

CABINET
7 MAY 2024

HOUSING SERVICES ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Matthew Roche, Health and Housing Portfolio

Responsible Director - Elizabeth Davison, Group Director of Operations

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To approve the Housing Services Asset Management Strategy 2024-2029.

Summary

2. Darlington Borough Council provides over 5,300 high quality homes for local residents and we are committed to providing safe, energy efficient and comfortable homes.
3. The Housing Services Asset Management Strategy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** sets out how Housing Services will ensure the efficient and effective management of our housing assets, as a core requirement of meeting our landlord services function.
4. The Tenants Panel has been consulted on the draft strategy and they have given their full support.
5. This strategy was considered by Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee on 24 April 2024, who agreed its onward submission for approval by Cabinet.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - (a) Consider the contents of this report.
 - (b) Approve the Housing Services Asset Management Strategy at Appendix 1.

Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) The Housing Services Asset Management Strategy ensures we have a clear approach to managing our housing assets.

- (b) In addition, the Regulator of Social Housing’s new Consumer Standards from April 2024 places a duty on social housing landlords to:
- (i) Have an accurate, up to date and evidenced understanding of the condition of our homes that reliably informs our provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for our tenants, and
 - (ii) Provide an effective, efficient, and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for our homes and the communal areas and shared spaces for which we are responsible.
- (c) The adoption of a formal Asset Management Strategy is one of the ways to demonstrate how we will achieve this.

Elizabeth Davison
Group Director of Operations

Background Papers

- (i) Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards.

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no impact
Health and Wellbeing	Well maintained Council homes will have a positive impact on the health and well-being of Council tenants
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	An effective asset management strategy will have a positive impact on the energy efficiency of our Council homes
Diversity	This policy supports the promotion of diversity
Wards Affected	All wards with Council housing
Groups Affected	Council tenants and leaseholders
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	This report supports the Council plan to ensure we are able to provide our tenants with good quality housing
Efficiency	An effective asset management strategy will ensure we make efficient use of our resources
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. Darlington Borough Council provides over 5,300 high quality homes for local residents and we are committed to providing safe, energy efficient and comfortable homes. This strategy sets out how Housing Services will ensure the efficient and effective management of our homes, as a core requirement of meeting our landlord services function.
9. The Housing Services Asset Management Strategy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** sets out the following key aims:
 - (a) To ensure our housing stock (our “assets”) is safe and well maintained to a good standard.
 - (b) To develop a housing portfolio that is fit for purpose, meeting the needs of current and future generations of tenants and their families.
 - (c) To improve the energy efficiency of our housing stock and the ways of working that reduce carbon emissions and level of fuel poverty.
 - (d) To develop skills and support the local economy.
10. To meet these aims, the strategy sets out the following objectives:
 - (a) Ensure all our housing assets are of a high standard and continue to meet the Decent Homes Standards, as a minimum.
 - (b) Ensure all tenants live in homes that offer affordable warmth, by completing Energy Performance audits of our properties, ensuring all achieve a minimum of EPC Band C by 2030. Where this is not possible, we will review our options in line with the Housing Services Climate Change Strategy.
 - (c) Maximise all available grants, particularly relating to energy improvements and making applications for works to improve our properties.
 - (d) Reduce the risk of condensation and mould growth, by ensuring adequate ventilation, along with sufficient levels of insulation and adequate heating. We will also advise residents on how to reduce moisture levels in their homes in line with our Housing Services Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy.
 - (e) Ensure all tenants live in homes with adequate levels of fire protection by completing Fire Risk Assessments and regularly assessing these, completing new assessments if significant changes occur within the property.
 - (f) Ensure all tenants live in homes with appropriate levels of security, by listening to our residents’ concerns and those of the people that support them and ensure we support any request to improve security, both within the home and to the boundaries.

- (g) Ensure that appropriate tenant engagement is undertaken and that tenants are involved in any project works to be completed within their home, prior to commencement.
- (h) Maintain all properties in the most cost-effective manner over a realistic period, including the completion of appropriate option appraisals, where necessary.
- (i) Ensure all works are recorded on the asset management system, along with updating the attributes, such as the date of install and expected life cycle of that component.
- (j) Review high-cost schemes and schemes that appear un-economical.
- (k) Increase the proportion of planned maintenance to responsive repairs by working towards a budget split of 70:30 respectively.
- (l) Reduce reactive maintenance costs, by ensuring all properties are loaded on to the asset management system with relevant attributes, updated to reflect current condition.
- (m) Conduct timely replacement of property components. By ensuring all information is loaded on to the asset management system, we can ensure planned maintenance programmes can be calculated and planned when they are due.
- (n) Ensure consistency of improvement standards. Ensuring everyone is given the opportunity to give feedback on the way to improve the delivery of our services.
- (o) Ensure we deliver an effective and efficient repairs and maintenance service, in line with our Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy.
- (p) Ensure, through proactive contract monitoring, that all work undertaken on our properties by external contractors, or by other Council services under Service Level Agreements, is completed to a high standard and in a timely manner.
- (q) Develop our workforce, through improved training and skills development, and address any shortfalls in staffing resources through proactive recruitment drives, apprenticeships and procurement of external contractors, where required.

Outcome of Consultation

11. Our Tenants Panel were consulted in March 2024 and overall, the Panel support the proposed Housing Services Asset Management Strategy.