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| 29 September 2022 | | ITEM: 7 |
| Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee | | |
| Interim report for Stock Condition Survey of Housing Portfolio | | |
| Wards and communities affected: All | Key Decision: N/A | |
| Report of: Alastair Wood – Technical Services Delivery Manager, Housing Adults, Housing & Health | | |
| Accountable Assistant Director: Ewelina Sorbjan Assistant Director, Housing Adults, Housing & Health | | |
| Accountable Director: Ian Wake, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health | | |
| This report is Public | | |

Executive Summary

This report seeks to provide an interim update to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress and interim findings of the stock condition survey the Housing Department are currently undertaking.

1. Recommendation(s)

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment on:

1.1 The interim findings of the stock condition survey.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 This report has been compiled to give the committee an interim update on the findings of the stock condition survey being undertaken over the last few months.

2.2 The housing department recognises the importance of monitoring our housing assets to ensure that we continue to maintain the housing stock appropriately, so it provides safe and secure homes for our residents. Whilst also ensuring that we have accurate information to develop investment programmes to meet the current and emerging demands of our housing portfolio.

- 2.3 The council's approach to undertaking stock condition surveys is to undertake partial surveys on selected properties that give a borough wide representation of the assets from across the entire housing portfolio. This approach allows the Council to undertake more frequent stock condition surveys, with the last one being done in 2017.
- 2.4 The data captured in this stock condition survey will supplement the data that was captured in 2017 and the data of which is captured annually through the delivery of the repair, maintenance, and investment programmes. The properties that were surveyed in 2017/18 have been excluded from this exercise to ensure that we are capturing new data from other assets.
- 2.5 In February 2022, Thurrock Council entered into contract with **MLCS3** to undertake a stock condition survey of circa 30% of existing housing stock equating to completing surveys to 2,952 properties, alongside with completing surveys to a sample of blocks equating to 161 blocks across both general needs and sheltered schemes. Onsite surveys commenced in late March 2022, following initial resident engagement.
- 2.6 Key data captured as part of this survey includes:
- 2.6.1 Recording the condition of the main internal and building components, the age of the component, estimated year of replacement together with quantity to provide lifecycle costing for asset management purposes and assist with the development of future planned works.
- 2.6.2 HHSRS – (*Housing health and safety rating system*) and Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 assessment criteria.
- 2.6.3 EPC – an official Energy Performance Certificate will be completed by the surveyor, all of whom are qualified Domestic Energy Assessors. EPCs and the data captured offer the opportunity to report on carbon output, EPC recommendations.
- 2.6.4 Backlog Repair – any “backlog” type of repairs that should be carried out to maintain the standard of the property including recording of any building defects that compromise the health and safety of residents/visitors, impact on security or potentially having a detrimental impact on other building components, if not rectified. The works are recorded using an agreed schedule of rates and a quantity is recorded to provide a total cost to carry out the work.

3. Access

- 3.1 Since March a total of 2,612 surveys have been completed to dwellings and 161 blocks. The following report provides an overview of the findings to date.

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| Target Properties to Survey | 2,952 |
| Total Surveyed to Date | 2,612 |
| Progress to Date | 88.48% |

- 3.2 Despite our best efforts to engage and book appointments with residents to gain access to the properties to undertake the stock condition survey, this has been challenging. The following table provides a breakdown between appointments scheduled for 1st and 2nd access attempts.

| Visit | Scheduled | Surveyed | Access |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1 st Visit | 4,337 | 1,964 | 45.28% |
| 2 nd Visit | 2,021 | 648 | 32.06% |
| Total | 6,358 | 2,612 | 41.08% |

- 3.3 Access to communal areas in blocks is under Thurrock Council's direct control and therefore, all 161 communal block areas have been surveyed.

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Target Properties to Survey | 161 |
| Total Surveyed to Date | 161 |
| Progress to Date | 100% |

4. Property Selection

- 4.1 To ensure the Council surveys a relevant representation of the entire stock, the housing department selected specific archetypes from all geographical areas of the Borough. Please note the total number of properties issued is greater than the number to be surveyed to allow for properties where access cannot be obtained. The following table provides a breakdown of the confirmed archetypes together with number of properties target and access to date.

| Archetype | Included in Sample | Surveyed | Access % |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----------|----------|
| Bedsit - End Terraced | 24 | 18 | 75.00% |
| Bedsit - High Rise | 53 | 19 | 35.85% |
| Bedsit - Low Rise | 57 | 17 | 29.82% |
| Bedsit - Mid Terraced | 1 | 1 | 100.00% |
| Bedsit - Semi Detached | 3 | 1 | 33.33% |
| Bungalow 1 to 2 Bed - Detached | 6 | 6 | 100.00% |
| Bungalow 1 to 2 Bed - End Terraced | 76 | 53 | 69.74% |
| Bungalow 1 to 2 Bed - Mid Terraced | 66 | 52 | 78.79% |
| Bungalow 1 to 2 Bed - Semi Detached | 42 | 27 | 64.29% |

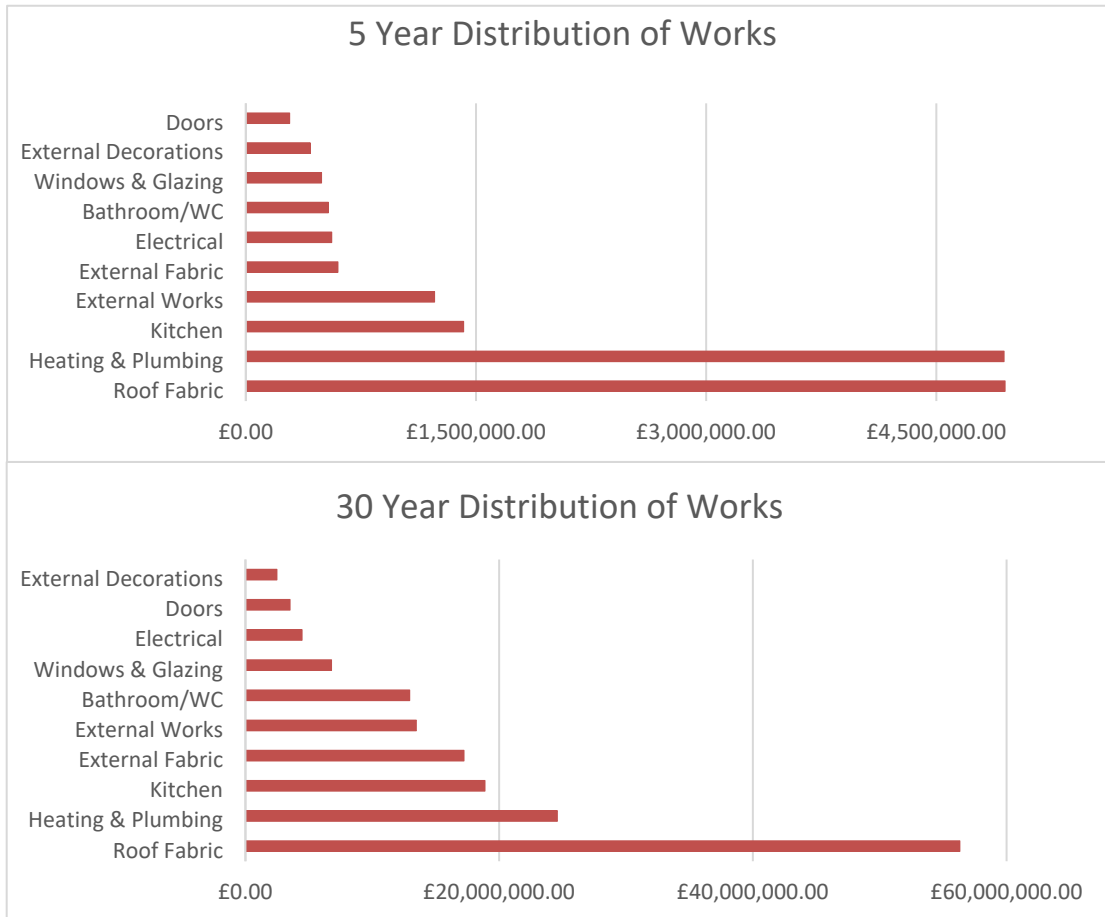
| | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Bungalow 3 Bed+ - End Terraced | 1 | 1 | 100.00% |
| Bungalow 3 Bed+ - Mid Terraced | 6 | 3 | 50.00% |
| Bungalow 3 Bed+ - Semi Detached | 3 | 2 | 66.67% |
| Flat/Maisonette 1 to 2 Bed - High Rise | 419 | 191 | 45.58% |
| Flat/Maisonette 1 to 2 Bed - Low Rise | 1203 | 769 | 63.92% |
| Flat/Maisonette 1 to 2 Bed - Upper Floor | 29 | 14 | 48.28% |
| Flat/Maisonette 3 Bed+ - Ground Floor | 46 | 29 | 63.04% |
| Flat/Maisonette 3 Bed+ - High Rise | 23 | 11 | 47.83% |
| Flat/Maisonette 3 Bed+ - Low Rise | 81 | 43 | 53.09% |
| Flat/Maisonette 3 Bed+ - Upper Floor | 116 | 64 | 55.17% |
| House 1 to 2 Bed - End Terraced | 79 | 52 | 65.82% |
| House 1 to 2 Bed - Mid Terraced | 227 | 142 | 62.56% |
| House 1 to 2 Bed - Semi Detached | 89 | 59 | 66.29% |
| House 3 Bed - Detached | 1 | 1 | 100.00% |
| House 3 Bed - End Terraced | 392 | 248 | 63.27% |
| House 3 Bed - Mid Terraced | 587 | 342 | 58.26% |
| House 3 Bed - Semi Detached | 592 | 365 | 61.66% |
| House 4 Bed+ - Detached | 3 | 2 | 66.67% |
| House 4 Bed+ - End Terraced | 19 | 16 | 84.21% |
| House 4 Bed+ - Mid Terraced | 54 | 32 | 59.26% |
| House 4 Bed+ - Semi Detached | 47 | 32 | 68.09% |
| TOTAL | 4345 | 2612 | 60.12% |

5. Interim update on Survey Findings

- 5.1 At the time of drafting this report the following findings are based on 807 properties and inclusive of internal and external communal areas to blocks of flats. Therefore, figures are not a representation on required level of expenditure per dwelling. Interim figures are being used at this stage due to the time required to filter, validate, and report on survey data. This report is being presented as an interim update and whilst conversation have been ongoing with our partners. All survey data will be jointly reviewed and validated upon full completion of the survey stage. Based on this, most of forecast costs data has been removed at this stage to avoid misleading members.
- 5.2 The findings of the survey to date have largely validated the housing department's understanding of the current stock condition in respect that over the coming years the Council needs to focus capital investment in the coming years on external aspects of our properties. The transforming homes project over the previous nine years has been a mix of internal and external works across the assets. However, most of the investment has been spent on replacing internal elements such as kitchens and bathrooms, alongside upgrading electrical infrastructure and improving insulation. The current phase of the transforming homes programme is largely centred around improving and

upgrading the external envelope of our estates and this is planned to continue in the coming years.

5.3 The following tables set out the key areas of expenditure based on the interim finding for the next 5 and 30 years.



5.4 The second highest element of identified investment is for heating and plumbing. The housing department recognises the priority to maintain heating and hot water systems across the portfolio so in addition to the servicing and repairs and maintenance expenditure. The council invests circa £600k per annum to upgrade heating and hot water systems, this investment has upgraded 860 systems over the two previous financial years with the same level of investment in this current financial year.

5.5 Further to this, the department is in the early stages of developing a plan for the future of our assets regarding heating and hot water systems. We recognise the need to deliver renewable and sustainable technologies into the portfolio. Whilst we have just taken our first step for the Chadwell St Mary tower blocks, by replacing the storage radiators with a new ground source heat pump scheme that will benefit all 273 flats alongside injecting cavity wall insulation to all three blocks, we recognise the challenges ahead for the whole portfolio.

6. HHSRS (The Housing Health and Safety Rating System) and Fitness for Human Habitation

- 6.1 As part of the survey the consultants are assessing the dwelling based against both above mentions acts.
- 6.1.1 The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is a risk-based assessment to identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings. It was introduced under the Housing Act 2004 and applies to residential properties in England and Wales. The assessment comprises of 29 “risks”. Full guidance regarding HHSRS can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system-guidance-for-landlords-and-property-related-professionals>
- 6.1.2 The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 came into law on 20th March 2019, which is applicable to Social Landlords, to ensure that rented houses and flats are ‘fit for human habitation’ which means that they are safe, healthy and free from issues that could cause serious harm. The Homes Act considers the risks identified as part of the HHSRS assessment along with additional factors to consider. Further details can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-fitness-for-human-habitation-act-2018/guide-for-tenants-homes-fitness-for-human-habitation-act-2018>
- 6.2 Under both of these criteria, based on all 2612 properties surveyed to date, five properties have been identified to have a severe risk under this criterion; these properties were referred to us immediately so the necessary repairs could be implemented. Other than these five cases, there were two predominant themes identified under these assessment criteria, related to fire and damp and mould.
- 6.3 The aspect of fire relates largely to individual detectors being missing / damaged or kitchen doors being removed / missing door closers. All these findings are being reviewed and actioned accordingly. Also, members will be aware the department is current delivering a programme to upgrade detection systems across our high-rise blocks and we have also now included the testing of fire detection systems inside residents’ dwellings on the annual gas servicing contract.
- 6.4 The identification of damp and mould is something the housing department expected. Furthermore, when starting this stock condition survey, we purposely selected specific properties that had a higher prevalence of damp and mould on a reoccurring basis. Based on the findings we have to date; we are working with the appointed consultants on the data captured and where required we are going to undertake further detailed assessments.

6.5 This report is not specifically for reporting damp and mould in the housing portfolio, there is report due to this committee specifically on this subject matter and therefore, information in this report is purposely limited.

6.6 The following table has been included in this report to inform members of the prevalence damp and mould identified in specific archetypes captured under this survey.

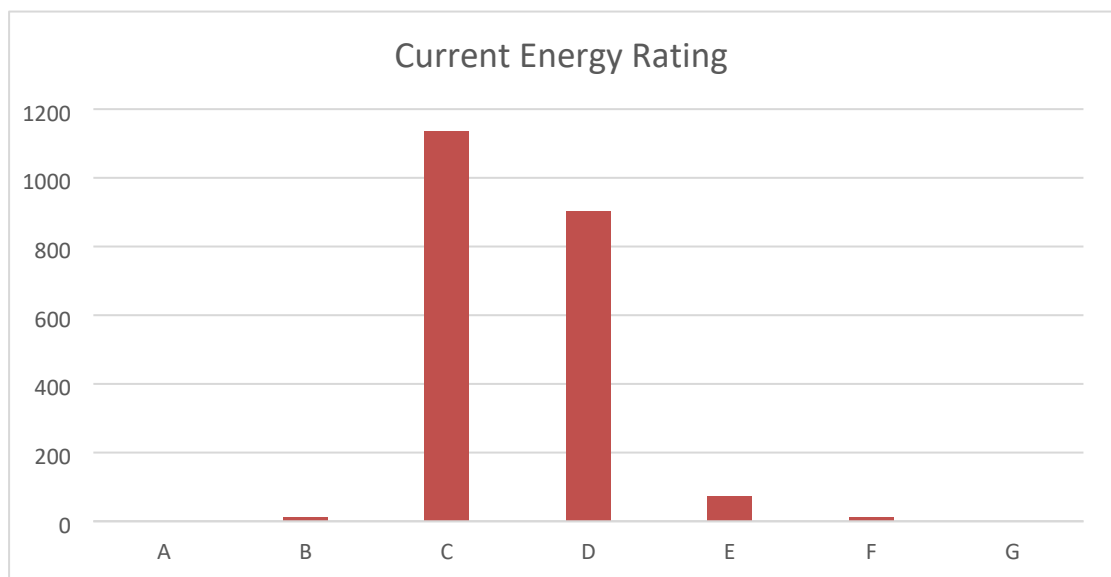
| Archetype | Surveyed | Slight Risk | Moderate Risk | Severe Risk | Total Risks | % Risk |
|--|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Bedsit - End Terraced | 18 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 11.11% |
| Bedsit - High Rise | 19 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 10.53% |
| Bedsit - Low Rise | 17 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 29.41% |
| Bedsit - Mid Terraced | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Bedsit - Semi Detached | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Bungalow 1 to 2 Bed - Detached | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 16.67% |
| Bungalow 1 to 2 Bed - End Terraced | 53 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 9.43% |
| Bungalow 1 to 2 Bed - Mid Terraced | 52 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5.77% |
| Bungalow 1 to 2 Bed - Semi Detached | 27 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 6 | 22.22% |
| Bungalow 3 Bed+ - End Terraced | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Bungalow 3 Bed+ - Mid Terraced | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Bungalow 3 Bed+ - Semi Detached | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 50.00% |
| Flat/Maisonette 1 to 2 Bed - High Rise | 191 | 9 | 2 | 0 | 11 | 5.76% |
| Flat/Maisonette 1 to 2 Bed - Low Rise | 769 | 45 | 16 | 0 | 61 | 7.93% |
| Flat/Maisonette 1 to 2 Bed - Upper Floor | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Flat/Maisonette 3 Bed+ - Ground Floor | 29 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 24.14% |
| Flat/Maisonette 3 Bed+ - High Rise | 11 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9.09% |
| Flat/Maisonette 3 Bed+ - Low Rise | 43 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 6 | 13.95% |
| Flat/Maisonette 3 Bed+ - Upper Floor | 64 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3.13% |
| House 1 to 2 Bed - End Terraced | 52 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 15.38% |
| House 1 to 2 Bed - Mid Terraced | 142 | 16 | 3 | 0 | 19 | 13.38% |
| House 1 to 2 Bed - Semi Detached | 59 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5.08% |
| House 3 Bed - Detached | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% |
| House 3 Bed - End Terraced | 248 | 31 | 7 | 0 | 38 | 15.32% |
| House 3 Bed - Mid Terraced | 342 | 29 | 9 | 0 | 38 | 11.11% |
| House 3 Bed - Semi Detached | 365 | 36 | 8 | 0 | 44 | 12.05% |
| House 4 Bed+ - Detached | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 50.00% |
| House 4 Bed+ - End Terraced | 16 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 12.50% |
| House 4 Bed+ - Mid Terraced | 32 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 12.50% |
| House 4 Bed+ - Semi Detached | 32 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 15.63% |
| TOTAL | 2612 | 216 | 59 | 0 | 275 | 10.53% |

6.7 This data is key to us looking at high prevalence in certain construction types to ensure that we can target and develop projects and programmes accordingly.

7. Energy Performance

7.1 As part of the survey programme, Energy Assessments were undertaken, and an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) was produced. This is being done to update our records and to allow the surveyors to identify potential improvement measures so these can be factored into the future investment programmes.

7.2 The below graph identified that all properties surveyed have an energy rating between Band A and Band G. The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) 2018 have identified that energy ratings of F and below are seen as sub-standard. Although these standards do not apply to social landlords, they do provide a benchmark to measure energy performance. Properties with an Energy Rating of F or below are going to be prioritised for improvement.



7.3 These findings concur with our wider understanding of the housing asset portfolio. However, the identification of some of the worst performing properties is essential for us as a landlord so we can deliver improvements to support our residents and provide better performing properties in respect to energy efficiency.

8. Conclusion

8.1 This report is being presented to the committee at this stage to give an interim update ahead of a future report that will set out the full finding of the survey. The future report will include details of actions / investment programmes the

department are undertaking to reflect the learning of this survey and other asset information that we hold and capture.

8.2 The findings to date as previously noted largely reflect our current understanding of the current position of the asset but the information captured will be vital to developing new and further informing the department current programmes and projects.

9. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

9.1 This paper provides opportunity for Members of this Committee to comment on findings to date.

11. Implications

11.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Strategic Lead – Corporate Finance

The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan makes provision for the ongoing investment in the existing housing stock. These works will be financed from the funding which has been set to facilitate ongoing maintenance and improvements.

11.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Godwin Mangse**
Locum Housing Lawyer – Law & Governance

The Council's obligations as landlord to repair and maintain Council properties are set out in the tenancy agreement. In addition, section 11 of the Landlord Tenant Act 1985 sets out statutory obligations to ensure that the structure of homes are repaired and the repairs are carried out within a reasonable time. Given this is an update report and the nature of the recommendation to the Committee, there are no legal implications directly arising from the recommendation.

11.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**
Team Manager - Community Development and Equalities - Adults, Housing and Health Directorate

A full community equality impact assessment has been undertaken of the implementation of the Housing delivery of the investment programmes.

Thurrock Council must continue to maintain its housing stock appropriately to ensure we are able to deliver the housing service. Effective asset management can only happen if the Council maintains an accurate record of the portfolio from works and surveys of this nature.

The need to maintain and improve our housing assets is more essential than ever; many residents are experiencing high levels of fuel poverty. Fuel poverty has many negative impacts on physical and mental health. Fuel poverty creates a harsh choice for our residents to choose between a warm home or food. The provision of tailored advice and the introduction of further energy efficiency measures and heating systems are designed to address this financial exclusion.

11.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder or Looked After Children

None

12. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

13. List of Appendices

None

Report of

Alastair Wood

Technical Services Delivery Manager, Housing Adults, Housing & Health