

## **Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee – Action Sheet form 23 January 2023**

### **Item 1.1: Stock Condition/ /Disrepair Claims/Damp & Mould – how a damp and mould complaint is assessed?**

To assess damp and mould complaints, we have a dedicated team of specialist building surveyors who evaluate the likely causes of the issue. This includes factors such as insufficient ventilation, defective windows, and loose mortar. Based on their assessment, our team puts forward short-term and long-term solutions to resolve the problem.

We categorise damp and mould under the HHSRS (housing, health and safety rating system), which is typically carried out by an EHO/EHP. This helps determine the level of risk when occupancy characteristics are considered, such as the presence of children under 14.

Our in-house DLO or main contractor will then undertake interim or permanent works as required. If major capital works are necessary, this will be included in our asset strategy to ensure a comprehensive solution to the issue.

*Richard Buckley, AD of Residents & Building Safety*

### **Item 1.2: Building Safety Requirements – information on the relevant schedule?**

As a landlord, ensuring the safety of our rental properties is a significant responsibility that involves conducting various inspections and checks. These include asbestos surveys, fire risk assessments, passive and active fire safety checks, gas safety checks, legionella checks, lift checks, electrical checks, and structural checks. At LBHF, we take this duty seriously and conduct approximately 30,000 inspections and checks every year. With the new prescriptive requirements outlined within the Building Safety Act 2022, we anticipate that the number of inspections will increase to around 47,000 per year. We are fully committed to meeting these requirements and ensuring that our properties meet the highest safety standards.

Under the Building Safety Act, a new role of the Accountable Person (AP) is created, who is responsible for the repair and maintenance of common parts in higher-risk residential buildings. The AP has a duty to prevent building safety risks, register buildings with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) by October 2023, prepare a safety case report, and apply for a building assessment certificate when directed by the BSR. Failure to register a building is an offense and is liable to imprisonment, fines, or both. The safety case report must include detailed information about the building, such as resident profile, fire prevention measures, structural safety, and more. As a landlord, we are aware of our responsibilities and are committed to complying with these regulations to ensure the safety of our tenants.

*Richard Buckley, AD of Residents & Building Safety*

Item 1.3: Meeting the Green Agenda – definition of thermal efficiency, details of the gas boiler phasing out programme?

We are currently developing a retrofit strategy that will include a target space heating demand for six of our most common archetypes. This strategy will focus on achieving an average space heating target of 64kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/y and an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of B across our stock and this document will be available later this year.

Regarding the phasing out of gas boilers, this will also form a part of the strategy. However, we need to approach this holistically we are currently conducting feasibility studies to explore options and determine what is feasible. Our Housing and wider Economy department are collaborating with the Climate Change Unit to develop these strategies, and the findings will be included in forthcoming plans.

*Richard Buckley, AD of Residents & Building Safety*

Item 1.4: Underperforming Repairs Service with Resident and Member Concerns – schedule of the performance

In order to tackle the Damp & Mould cases, the DLO has been expanded with a team of 12 operatives to manage damp and mould. As a result, we have seen a reduction in known damp and mould cases from around 800 to 500. We have also prioritised work received from our Customer Contact Centre and have on-boarded several specialist contractors to boost our capacity. Additionally, we have a dedicated team that deals with individual damp and mould cases and tracks them through to resolution, and we have implemented a single point of contact system for NHS clinicians to prioritise referrals for highly vulnerable tenants.

To address infrastructure items, such as drainage stacks, we are implementing a targeted planned programmed maintenance and have agreed to a 10-year £600 million capital investment in infrastructure, insulation, and building elements to ensure we maintain compliance with the Decent Homes Standard and address damp and mould issues.

We have also provided support to our residents by offering dehumidifiers, financial assistance with electricity running costs, and a "decant" process should it be necessary, with financial support for any required move. Our approach is geared towards ensuring our properties meet the Decent Homes Standard and that our residents have access to healthy living conditions. We are committed to continuously improving our services to meet their needs and expectations.

Finally, we have committed to providing a more thorough and in-depth update on repairs during the next PAC meeting in July.

*Richard Buckley, AD of Residents & Building Safety*

Item 2 & 3: To provide a progress report which categorised the reasons and proposed actions for each void property & to follow up an outstanding action in

respect of void reduction, i.e. information on the building specifications adopted by H&F.

In regard to our void properties, we have made significant progress and taken a number of measures to ensure that they are managed effectively. We have categorised the reasons and proposed actions for each void property, and we have followed up on outstanding actions with regards to void reduction, including information on the building specifications adopted by H&F.

Our baseline of void metrics shows that our average number of voids at year-end is 335. This is broken down by major, minor and policy voids.

With regards to our routine voids that require minor repairs, we had 118 such voids as of 31/12. The average historic turnaround for these types of voids is 132 per year, or 11 per month. However, we aim to increase our performance by 25% to 14 per month, and we have already achieved 20 per month in Q3 2022-2023. We have implemented several improvement measures to achieve this, including increasing contractor capacity, flexible allocation between contractors, improved commercial terms and incentivisation, and robust contractor management.

We also have routine voids that require major repairs, and as of 31/12, we had 131 such voids. The average historic turnaround for these types of voids is 175 per year, or 14 per month. However, we aim to increase our performance by 25% to 20 per month, and we have already achieved 20 per month in Q3. Our improvement measures for these types of voids are similar to those for minor repairs.

We also have policy voids that require longer-term solutions, such as those requiring substantial works or complex voids, awaiting expert surveys or decisions, awaiting sale, awaiting demolition, awaiting regeneration or remodelling, insurance or legal issues, or housing management decisions.

To increase the turnover of voids, we have intensified our management oversight of all areas of the void process, onboarded additional contractors to support turnaround of routine voids, incentivised contractors with potential future workstreams and sustainable commercial terms, made capital investments to bring long-term voids back into circulation, and brought key decisions on long-term voids' future use to the forefront.

A copy of both the standards for lettable voids and voids schedule is attached to this document.

*Richard Buckley, AD of Residents & Building Safety*

Item 4: To provide information on the percentage of the Council housing responsible for the carbon emissions?

Based on the information gathered from the H&F Climate Change unit and the Council's annual carbon reporting, it appears that Council housing for 22/23 emitted a significant amount of CO<sub>2</sub>, with 12,161 tonnes emitted for electricity and 28,337 tonnes emitted for gas, resulting in a total of 40,498 tons CO<sub>2</sub>.

However, it's interesting to note that the carbon emissions associated with electricity use have been decreasing due to the decarbonisation of the Grid, while there has been a minor increase in CO<sub>2</sub> production from gas. This raises the question of what factors could be contributing to the observed increase in CO<sub>2</sub> production from gas, such as a potential decline in boiler efficiencies or a reduction in the thermal efficiency of properties. Additionally, it is pertinent to consider what measures can be implemented to mitigate this increase and continue reducing carbon emissions in the future.

*Sam Cunningham, Strategic Programme Manager - Economy*