Fuel Poverty. We must ensure that we do not increase tenants' energy bills through the installation of new or alternative technologies. We will do this by carrying out Whole Life Carbon and Cost Assessments for the measures that we would be installing. This will compare the energy efficiency and/or carbon reduction against any potential increase in energy usage and therefore cost to the tenant.

Through our Intelligent Energy software and from the findings of the Energy Study we will be able to identify those tenants who may already be in Fuel Poverty and aim to prioritise works and improvements to their homes.

### Energy Efficiency – Commitment 16

All energy efficiency measures will be assessed to understand impact to tenants' energy costs and not to place them in fuel poverty by March 2023. We will actively promote the benefit of decarbonisation improvements to mitigate rises in utility costs. We will provide training and guidance to support efficient use of new technologies.

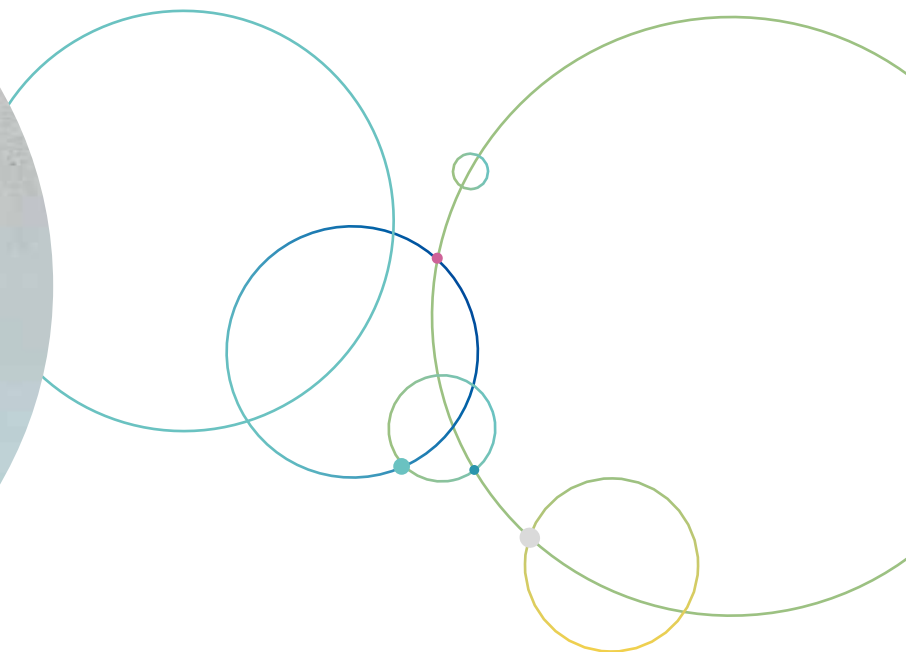


# Compliance and Building Safety

## Strategic Objective

Ensuring our properties are safe, secure and compliant, meeting all our landlord obligations

As we have shown, the focus on compliance and building safety has rightly been brought to the forefront of the housing sector. We are no exception in that ensuring our properties are both safe and secure is our highest priority. We must maintain our compliance levels and monitor safety on an ongoing basis. We categorise compliance into six key areas:



## Compliance Management Systems

Due to the critical and increasing nature of this area of work, we have identified that we require better systems and processes to monitor our activities. Having a robust reporting system will allow us to ensure that our servicing and remedial works programmes are continually monitored and can provide evidence and assurance to tenants, leaseholders and stakeholders of our overall compliance.

Our objective is that this system can be used across the council, being able to monitor remedial works (via Property Services) and management actions (via Housing and Estate management teams).

This will be supported by an overarching compliance framework which will address the points required for the delivery and monitoring of these areas of compliance. Working alongside our development team we will embed this framework into the handover process for any new build properties.

We will review all our core compliance areas to ensure that there is the appropriate separation of responsibilities between the council and contractors. This is to make sure that the relevant checks and balances are in place to mitigate further risk. We will assess both our internal processes and that of our contractors to confirm all relevant qualifications, accreditations and quality management processes are present and retained throughout delivery.

### Compliance and Building Safety – Commitment 18

Assess the current roles and responsibilities, both internally and with our contractors, to ensure segregation of responsibilities as well as qualifications, accreditations and process compliance by July 2022.

### Compliance and Building Safety – Commitment 17

To review our current management and reporting processes and understand the potential need for improved systems to better support compliance by December 2022.

Create supporting Compliance Management Framework by March 2023.

## Building Safety

In a response to the Fire Safety Act and Building Safety Bill, we acknowledge that we need to develop more detailed servicing and remedial works plans that we can share with our tenants and leaseholders. This is especially important where leaseholders may be responsible for a proportion of these costs.

Where required, we will provide building specific safety files which will detail all relevant information about the building and its tenants; this will be mandatory for our Sheltered Schemes.

These servicing programmes and building safety files will allow us to gain more foresight into the upcoming risk, liability and investment that we will be required to maintain for compliance and safety.

They will also allow us to have a more co-ordinated approach to works delivery, from both a responsive and planned investment perspective.

We will investigate the use of technologies, such as sensors which can monitor levels of CO<sup>2</sup>, damp and component life, to provide real time insight to the compliance and performance of our properties.

This would allow us to take a more preventative approach to compliance and building safety, which can be evidenced to our tenants.

### Compliance and Building Safety – Commitment 20

Create a suite of communication templates to be provided annually for tenants and leaseholders detailing all relevant compliance documentation (ie FSRA's), servicing plans and compliance assurance by March 2024.

### Compliance and Building Safety – Commitment 19

Develop five-year Servicing Programmes with estimated remedial works creating a long-term financial projection for building compliance and safety; considering the impact on Service Charges and Leaseholder Recovery by March 2023.



## Communication, Monitoring and Review

The strategy will be communicated across the council, with tenants, leaseholders and external stakeholders. We will provide a summary of the strategy to new tenants when they move into their home.

The strategy will largely be monitored through the supporting Action Plan, which will be cascaded into the Property Services Team Plan, individual targets and personal objectives.

Operationally the strategy will be monitored quarterly, focussing on delivering the projects and initiatives identified within the Action Plan. We will create an Asset Management Steering Group, which will be supported and facilitated by external consultants to provide a level of independence, challenge and insight to sector best practice.

The strategy will be reviewed every three years, with the supporting Action Plan being advised and updated. At these review points, new strategic objectives and commitments may be developed to replace those completed or reacting to changes in the external environment.

## Asset Management Strategy Governance

The governance and responsibility of strategic delivery will be held by the Head of Operations. They will ensure, through the Asset Management Steering Group, that the strategic objectives are being maintained and actions are progressed and completed.

The Steering Group will provide a quarterly update which can be shared with the Executive Team, Tenants Panel and Members. The strategy and action plan outcomes will be reported to the Landlord Services Advisory Board every six months; providing a review of activity and plans of the upcoming areas of focus. In addition to this update the Landlord Services Advisory Board will be consulted on any key projects, recommendations and changes to policy, procedure or operations and approved by the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

We will also review our progress to tenants and leaseholders through regular communications, newsletters and consultation meetings. Throughout the strategy we will invite feedback from tenants as to our progress and work to include formal feedback into our biennial STAR survey.

A full Equality Impact Assessment of this strategy document has been carried out.



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