

Title: Asset Compliance Plan Progress

Lead Officer: Steve Partner, Head of Neighbourhood & Assets

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Paul Wightman, Cabinet Member for Housing
 Wards of the District directly affected: all

Approvals required	Date	Name
Portfolio Holder	13.02.24	Paul Wightman
Finance	13.02.24	Andrew Rollins
Legal Services		N/A
Chief Executive	13.02.24	Chris Elliott
Director of Climate Change		N.A
Deputy CEO	13.02.24	Darren Knight
Section 151 Officer	13.02.24	Andrew Rollins
Monitoring Officer	13.02.24	Graham Leach
Leadership Co-ordination Group		N/A
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	No	
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No	
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	No	
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	No	
Accessibility Checked?	Yes	

Summary

Following the independent asset review, the governance framework and action plan have commenced in response to the recommendations. This report gives the asset compliance committee an update on the current position and progress on the action plan.

Recommendation(s)

That the committee notes the progress made.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Following the independent asset compliance review, a self-referral to the Regulator for Social Housing was made on the 9 November 2023.
- 1.2 As reported verbally at the last meeting of the Committee in January, the Regulator has determined not to record a Breach of the Standard at this stage but to require regular reporting on progress in meeting the Action Plan.
- 1.3 The Regulator has been contacted to confirm agreement on the level of detail and frequency that will be required in order to provide updates.
- 1.4 The two specialist leads, Fire Safety and Building Safety were appointed to provide specialist assistance based on the specific competencies required around these areas, and liaison continues with Pennington. However, the Fire Safety lead left with effect from 5 February 2024 and work is underway to appoint a suitable replacement. A verbal update will be given at the meeting.
- 1.5 A Project manager has been recruited and has started work on project coordination for the many recommendations in the Action Plan.
- 1.6 Consultancy with Pennington is underway around data validation, involving officers from the Assets and Housing Teams together with data analysis from Pennington.
- 1.7 A meeting of the Compliance Board was held on 14 February 2024 and any matters arising will be reported verbally at this meeting.

2 Highlight Report & Action Plan

- 2.1 Appendix 1 is the updated highlight report with columns to provide further context for this Committee.
- 2.2 With the self-referral to the regulator completed and the outcome now known, additional regulatory information provided and specialist resources in place, the Compliance Action Team will:
 - Review the target dates in the action plan.
 - Set out estimated start dates for the recommendations that have not commenced.
 - Further break down recommendations into more detailed tasks and milestones (this was an area also highlighted by overview & scrutiny)

3 Regulatory Information

- 3.1 **Appendix 2** is a copy of the data compliance dashboard. This reporting will further evolve and improve over time. In relation to the compliance % areas that show 0%. This is due to the fact the information is held by the contractor's database and not the Council's housing management system, ActiveH. There is a recommendation to address this within the action plan.
- 3.2 The compliance board have requested the dashboard is amended and moving forward it will target dates for when the compliance performance will be achieved to help further monitor progress.

4 Financial Services

- 4.1 As reported at the previous meeting, from the Housing Revenue Account, £270,000 of resources will be used for specialist consultancy support and additional technical resources covering asset compliance, fire safety and building safety. This ensures that we have the right skills, experience and competence immediately in the organisation to help drive forward critical and high priority actions.
- 4.2 During this year we will be considering what resources will be needed to sustain the improvements that are being made to ensure compliance is maintained. This is to ensure that 'kneejerk' structure changes are not made, and proposals recommended will be thoroughly considered and sustainable.

5 Risk Assessment

- 5.1 **Appendix 3** is the updated risk assessment, including additional risks 11 and 18 as previously notified. This was reviewed by the Compliance Board when it met on 14 February. It has been updated to record the financial risk to the Council in building and maintaining the compliance framework.
- 5.2 In summary the risk register records 19 number of risks of which 10 are green, 4 are amber, 5 are yellow and 0 are red. Since the last meeting none of the risks have changed in scoring
- 5.3 Since the last meeting of the Committee, feedback from two Councilors has been received on the risk register, and these comments with a response are set out below.
- 5.4 **Question 1** - Do we have tight enough interaction with our suppliers? We know we are being held to account but is it as high a priority with them and if not, how do we make them understand that it is important for us.
- 5.5 **Response:** At the start of the project, a meeting was held with all relevant suppliers to explain about the outcome of the Pennington report and to obtain agreement from contractors to deliver on key aspects of the required outcome. Further meetings will be held as actions are progressed to further inform and involve contractors.
- 5.6 **Question 2:** Item 1: what is meant by "action plan not accurate", in what way could it be inaccurate?
- 5.7 **Response:** This is a description of a potential, rather than actual risk. It reflects a risk that Pennington may not have accurately established an action plan that would deliver compliance, but the register registers that this is a very low-level risk.

- 5.8 **Items 2 and 3:** I don't think slow progress on the plan and not delivering the plan have the same impact, but it does depend on how slow the progress is.
- 5.9 **Response:** Agreed, the degree of any slow progress would impact on the risk rating for the mitigation which can be adjusted as the project progresses
- 5.10 **Item 7:** the risk level with mitigation seems too low both for likelihood and impact.
- 5.11 **Response:** This was discussed at the Compliance Board on 14 February 2024 and the decision was to ask for further guidance from the Audit and Risk team about how residual risks are measured. There was also a recommendation that a further column be considered showing the risk rating at a point in time in addition to the residual risk rating when all actions are complete.
- 5.12 **Item 9:** Should "company" be "council"? Risk after mitigation for both impact and likelihood seems too low. It would make sense for it to be the same as item 12.
- 5.13 **Response:** Noted and will be changed

Background papers: None.