# Diversity Impact Assessment

## Title

HRA Housing Asset Management Strategy

## Date

October 2023

## Lead Officer

Aisling Sims – Policy and Partnerships Manager

### Summary description of the proposed change

*What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed? How does it compare with the current situation?*

The HRA Asset Management Strategy sets out the strategic medium and long term approach to the Council’s housing assets. The Council’s Housing assets relates to, but is not limited to: residential dwellings, blocks, schemes, communal areas, garage areas, development and potential sites. This DIA will consider the potential impacts of the proposed HRA Asset Management Strategy 2023.

The strategy replaces an older version dated 2015 to 2020 and applies to all dwellings, blocks, schemes, communal areas and development sites owned by HRA Housing Services.

Since the previous strategy has been published there have been some key changes to:

* Legislation
* Development Programme
* The HRA Business plan

The purpose of the proposed HRA Asset Management Strategy can be summarised as follows:

Identify long-term capital investment requirements.

Procure contracts and services that are suitable for works being delivered and provide value for money.

Minimise expenditures on day-to-day repairs and prioritise planned maintenance.

Maximise external funding sources and grants for financial sustainability.

Provide affordable homes for tenants that meet government quality and energy efficiency standards.

Prioritise investments based on tenant needs and feedback.

Assess the long-term viability of at-risk housing stock and take appropriate action.

The following four overall strategic objectives are set out in the proposed HRA Asset Management Strategy:

* Landlord Compliance
* Net Zero
* Property Standards
* Financial Performance

Since the implementation of the previous strategy, Medway have continued to maintain its stock at a higher level than the Decent Homes Standard, known locally as ‘The Medway Standard.’ This strategy proposes to continue this as the outcome of the government level review of the Decent Homes Standard is awaited.

As of September 2023, 90.93% of the council’s housing stock meets the Decent Homes Standard. Of the 274 properties which do not meet the standard they are either scheduled for works as part of this year’s capital works programme or have had waivers signed by the tenant.

### Summary of evidence used to support this assessment

*Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user records etc. Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile*

The following evidence has been used to make an assessment for this DIA.

Ahead of the introduction of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), a baseline satisfaction survey was carried out in March 2023. In total 677 responses were received giving a response rate of 26%. Here is a summary of the satisfaction scores:

* Overall satisfaction 64%
* Repairs satisfaction 68%
* Repair timing satisfaction 66%
* Satisfaction with home maintenance 62%
* Satisfaction that you feel safe at home 65%
* Satisfaction that your landlord listens and acts 46%
* Satisfaction that your landlord keeps you well informed 55%
* Your landlord is fair and respectful 64%
* Satisfaction with complaint handling 28%
* Satisfaction with communal areas 56%
* Satisfaction with your neighbourhood 45%
* Satisfaction with landlords handling of ASB 39%

Monthly big door knocks are now carried out in targeted areas by the whole of the HRA team which encourages residents to engage with all aspects of the service and allows us to be proactive in our approach to repairs and maintenance. Between May and August 2023, residents were asked what their top 3 priorities for the Housing Service were:

Repairs service – 65.3%

Feel safe and secure at home – 45%

Quick to respond to ASB – 45%

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) have released figures showing there were 13,400 more deaths in the winter period (December 2021 to March 2022) compared with the average of winter months.

Although anyone can be at risk of cold related illnesses, as of August 2023, 34.6% of our tenants were aged 65 and over, In order to reduce the impact of cold related illnesses important that HRA properties are decent and thermally efficient.

The proposed strategy will also include a long term approach to improving thermal efficiency look for potential ways to reduce fuel poverty. As at September 2023 it is estimated that 1165 (or 39%) of our tenants have their housing costs paid via Universal Credit.

Given the current cost of living crisis, it is likely that a growing number of households are being faced with rising utility bills and residents will need to be supported as much as possible to keep their homes warm during winter months.

It is estimated that around xx% of our tenants suffer from a long term health condition or a disability. Through the 2022/23 year a total of 16 disabled adaptations were completed in HRA properties. The strategy will reinforce that residents should live in homes that meet their needs and live independently for as long as possible.

The demand for social and affordable housing in the area continues to increase. In January 2023 there were 1,696 households on the active housing register and in September 2023 this has risen to 2,169. The development programme will ensure that the HRA continues to maximise stock that meets the needs of households now and in the future.

### What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

*Is it likely to :*

* *Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups?*
* *Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups?*

*Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don’t?*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Protected characteristic groups | Adverse impact | Advance equality | Foster good relations |
| Age |  | X |  |
| Disabilty |  | X |  |
| Gender reassignment |  |  |  |
| Marriage/civil partnership |  |  |  |
| Pregnancy/maternity |  |  |  |
| Race |  |  |  |
| Religion/belief |  |  |  |
| Sex |  |  |  |
| Sexual orientation |  |  |  |
| Other (eg low income groups) |  | X |  |

### Summary of the likely impacts

* *Who will be affected?*
* *How will they be affected?*
* The proposed Asset Management Strategy will applied equally and will only serve to advance equality, by improving the living conditions of residents whose properties and estates are due for improvement.
* The programme will be based on the property/assets and not the characteristics of the household receiving the work. Decisions on units and stock is solely based on their lifecycle, condition, performance and our obligations as set by legislation.
* It is anticipated that the proposed strategy will advance equality for this in disabled, lower income and certain age groups as it strives to ensure that properties and related assets are in good condition, fit for purpose, energy efficient and serve the needs of the household.
* No adverse impacts have currently been identified through internal consultation. Any adverse impacts identified through future consultation will trigger a review of this DIA and where appropriate mitigating actions will be built into the strategy.

### Action plan

What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

* *Are there alternative providers?*
* *What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?*
* *Can demand for services be managed differently?*

Currently n/a

### Action plan

*Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Lead** | **Deadline or review date** |
| Present the new strategy to the HRA Governance Board | Head of Property Services | November 2023 |
| Present the proposed strategy to the HRA Resident Scrutiny Panel | Head of Property Services | January 2024 |
| Ensure that the proposed strategy is updated as necessary following the outcome of the Decent Homes review. | Head of Property Services | TBC |
| Continue to complete big door knocks and use feedback on Property Services to shape the service | Policy and Partnerships Manager | Ongoing |
| Use feedback from TSMs to ensure that the ‘resident voice’ guides the approach to the HRA Asset Management Strategy and action plans. | Policy and Partnerships Manager/Head of Property Services | Annually |

### Recommendation

*The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be:*

* *to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate*
* *consider alternatives*
* *gather further evidence*

*If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.*

To proceed with the implementation of the HRA Asset Management Strategy.