

# Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 20 February 2024

## Housing Stock Condition – Tenant Safety, Damp and Mould (PL2303) – Service Area Response

Executive/routine  
Wards

All

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee is asked to:
  - 1.1.1 Note the service area response and actions taken to date to address the risks raised in the Internal Audit report on Housing Stock Condition – Tenant Safety, Damp and Mould (PL2303); and
  - 1.1.2 Refer this report, with the associated Internal Audit report, to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee for information.

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Executive Director of Place

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## Housing Stock Condition – Tenant Safety, Damp and Mould (PL2303) – Service Area Response

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report accompanies the Internal Audit report on Housing Stock Condition – Tenant Safety, Damp and Mould (PL2303) and provides a summary of the actions taken by the Housing and Homelessness service in response to the audit findings.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 The Council is responsible for the maintenance of all homes owned by the Council and let out to Council tenants.
- 3.2 Following the tragic death of a two-year-old in Rochdale in December 2020, an investigation into his death identified the cause as a respiratory condition caused by mould in his home. The coroner's report highlighted a link between dampness and mould in houses and serious health conditions.
- 3.3 The Scottish Housing Regulator requested all landlords ensure that they have proactive systems in place to identify and deal with any reported cases of damp and mould timeously and effectively.
- 3.4 The objective of this internal audit was to assess the adequacy of design and operating effectiveness of the key controls established as part of the Council's Improvement Plan to address the Scottish Housing Regulator's request to ensure that processes to identify and remediate cases of damp and mould in a timely and effective manner.
- 3.5 The overall assessment was that substantial assurance was provided of the design and operating effectiveness of the key controls established by the Council to deal with cases of damp and mould in Council homes.

### 4. Main report

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#### Service Area Response to Internal Audit Findings

- 4.1 The service area welcomes the findings of the audit and are committed to ensuring continuing improvement in dealing with damp and mould when this is reported, and in particular in addressing the management actions agreed.
- 4.2 The audit looked at three areas of service:
- 4.2.1 Implementation of the Council’s Dampness Improvement Plan;
  - 4.2.2 Customer experience; and
  - 4.2.3 Repairs of dampness and mould.
- 4.3 The audit highlighted the following areas of good practice:
- 4.3.1 Effective customer interface controls have been established to identify tenant vulnerabilities when tenants report cases;
  - 4.3.2 A proactive communication plan and awareness campaign has been established that enables tenants to identify root causes of dampness, mould and condensation issues; and
  - 4.3.3 A working group oversees progress on the Dampness Improvement Plan.
- 4.4 The following areas for improvement were also identified:
- 4.4.1 Action should be taken to understand why the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) to complete dampness surveys within 21 days is consistently not being met; and
  - 4.4.2 Contract management and performance monitoring meetings should occur regularly, should be appropriately recorded and KPIs monitored.
- 4.5 Progress has been made in implementing these improvement recommendations and a status update is provided at 4.6.

**Progress with Management Actions**

- 4.6 Of the three areas of service reviewed (paragraph 4.2), there were two findings arising from the repairs of damp and mould. These relate to performance monitoring and improvement and contract management.
- 4.7 The table below provides a summary of the recommendations, the actions agreed and a status update.

Ref	Recommendation Summary	Summary of Action	Status Update
1.1	a. Steps to understand why the KPI to complete a dampness survey within 21 days is consistently not being achieved.	The service is increasing resources to address the challenge of completing surveys within the required timescale. This is being reviewed regularly, and	Three additional Preservations Surveyors have joined the team.  One further contractor also commissioned to provide additional capacity.

	<p>b. Give consideration to establishing a KPI for completing internal and preservation repairs in a timely manner.</p> <p>c. Review tracker to ensure completion dates are appropriately recorded.</p>	<p>resources will be deployed to demand.</p> <p>KPIs will be developed and communicated.</p> <p>Dampness case tracker updated weekly with completion information.</p>	<p>KPIs established with contractors and monthly contract meetings in place.</p> <p>The tracker is regularly reviewed and updated.</p>
1.2	Dashboards presented to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee should include a summary of outstanding repair work by age, to allow scrutiny and escalation of significantly overdue repairs.	This will be implemented from the next Committee update in May 2024.	Development of dashboards in progress.
1.3	Column to be added to case tracker to identify vulnerable residents and costs of decants, where applicable.	Case tracker to be updated.	Action complete.

## 5. Next Steps

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- 5.1 Evidence of completion of the remaining actions will be uploaded to the Team Mate platform for review by Internal Audit colleagues. Actions may be subject to future checks as part of annual audit plan to ensure that controls remain in place and effective.

## 6. Financial impact

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- 6.1 The actions in this report have no impact on Council budgets, however, the strengthening of controls identified will assist with the implementation of sound governance.

## **7. Equality and Poverty Impact**

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7.1 There are no direct equality or poverty impacts arising from the findings of this audit.

## **8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications**

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8.1 There are no climate or nature emergency implications arising from the findings of this audit.

## **9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact**

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9.1 The audit management actions referenced in this report will contribute to a strong system of risk management and compliance through a strengthening of controls and procedures.

## **10. Background reading/external references**

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10.1 Housing Stock Condition – Tenant Safety, Damp and Mould Internal Audit report (PL2303).

10.2 Reports to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee:

10.2.1 [3 October 2023](#);

10.2.2 [9 May 2023](#);

10.2.3 [20 January 2022](#); and

10.2.4 [3 June 2021](#).

## **11. Appendices**

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None.