

Briefing Note: Stock Condition Survey Strategy

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Purpose

To brief Members on the proposed strategy for addressing significant gaps in stock condition data across the Council's 7,600 social homes and to outline a phased delivery model for improving asset data, enabling better housing investment decisions, and ensuring regulatory compliance.

Background

- The Council must survey 100% of its housing stock every five years to remain compliant with regulatory standards (Decent Homes and the Home Standard).
- Currently, around 3,000 properties (approx. 50%) have no recent survey.
- In-house delivery has struggled to keep pace due to competing operational pressures.
- Accurate stock condition data is essential for planning investment, improving housing safety, and managing risk.

Recommended Option: Phased Delivery Model

Phase 1 (Year 1):

- Fully outsourced programme to clear the backlog (approx. 3,000 homes).

Phase 2 (Year 2+):

- Rolling outsourced programme covering approx. 1,500 homes per year on a 5-year cycle.

This model balances urgent compliance needs with long-term sustainability.

Benefits

- **Compliance:** Supports full alignment with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards.
- **Safety:** Improves visibility of safety issues like damp, mould, and disrepair.
- **Investment Planning:** Enables accurate forecasting and strategic targeting of capital spend.
- **Efficiency:** Reduces reliance on reactive maintenance and supports long-term cost control.
- **Tenant Confidence:** Signals a proactive approach to maintaining homes and acting on resident concerns.

Financial Overview

- Estimated cost to clear backlog: **£300,000–£500,000**
- Ongoing annual cost: **£150,000–£200,000**
- Five-year total: **£800,000–£1 million**

- Costs benchmarked against comparable local authority contracts and considered competitive.

Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
Contractor underperformance	Contract KPIs and performance management
Tenant access refusal	Early engagement and flexible appointment scheduling
Data quality issues	Internal QA sampling and contractor reporting
Transition delays	Phased mobilisation with milestones
TUPE implications	Monitored with HR/legal advice (currently low risk)

Alternative Options Considered

Option	Summary	Conclusion
Hybrid (in-house + outsourced)	Slower, more complex coordination	Not viable for urgent backlog
Outsourced only (no backlog clearance)	Leaves current data gaps unaddressed	Non-compliant short term
Fully insourced	High cost, recruitment challenges	Unsustainable
Triaged hybrid	Prioritises high-risk stock	Complex and inconsistent

Alignment with Council Priorities

- **Tackling Poverty & Inequality:** Safer, better-maintained homes reduce health inequalities.
- **Financial Sustainability:** A cost-effective, scalable delivery model.
- **Climate Change:** Integrated EPC data supports net-zero objectives.
- **Transparency:** Improves data governance and tenant trust.

What Success Looks Like

- 100% of stock surveyed on a rolling 5-year basis.

- Up-to-date, high-quality asset data to inform investment and safety programmes.
- Reduced risk of compliance breaches or reputational harm.
- High tenant satisfaction with property condition and housing services.

Next Steps

- Cabinet decision (15 July 2025)
- Tender issued and contractor appointed (Autum 2025)
- Mobilisation of Phase 1 TFO
- Review and transition to rolling Phase 2 model in 2026

For further details or to raise queries, please contact:

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