



Report to: Cabinet Meeting – 19 December 2023

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Lee Brazier, Housing

Director Lead: Suzanne Shead, Director - Housing, Health & Wellbeing

Lead Officer: Caroline Wagstaff, Business Manager – Housing Maintenance & Asset Management, Ext. 5637

<b>Report Summary</b>	
<b>Type of Report</b>	Open Report, Key Decision
<b>Report Title</b>	Damp & Mould Policy
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To share the draft Damp & Mould Policy which sets out our approach to tackling and preventing damp and mould in Council owned homes.
<b>Recommendations</b>	To endorse the Damp & Mould Policy for approval as recommended by the Local Influence Network Chairs.
<b>Alternative Options Considered</b>	There are no viable alternatives and taking no action would mean failure to meet our regulatory requirement to ensure that we have measures in place to appropriately tackle cases of damp and mould and keep tenants safe in their homes.
<b>Reason for Recommendations</b>	As detailed in the report and recommended for approval by the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee on 4 December 2023.

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 In October 2021, the Housing Ombudsman issued a “Spotlight on Damp and Mould”, highlighting the approach they expect social landlords to take when dealing with tenants who complain about damp to them. This has included adopting a more customer centred approach to the issue and better response to managing complaints.
- 1.2 On 22 November 2022 the Regulator of Social Housing sent a letter to all social housing providers seeking information and assurances on our approach to tackling damp and mould. Our response was well received including the changes we have made in this draft policy and our approach to tackle damp and mould.
- 1.3 Awaabs Law was a new amendment to the Social Housing Act received royal assent in July 2023. This will enforce social landlord to remedy damp and mould within strict time limits. However, further guidance/regulation as to the relevant timescales and

definitions are still awaited. Also, under the Social Housing Act 2023 the Housing Ombudsman has been given new powers to investigate damp and mould cases.

- 1.4 As part of our approach we have undertaken a full review of our damp and mould policy and procedures to include the 27 recommendations from the Housing Ombudsman review and adopt a more customer centred approach.
- 1.5 A presentation and the attached draft policy has been to all our Local Influence Network (LINs) groups was conducted earlier this year. The changes in the policy and our approach were positively received and approved.

## **2.0 Proposal**

- 2.1 The draft Damp & Mould Policy is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report for comment and approval.
- 2.2 The Local Influence Network, Tenant Engagement Board and Policy, Performance & Improvement Committee have seen and recommended the policy for approval.

## **3.0 Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding, Sustainability, and Crime and Disorder and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

### **3.1 Financial Implications - FIN23-24/**

This strategy has no direct financial implications outside of existing budgets for repairs and capital works in Council owned homes.

### **3.2 Equalities**

The policy has no direct equalities implications although there is an expectation that approaches to engagement are varied and reflect the needs and requirements of tenants.

### **3.3 Tenant Involvement**

Local Influence Networks (LINs) have been consulted in the creation of this policy.

## **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None