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REVISED AGENDA

Committee	-	**CABINET**
Date & Time	-	Tuesday, 20 January 2026 at 6.30 pm
Venue	-	Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding

Membership of the Cabinet:

Councillors: C N Worth (Leader), P A Redgate (Deputy Leader), J R Astill, H J W Bingham, T A Carter, A Casson, E J Sneath and G J Taylor

Junior Portfolio Holder:

Councillor G Scalese

No substitutions permitted. Quorum 3.

Note: Cabinet reports may be referred to Council or Scrutiny Panels. They should therefore be kept for future reference during the current committee cycle.

Persons attending the meeting are requested to turn mobile telephones to silent mode

Democratic Services
Council Offices, Priory Road
Spalding, Lincs PE11 2XE

Date: 19 January 2026

Please ask for Democratic Services: Telephone 07557 821124
e-mail: demservices@sholland.gov.uk

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence.

2. Minutes - (Pages 5 - 18)
To sign as a correct record the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 16 December 2025 (enclosed).

3. Declarations of Interest. -
(Where a Councillor has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest the Councillor must declare the interest to the meeting and leave the room without participating in any discussion or making a statement on the item, except where a Councillor is permitted to remain as a result of a grant of dispensation.)

4. Questions raised by the public under the Council's Constitution (Standing Orders).

5. To consider any matters which have been subject to call-in.

6. To consider matters arising from the Policy Development and Performance Monitoring Panels in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure or the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.

7. Q2 Performance Report 25-26 - (Pages 19 - 52)
To provide an update on how the Council is performing for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 September 2025 (report of the Assistant Director – Corporate enclosed).

8. Housing Standards Policies - (Pages 53 - 58)
To approve the South and East Lincolnshire Housing Standards Policies (report of the Assistant Director – Communities and Housing Services enclosed).

9. Partnership Social Media Policy - (Pages 59 - 80)
To seek approval for the Partnership Social Media Policy (report of the Assistant Director – Corporate enclosed).

10. HRA Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy - (Pages 81 - 162)
To consider and provide feedback on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2026-2056 and HRA Asset Management strategy 2026-2035 (report of the Assistant Director – Housing enclosed).

11. Transfer of Open Space to Sutton Bridge Parish Council. - (Pages 163 - 172)
To secure Cabinet approval to transfer land to Sutton Bridge Parish Council using the provisions set out within Circular 06/2003 (report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Programme Delivery and Assistant Director – General Fund Assets enclosed).

12. Debt Write Off - (Pages 173 -
To seek approval for the write off of uncollectable debt (report of the

Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) enclosed). 178)

13. Any other items which the Leader decides are urgent. -

Note: (i) No other business is permitted unless by reason of special circumstances, which shall be specified in the Minutes, the Leader is of the opinion that the item(s) should be considered as a matter of urgency.

(ii) Any urgent item of business that is a key decision must be dealt with in accordance with the Constitution's Access to Information Procedure Rules.

14. To consider resolving that, under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) 2 & 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

15. Restricted Minute - (Pages 179 - 182)
To sign as a correct record the restricted minute to the Cabinet meeting held on 16 December 2025 (enclosed).

16. Debt Write Off - (Pages 183 - 192)
To consider exempt appendices to item 12 (enclosed).

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Minutes of a meeting of the **CABINET** held in the Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 16 December 2025 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

C N Worth (Leader)

J R Astill	T A Carter	E J Sneath
H J W Bingham	A Casson	G J Taylor

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors P A Redgate and B Alcock (Chairman, Performance Monitoring Panel).

In Attendance: Councillor A C Beal (Chairman, Governance & Audit Committee), Councillor P Barnes, Councillor A R Woolf (Chairman, Policy Development Panel), the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), the Deputy Chief Executive – Delivery and Assistant Director - General Fund Assets, the Assistant Director - Regulatory, the Head of Revenues & Benefits, the Head of Finance Delivery (SHDC), the Head of Procurement and Contracts, the Assistant Director - Leisure and Local Services and the Democratic Services Manager.

59. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2025 and 24 November 2025 were agreed and signed by the Leader as a correct copy.

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were none.

61. QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC UNDER THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION (STANDING ORDERS).

There were none.

62. TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS WHICH HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO CALL-IN.

There were none.

63. TO CONSIDER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANELS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE OR THE BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK PROCEDURE RULES.

There were none.

64. NET ZERO ACTION PLAN

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Conservation and Heritage Cllr Sneath presented the report and advised that in April 2025, South Holland District Council completed a carbon foot printing exercise to establish a baseline of carbon emissions from the organisation and their sources.

The exercise resulted in the adoption of a Carbon Reduction Plan and a commitment to achieve Net Zero by 2040, thereby aligning the Council's ambitions with those of its partner authorities.

Cllr Sneath advised that following extensive engagement with internal stakeholders, a Net Zero Action Plan was subsequently developed. This plan provided a clear roadmap for reducing carbon emissions in the coming years and driving progress towards the Council's Net Zero target.

Cllr Sneath explained that the principal areas of focus within the plan were as follows:

- Fleet – Identifying opportunities to reduce fossil fuel consumption by exploring alternative fuel options.
- Operational Buildings, Depots and Offices – Introducing efficiency upgrades, subject to feasibility studies (e.g., solar panels), with Priory Road and the South Holland Centre identified as priority sites.
- Social Housing – Building upon existing work to improve the energy efficiency of housing stock and offering energy-saving advice through tenancy engagement events to help reduce household bills.
- Waste Management – Improving waste management practices across Council sites and seeking ways to reduce, re-use and recycle more effectively.
- Green Champions Network – Establishing a network across the Partnership to advocate energy-saving measures both at work and at home.

Cllr Sneath advised that the plan contained numerous proposals; however, it was acknowledged that new opportunities might arise, and that the Council would need to remain agile in order to optimise these as they emerged.

Similarly, certain projects might require changes in approach or discontinuation as technologies evolved.

Cllr Sneath further noted that implementation would be influenced by the availability of capital, anticipated return on investment, and opportunities to secure external funding, many of which were highly competitive. It was noted that approval of the plan did not commit the Council to any financial obligations in respect of individual projects or the plan as a whole.
It was confirmed that relevant Portfolio Holders and elected members would be involved as the plan was implemented, and that officers across the Partnership would play a vital role in delivery. Where possible, external funding sources would be sought, with the plan placing the Council in a stronger position to do so.

The Policy Development Panel had been consulted on the plan and had provided its full support without amendment.

Cllr Barnes expressed disappointment regarding the fleet of new collection vehicles for food waste, noting that they were not electric. He queried whether this could have been achieved. He also referred to the 2040 target date and asked whether interim dates could be set to enable progress monitoring.

On the matter of single-use plastics, Cllr Barnes questioned the starting point and current expenditure, stating that no clear figures had been provided.

The Assistant Director – Regulatory confirmed that an interim target existed and undertook to provide details. Regarding single-use plastics, he advised that an audit of usage and associated costs across the partnership was underway, and a report would be brought back to PDP in due course.

The Leader noted that some work had been undertaken approximately a year ago and agreed to revisit this following a meeting on the subject. The Assistant Director – Regulatory added that preliminary work had commenced, but auditing spending across the partnership was an ambitious task given the scale of expenditure.

Clarification was sought on the figures around public lighting and the Assistant Director confirmed that further clarification would be provided.

It was confirmed that, irrespective of LGR, work would continue on the current basis, with no changes proposed unless deemed

necessary, in order to minimise costs

DECISION:
That Cabinet approves the Net Zero Action Plan in line with the Council's commitment to achieve Net Zero by 2040.

(Other Options considered)
- *Do nothing*

Reasons for decision:
- *To set out a delivery pathway to achieve the Council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2040 via a pipeline of projects and actions as set out in the Net Zero Action Plan.*

65. TREE AND HEDGEROW STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Conservation and Heritage Cllr Sneath presented the report and advised that trees and hedgerows played a central role in the Partnership's strategic response to the challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change. The changing climate and the increased risk of extreme weather events highlighted the importance of green infrastructure in protecting communities and underpinned the ability to adapt to climate change.

Cllr Sneath advised that in 2022, the Partnership adopted a Tree and Hedgerow Strategy. The action plan presented to members provided the delivery mechanism for the strategy and outlined various work areas and projects to ensure that trees and hedgerows throughout the sub-region were appropriately managed, protected, and enhanced for the benefit of all.

Tree planting had become a high-profile activity to address climate change, but it was critical that this was done with the principle of "Right Tree in the Right Place." Existing trees and hedgerows also needed to be managed and maintained to ensure their longevity and continued contribution to environmental and carbon benefits.

Cllr Sneath noted that South Holland, along with large areas of Boston, was traditionally a fenland landscape, and tree cover was therefore much lower. This was an important landscape characteristic that needed to be recognised.
Delivery timeframes for this work were broken down into short, medium, and long term, recognising the complexities around delivery and ensuring that quick wins were balanced with strategic, legacy-building actions.

The plan had evolved through extensive consultation with outside bodies, potential funders, and internal departments, and it needed to dovetail with the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Lincolnshire, due to be published in late 2026.

The action plan did not commit the Council to any expenditure. Instead, it sought to influence and prioritise the approach to managing trees and hedgerows so the Council could take advantage of external funding when it became available.

This was a key step towards reaching net zero targets, supporting nature recovery, and creating opportunities for community participation. The Policy Development Panel had been consulted and gave the action plan their full support without amendment.

Members noted that one reason for the limited number of trees in the area was the historical prioritisation of farming. However, many farmers are now introducing hedgerows, and a key element of the strategy involves working with them.

DECISION:

- That Cabinet agrees to adopt the Tree and Hedgerow Action Plan.

(Other Options Considered)

- *Not to adopt the Action Plan and continue to undertake projects, policy and procedural updates in a piecemeal fashion across South and East Lincolnshire.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To ensure a considered plan is in place to deliver progress against the ambition and high level commitments of the Tree and Hedgerow Strategy.*

66. 2025/26 QUARTER TWO FINANCE UPDATE

The Leader introduced the report which gave the Quarter Two Finance Update for 2025/26.

He advised all present that throughout the year quarterly monitoring reports were completed forecasting the expected year end outturn compared to the approved budget. This report provided information on the forecast full year financial performance as at 30 September 2025.

General Fund Revenue Forecast

The revenue outturn forecasted an overspend position of £281,000 at the year-end.

The Leader pulled out some key areas for Cabinet's attention as follows:

- The General Fund 2025/26 net budget for investment income was £0.771m. The forecasted full year outturn for investment income as at Q2 was £1.283m, which would be an overachievement of £512,000.
- As members would be aware the 2025/26 budget included a savings efficiency target of £1.203m, savings were being tracked and could be found in Table 1b. He advised that that 54% of the target had been identified as at 30th September and the forecast assumed the remaining target would be met with work ongoing to support this.

General Fund Capital

The Leader detailed that for General Fund Capital, Table 1a of Appendix B provided details of all capital schemes. The capital budget as at Q2 for the General Fund was £14.681m. General Fund forecasted capital spend at the end of Quarter 2 was £14.520m, expected to underspend by £161k. Changes to the capital programme were also being tracked with £199k identified and detailed in Table 1c of Appendix B. Slippage continued to be carefully monitored and considered and budgets refined as we progressed through the financial year.

General Fund Reserves

The Leader advised that Table 2 of Appendix A provided details of the balances held in reserves at 30 September 2025 being £7.761m. The overall movement in reserve balances during Q2 2025/26 was a decrease of £38,000 taking account of adjustments budgeted or previously approved by way of Proforma B that sought approval from either the S151 Officer or Cabinet.

HRA Revenue

The Leader advised that Section 2.4 detailed the HRA revenue outturn, which showed a surplus of £687,000. He noted that this was due mainly to a reduction in interest payable (£244,000) and an increase in investment income (£297,000).

HRA Capital

The Leader advised that for the HRA Capital, Table 4 provided details of all capital schemes with the programme totalling £20.356m for 2025/26. HRA forecasted capital spend at the end of Quarter 2 was £16.500m.

Treasury

The Leader advised that Section 2.6 of Appendix A detailed the Council's treasury investments. The Councils cash continued to perform well with £810,000 forecast to be achieved in excess of budget.

Concerns were raised regarding utility costs at Priory Road, which appeared not to have been included in the budget to meet last year's spend, resulting in an overspend of approximately £35,000. Officers explained that the variance column showed differences between budget and actuals, not an omission.

It was noted that General Fund Assets agency costs were £67,000, which seemed high and suggested significant use of agency staff. Regarding agency costs, it was confirmed that the waste service employed a significant number of agency workers, which accounted for the high figure.

It was acknowledged that the budgeted amount for utilities did not match previous year's spend, and this would be reviewed to ensure future budgets captured such changes. The increase in utility costs had not been fully reflected in the budget, possibly due to timing of budget setting and price changes

Salary efficiency targets were highlighted as not being met, prompting questions about their origin and achievability. Officers noted that while the full target had not been met, vacancy savings of approximately £400,000 had been achieved, making a significant contribution. Further work would continue over the next six months..

The importance of monitoring small variances was stressed, as these could accumulate into significant overspends.

Officers reassured members that despite pressures, the overall forecast deficit of £281,000 was not considered a bad position compared to other councils.

It was acknowledged that improvements were needed, but the Council remained in a stronger financial position than many others nationally, reflecting positively on the finance team and auditors.

DECISION:

1) That Cabinet notes the forecast revenue position of a £281,000 overspend for 2025/26 as detailed in Table 1 and the need for continued focus on the savings and efficiency programme.

2) That Cabinet notes the forecast revenue position of the HRA for 2025/26 (surplus of £688k) as detailed in Table 3.

3) That Cabinet notes the HRA Capital Programme position as detailed in Table 4 of Appendix A and the changes set out in this report.

4) That Cabinet approves the amendments to the Capital Programme at Appendix B – Table 1c that require Cabinet approval to take into account the changes set out in this report.

(Other Options Considered)

- To not approve the financial movements outlined.

Reasons for Decisions

- *To ensure the Council's forecast financial position for 2025/26 is considered and related decisions approved. It is important that the Cabinet are aware of the financial position of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account to ensure that they can make informed decisions that are affordable and financially sustainable for the Council.*

67. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2026/27

The Leader introduced the report and advised that by way of background, the Council must review its scheme for working age claimants each year and consult with major precepting authorities and interested parties.

The scheme for pensioners is set by the Government and cannot be changed by the Council.

The Leader advised that after consideration earlier in the year to the current economic challenges and the impact that a reduction in the scheme would have on working age claimant households, Cabinet decided to consult on continuation of the current working age Council Tax Support scheme, providing a maximum level of support of 85% for households with children, and 75% for all other households.

The Leader advised that the consultation ran between 23

September to 8 November 2025 and of the 29 responses received 61% agreed that the council should retain the current level of support. He noted that whilst 29% did not agree, views were divided: some favoured maintaining or increasing support, while others saw the system as unfair or too generous.

The full consultation report was provided at Appendix 1 to the report.

It was noted that the response rate of 29 was disappointing given the size of the district. Members felt that consideration should be given to how future surveys could encourage greater participation and engagement. It was acknowledged that this had always been a challenging area in which to secure responses. The subject matter was not widely understood by the public, which may have contributed to the low engagement. Members agreed that it was the role of councillors to ensure that information was presented as clearly as possible. Despite efforts to promote the survey through various channels, engagement remained difficult.

Members concluded that, while further work could be explored, the outcome was reflective of the challenges inherent in this area.

DECISION:

1. That Cabinet recommends that Full Council approve continuation of the current Council Tax Support scheme, uprated in line with DWP's annual update of allowances and premiums, for 2026/27.

2. That Cabinet delegates approval for developing the 2026/27 scheme rules in accordance with recommendation 1 above to the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance as appropriate, including prescribed, administrative and minor changes.

(Other Options Considered)

- *Options were considered previously by Cabinet, leading to consultation on a continuation scheme*

Reasons for Decision:

- *Full Council must make any revision to its scheme, or any replacement, and agree its final scheme no later than 11th March 2026 in respect of the 2026/27 financial year.*
- *The recommendation has regard to the earlier deliberations of the Cabinet, and the outcome of the consultation process for a continuation scheme.*

- *Uprating in line with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will ensure the scheme continues to support the most vulnerable and low-income households by using nationally recognised rates of DWP income.*

68. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

The Leader introduced the proposed amendments to the Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs), which were brought forward for approval, including the delegation to officers as highlighted in Appendix 2.

Members had previously reviewed the revised set of CPRs, and any comments were considered prior to the final version being circulated to all Council for full approval.

By way of background, the Leader advised that the purpose of these amendments was twofold. Firstly, public procurement legislation had changed following the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023, which had been in place since February 2025. Whilst the current CPRs were compliant with this legislation, the proposed amendments included additions and revisions to further align the CPRs with the Procurement Act 2023.

Secondly, the CPRs had last been updated three years ago, and therefore were due for review. Appendix 3 highlighted the key changes.

The Leader noted that significant work had been undertaken to review and update the rules, and expressed appreciation to officers for their diligence in managing the extensive changes required. The amendments included provisions relating to frameworks and dynamic markets, in line with the Procurement Act 2023, to ensure officers complied with the new legislation.

In relation to thresholds, the Leader noted that the main change was the increase from the current range of £40,000–£85,000 to £50,000–£100,000. He added that importantly, the requirement for at least five written quotations was proposed to be amended, as sourcing five quotations could be challenging in certain industries. Feedback from suppliers indicated that the current requirement could discourage participation, as they perceived a low chance of success.

The Leader advised that further additions were made regarding contract management and monitoring, ensuring that operational contract managers regularly reviewed contract performance and

met with suppliers as required under the terms of the contract. He also confirmed that a named contract manager would be recorded on the contracts register.

Concern was expressed regarding the inclusion of VAT in the figures presented, noting that this was not standard practice and could lead to inaccuracies if VAT rates changed in the future. The Member queried why VAT needed to be included and suggested that it should be removed.

Officers explained that the inclusion of VAT was a statutory requirement under the relevant legislation. They confirmed that thresholds would continue to be calculated exclusive of VAT, as outlined in the accompanying table, but acknowledged that minor adjustments might be necessary to ensure consistency throughout the document.

The Member highlighted that some figures within the text appeared to be exclusive of VAT, while others were inclusive, which caused confusion.

Officers advised that Section 1.5 of the Contract Procedure Rules explained that all figures were inclusive of VAT, except for the table at 13.3.

Members stated that they were extremely satisfied with the work undertaken by the Procurement Team, particularly in relation to improved contract management. They noted that the team had delivered strong outcomes for the Council and expressed full support for the proposed increase in procurement thresholds, citing the challenges of obtaining multiple quotes for specialist areas.

Another Member emphasised the importance of providing opportunities for local businesses to participate in procurement processes, noting that this had been a longstanding priority.

Further comments highlighted the need for declarations of interest to cover all parties involved, including councillors, officers, and the Procurement Team.

Members acknowledged the difficulties in securing quotes for specialist works within tight deadlines, particularly when external funding imposed strict spending requirements.

Overall, Members agreed that the report was positive and commended the Procurement Team for managing significant pressures effectively.

DECISION:

1. That Cabinet recommends the draft revised Contract Procedure Rules at Appendix 1a to this report to be approved at Council.

2. That Cabinet approves the delegations to Officers that sets out the authorisation for decision making in relation to Contract Procedure Rules at Appendix 2 to this report. This approval will be subject to a Council decision to amend the Contract Procedure Rules.

(Other Options Considered)

- *To do nothing – which would result in the retention of the existing Contract Procedure Rules. This would not be deemed best practice as the Contract Procedure Rules have not been reviewed or updated for 3 years.*

Reasons for Decisions:

- *To ensure that the Council has robust, up-to-date Contract Procedure Rules that provide clarity to officers, members, and potential suppliers.*
- *To ensure a clear and consistent approach in the award of contracts and safeguard the public's trust and confidence and promote public accountability and procurement practice.*
- *To help avoid governance failures in the Council's procurement activity.*

69. QUARTER 1 RISK REPORT 2025/26

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Communications and Environmental Services provided an update on the Risk Register up to the end of June 2025. He noted that the registers had been considered by the Governance and Audit Committee in September and risks were managed in accordance with the Partnership Risk Management Framework by officers, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders.

It was noted that staff retention remained a high-risk area and a request was made for a figure on the percentage turnover of staff. The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Communications and Environmental Services advised that an HR report was produced quarterly, detailing percentage turnover, and it was confirmed that further clarification would be provided in relation to the figure requested.

Another high-risk area identified was waste collection and round pressures. A question was asked as to whether this situation was

expected to improve.
In response, it was explained that the current policies allowed unrestricted amounts of waste, making it difficult to predict volumes. Plans approved by Cabinet were scheduled for implementation within the next 12 to 18 months, which would address this risk. Associated policy changes were noted as progressing through a special Policy and Performance Committee.

A further query was raised for clarity regarding "capacity" as referenced in risk item 15. It was confirmed that this referred to officer capacity to deliver work across three organisations and multiple high-profile programmes, including waste, housing revenue account, and other partnership initiatives. This issue had featured in both the Council's and the partnership's risk registers for some time. It was acknowledged that while senior officers had risen to the challenge, the demands continued to be monitored closely, as additional work pressures could make the situation more challenging.

DECISION:
That the Cabinet considers and notes the quarterly risk monitoring information for Q1 of 2025/26.

(Other Options Considered)
- *Alternative reporting arrangements.*

Reasons for Decision:
- *The Cabinet is responsible for overseeing the Council's risk management arrangement.*

70. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE LEADER DECIDES ARE URGENT.

There were no further items.

71. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

DECISION:

Under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

72. CONTRACTING OF LEISURE FACILITIES WITH AN EXTERNAL OPERATOR AS AGENT FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Programme Delivery & Assistant Director, General Fund Assets for the award of contract under agency agreement for the operation and lifecycle maintenance of the Council's leisure facilities.

DECISION:

That Cabinet agreed to the recommendations held within the exempt report.

(The meeting ended at 7.19 pm)

(End of minutes)

Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	Tuesday 20 January 2026
Subject:	Q2 Performance Report 25-26
Purpose:	To provide an update on how the Council is performing for the period 1st July 2025 to 30th September 2025
Key Decision:	No
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Jim Astill, Portfolio Holder for Corporate, Governance, Communications and Environmental Services
Report Of:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate
Report Author:	Corey Gooch, Business Intelligence and Change Manager
Ward(s) Affected:	*None*
Exempt Report:	No

Summary

The Quarter 2 2025-26 Performance Report, detailed in Appendix A, provides Members, businesses, and residents with an overview of how the Council is performing against its key performance indicators.

Recommendations

That the contents of this report be noted.

Reasons for Recommendations

To ensure Council performance is properly scrutinised.

Other Options Considered

Not to monitor performance – this isn't recommended.

1. Background

1.1. This report provides Cabinet with an overview of the key performance indicators for the Council at the end of Quarter 2 (1st July 2025 to 30th September 2025)

1.2. The Performance Framework's role is to drive improvement in service delivery, and this includes ambitious targets that aim to stretch service delivery.

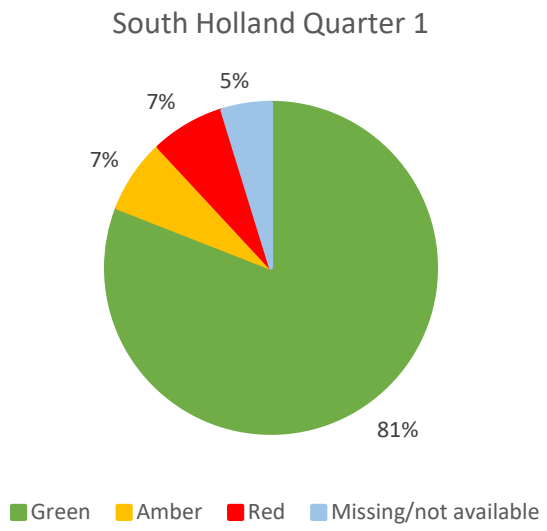
1.3. Whilst the Performance Framework is agreed across the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership, each Council continues to scrutinise the performance of its own services on a quarterly basis.

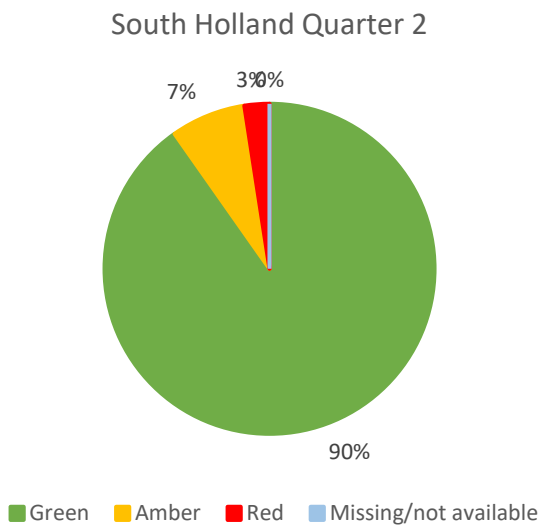
2. Report

2.1 The SHDC Q2 Performance Report details areas of under-performance. Key areas to note are:

- **Percentage of corporate complaints responded to within corporately set timescales:** Complaints responded to within set timescales is holding steady at 85.19% (85% in Q1), against target of 95%. (Details for this indicator can be found on page 8 of the report)
- **Percentage of fly-tips collected within 5 working days of being reported:** The collection rate has dipped slightly below target rate of 95% for the first time in the past year.

2.2 The pie charts below show the Quarter 2 outturn compared to the previous Quarter, Further details of these areas can be found in Appendix A of this report which underscores the council's efforts to address key issues while also pointing out areas requiring more focused strategies to meet targets and improve service delivery.





3. Conclusion

- 90% of the Council's performance metrics present a positive position against targets.
- 7% are slightly below target.
- 3% are significantly under target.

It should, however, be noted that targets are set to help drive performance improvements as opposed to being easy goals to achieve.

4. Performance Monitoring Panel Feedback (10 December 2025)

- Panel members questioned the slight underperformance of the fly-tip collection target and whether this was due to an increase in reported incidents. A data report on the details of fly-tips will be coming forward to members from the environmental services team.
- It was suggested that members of the public who report fly-tips should receive feedback on whether their report will be actioned.
- The proportion of homes with completed Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR) was noted as lower than for other safety checks. The panel was informed that injunctions are being sought to gain access.
- The ability to add photos to fly-tip reports was suggested as a useful improvement and will be fed back to the service.
- An increase in fines for fly-tipping was noted as a potential deterrent.
- The number of fixed penalty notices issued by Kingdom dropped significantly between Q1 and Q2; This was largely due to the enforcement contractor experiencing unstable staffing levels during that period.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

The Performance Framework is partnership wide, some indicators feature data which is measured across the partnership and some indicators are sovereign to South Holland District Council

Corporate Priorities

The report presents progress monitoring of key performance indicators from the corporate priorities which highlight the areas of focus in Council delivery of services.

Staffing

The report contains information on Council's performance which does convey some information relating to staffing.

Workforce Capacity Implications

None

Constitutional and Legal Implications

None

Data Protection

None

Financial

None

Risk Management

Performance issues may be subject to risk management measures to protect Council interests.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

None

Reputation

Performance issues can cause some reputational consequence. It is the purpose of this report to highlight performance issues at an early stage.

Contracts

The report contains information on Council's performance which does convey some information relating to contract matters.

Crime and Disorder

The report contains information on Council's performance which does convey some information relating to crime.

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

None

Health and Wellbeing

The report contains information on Council's performance which does convey some information relating to health and wellbeing.

Climate Change and Environment Impact Assessment

Not Undertaken

Acronyms

PSPS – Public Sector Partnerships Ltd
CTS – Council Tax Support
ICO – Information Commissioner's Office
LGO - Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

Appendices

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report:

Appendix A	*Q2 SHDC Performance report 25-26*

Background Papers

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below

Chronological History of this Report

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body

Report Approval

Report author:	Corey Gooch, Business Intelligence and Change Manager Corey.Gooch@sholland.gov.uk
Signed off by:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate email
Approved for publication:	Jim Astill, Portfolio Holder for Corporate, Governance, Communications and Environmental Services (if required)

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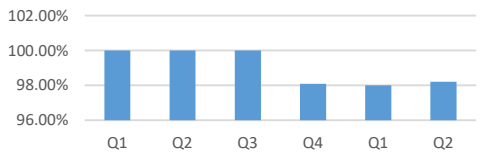
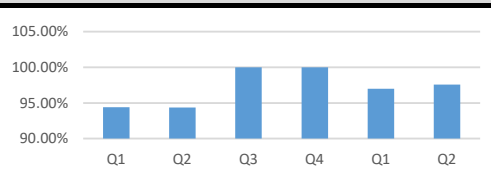
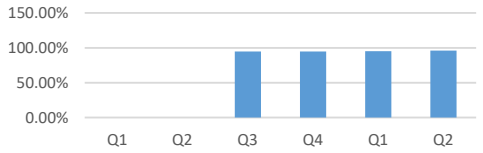
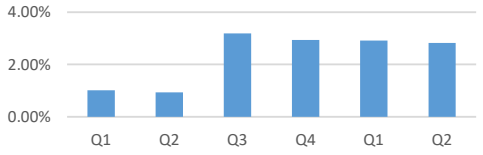
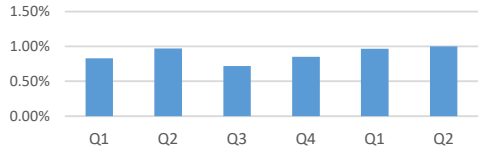
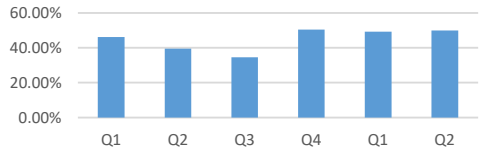
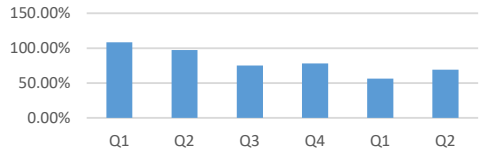
Performance Indicators with Targeted Performance Levels

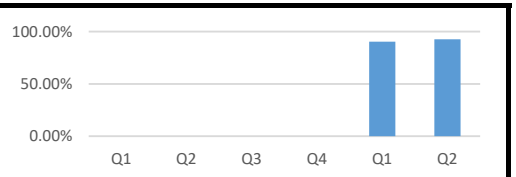
Growth and Prosperity

PI Name	AD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Target	RAG	
Occupancy Rate at end of Quarter: Industrial Units	Andy Fisher	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	98.08%	98.00%	98.21%	97.00%		
Commentary	There was one vacant unit a the end of quarter.									
Percentage of major planning applications determined within 13/16 weeks (or agreed extended period)	Phil Norman	94.38%	94.34%	100.00%	100.00%	96.97%	97.56%	65.00%		
Commentary	Good performance on Major applications over all - well above Government and KPI target figure. Team continuing to monitor live tables and manage timeliness of decision making.									
Percentage of non-major planning applications determined within 8 weeks (or agreed extended period)	Phil Norman	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	94.74%	94.64%	95.08%	96.00%	75%		
Commentary	Good performance on Non-Major applications - well above Government and KPI target figure. Team continuing to monitor live tables and manage timeliness of decision making.									
Percentage of major planning appeals allowed within the last 2 years (rolling period) against number of applications determined	Phil Norman	1.01%	0.94%	3.19%	2.94%	2.91%	2.83%	10%		
Commentary	Percentage of allowed appeals has increased slightly, but generally still remains comfortably below the threshold set by MHCLG - gives the service confidence in decision making. Continue to monitor.									

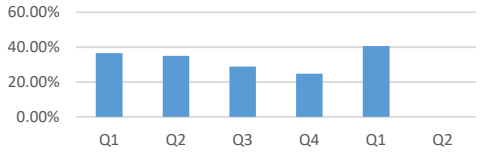
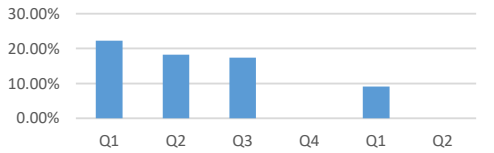
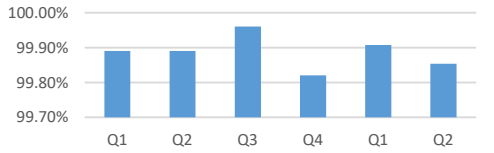
Percentage of minor & other planning appeals allowed within the last 2 years (rolling period) against number of applications determined (OFLOG)	Phil Norman	0.83%	0.97%	0.72%	0.85%	0.97%	1.00%	10%		
Commentary	Appeals performance is very good - gives the service confidence in sound decision making.									

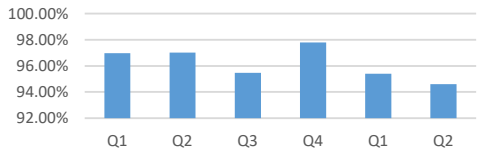
Safe and Resilient Communities

PI Name	AD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Target	RAG	
Percentage of cases opened at homelessness prevention stage (i.e. before they have become homeless)	Emily Spicer	46.15%	39.53%	34.62%	50.46%	49.21%	50.00%	50.00%		
Commentary	The number of cases started before people become homeless is now on target. Further guidance is to be provided by the SELCP Homelessness Team Leader to try and further improve performance.									
Percentage of homelessness cases that were opened at homelessness prevention stage that resulted in the customer not becoming homeless	Emily Spicer	108.33%	97.06%	75.00%	78.18%	56.45%	69.12%	50.00%		
Commentary	The total number of households prevented from becoming homeless is above the target and performance has improved since the last quarter.									
Number of families with children placed into Bed & Breakfast (B&B) for more than 6 weeks	Emily Spicer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Commentary	No households with children were in B&B for more than 6 weeks.									

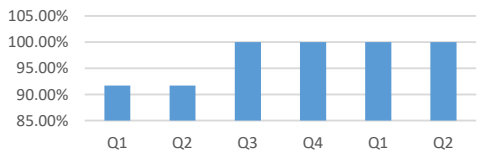
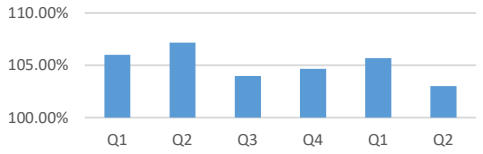
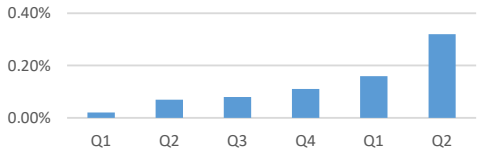
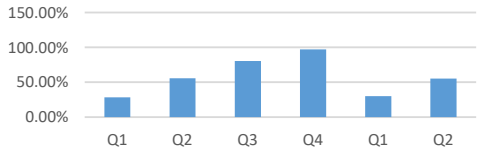
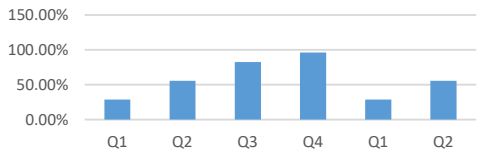
Percentage of decisions issued on an applicant's initial homelessness application within target timescale of 33 working days	Emily Spicer	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	90.43%	92.56%	75.00%		
Commentary	Performance is much higher than the target as well as improving since the last quarter.									

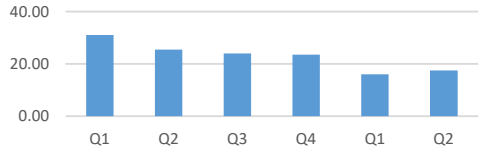
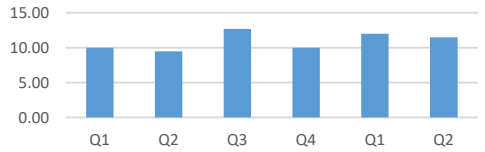
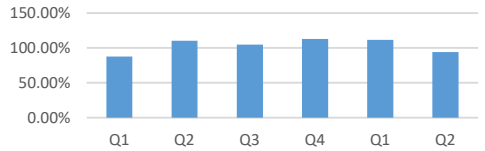
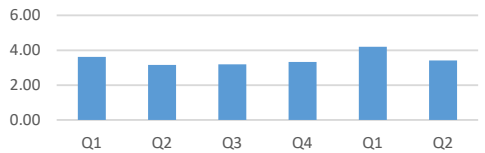
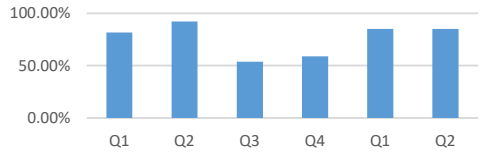
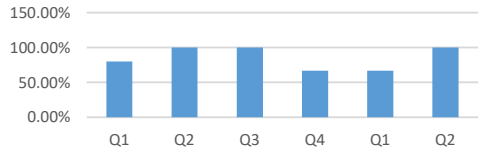
Environment

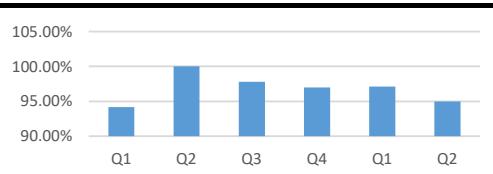
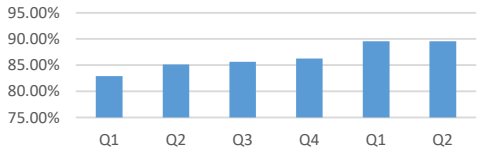
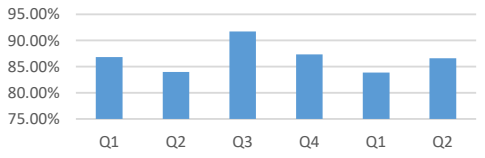
PI Name	AD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Target	RAG	
Number of homes improved through green home/warm home grants	Christian Allen	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	0	0	0		
Percentage of household waste collected for recycling and composting	Victoria Burgess	36.52%	34.90%	28.79%	24.80%	40.67%		45.00%	Annual Target Only	
Commentary	Recycling rates for dry recycling and garden waste follow similar patterns over the 4 quatres of any given year, and comparisons should only ever be on a like for like basis and not by comparing different quatres other than to understand seasonal trend i.e. main growing season against when plants are dormant, or the influence of major sporting events.									
Percentage of recycling collected that is unable to be recycled (contamination)	Victoria Burgess	22.22%	18.21%	17.36%	No Data Provided	9.14%		14.00%		
Commentary	Q2 data is not abailable on WDF. Review required to determine the use of LCC data or WDF.									
Percentage of waste collections that were successful first time	Victoria Burgess	99.89%	99.89%	99.96%	99.82%	99.91%	99.85%	99.80%		

Percentage of fly-tips collected within 5 working days of being reported	Victoria Burgess	96.98%	97.02%	95.47%	97.79%	95.40%	94.59%	95.00%		

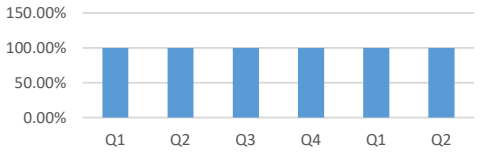
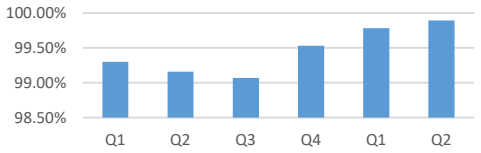
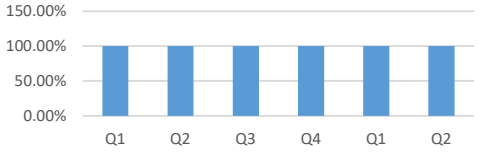
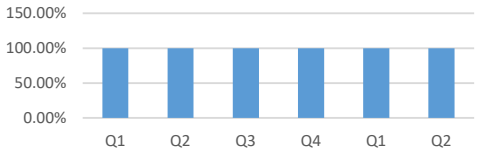
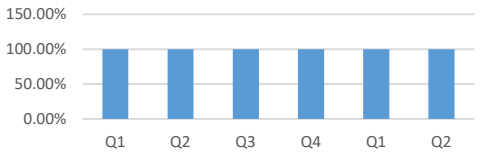
Efficiencies and Efficacies

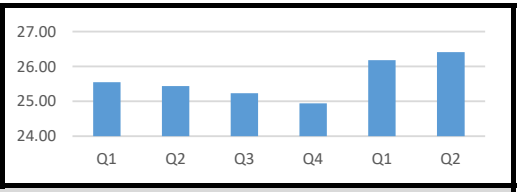
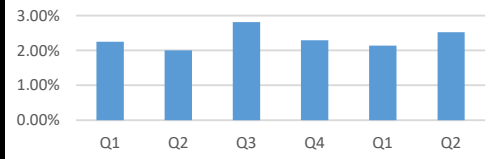
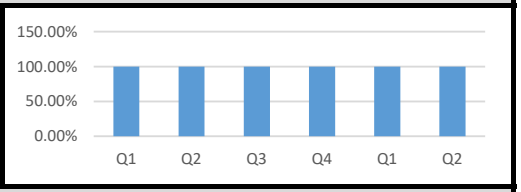
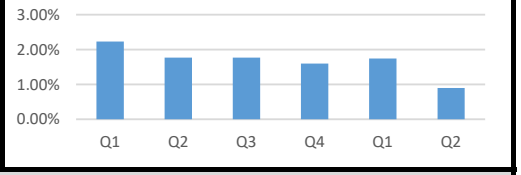
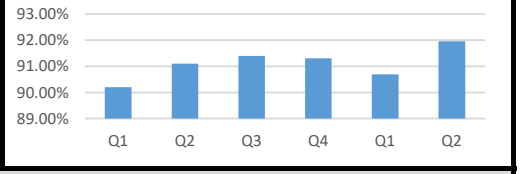
PI Name	AD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Target	RAG	
Occupancy Rate at end of Quarter: Other investment property	Andy Fisher	91.66%	91.67%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	97.00%		
Commentary	No 'other investment property' was vacant at the end of Q1.									
Percentage of car parking income received against agreed annual budget – cumulative figure to end of successive quarters.	Andy Fisher	106.00%	107.16%	103.97%	104.66%	105.68%	103.01%	100.00%		
Commentary	Vine Street car park is free to park on Wednesdays and Saturdays currently due to the BID town forum's request - we will be putting in an invoice to reclaim fees once calculated.									
LA Error rate (measured against estimated annual expenditure) (PSPS)	Russell Stone	0.02%	0.07%	0.08%	0.11%	0.16%	0.32%	0.42%		
Business Rates in-year collection rate	Russell Stone	28.43%	55.61%	80.56%	97.30%	30.14%	55.28%	55.50%		
Commentary	The current climate for businesses is challenging, and the reduction in relief this year has impacted collection. A robust programme of recovery is in place. £270k is outstanding as a combined result of a large new hereditament, a business subject to a restructuring, and a Proposed Voluntary Arrangement.									
Council Tax in-year collection rate	Russell Stone	28.63%	55.80%	82.56%	96.32%	28.65%	55.55%	55.50%		

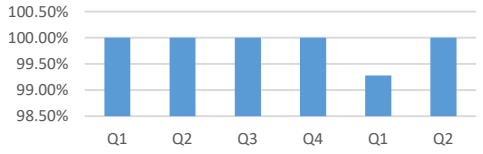
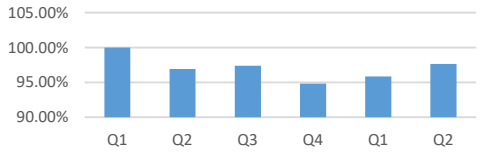
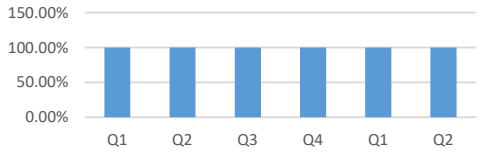
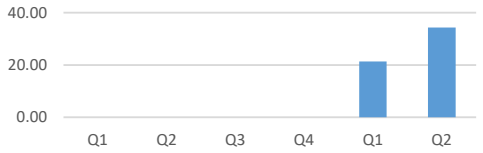
Housing Benefit New Claims speed of processing (Year to Date) (PSPS)	Russell Stone	31.00	25.50	24.00	23.50	16.00	17.50	25		
Housing Benefit Changes speed of processing (Year to Date) (PSPS)	Russell Stone	10.00	9.50	12.67	10.00	12.00	11.50	12		
Housing Benefit Overpayment Recovery rate (PSPS)	Russell Stone	87.87%	110.11%	104.59%	113.05%	111.56%	94.16%	85.00%		
Land Charges - Average number of days taken to process Local Authority searches (working days)	Christian Allen	3.61	3.16	3.19	3.32	4.20	3.41	8		
Commentary	163 in the period.									
Percentage of corporate complaints responded to within corporately set timescales	John Medler	81.82%	92.31%	53.85%	58.82%	85.00%	85.19%	95.00%		
Commentary	6 of the late items were with Neighbourhoods - the process is improving from last period as a result of direct changes. There was an additional 7 complaints withdrawn, and we have further 7 recorded as outstanding.									
Percentage of subject requests responded to within statutory timescales	John Medler	80.00%	100.00%	100.00%	66.67%	66.67%	100.00%	95.00%		
Commentary	There are two that are outstanding which will be classed as late when they complete- making the figure 75%. These were found in legacy mailboxes that were part of an operational queue. Work will be done to remind those teams to triage DSAR/FOI.									

Percentage of information requests responded to within statutory timescales	John Medler	94.17%	100.00%	97.79%	96.97%	97.10%	95.00%	95.00%		
Commentary	The FOIA performance for Q2 has decreased very slightly compared to Q1 - however there has also been a 30% uplift in FOIA's during this period. we remain above the ICO good guilince figure of 95%.									
Percentage of contacts resolved at first contact – targeted. (PSPS)	Phil Perry	82.89%	85.11%	85.65%	86.27%	89.56%	89.57%	80.00%		
Commentary	Quarterly Target Exceed by 9.57% Total contacts - 31,337 Cases logged - 18,758 Service Requests - 9,313 Transfer & Message - 3,266 - Council Tax (43.15%), Housing (24.48%), Benefits (11.08%) Levels of chase enquiry remains high at 11.09%, with service answer rate 34.09% , driving up transfer and message enquiries.									
Average answer rate – Customer Contact (PSPS)	Phil Perry	86.84%	84.00%	91.71%	87.32%	83.87%	86.58%	80.00%		

HRA

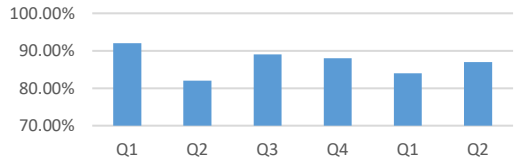
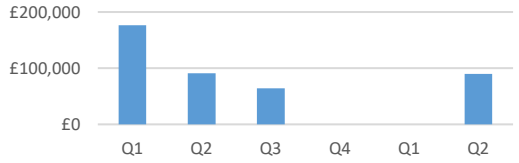
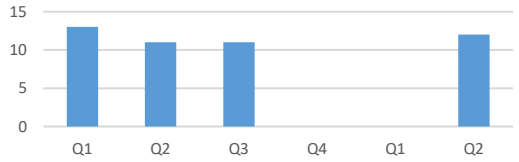
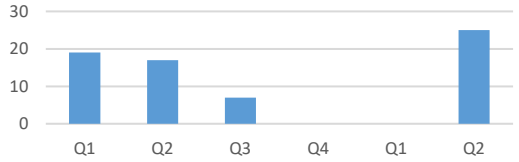
PI Name	AD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Target	RAG	
Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out	Vicky Cherry	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		
Commentary	No gas safety checks are outstanding.									
Proportion of homes for which an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) has been carried out	Vicky Cherry	99.30%	99.16%	99.07%	99.53%	99.78%	99.89%	100.00%		
Commentary	There are 4 properties out of 3673 outstanding an EICR report. Tenants of these properties are refusing access and are being pursued through the 'No Access Working Group' including seeking injunctions for access. National average is 99.59%.									
Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out	Vicky Cherry	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		
Commentary	No Fire risk assessments were overdue at period end.									
Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out	Vicky Cherry	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		
Commentary	There are no asbestos management surveys outstanding at period end.									
Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out	Vicky Cherry	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		
Commentary	No legionella risk assessments are outstanding at period end.									

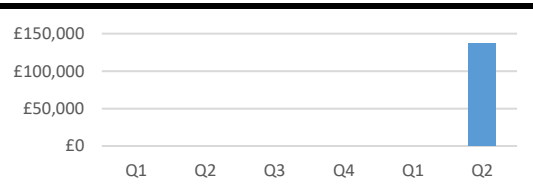
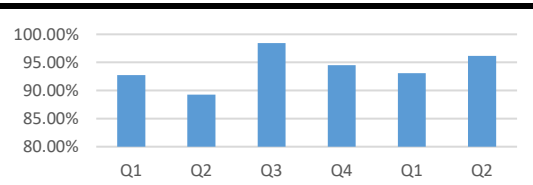
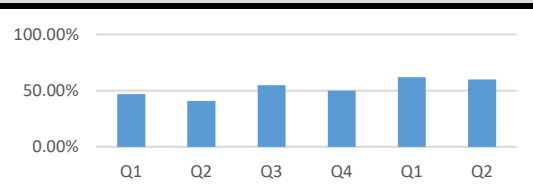
Average time to re-let a property excluding major works (days) all letting types – Running total	Vicky Cherry	25.55	25.44	25.23	24.94	26.18	26.41	28		
Commentary	Year-to-date we now have had 127 voids, slightly higher than the 116 at the same point last year.									
Gross rent arrears (including service charges) as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year. Note the following tenures are reported by exception on request: supported accommodation, garages, temporary	Vicky Cherry	2.25%	2.00%	2.81%	2.29%	2.14%	2.52%	4%		
Commentary	Year-to-date we now have had 127 voids, slightly higher than the 116 at the same point last year.									
Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out	Vicky Cherry	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		
Commentary	All checks completed.									
Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	Vicky Cherry	2.23%	1.77%	1.77%	1.60%	1.74%	0.90%	2.00%		
Commentary	Currently have 33 properties classed as not meeting the decent homes standard. 10 properties will never be able to meet the standard due to kitchen capacity.									
Proportion of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale - 28 days	Vicky Cherry	90.20%	91.10%	91.40%	91.30%	90.69%	91.95%	90.00%		
Commentary	Performance in this area remains on target - with monthly and annual performance consistently being around the 90%-91% level.									

Proportion of emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale	Vicky Cherry	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	99.28%	100.00%	100.00%		
Commentary	100% of emergency repairs attended to within timescales.									
Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales	Vicky Cherry	100.00%	96.92%	97.37%	94.84%	95.83%	97.62%	95.00%		
Commentary	2 Stage 1 Complaints were non-compliant during Q1 (cumulative figure reported).									
Proportion of stage two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales.	Vicky Cherry	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	95.00%		
Commentary	2 stage 2 complaints received in Q2 and total of 4 year to date; all responded to within timescale.									
Average number of days to fix damp and mould issues	Vicky Cherry	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	21.33	34.27	56		
Commentary	The vast majority of our routine cases are now undertaken by the internal DCM or housing repairs team with only either major or specialist works being contracted externally, this enables us to keep performance in check.									

Performance Indicators with Trend Only Performance Levels

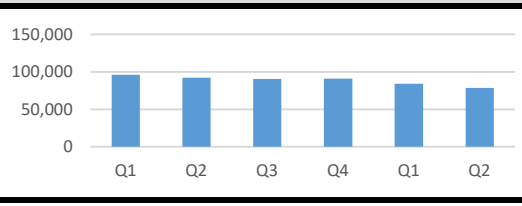
Growth and Prosperity

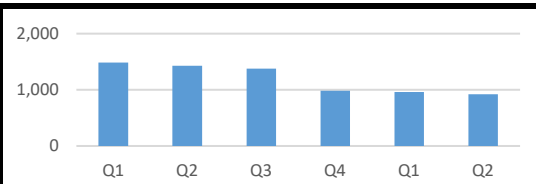
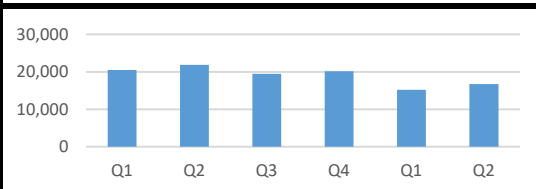
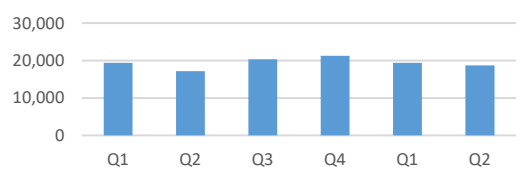
PI Name	AD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
Building Control market share	Christian Allen	92.00%	82.00%	89.00%	88.00%	84.00%	87.00%	
Value of Grants awarded via Grants4growth	Growth	£176,339	£91,051	£64,427	No Data Provided	No Data Provided	£89,813	
Number of Grants awarded via Grants4growth	Growth	13	11	11	No Data Provided	No Data Provided	12	
Number of Businesses assisted via Grants4growth	Growth	19	17	7	No Data Provided	No Data Provided	25	
Number of Business registered via Grants4growth	Growth	19	No Data Provided	No Data Provided	No Data Provided	No Data Provided	25	

Matched funding through Grants4Growth scheme	Growth	No Data Provided	No Data Provided	No Data Provided	No Data Provided	No Data Provided	£136,353	
Percentage of decisions (major / minor / others) taken under delegation within period	Phil Norman	92.72%	89.29%	98.42%	94.53%	93.10%	96.15%	
Commentary	High % of applications being determined through delegated powers - showing an effective scheme of delegation and support and trust in officer recommendations.							
Council run stall occupancy level (Markets)	Phil Perry	46.80%	41.00%	55.00%	50.00%	62.00%	60.00%	
Commentary	914 pitches occupied of possible 1518. New Makers and Farmers Market held at Spalding on 16th August.							

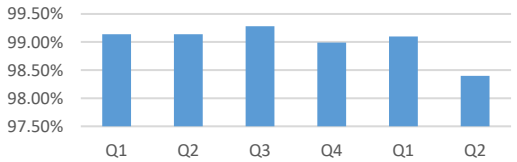
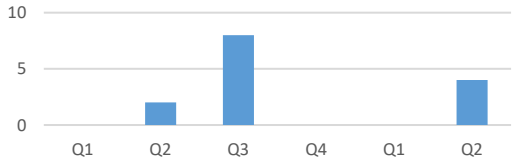
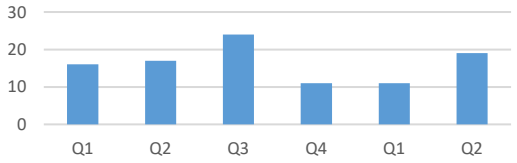
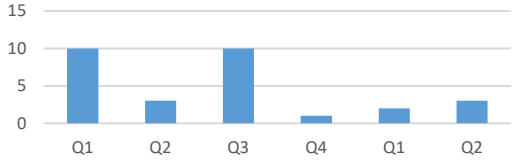
Healthy Lives

PI Name	AD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
Number of days to complete a stage 2 DFG	Emily Spicer	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	128	167	
Number of days to complete a stage 3 DFG	Emily Spicer	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	5	2	
Number of days to complete a stage 4 DFG	Emily Spicer	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	45	48	
Number of DFG referrals received	Emily Spicer	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	20	31	
Number of DFG grants approved	Emily Spicer	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	16	10	

Number of DFG grants completed	Emily Spicer	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	8	13	
For a successful prevention outcome at least 32% should be achieved through keeping the household in the home presented from	Emily Spicer	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	31.00%	19.10%	
Commentary	Performance has fallen this month. The new Senior Officer will be tasked with supporting the officers to improve the performance where possible. Keeping people in their own home is reliant on the excluder being willing to work with the Council and the cost of preventing the homelessness.							
Percentage of not in priority need decisions should reflect at least the regional average for the East Midlands (32%)	Emily Spicer	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	43.00%	60.00%	
Commentary	This is significantly higher than the East Midlands average. Cases will be reviewed to check Officers are not setting the priority need threshold too high.							
Percentage of intentional homelessness (IH) decisions should reflect at least the regional average for the East Midlands (5%)	Emily Spicer	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	11.00%	4.00%	
Commentary	There was only 1 our of 25 cases classed as intentionally homeless. Applicants can only be classed as intentionally homeless if they have become homeless as a result of a deliberate act such as non-payment of rent when they had the means to pay it or giving up a property that was reasonable for their occupation.							
Visitor numbers / number of tickets sold, for leisure venues	Phil Perry	96,186	92,281	90,588	91,001	84,226	78,384	

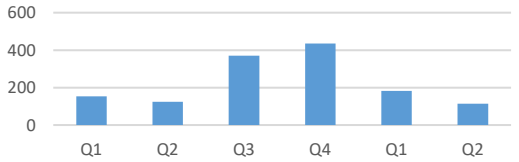
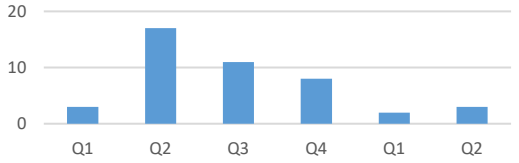
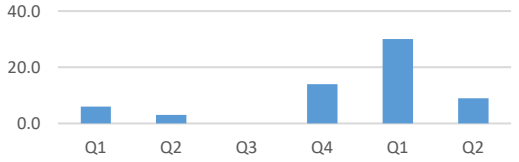
Number of gym members	Phil Perry	1,485	1,431	1,376	982	962	921	
Number of swims	Phil Perry	20,482	21,843	19,498	20,174	15,190	16,753	
Number of swimming lessons	Phil Perry	19,399	17,147	20,330	21,256	19,409	18,660	

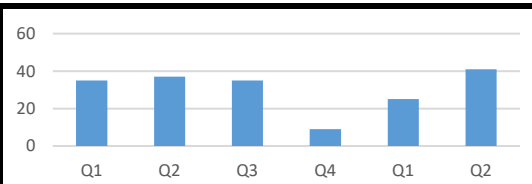
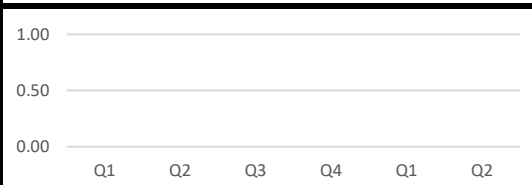
Safe and Resilient Communities

PI Name	AD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
Food Safety – percentage of rateable food businesses with a rating of 3 (generally satisfactory) or above as a Percentage of the total number of rateable food businesses.	Christian Allen	99.14%	99.14%	99.28%	98.99%	99.10%	98.40%	
Number of organisations supported with accessing funding	Emily Spicer	0	2	8	0	0	4	
Commentary	Crowdfunding has seen 4 projects successful in the South Holland District.							
Number of verified rough sleepers during the month	Emily Spicer	16	17	24	11	11	19	
Commentary	We have seen an increase in rough sleepers in the SHDC area although 5 are close to being resolved. Individuals with complex needs may choose to remain outdoors, especially if previous interventions have felt restrictive and warmer weather can reinforce this choice, reducing engagement with support services. Warmer temperatures reduce							
Number of properties improved through Council intervention	Emily Spicer	10	3	10	1	2	3	
Commentary	The ongoing enforcement work that has generated (although not received) over £190,000 of financial penalties has been both slow to resolve due to legislative constraints as well as pending appeals. The ongoing work with the development of policies has naturally taken up some resource as well as the time of year playing into the fact that service requests naturally tend to drop off and pick back up within the next quarter as winter approaches.							

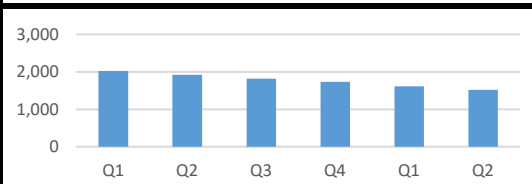
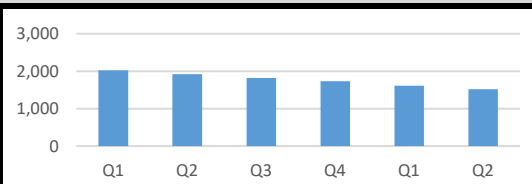
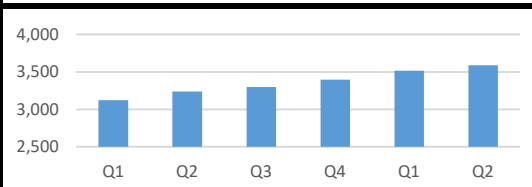
The percentage of main duty decisions made within 5 working days of the end of the relief duty	Emily Spicer	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	70.97%	84.00%	
Commentary	Performance is above target and also improved since the last quarter.							
Number of lets into the private rented sector	Emily Spicer	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	26	24	
Commentary	Performance remains consistent. Recruitment is now complete which should result in performance improving.							

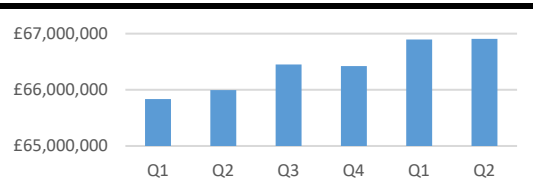
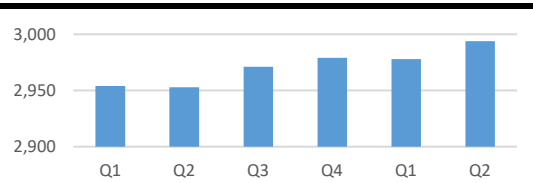
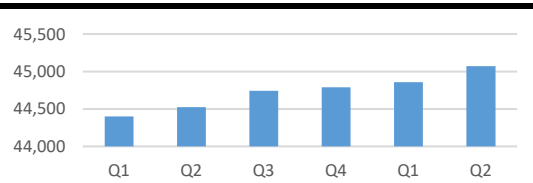
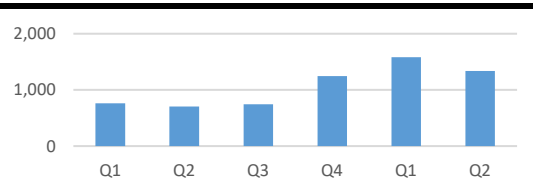
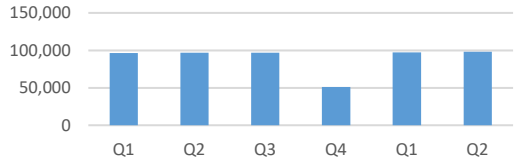
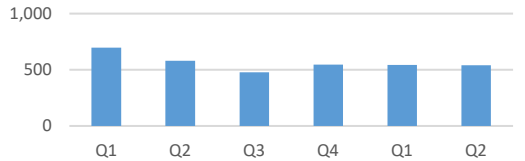
Environment

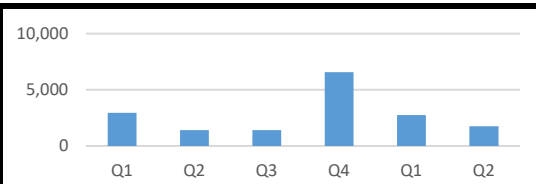
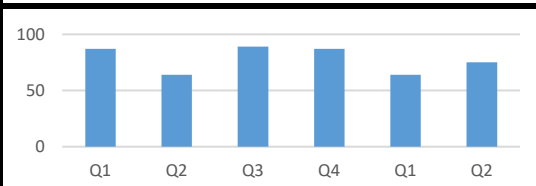
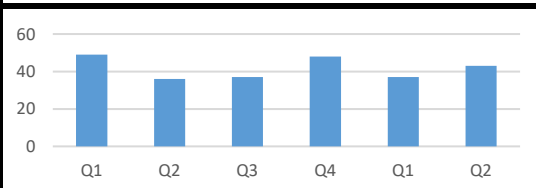
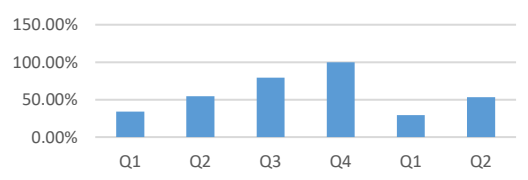
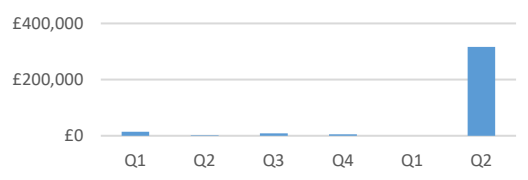
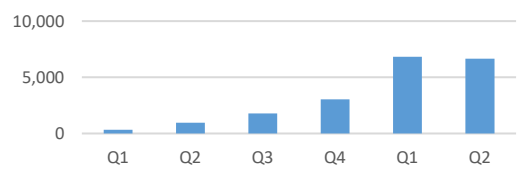
PI Name	AD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
Kingdom Contract: Number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) Issued - Litter (In quarter)	Christian Allen	154	124	371	435	183	114	
Kingdom Contract: Number of FPNs Issued - Fly Tipping (In quarter)	Christian Allen	3	17	11	8	2	3	
Kingdom Contract: Number of FPNs Issued - other (e.g. PSPO etc.) (In quarter)	Christian Allen	6.0	3.0	0.0	14.0	30.0	9.0	

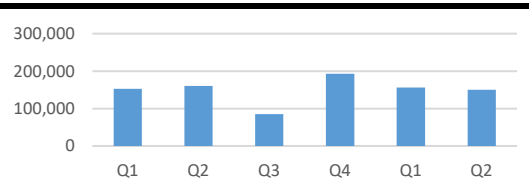
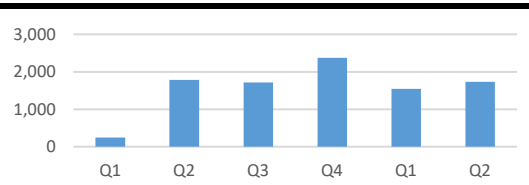
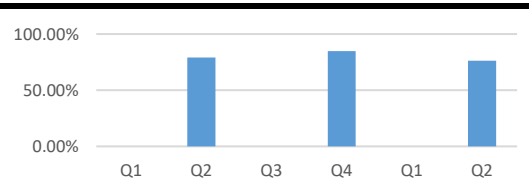
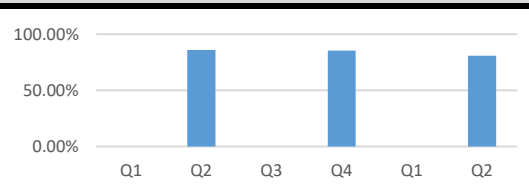
Kingdom Contract: Number of prosecutions completed to sentencing. (In quarter)	Christian Allen	35	37	35	9	25	41	
KG of total waste collected per household	Victoria Burgess	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	

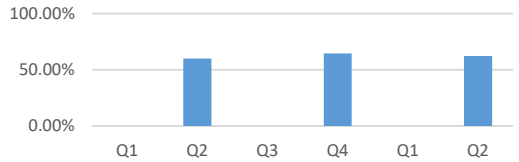
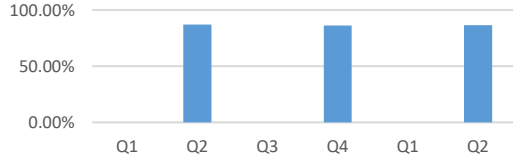
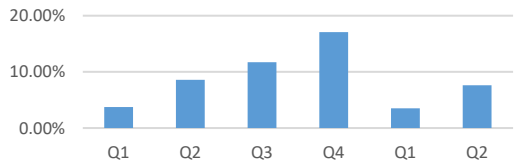
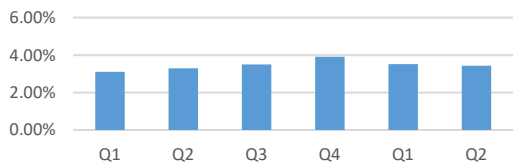
Efficiencies and Efficacies

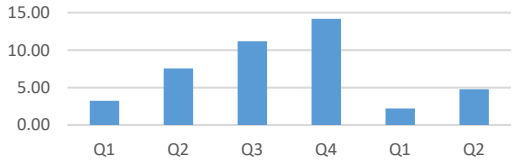
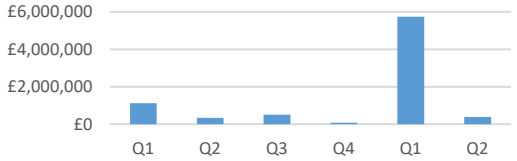
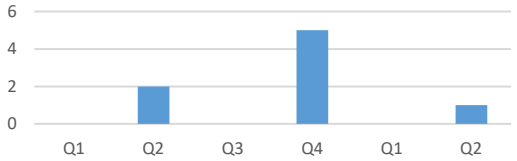
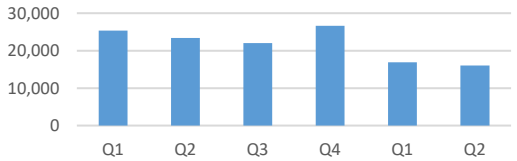
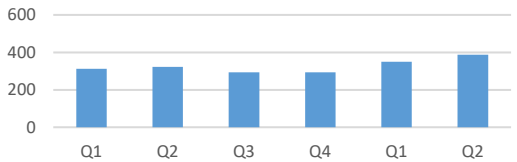
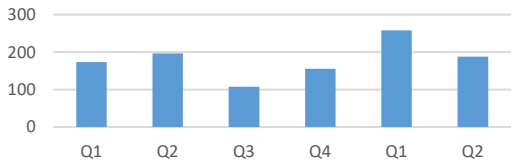
PI Name	AD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
Repairs & Maintenance: Percentage committed spend against budget – cumulative	Andy Fisher	22.55%	47.91%	93.12%	108.04%	25.57%	46.78%	
Commentary	£154,373.24 spend to Q2							
Housing Benefit Caseload	Russell Stone	2,023	1,917	1,816	1,734	1,608	1,521	
Council Tax Support Caseload	Russell Stone	3,124	3,237	3,299	3,395	3,517	3,590	

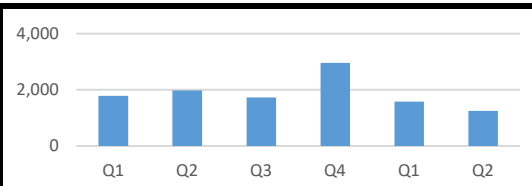
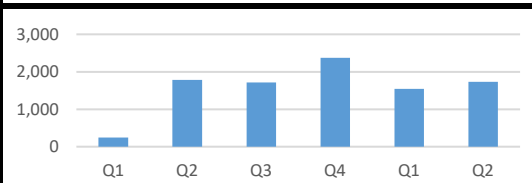
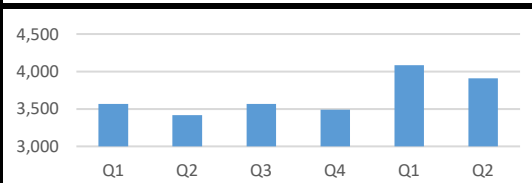
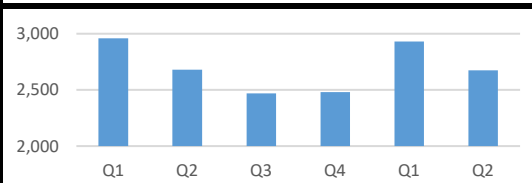
Business Rates RV	Russell Stone	£65,834,876	£65,994,656	£66,449,454	£66,422,129	£66,898,329	£66,904,080	
Business Rates Hereditaments	Russell Stone	2,954	2,953	2,971	2,979	2,978	2,994	
Council Tax Banded Dwellings	Russell Stone	44,401	44,522	44,743	44,791	44,859	45,070	
Digital Services Take-Up	Russell Stone	763	707	746	1,248	1,583	1,339	
Commentary	Change of Address for Council Tax = 268. Create Profile = 674. Direct Debit sign up = 262. eBilling sign up for Council Tax = 49. eBilling sign up for Business Rates = 1. PIN Requests = 71. Arrangements for Council Tax = 14.							
Direct Debit Payments	Russell Stone	96,499	97,044	96,985	51,213	97,427	97,950	
CTS New Claims – Number of Decisions Made	Russell Stone	697	581	479	547	542	541	

CTS Changes – Number of Decisions Made	Russell Stone	2,941	1,425	1,424	6,574	2,759	1,756	
Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) number of applications	Russell Stone	87	64	89	87	64	75	
Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) number of awards	Russell Stone	49	36	37	48	37	43	
Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) spend against Budget	Russell Stone	33.98%	54.63%	79.48%	100.00%	29.46%	53.44%	
Procurement savings / benefits achieved (By the PSPS procurement team) In quarter	Russell Stone	£13,925	£1,500	£8,300	£5,500	£0	£316,689	
Digital services take up (services accessed online) (PSPS)	Russell Stone	319	961	1,790	3,033	6,816	6,649	

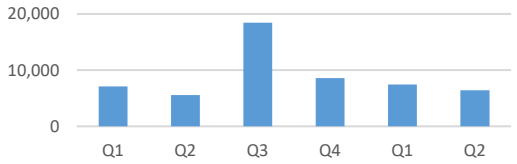
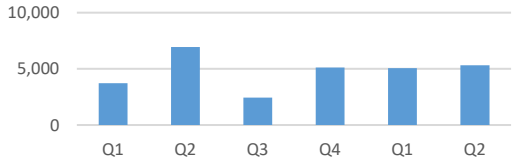
Website visitors (accessing website information) (PSPS)	Russell Stone	152,970	160,707	85,037	193,000	155,991	149,751	
Number of customers using webchat (PSPS)	Phil Perry	241	1,783	1,711	2,375	1,544	1,731	
Percentage of Partnership workforce (surveyed collectively) who said 'Yes' when asked if they felt valued at work	James Gilbert	Half Yearly	79.00%	Half Yearly	84.80%	Half Yearly	76.30%	
Commentary	This is a Partnership average. There were approximately 100 fewer completions this period. This may be influenced by seasonal factors, such as annual leave patterns or competing priorities during this time of year. We will explore this further as review directorate level data in more depth. The response for SHDC only data is slightly higher than the S&ELCP average at 79.5% . The staff poll is designed to be a periodic litmus test of employee sentiment. It is not unusual for figures to ebb and flow between periods, particularly in dynamic organisational environments.							
Percentage of the Partnership workforce (surveyed collectively) who said 'yes' they feel there are opportunities in the Partnership to learn and develop their skills and expertise	James Gilbert	Half Yearly	86.00%	Half Yearly	85.50%	Half Yearly	80.90%	
Commentary	This is a Partnership average. The SHDC only data is 85%. The staff poll was conducted before the Mid-Year Review process had begun. As this review includes development planning conversations, its absence during the polling period may have affected responses related to learning and development opportunities. The staff poll is designed to be a periodic litmus test of employee sentiment. It is not unusual for figures to ebb and flow between periods, particularly in dynamic organisational environments.							

Percentage of the Partnership workforce (surveyed collectively) who feel informed about the Partnership and what decisions it is making	James Gilbert	Half Yearly	60.00%	Half Yearly	64.70%	Half Yearly	62.20%	
Commentary	This is a Partnership average. The SHDC only data is 65%. Periods of change often brings uncertainty, and this can impact how informed and valued employees feel. The staff poll is designed to be a periodic litmus test of employee sentiment. It is not unusual for figures to ebb and flow between periods, particularly in dynamic organisational environments. Positive feedback is included from employees in the commentary in relation to the level of communication provided particularly in relation to Local Government Reorganisation.							
Percentage of the Partnership workforce (surveyed collectively) who said 'yes' they feel the Partnership recognises and supports positive mental health in the workplace	James Gilbert	Half Yearly	87.00%	Half Yearly	86.30%	Half Yearly	86.60%	
Commentary	This is a Partnership average. Encouragingly, perceptions of how the Partnership supports positive mental health have remained stable, with a slight increase. The staff poll is designed to be a periodic litmus test of employee sentiment. It is not unusual for figures to ebb and flow between periods, particularly in dynamic organisational environments. The SHDC only data is 92.5%.							
Staff Turnover Cumulative	James Gilbert	3.75%	8.60%	11.72%	17.05%	3.51%	7.61%	
Commentary	An increase of 4.1% in total turnover and the voluntary turnover is 3.43% compared to 3.51% in the previous quarter. Resignations to take up appointments in another Partnership Council accounted for over a third of the voluntary leavers this quarter.							
Voluntary Staff Turnover	James Gilbert	3.10%	3.30%	3.50%	3.90%	3.51%	3.43%	

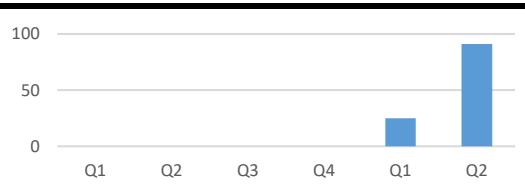
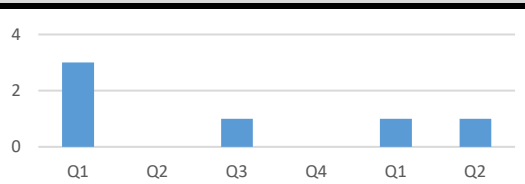
Number of working days lost to sickness per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) (Cumulative)	James Gilbert	3.24	7.56	11.18	14.19	2.20	5	
Commentary	An increase of 0.36 days lost per FTE, however days lost per FTE in this quarter are lower than throughout 2024/25.							
External funding – a calculation of external Partnership funding received as a trend – showing quarter by quarter and including a breakdown by Council	James Gilbert	£1,121,638	£335,000	£503,734	£73,235	£5,738,470	£392,959	
Number of late reports not made available to the Democratic Services teams at agenda publication	John Medler	0	2	0	5	0	1	
Call volumes (PSPS)	Phil Perry	25,315	23,430	22,003	26,656	16,851	16,031	
Average Call Duration - Customer Contact (Seconds) (PSPS)	Phil Perry	312	323	293	294	349	387	
Average Speed of Answer - Customer Contact (Seconds) (PSPS)	Phil Perry	173	196	107	155	258	188	

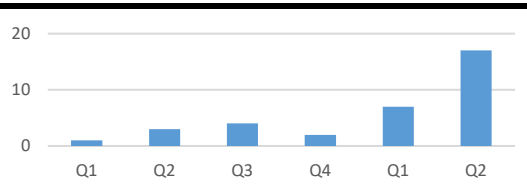
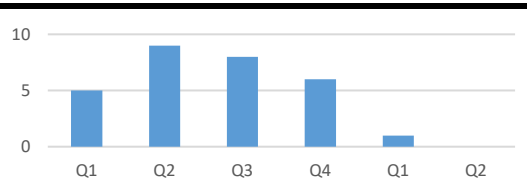
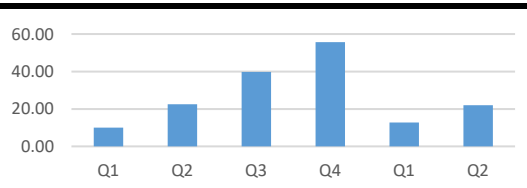
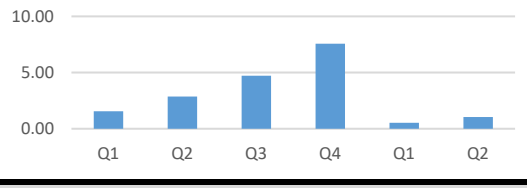
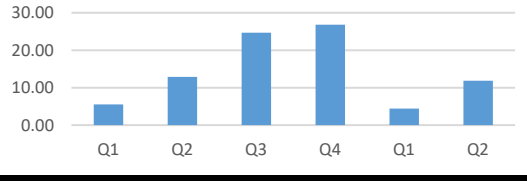
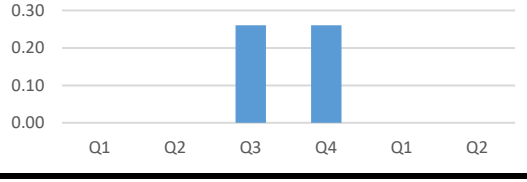
Number of Callbacks (PSPS)	Phil Perry	1,789	1,984	1,726	2,955	1,577	1,253	
Number of customers using webchat (PSPS)	Phil Perry	241	1,783	1,711	2,375	1,544	1,731	
Customer Contact Centre visits (PSPS)	Phil Perry	3,566	3,416	3,566	3,489	4,084	3,909	
Enquiries via email and social media (PSPS)	Phil Perry	2,960	2,679	2,470	2,480	2,931	2,675	

Local Only Indicators

PI Name	AD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
South Holland Centre Ticket sales	Emily Spicer	7,075	5,573	18,414	8,595	7,425	6,392	
Visitors to Ayscoughfee Hall Museum	Emily Spicer	3,713	6,939	2,430	5,129	5,069	5,316	

HRA

PI Name	AD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
Number and percentage of damp inspections arranged within 14 working days	Vicky Cherry	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	25	91	
Commentary	91 Inspections (YTD) were undertaken within 14 working days of being reported. We are currently recruiting to bring this service in house.							
Number and percentage of damp inspections arranged within 14 working days	Vicky Cherry	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	30.49%	65.47%	
Commentary	91 Inspections (YTD) were undertaken within 14 working days of being reported. We are currently recruiting to bring this service in house.							
Number of damp, condensation and mould cases reported in the last quarter	Vicky Cherry	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	Not Previously Reported	82	57	
Commentary	There was 57 new DCM cases reported during quarter 2, with the majority reported in July following tenant engagement sessions.							
Number of households evicted in the last quarter	Vicky Cherry	3	0	1	0	1	1	
Commentary	2 evictions to date.							

Number of Right to Buy sales completed in the last quarter	Vicky Cherry	1	3	4	2	7	17	
Number of new properties completed in the last quarter	Vicky Cherry	5	9	8	6	1	0	
Number of stage one complaints received per 1,000 homes	Vicky Cherry	9.96	22.54	39.84	55.64	12.74	22.03	
Commentary	Cumulatively 84 stage 1 complaints (including MP enquiries) have been received during Q1 & Q2.							
Number of stage two complaints received per 1,000 homes	Vicky Cherry	1.57	2.88	4.72	7.58	0.53	1.05	
Commentary	4 Stage 2 complaints have been received during the first two quarters.							
Number of anti-social behaviour cases opened per 1,000 homes	Vicky Cherry	5.50	12.84	24.64	26.85	4.45	11.81	
Number of anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents opened per 1,000 homes	Vicky Cherry	0.00	0.00	0.26	0.26	0.00	0.00	

Number of live ASB cases (as a percentage of stock)	Vicky Cherry	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.21%	0.90%	
Commentary	As at 30 September there was 34 live cases open across the housing stock of 3,761 at the period end.							

Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	20th January 2026
Subject:	Housing Standards Policies
Purpose:	To approve the South and East Lincolnshire Housing Standards Policies.
Key Decision:	No
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Carter – Portfolio Holder for Communities and Operational Housing
Report Of:	Emily Spicer - Assistant Director, Communities and Housing Services
Report Author:	Jon Challen (Group Manager, Safer Communities), Luke Settle (Housing Standards Team Leader)
Ward(s) Affected:	All
Exempt Report:	No

Summary

There are three draft Housing Standards Policies that have been fully reviewed, updated and aligned across the Partnership. These are the Empty Homes, Houses in Multiple Occupation and Housing Standards Enforcement Policies. Reviewing these policies ensures any updates are captured within the new aligned Policies, as well as ensuring the policies are still fit or purpose and comply with all relevant statutory requirements and guidance.

Recommendations

That Cabinet approves the draft Empty Homes Policy at **Appendix 1**, the draft HMO Policy at **Appendix 2**, and the draft Housing Standards Enforcement Policy at **Appendix 3**.

Reasons for Recommendations

To ensure the Council has suitable policies and procedures in place for responding to and dealing with housing standards issues.

These polices enable and ensure our Housing Standards Officers apply their work confidently and robustly across the three councils of the partnership and ensure we are ready for any changes that need to be applied as part of the Renters' Rights Act which comes into force this year.

For empty homes the main focus is introducing a scoring matrix to prioritise properties at greatest concern with each council of the Partnership enabling their tools available to them without committing to specific resources. For HMO licensing the policy introduces a new fee structure that is consistent across the Partnership and the Enforcement policy includes the revision of fixed penalty notice amounts reflected in the Renters' Rights Act.

Other Options Considered

Keep current policies – not recommended.

1. Background

1.1 The Council is responsible for ensuring it has suitable policies in place for dealing with Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), Empty Homes and Housing Enforcement matters.

1.2 The Council wants to deal with these matters in a way that is open, fair and compliant with legislation. A policy-led approach helps staff understand what is expected of them, what options for action are available and who can authorise these actions. Having a policy that can also be shared with homeowners, tenants, and landlords can help in managing their expectations.

1.3 By reviewing, updating, and aligning the Housing Standards Policies across the Partnership, the Council ensures that enforcement practices and legislative compliance are consistent with national standards, enabling all councils involved to operate under the same guidelines and statutory requirements for housing enforcement.

2. Report

EMPTY HOMES POLICY (Appendix 1)

2.1 The main focus is introducing a scoring matrix to prioritise properties at greatest concern with each council of the Partnership enabling their tools available to them without committing to specific resources.

The Policy sets out the options and powers available to the Council to enable and encourage home owners to bring homes back into use. A Policy on this matter is not required by law, but it is considered best practice. For information, a long-term empty home is a residential dwelling which has been unoccupied for 6 months. Councils have a limited number of tools to assist with returning empty homes back into use (page 8 of the policy).

HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION POLICY (Appendix 2)

2.2 HMO licensing introduces a new fee structure that is consistent across the Partnership.

A house in multiple occupation (HMO) is any house or flat which is occupied by more than one household who share (or lack) kitchen, bathroom or toilet facilities. From April 2006 the owners of certain types of HMOs must apply to the Council to have their property licensed. As of 2018 this requirement applies to dwellings of all storeys. The Council must maintain a register of licensed HMOs for the public to view. There are a range of different requirements, and we have fees and charges linked to this contained within the appendices to the policy. The fees associated with HMO licensing can be found within "Appendix 3A" as there is no "Appendix 2A" due to all fees relevant to the Housing Standards department being grouped into one appendix.

HOUSING STANDARDS ENFORCEMENT POLICY (Appendix 3)

2.3 This policy includes the revision of fixed penalty notice amounts reflected in the Renters' Rights Act. These were robustly reviewed and supported by scrutiny in November.

It also details the way the Council will deliver private sector housing enforcement under respective legislation and what landlords and tenants can expect from the service. The alignment of fees across the Partnership enables a consistent approach to enforcement for the Council and its officers – specifically those who are authorised under section 113 arrangements.

3. Conclusion

3.1. These three Policies have been fully reviewed and updated to ensure the information is easily accessible and understood by officers and members of the public alike, clearly setting out the processes for different situations. They have also been fully reviewed against prevailing legislation, national and local guidance to ensure best practice is being followed. Adoption of these policies will ensure that the Council complies with all statutory requirements and guidance primarily from the Housing Act 2004 as well as the legislation outlined within each of the three policies.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

This will be a set of aligned policies, so officers across the partnership are working to a single set of policies and procedures, ensuring consistency for officers and residents alike.

Corporate Priorities

Improve housing standards, deliver affordable housing based on housing needs now and in the future and bring empty properties back into use.

Staffing

None

Workforce Capacity Implications

None

Constitutional and Legal Implications

These policies allow the Council to discharge its statutory duties in relation to housing enforcement, licensing of HMOs and dealing with empty homes.

Data Protection

The provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 (including UK GDPR) will be complied with at all times when dealing with people in matter relating to this Policy.

Financial

Section 249A of the Housing Act 2004 enables Councils to serve financial (civil) penalties as an alternative to prosecution, limited to £30,000 per offence. The alignment of these penalty amounts will see an increase for the same offence across the three Councils. The fees and charges for the Housing Standards department will align across the Partnership as well as a revision to the way in which the HMO licensing fee is calculated to reflect proportionality and transparency equal to the size and layout of each dwelling.

Risk Management

The risk to the Councils lies in not taking action to return empty homes to use, not effectively managing HMOs and not having properly enforced housing standards. These matters could mean a lack of sufficient housing to meet local needs, loss of income to the Councils and a detrimental income to tenants and communities in terms of neglected or unmaintained properties.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

Housing officers across the partnership have been consulted throughout the updating and aligning of the 3 policies. Portfolio Holders have also had chance to see the draft Policies for input before coming to committee for consideration, along with relevant senior officers and departments. Finally, these policies will be considered by the relevant scrutiny committee before being considered by Cabinet / Executive for final approval.

Reputation

None

Contracts

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

The policies will support the Council's Safeguarding duties in protecting vulnerable residents.

Health and Wellbeing

The policies will support the Council's health and wellbeing responsibilities in protecting vulnerable residents.

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

Empty homes can be detrimental to neighbouring properties and the local built and natural environment. Reducing the number of empty properties can mitigate against this. Where these are modernised and/ or brought up to decent homes standards, they are likely to be better insulated and more energy efficient, reducing their impact on the environment, as well as reducing costs to their owners and/or residents.

Acronyms

HMO – Houses in Occupation
CPN – Civil Penalty Notice

Appendices

Appendices are listed below.
Please note that due to the size of the documents the following appendices are available on the Council's website:

https://democracy.sholland.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&MId=3343&Ver=4

Appendix 1	Draft Empty Homes Policy
Appendix 1A	Council Tax Classifications
Appendix 1B	Empty Homes Scoring and Rating Matrix
Appendix 2	Draft HMO Licensing Policy
Appendix 2B	HMO Licence Conditions
Appendix 2C	Amenity and Space Standards for HMOs
Appendix 2D	Fit and Proper Person: Relevant Offences
Appendix 3	Draft Housing Standards Enforcement Policy
Appendix 3A	Fees and Charges
Appendix 3B	Financial (Civil) Penalties
Appendix 3C	Statement of Principles in Relation to Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations
Appendix 3D	Statement of Principles in Relation to MEES
Appendix 3E	Mobile Homes and Caravan Site Licensing and Fee Policy
Appendix 3F	Caravan Site Licensing: Model Standards
Appendix 3G	Caravan Site Licensing: Static Caravan Site Conditions
Appendix 3H	Caravan Site Licensing: Touring Caravan Site Conditions
Appendix 3I	Caravan Site Licensing: Holiday Caravan Site Conditions

Appendix 3J	Guidance Document 1 Lacors Crowding and Space
Appendix 3K	Guidance Document 2 Lacors Fire Safety

Background Papers

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

Chronological History of this Report

Name of Body	**Date**
PDP	25 November 2025
HMO Policy	6 November 2019
Empty Homes Policy	15 September & 27 October 2020
Housing Enforcement Policy	11 November 2021

Report Approval

Report author:	Jon Challen (Group Manager, Safer Communities), Luke Settle (Housing Standards Team Leader)
Signed off by:	Emily Spicer - Assistant Director, Communities and Housing Services
Approved for publication:	Councillor Carter

REPORT TO:	Cabinet
DATE:	20 January 2026
SUBJECT:	Partnership Social Media Policy
PURPOSE:	To seek approval for the Partnership Social Media Policy
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Jim Astill, Corporate, Governance and Communications
REPORT OF:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate
REPORT AUTHOR:	Shaun Gibbons, Group Manager – Communications and Engagement
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	N/A
KEY DECISION:	No
EXEMPT	No

SUMMARY

As part of the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership's ongoing Communications Strategy, a policy document included in Appendix 1 has been prepared to consider the adoption of a consistent approach to social media channels and tactics when using social media to communicate to residents across the sub-region.

This draft policy document will be an addendum to the existing Partnership Communications Strategy and will cover topics such as house rules - how followers should behave when replying or responding to our messaging; how replies and comments are consistently handled; what content is best suited for channels; what strategic focus should each channel have; and security and housekeeping protocols.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the Cabinet approves the Partnership's Social Media Policy attached at Appendix A

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- To have a coordinated and clearly communicated approach to South Holland District Council's use of social media when communicating to residents.

- To provide clear 'house rules' for those wishing to interact and communicate with South Holland District Council on all of its social media channels.

- To provide a strategic framework underpinned by audience data and analytics for all social media messaging and campaigns.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- None.

REPORT

1. In 2023, South Holland District Council, along with Boston Borough Council and East Lindsey District Council as part of the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership, adopted a Communications Strategy. As part of that Strategy, further work was undertaken to develop a social media policy for the Partnership.

2. This policy was to introduce a coordinated approach to how social media channels were used across the Partnership. This was to ensure consistency and also to place a strategic emphasis on data and audience insights to influence decision-making and also how and what messaging was developed*.*

3. This report gives an overview of how the council's social media channels have developed over a two-month period in 2025, as well as a series of recommendations to apply house rules to those residents who choose to communicate with the council via its social media channels as well as clear mechanisms to answer resident queries.

4. This report looks at each of the Council's social media channels and recommends a series of strategic objectives and approaches based on data and audience insights.

5. This report also considers the use of social media channels in other departments and areas of the council, recommends a series of actions, including security and housekeeping.

6. This policy sets out the strategic framework on how each of the council's social media channel will operate and provide clear and defined roles, both for how residents interact with the council, how the council will manage comments and replies.

7. The Policy has been through scrutiny at each Council prior to Cabinet consideration.

EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

Consistency across the Partnership's social media platforms is important particularly in terms of resident engagement, the time scales in terms of answering replies and also a

more strategic focus on content as social medias plays more of an important role in how the council is perceived throughout our communities.

IMPLICATIONS

SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL'S PARTNERSHIP

As identified in 'Expected benefits to the Partnership'.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This policy will support the strategic objectives underpinned in the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership Communications Strategy.

STAFFING

None

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

DATA PROTECTION

None

FINANCIAL

None

RISK MANAGEMENT

The adoption of a suitable policy on the use of social media is a key means of managing the reputational risks and issues of the council and by using platforms more strategically means the council can limit those risks and provide more targeted and useful communications to residents.

REPUTATION

Having a robust policy with a strong focus on strategy is important to the reputation of the Council, as described above.

CONTRACTS

None

CRIME AND DISORDER

None

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

None

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

None

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

ACRONYMS

PSPS – Public Sector Partnership Services

APPENDICES Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -	
Appendix A	Partnership Social Media Policy

BACKGROUND PAPERS Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -	
Document title	**Where the document can be viewed**
N/a	

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT	
PDP	**Date 25 November 2025 (no amends)**
Overview (East Lindsey)	**Date 9 December 2025 (no amends)**
Overview and scrutiny (Boston)	**Date 9 December 2025 (no amends)**

REPORT APPROVAL	
Report author:	Shaun Gibbons, Group Manager – Communications and Engagement
Signed off by:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate
Approved for publication:	Councillor Jim Astill, Corporate, Governance and Communications

Partnership social media policy 2025/26 to 2028/29

Table of contents:

Introduction:

The social media landscape is constantly evolving and for public sector organisations in general, and for the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership in particular, it is essential that we communicate regularly and effectively across a broad range of channels.

In an Ofcom report published in late December 2024, data revealed that seven out of 10 in the UK are using Meta-owned platforms Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. 84 per cent of people in the UK use WhatsApp monthly and 64 per cent use it daily. That makes WhatsApp the most used social/messenger app in the UK.
The same report sees X (formally Twitter) failing to maintain follower count and many organisations – including those in the public sector – are making the decision to stand back from the platform. With

this in mind, we no longer post on X but keep our corporate accounts should the social media landscape change.

What is clear is that in order for the Partnership to communicate effectively with its communities, an approach based on data and insights, identifying audiences that use social platforms based on age, preferences, etc. coupled with clear objectives and creativity is key.

This policy sets out how each of our main platforms will operate, how we will produce engaging content focused on our strategic and operational messages using metrics and analytics, how we moderate those channels and how we expect residents and staff to use the channels.

Audit: January 2026

Below is a table for each sovereign council and the Partnership– both corporate channels and sub-channels (channels that are not directly managed by the Partnership Communications Team).

South Holland District Council	
Platform	**Followers**
Facebook	10,118
X	4,307
LinkedIn	4,092
NextDoor	15,031
WhatsApp	426
Instagram – lfgsholland	62
Instagram – wellness4southholland	24
SHDC Communities – Facebook	5,522
SHDC Communities – Instagram	532
SHDC Communities – X	242
Ayscoughfee Hall – Facebook	4,394
Ayscoughfee Hall – Instagram	758
South Holland Centre – Facebook	6,700
South Holland Centre – Instagram	1,216
South Holland Markets	1,159
TOTAL: 15 **Corporate: 7** **Sub-channels: 8**	**TOTAL: 54,583** **Corporate: 34,060** **Sub-channels: 20,523**

Boston Borough Council	
Platform	**Followers**
Facebook	18,877
X	4,405
LinkedIn	2,672
NextDoor	9,205
WhatsApp	412
Instagram - bostonborough	1,997
Instagram - lfgbostonboroughcouncil	27
Boston Markets	3,820
Boston Guildhall – Facebook	599
Boston Guildhall – Instagram	61
Explore and Discover Boston	1.930
TOTAL: 10 **Corporate: 7** **Sub-channels 4**	**TOTAL: 42,075** **Corporate: 37,595** **Sub-channels 6,410**

East Lindsey District Council	
Platform	**Followers**
Facebook	21,493
X	7,390
LinkedIn	3,758
NextDoor	23,326
WhatsApp	412
Instagram – lfgeastlindsey	153
East Lindsey Markets	1,185
Story Tellers NPO	373
Love Horncastle	2,000
Love Louth	2,400
Love Alford	1,000
Love Spilsby	1,300
TOTAL: 12 **Corporate: 6** **Sub-groups: 6**	**TOTAL: 64,790** **Corporate: 56,532** **Sub-groups: 8,258**

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership	
Platform	**Followers**
X	206
LinkedIn	2,414
South and East Lincolnshire Community Lottery – Facebook	154
Grants4Growth – Facebook	710
TOTAL: 6 **Corporate: 3**	**TOTAL: 3,484** **Corporate: 2,774**

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHANNELS: 43	**TOTAL FOLLOWERS: 164,932**

How we will use our channels:

Below are insights from our most popular platforms and how we will start to use these:

Facebook

Each sovereign council has a Facebook page profile and has done so for years. Facebook is our primary channel based on audience data taken from Meta.

South Holland District Council:
8,700 followers
Male: 29% Female 71%
Dominant age: 35-44
Views (no. of times content was played or displayed over 28-day period) 254,580

Boston Borough Council:
17,743 followers

Male: 34% Female 66%
Dominant age: 35-44
Views (no. of times content was played or displayed over 28-day period) 881,594

East Lindsey District Council:
20,054 followers
Male: 28% Female: 72%
Dominant age: 35-44

Views (no. of times content was played or displayed over 28-day period) 605,149

Total average monthly views**: 1,741,323.**

Insights:

- Almost one-third of the UK population uses Facebook, with two thirds using Facebook Groups.
- Facebook has moved away from connecting friends and family to focus on algorithms based on user interests.
- Content from Facebook Groups account for 15 per cent of users' timelines.
- Carousels and reels are by far the best content for engagement.
- Artwork, GIFs, stock images, text, and AI images do not get good engagement.

Approach:

- For those local community Groups that accept Corporate Pages such as councils, we will post in these Groups as well as respond to posts that contain factual inaccuracies or questions that can be answered quickly. For more tricky questions, we will post a link to our website (FAQ sections, or email addresses).
- In the event of emergencies such as flooding, cyber-attacks, etc. we will share content from other agencies or our own depending on circumstance.
- Experiment with content that touches on broader topics whilst also retaining a clear focus on our strategic messaging.
- A spread of pictures gets the most engagement, using Reels gets the second.
- If videos are applicable, shoot vertical. Facebook has been pushing this for some time.
- Desist with GIFs, single images, stock images/artwork.
- If AI-generated artwork and content enhances our content, then will be use those technologies, however we will be open and transparent with our audiences if and when we do so. Also, if we share content from other agencies which include AI-generated images, we will make sure this is acknowledged.

LinkedIn

Each sovereign council has a LinkedIn page.

South Holland District Council:
3,738 followers

Views (over 28 day period): 308
Impressions (over 28 day period 18 Feb to 18 March 2025) 9,375

Boston Borough Council:
2.305 followers
Views (over 28 day period): 246
Impressions (over 28 day period 18 Feb to 18 March 2025) 11,889

East Lindsey District Council:
3,273 followers
Views (over 28 day period): 293
Impressions (over 28 day period 18 Feb to 18 March 2025) 12,478

South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership:
2.086 followers
Views (over 28 day period): 110
Impressions (over 28 day period 18 Feb to 18 March 2025) 6,632

Total average monthly views**: 40,374**

Insights:

- Like Facebook, a carousel of images/pictures is the most effective content in terms of engagement.
- Vertical video is also effective – as is artwork.
- Single pictures, text, links, PDF and reposts with text gets poor engagement.

Approach:

- Encourage staff, Members and our stakeholders/partners to use their own profiles to share corporate messaging to their own networks.
- Encourage staff to contribute to discussions by using corporate content to point to.
- Vertical video is being promoted by the platform, so the more opportunity to create engaging video shot vertical, the better for engagement.
- Posting jobs on main posts get really low engagement. Instead, jobs should be posted on LinkedIn's own jobs stream.

- Good quality content is about celebrating organisation's success stories and hearing those stories through human eyes.
- No AI generated artwork will be used to enhance our content and if anything we share from other agencies includes AI-generated images, we will make sure this is acknowledged.

X (formally Twitter)

East Lindsey District Council: (six-month stats from September 2024 to February 2025)

- Followers – 7,513
- Posts published – 27
- Posts by other accounts reposted - 10
- Total likes – 22
- Total reposts – 13
- Total comments – 6
- **Total views – 9,470**

South Holland District Council: (six-month stats from September 2024 to February 2025)

- Followers – 4,390
- Posts published – 18
- Posts by other accounts reposted - 11
- Total likes – 3
- Total reposts – 2
- Total comments – 0
- **Total views – 4,046**

Boston Borough Council: (six-month stats from September 2024 to February 2025)

- Followers – 4,487
- Posts published – 17
- Posts by other accounts reposted - 12
- Total likes – 7
- Total reposts – 2
- Total comments – 0
- **Total views – 2,879**

South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership: (six-month stats from September 2024 to February 2025)

- Followers – 206
- Posts published – 6
- Posts by other accounts reposted - 0
- Total likes – 0
- Total reposts – 0
- Total comments – 0
- **Total views – 216**
- **Total views: 16,611**

Insights:

- Public sector organisations are struggling to maintain engagement levels with their audiences – down to a change in algorithms.
- More than half of public sector organisations are evaluating how they are using X.
- New social media platform (and competitor to X) Bluesky is seeing a surge in growth, audience and engagement, with X suffering a downturn in the same metrics.
- Threads – a Meta-owned platform – had 7m followers in June 2024.

Approach:

- To review X's effectiveness as a communication tool with split testing alongside Bluesky (or similar) with a view to either terminating use with X or only using X in specific circumstances (election results, for example).

Social media usage for officers and followers:

Followers:

For followers of the Partnership's (and constituent sovereign council's) social channels, this policy proposes to create the below 'house rules' which will be published via each of the three council's website and regularly cited to remind followers of their obligations when posting and interacting on our channels.

Social media house rules:

South Holland/East Linsdey/Boston Council uses a number of different social media channels to inform residents of our work and news from across the area, as well as to listen and respond to their views.

We want our channels to be a place where everyone can engage in safe, respectful discussions. In order for that to happen, we have created a simple set of house rules – what you can expect from us and what we expect of our residents.

These standards apply across all our social media channels and those who breach them may be blocked and reported.

What to expect from us:

- Our social media accounts will be monitored from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).
- The communications team and PSPS Customer Contact colleagues will respond to queries within three working days (as per the PSPS terms of reference).
- We will make our content accessible as possible.
- While AI is a tool to use for research, etc. we will not use AI generated content. If we share AI generated content from a stakeholder/partner, we will be clear about it.

What we expect from followers:

- Please keep comments relevant to the original topic. If you have feedback about a separate issue, send this to us via our ***feedback page***
- We will remove comments which we believe:
    - are abusive or obscene.
    - bully, harass or intimidate any individual or organisation.
    - are unlawful, libelous or defamatory.
    - promote discrimination based on age, disability, gender, marital status, pregnancy, race, religion and sexual orientation.
    - are spam.

- are deliberately deceptive or misleading.
- are promotional material, including links to external websites and promotions.
- Please do not swear.

Staff

Staff should refrain from using their day-to-day work as content for their own social media channels. Instead, if there are project milestones etc, or something in which a staff member thinks is worthy of wider attention, speak to the Communications Team who will post on the corporate channels. The team would then actively encourage as well as tag/mention individual staff members to share and comment on.

Whilst we recognise the value and importance of officers being able to share their own experiences and feelings about projects and the accomplishments of the councils and Partnership, the key is that these pieces of news are always first shared through the corporate channels, maximising their exposure and ensuring that the correct, agreed message is conveyed to residents, press and other interested parties and given the appropriate level of coverage.

We would also ask staff to take the time to read their council's Code of Conduct which references more about the use of social media.

Comment moderation:

For insight into the scale and nature of comments that the three councils receive on our social media platforms, we analysed six months' worth of comments on the three corporate Facebook pages.

N.B: Facebook was chosen as it is, by a significant margin, the most active and engaged platform we use. (The data below covering the second half of 2024 July – December).

Council	Overall	Service Related	Non-Service Related
Boston	7,124	966 (13.6%)	6,158 (86.4%)
East Lindsey	2,081	324 (15.6%)	1,757 (84.4%)
South Holland	3,495	1158 (33.1%)	2,337 (66.9%)
Total	**12,700**	**2,448 (19.3%)**	**10,252 (80.7%)**

Analysis:

In total, the three councils received 12,700 comments across 2,466 posts on their main corporate Facebook accounts – an average of just over five comments per post.

Split down further to the number of comments received each working day over this period, which would equate to 98 comments every day that the councils received, just one platform.

Of these, 2,448 (19.3%) were service-based comments, where a factual response or sharing or linking of information would be able to go some way to addressing the reason for comment. Other responses are a variety of positive and negative reactions, political posting, tagging of friends or unrelated content, where a council response is either unnecessary or more time-consuming to research and sign-off.

Interestingly, 1,277 posts (51.8%) in this time received no comments of any kind, furthering the need for the Partnership to consider the use of data and analytics to curate content, and move away from those topics that are proven to not provoke engagement, saving officer time and resource, and improving resident sentiment at the quality and relevance of content produced.

These figures highlight the scale of content that there is to evaluate and respond to where required and gives an indication of the resource that would need to be dedicated to providing replies to all appropriate comments.

PSPS Customer Contact Team support responses to service-based comments received, such as waste collections and council tax billing, with a need for wider collaboration around those less frequent topics or those that fall outside of standard service requests.

The Communications Team will collaborate with Customer Contact colleagues to prepare scripts, stock responses and FAQs around these subjects, with a Teams Chat to be established between the two teams to allow officers to easily and quickly reach out for advice on potentially contentious or uncertain responses.

Comments will aim to be addressed quickly, due to the public nature of these posts and their ability to develop or escalate if left unaddressed, whilst message responses will be made consistent with

the current expectation laid out in the SHDC automatic response, to aim to reply by the end of the following working day.

Response protocols:

Social media is one of the most visible and immediate ways the council interacts with the public. Done well, it builds trust, provides clarity, and reinforces the council's credibility. But it also presents risks - particularly when conversations become negative, emotional, or misinformed.

The protocols below are designed to help the Communications Team and Customer Contact respond consistently, calmly, and effectively to challenging posts that are non-service related.

Protocols:

1. Respond promptly

    - Aim to respond within two working days wherever a reply is needed.
    - Keep responses short, calm, and focus on clarity.
    - Not all posts require a response.
    - Review the post and assess its nature
    - Will a response provide clarity?
    - Is it a complaint?
    - Is it widely seen or shared?
    - Would silence seem evasive?
    - Don't engage if: the post is purely inflammatory, there's no factual inaccuracy or reputational risk, a response is likely to escalate rather than clarify.
    - Monitor quietly and prepare to step in only if needed.

2. Take it offline

    - Move detailed or emotional conversations out of the public thread.
    - Avoid getting drawn into extended public exchanges.
    - Use a private channel (direct message, email, or phone) to resolve the issue.
    - Respond publicly to show you've acknowledged the comment, then redirect.

3. Be empathetic and professional

    - Always model the tone we expect from others.
    - Use calm, neutral language - even if the original post is aggressive.

- Acknowledge the concern, then offer the next step or clarification.
- Avoid sarcasm, defensiveness, or being drawn into point-scoring.
- Tone should be human, not chatty. Aim for firm, respectful and kind.

4. Protect privacy

- Never post or confirm personal details in public.
- Don't mention names, addresses, account numbers or case details in response.
- If the issue involves someone's personal circumstances, move the conversation to private messages.
- Always follow GDPR and data protection protocols.

5. Stay consistent

- All responses should reflect a single, recognisable council voice.
- Use the agreed tone: confident, clear, and non-political.
- Avoid overly personal styles unless specifically agreed ("I" or"me").
- Collaborate when needed and use peer review on sensitive posts.
- Draft replies together for tricky topics.

6. Monitor and escalate when necessary

- Know when to step back and when to escalate.
- Escalate immediately if: a post involves threats, safeguarding, legal issues or defamation, elected members are being targeted or tagged in the post is gaining traction or media interest.
- Take a screenshot, log the post, and notify the Group Manager.
- Do not delete unless instructed
- Only use "hide" for toxic but non-illegal content if visibility is a concern.

Sub-groups:

Across the Partnership there are numerous examples of sub-groups and pages being operated by individual teams on social media, such as the markets and communities accounts.

Whilst these pages and their content remain the responsibility of those teams, there is an expectation that at least one member of the Communications Team will have access to these, in case of an urgent need to make or remove a post and is also available as a 'critical friend' to advise or feedback on any content or campaign suggestions.

The existing audiences built up on these pages is recognised, but, where a team does not already have their own corporate channel, a strong justification is needed for a new page or group to be created, and officers should not create any corporate social media account for business use without agreement/collaboration from the Communications Team. All requirements for social media communications should be requested through the Communications Team in the first instance.

When requesting a sub-group or page, teams will be expected to be able to demonstrate consideration and planning of its need across several areas. This will include details on its name and profile picture, group rules, who will require admin rights, what makes the output not achievable through the main corporate channels, and a content plan to evidence that there will be a regular, engaged stream of posts. If approved, these channels will be created by the communications team and then handed over.

Where corporate accounts are used, employees should always:

- Ensure information is accurate, up-to-date, and approved by the relevant team or project lead.
- Make posts accessible for all users to understand and use.
- Ensure strong account security, that corporate passwords are not shared wider and that channels are only used on approved devices.
- Remain professional and in-keeping with the Partnership's usual public tone and approach.
- Not share anything offensive, controversial, sensitive or politically bias.
- Ensure that the correct permissions are in place for any photography or other media used.
- Provide members of the Communications Team with admin access to the channel for security and contingency.

Where inappropriate information or content is found to be on a corporate channel a team manages, they will be asked to remove it in the first instance. Dormant or inactive accounts pose their own

reputational risk to the Partnership, and groups or pages that are no longer posting may be asked to be closed if they are no longer required.

Security and housekeeping:

For security and access purposes, the Communications Team keeps a password-protected spreadsheet of all logins, passwords, etc for all corporate accounts and sub-groups so access can be granted.

Any malicious attack on councils' social platforms and indeed databases and internal IT systems means social media platform passwords, log-in details, etc can be changed wholesale immediately.

Passwords will be changed by the team no less than quarterly, or immediately when officers with access leaves the organisation.

Operational focus

This policy will sit as an addendum to the existing Partnership Communications Strategy that sets out the Communications Team overall communication objectives – in particular, it is approach to strategic communications.

Sitting at the heart of the Strategy sits our CORE purpose communications model:

C – changing behaviour
O – operational effectiveness
R – reputation management
E – explanation of policies, actions and campaigns

These principles will guide all future content and direction across our corporate social media platforms.

In addition, monthly evaluation metrics will be collated and distributed, and these figures will used to assess operational effectiveness and how we can tweak, improve and learn moving forward.

In the past, the Communications Team has seen an increase in the number of requests from individual services and departments for social media content. This has led to messaging and content becoming fragmented, disjointed and due to the complexities with algorithms, etc. not visible to the full extent of our audiences. With a focus on data and audience insights, this new strategy will underpin how social media will be used more strategically with an emphasis on quality not quantity.

The Communications Team will continue to work with services and departments to support their needs, however a more strategic approach will be taken in terms of public messaging on social media.

With a more strategic focus on our social media outcomes, rather than outputs, this policy will underline the need for a more considered and tailored approach – coupled with audience data and insight – to leverage more opportunities to engage with audiences and keep them informed and aware of what councils in their area do.

Objectives:

- Publish social media 'house rules' on council websites and social platforms to communicate to users how they should interact and behave.
- Use the insights and approaches set out in this policy for each of our main corporate channels.
- Move away from a service/department-led content approach to a more strategic decision-making process and strategic messaging that is led by the Communications Team.
- Work with PSPS colleagues to set up a robust system of comment response/moderation as set out in the policy above.
- To look into the possibilities of incorporating either analytical software and/or AI capability to capture and interpret audience trends, metrics, etc.
- To publish monthly evaluation reports across our platforms to Portfolio Holders, senior management, etc.
- To collaborate with owners of sub-groups to make sure that their platforms are fit for purpose, appropriate content and also that passwords, log-in details etc are shared with the Communications Team.
- To keep up to date a single password-protected document containing all relevant passwords/logins for all platforms.
- Review our corporate X channels based on engagement levels, etc and whether shifting focus to similar platforms such as BlueSky, etc.
- Develop a more distinct 'tone of voice' for how we communicate with residents across all our corporate platforms.
- In the short-term, a review of the Communication Team in terms of identifying a 'single point of contact' for our social media content, who can advise, plan and post on behalf of the Partnership to provide consistency in messaging and be the 'gatekeeper' for requests. In the long-term, to look at further funding opportunities to bring a dedicated social media officer into the team to oversee the Partnership's social media platforms and content.

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Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	Tuesday 20th January 2026
Subject:	HRA Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy
Purpose:	To consider and provide feedback on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2026-2056 and HRA Asset Management strategy 2026-2035
Key Decision:	Yes
Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing
Report Of:	Vikki Cherry, Assistant Director – Housing
Report Author:	Vikki Cherry, Assistant Director – Housing
Ward(s) Affected:	(All Wards)
Exempt Report:	No

Summary

This report introduces the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2026 - 2056.

Over the last 18 months, Officers have worked closely with Savills to model the business plan on updated stock condition data and new requirements in response to significant changes in the social housing landscape, including rising inflation, increased investment needs, and higher borrowing costs, while maintaining long-term financial sustainability.

The work has determined that the Housing Revenue Account is sustainable over the 30-year period based on the assumptions regarding future costs. This is considered a substantial achievement for the Council at a time when finances are under pressure across the social housing sector.

The HRA Business Plan will be updated on an annual basis, to ensure it reflects the most up to date operating costs and capital programme costs.

This report also introduces the HRA Asset Management Strategy 2026-2035. The purpose of the Strategy is to provide an action plan based on the recommendations from the HRA Business Plan and to set a five-year capital investment programme.

The Asset Management Strategy will be used to set budgets each year and will be updated on an annual basis. This will ensure that it remains current in the ever-changing environment of social housing.

Both documents are evidence led, informed by surveys of the Council's housing stock over the last 18 months and feedback from Tenant and Member consultations.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

a) Recommend to Council to adopt the HRA Business Plan 2026-2056.
b) Supports the recommendation to Council to delegate minor operational and legislative amendments to the HRA Business Plan 2026-2056 to the Assistant Director for Housing in consultation with the s151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing
c) Recommend to Council to adopt the HRA Asset Management Strategy 2026-2035.
d) Supports the recommendation to Council to delegate minor operational and legislative amendments to the HRA Asset Management Strategy 2026 – 2035 to the Assistant Director for Housing in consultation with the s151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing.

Reasons for Recommendations

Section 76 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires Local Authorities with a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to set a budget for the account that avoids a deficit, whilst using robust and valid assumptions.

Furthermore, there is a statutory requirement for the Council to review the 30-Year Business Plan for the HRA on an annual basis. The purpose of this exercise is to keep the long-term financial viability of the HRA under regular review.

Other Options Considered

The Council is required to ensure that HRA income and expenditure are balanced over 30 years. No other alternatives were considered.

To not adopt the Asset Management Strategy. This option is not recommended as the Strategy provides a clear plan to implement recommendations from the HRA Business Plan.

1. Background

1.1 Produced in partnership with Savills, the Council's 30 Year HRA Business Plan

sets out how the Council will best use the resources of the Housing Revenue Account to maintain and enhance council housing stock.

1.2 The Business Plan recognises the challenging landscape for social housing including:

- Substantial increases in capital investment needs within social housing driven by high levels of inflation, updated stock condition data and revised investment assumptions.
- Rising demand for day-to-day and responsive repairs post-Covid, changes in fire safety regulations following Grenfell, the continued spotlight placed on the condition of social housing by the Housing Ombudsman and introduction of Awaab's Law (October 2025, with further phases due).
- Inflationary pressure nationally increasing development costs.
- Continued high levels of interest rates available from the PWLB (at three times what they were less than 3 years ago).
- Government consultations on changes to the Decent Homes Standard and the introduction of a Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) anticipated to be implemented during 2026.

1.3 In 2024, more than 100 stock holding Councils (including South Holland) signed up to the "securing the future of social housing" campaign raising concerns about the danger of HRA finances, with a £2.2bn black hole in councils' national housing budgets expected by 2028.

1.4 Despite these pressures, the Business Plan confirms that the HRA can afford all currently planned expenditure over the next 30 years, but in doing so will experience an increase in its debt levels in order to deliver the largest investment programme in the history of South Holland's HRA.

1.5 Over the life of the plan, the HRA is projected to generate £854.5m income and invest £235m in the housing stock. This includes £142m financed through borrowing, which factors in the existing £67.5m debt originally taken out in 2012 as part of the self-financing settlement. (Latest stock valuation was £257.4 million at 31 March 2025).

1.6 The overall stock investment profile as financed within the business plan equates to £62,100 per property (at today's prices), which is in line with benchmarks for authorities of a similar size to South Holland. Investment is necessary to meet government expectations regarding energy efficiency standards and ongoing investment required in HRA sewage treatment works.

1.7 While borrowing is required, the plan operates with capacity for additional investment within this metric. This is considered a substantial achievement for the Council at a time when finances are under pressure across the social housing sector.

1.8 Delivery of the HRA Business Plan will be supported by an Asset Management Strategy. The purpose of the Strategy is to set an accurate capital programme for the next five years ensuring our tenants live in good quality, efficient homes. It also demonstrates how this proposed spend will help to keep homes safe, compliant and decent. It sets out a clear action plan and projects to help inform future investment in HRA assets.

1.9 Both documents are considered financial planning documents, setting out the capacity of the HRA and will be used to support drafting of the HRA Budget, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

1.10 The HRA Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy will be updated on an annual basis, to ensure they reflect the latest stock condition data, operating costs and capital programme costs. The annual update will be based on consistently applied methodology and assumptions.

2. Report

2.1 Business Plan

2.2 The Council has a clear and evidence-based understanding of the Council's income and expenditure over a 30-year period.

2.3 The Business Plan:

- Is based on up to date data, including component decency, HHSRS and energy assessments.
- Supports continued investment into the stock.
- Continues to provide for investment into services to support transformation plans, controlling them to real terms levels (i.e. increasing with inflation) at a time when rents are set to increase at a higher rate.
- Allows a limited but significant programme of development or acquisition which will see our stock grow following decades of declining numbers through right to buy sales.

2.4 The Plan is fully financed across the 30 years, remaining within the "golden rule" of an Interest Cover Ratio of at least 1.25%, so that there is a cushion to ensure interest can be paid in the event of unexpected cost increases. Factoring in a substantial increase in investment towards achieving EPC C by 2030 for all homes, completing investment works to HRA sewage treatment facilities, and ensuring that the Council is able to deliver life cycle replacement programmes.

2.5 The Business Plan is an evidence led document, informed by latest stock condition data and views of tenants and Members. It contains a series of evidence led policy recommendations with resilience measures incorporated to mitigate identified risks, including stress testing in a manner that the Regulator of Social Housing requires of housing associations.

2.6 Within 2026/27, net costs of management and repairs (after taking into account service charges and non-rent income) represents 63p of every £1 of rent income collected. We know that this is relatively high compared to benchmarks and will keep opportunities to seek greater efficiencies under regular review, including exploring ways to enhance the performance of sewage treatment works and assessing recharges for internally commissioned services.

2.7 The methodology assumes borrowing as the "financing of last resort". This approach offers the best value for money for the HRA business plan, especially at a time when interest rates are at a relatively high level.

2.8 Asset Management Strategy

2.9 A key element of the Business Plan is the Asset Management Strategy. The Strategy sets out plans for the management and maintenance of HRA housing stock over the long term, and in particular an Investment Plan to 2035.

2.9 Objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Continue to grow knowledge and understanding about housing stock and neighbourhoods
- Bring stock to revised Decent Homes Standard by 2035
- Meet Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards by 2030 and beyond
- Set a high standard for neighbourhoods and invest to that standard.

2.10 Multiple consultation events were held with Members and tenants during Autumn 2025, seeking views around prioritising investment including:

- Extension of lifetimes of key components
- Whether the Council should maintain a stock replacement, acquisition and/or development programme. If so, the balance between investment in the existing stock and new homes
- The importance of investment in the neighbourhood and environment
- The importance of investment in disabled aids and adaptations
- Whether there is a role for regeneration and development of "obsolete" / high-cost homes.

2.11 In summary, tenant feedback was as follows:

- Support extending lifecycles for kitchens, bathrooms, and boilers so long as quality is high; avoid unnecessary replacements of components.
- Safety and quality of existing stock should take priority over new homes, though future-proofed builds on brownfield sites are welcomed.
- Strong support for aids and adaptations and improved bathroom accessibility.
- Raise void property standards and review asset performance; dispose or redevelop homes where costs are excessive.
- Mixed views on fencing, but external areas should remain attractive.
- Council support for home and garden maintenance where needed, with recharges for property neglect.
- Support for sustainability and improved energy efficiency of homes.

2.12 Councillor priorities were as follows:

- Support for extending lifecycles of kitchens, bathrooms, and heating systems so long as they remained in good condition.
- Support for a stock replacement/acquisition programme on the basis that investment in existing stock is prioritised and consideration around selling high-cost or isolated properties to reinvest in newer stock. New build / acquisition programme should be focussed on property types which meet local housing need.
- Strong support for improving neighbourhoods (fencing, landscaping, communal areas), recognising the impact on wellbeing and estate appearance.
- Support for ongoing investment in aids and adaptations.

- Role for regeneration where properties are costly to maintain or have poor energy efficiency, supporting exploring redevelopment opportunities/disposal of units.
- Additionally, members had a strong interest in solar panels (based on resident feedback) and welcomed the re-introduction of support/incentives for downsizing.

2.13 In response to the feedback received, the Strategy incorporates the following:

- Extension to life cycles of key components such as kitchens and bathrooms by 5 years, whilst retaining those that are beyond the national standard (i.e. roof repairs). This approach continues to model lifecycles shorter than the maximum Decent Homes lifetimes and reduces expenditure over 30 years by £16m. (The existing Investment Plan will be continued to 2030 as there are already contracts and suppliers in place and fully procured for the programme. Revised lifecycles will be introduced no later than 2031, aligned with the renewal of contracts).
- Provision for an acquisition/development programme of 5 homes per annum within the MTFS followed by up to 20 homes per annum thereafter on the assumption that 40% grant funding is available.
- Investment into energy efficiency extended to achieve EPC C for all stock by 2030. Additional programmes totalling £3.7m commencing during 2027 to allow time for procurement.
- Ongoing investment for disabled aids and adaptations of over £5.4 million during the current MTFS and £3m modelled every 5 years thereafter.
- Conducting an Asset Performance Evaluation during the period of the Strategy to analyse in detail the financial performance of properties to identify which properties may be prohibitively high cost to repair, or where properties may be obsolete and in need of replacement.
- Consulting tenants and members on the approach to recharges as part of the review of the Housing Repairs and Fitness for Habitation Policy during 2026/27.

2.14 This strategy relies on additional revenue from rental income and borrowing. Nevertheless, the level of borrowing remains sustainable within the context of HRA business planning, and the ability to fully fund the programme offers strong assurance that the Asset Management Strategy is underpinned by robust core data and is financially viable.

2.15 The Asset Management Strategy includes an action plan setting out a commitment to achieve these ambitions of the Strategy. Updates will be provided to Cabinet and tenants annually as part of the annual refresh.

2.16 <u>Modelling the HRA Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy</u>

2.17 The Strategy is based on assessments and analysis of a variety of data and information sources, including:

- Stock condition survey – stock condition data from surveys completed within the last 18 months on 75% of the stock has been used to model the Plan and Strategy. (At the point of writing the report, the Council had up to date stock condition data on 90% of properties and continues to work

towards 100%.)

- Resident survey – engagement and consultation was held with tenants to understand their priorities for investment.
- Energy efficiency – up to date energy performance data has been included, along with details of properties included in our Warm Homes programmes. As at the point of writing the report c.1,200 properties were outside of the Warm Homes Programme, at band D or below.
- Sewage Treatment Works – At the point of consulting Members and Tenants, modelling was based on survey findings from sites conducted in 2023, involving highly cautious assumptions. A further exercise has since taken place, with the existing maintenance contractor providing estimates for like-for-like replacements at today's prices. These figures have been incorporated into the business plan. This method is considered more accurate than the earlier conservative estimate of £500k per site, though a 25% contingency has been included.

3. Conclusion

3.1. The Council's 30-Year HRA Business Plan and supporting Asset Management Strategy provide a robust, evidence-based framework to safeguard and enhance the quality of council housing for the long term. Despite significant financial pressures across the social housing sector, the Plan demonstrates that South Holland can fully fund its commitments. This includes meeting government standards on energy efficiency, maintaining compliance, and improving neighbourhoods, all underpinned by prudent financial modelling and stress testing,

3.2. The Strategy reflects the priorities of tenants and Members, balancing investment in existing stock with a modest development programme, embedding sustainability and accessibility at its core. By extending component lifecycles, targeting energy improvements, and planning for regeneration where necessary, the Council ensures value for money and resilience. Annual updates will maintain accuracy and transparency, ensuring these plans remain responsive to changing conditions.

3.3. Together, these documents set a clear path for maintaining safe, decent, and efficient homes, supporting community wellbeing, and securing the future of social housing in South Holland.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

None.

Corporate Priorities

The HRA Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy deliver the corporate priorities of efficiency and effectiveness:

- delivering good quality and value for money services, in line with customer needs and
- meeting the financial challenges facing the sector.

The documents also deliver the local priority of engaging with housing tenants to help shape service delivery in the district.

Staffing

None.

Workforce Capacity Implications

None.

Constitutional and Legal Implications

The HRA Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy are considered part of the Council's Policy Framework and must be formally adopted by the Full Council.

Expenditure and income relating to property and income listed in section 74 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 which includes housing held under Part II of the Housing Act 1985 must be accounted for in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The HRA is a ring-fenced budget. The HRA should be self-funding and continuous review of the position of the HRA is required to ensure this.

Data Protection

None.

Financial

The main conclusion from the Business Plan is that the Housing Revenue Account is sustainable over the 30-year period based on the assumptions regarding future costs.

In order to protect the HRA, the Council will need to continue to maximise income to the HRA, ensuring that actual rent increases are in line with maximum amounts permitted by Government policy.

The HRA Business Plan has been prepared with careful consideration of how best to provide resilience against financial risk without compromising the ability of the HRA to deliver its strategic objectives.

Risk Management

The HRA Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy has been produced by housing finance specialists, Savills. The documents have been prepared with careful consideration of how best to provide resilience against financial risk without compromising the ability of the HRA to deliver its strategic objectives.

Sensitivity analysis has been undertaken on the financial assumptions made in the business plan in a form expected by the Regulator of Social Housing on housing associations. The key areas that could impact on the projections set out in the business plan are rental increases arising primarily from the associated government policy relating to this and inflation affecting future expenditure levels. These are largely outside of the Council's control and are risk areas that the Council continues to monitor. Changes in these areas (for example, government policy leading to a period in which rents cannot be increased) would directly impact the monies available for investment.

There are also financial sensitivities relating to voids and the loss of income and additional expenditure associated with this as well as potential bad debts. Income performance is reported to Housing Compliance and Performance Clinic on a monthly basis of which the Director for Communities and Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing attends.

The HRA Operational Risk Register and Corporate Risk Register have been reviewed to ensure the risks mentioned in the Strategy are recognised.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

Multiple engagement events were held with Members and tenants during Autumn 2025. Outcomes of events are summarised in the main body of this report. Appendix C provides further detail on tenant engagement.

The HRA Accountant (PSPSL), s.151 Officer, Monitoring Officer, Senior Leadership Team, Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing and wider Cabinet Members have been consulted throughout the development of the HRA Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy.

The (Interim) Strategic Finance Manager (PSPSL) and Treasury and Investment Manager (PSPSL) have been consulted and involved in the final drafting of documents.

It considered that the Business Plan had been developed robustly, with a positive approach to involving tenants and members in this process.

Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel was consulted on 13th January 2026. Due to report deadlines, a verbal update will be provided to Cabinet at the meeting.

Reputation

The HRA Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy was produced by housing finance specialists, Savills.

The HRA Business Plan operates within a political environment therefore changes in both national and local policy can have a major impact and influence on the plan. The HRA Business Plan will be updated on an annual basis, to ensure it reflects the most up to date operating costs and capital programme costs. The annual update will be based on consistently applied methodology.

Contracts

None. Delivery of the HRA capital programme will be in line with the Council's contract procedure rules.

Crime and Disorder

None. The HRA Business Plan recognises the benefit in investing in the wider housing environment in order to support safe, resilient and cohesive communities.

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

In finalising the HRA Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy, the Council must comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in S149 of the Equality Act.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out (see Appendix D). Our analysis demonstrates that the proposed HRA Business plan and Asset Management Strategy shows minimal potential for discrimination, and we have taken all opportunities to advance equality subject to continuing monitoring and review.

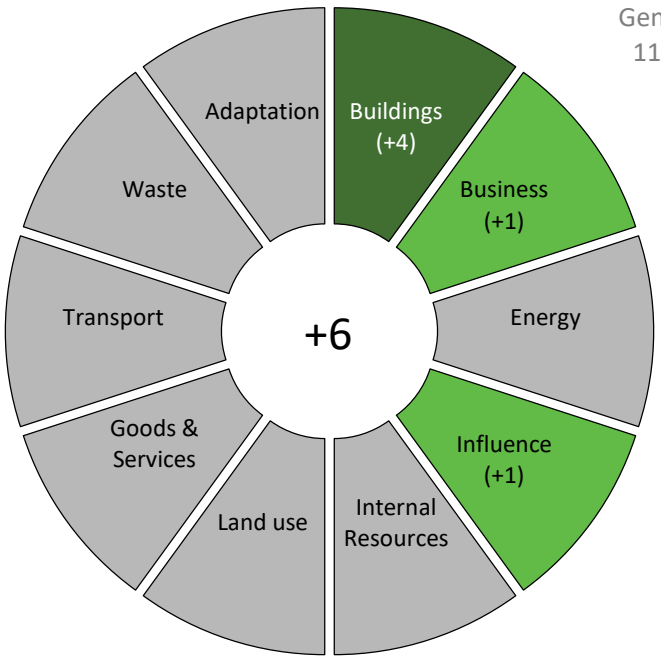
Health and Wellbeing

The HRA Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy include budgets for investment in homes to ensure disabled aids and adaptations are readily available to support vulnerable tenants to live safely and independently in their homes.

Climate Change and Environment Impact Assessment

The HRA Business Plan has positive implications for climate change and environmental impact, incorporating energy efficiency upgrades to homes, ensuring that all properties within the HRA achieve an EPC rating of C or higher by 2030, in alignment with current government guidelines.

The Plan does not deliver a carbon neutral outcome as significant external funding would be required. This is the case for the wider housing sector.



The Partnership has committed to being Net Zero by 2040 (14 years and 0 months away).

Acronyms

CPI - Consumer Price Index.
HRA - Housing Revenue Account.
MHCLG – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Appendices

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report:

Appendix A – HRA Business Plan 2026-2056
Appendix B – HRA Asset Management Strategy 2026-2035
Appendix C – Tenant consultation outcome report.
Appendix D – Equality Impact Assessment

Background Papers

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

Chronological History of this Report

Name of Body	**Date**
Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel	13/1/2026

Report Approval

Report author:	Vikki Cherry, Assistant Director - Housing vcherry@sholland.gov.uk
Signed off by:	Vikki Cherry, Assistant Director - Housing vcherry@sholland.gov.uk
Approved for publication:	Cllr Tracey Carter, Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing

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South Holland District Council

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2026-2056

Summary

Draft v3.1 (22 December 2025)

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Welcome to South Holland's Housing Revenue Account Business Plan for 2026. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is the account we use for the finances for council housing. The HRA is operated as a separate account within the Council's overall finances and covers the income and expenditure for council housing, including both day to day services and investment into our homes.

Every year, we set budgets and financial plans for our council housing stock and services as part of the Council's overall financial management processes. As we need to set out how we will manage and maintain our homes over the long-term, we also produce a business plan that covers the finances for the next 30 years.

The Council last set out a comprehensive approach to business planning some years ago. Changes in national policy and the framework for regulation of council housing has led to us developing a completely new approach to the business plan, work which has been going in since summer 2024 and which is closely linked to work on understanding the investment needs of our stock contained within our Asset Management Strategy.

Whilst business planning is intrinsically linked to our Asset Management Strategy, our transformation programme for Housing Landlord Services, and the Council's wider strategic objectives, this document summarises the main themes around our business plan from a financial perspective.

This business plan summary sets out the financial basis for the delivery of services and investment into our homes. It should therefore be read in conjunction with the Housing Landlord Strategy (developed in 2024) and Asset Management Strategy (which has been developed alongside the business plan).

Our plan is based on a robust and comprehensive evidence base of data around our stock and the needs of our tenants and residents. We can plan with confidence over the next 5-10 years to invest in our services, homes and neighbourhoods. Our planned investment is very substantial, particularly over the next 10 years and represents the largest ever programme of investment into council housing in the district.

As will be seen within the summary, the business plan is not without financial pressures and we will need to manage our future planning carefully to address the risks and challenges that face council housing services. This summary also includes a commentary on the main risks and "stresses" that might arise if financial or other conditions change over time and how we will respond to manage those risks.

In summary, the business plan provides assurance that the resources and financial plans are sufficient over the long term to allow us to finance the investment plans set out in the Landlord and Asset Management Strategies.

As will be seen throughout this summary, there are certain elements of government policy and guidance that remain to be agreed at a national level. At the same time, we are continuing to analyse a substantial amount of data about our stock and customers collected in the last 18 months. This plan will therefore be subject to refresh and review within its first year and will be updated in the autumn of 2026.

1.2. How the Business Plan fits in

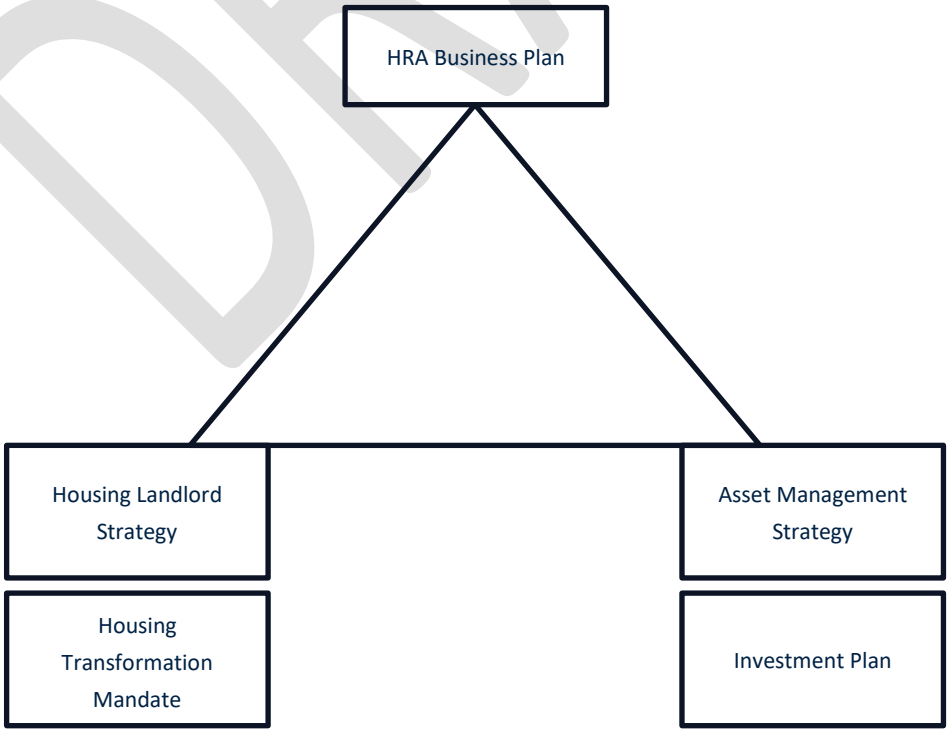
The overall planning framework for South Holland is set out in the Council's Partnership Alignment and Delivery Plan https://democracy.sholland.gov.uk/documents/s43271/Appendix%206%20Partnership%20Alignment%20and%20Delivery%20Plan%2025.26.pdf.

The overarching strategic objectives for South and East Lincolnshire, and how the HRA business plan aligns with them, are as follows:

- Growth and Prosperity – the expanded investment programmes set out within the Asset Management Strategy financed within the business plan mean opportunities for increased jobs locally
- Healthy Lives – the safety and quality of our homes directly impacts the health and wellbeing of our tenants and residents, and our services provide the support for our communities to live healthier lives.
- Safe and resilient communities – investment in our homes and in our communities within our council housing estates provides the basis for community resilience.
- Environment – investing in the environment through increased energy efficiency is an intrinsic part of the business plan.

As the primary financial planning document for council housing, the business plan is directly aligned with the two principal strategies around service delivery and stock investment as set out in the diagram below. In turn, the two strategies have short-medium plans within them to deliver over the next few years. The business plan forms the basis for the delivery of these plans, setting out how these plans will be financed.

Figure 1.1: business plan linkages



The Housing Landlord Strategy 2024-2026 provides a key framework for the Asset Management Strategy, and together these form the basis of our future plans. The Landlord Strategy was approved by Council in 2024 and sets our plans for transformation of the housing landlord service, of which repairs, maintenance and investment are an integral part. The business plan sets out how all of this will be financed.

1.3. Business Plan context

Our landlord strategy and housing transformation plan represent an integral part of the Council's overall Partnership Alignment and Delivery Plan, a plan which is annually updated to reflect the priorities of the Council in its sub-regional and wider Lincolnshire context.

Our Housing Landlord Strategy sets out our ambitions to deliver on four overarching themes:

1. Culture and Operational Excellence

   We will deliver a service that meets the needs and aspirations of our tenants, whilst keeping them safe

2. Quality Homes and Connected Neighbourhoods

   We will be well governed and financially resilient, operating efficiently and responsibly, and investing wisely to fulfil our social purpose.

3. Accountability and Transparency

   We will deliver well maintained, safe, affordable homes and neighbourhoods, where people are proud to live that supports their health and wellbeing.

4. Tenant Voice and Opportunity

   Tenants will be at the heart of everything we do and every decision we make.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 reformed regulation and strengthened social landlord obligations around transparency and accountability to residents. It also stresses the importance of good data to demonstrate compliance. The Government consulted in the summer of 2025 on updating the Decent Homes Standard with a key proposal to introduce a minimum standard for energy efficiency for the first time, and for this standard to become part of the Decent Homes Standard. At the time of agreeing this business plan, the outcome of the consultation process is awaited, although we have made some assumptions around future requirements that we believe will ensure that we are compliant with the new standard when it is finalised, and that we will have sufficient resources to finance what is required.

Demand for affordable housing in the district continues, in line with the national trend. The financial plans within this business plan underpin our ambitions to deliver new social homes.

The Business Plan is a forward looking document. It is rooted in the current and near-term future financial plans for the HRA but sets out that short-term investment can be sustained in a long-term context. The standard approach to the "long-term" is 30 years, as the overwhelming majority of investment into homes takes place within a 30 year period.

2. Our approach to business planning

2.1. Introduction, preparation and governance

This section sets out how we have arrived at this document and the financial planning within the business plan.

The business planning process began in the summer of 2024 with a cross-service and multi-disciplinary team of senior officers including officers from housing management, asset management and finance.

The team has been supported by external advisors, Savills, and are utilising their business plan modelling platform to deliver the projections that are set out in this summary. Our advisors have also brought insight from good practice at other local authorities, providing both assurance that South Holland's income and costs are in line with benchmarks and bringing opportunities for us to consider best practice on delivery from other authorities.

There has been regular contact with key decision makers including the Council's s151 Officer, Senior Leadership Team and the Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing.

2.2. Decision making during plan development

There have been a number of iterations of the business plan financial projections since we commenced this process, starting with those prepared for the 2025/26 financial year.

As a result of work undertaken by the project team, the Council has already introduced a series of changes to the way it manages and delivers council housing services. In particular, the Council has done the following:

- Put in place procedures to ensure that the Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by the Council for all services are in alignment with the business plan so that the first year of the business plan has the same financial basis as the approved budget and capital programme.
- Introduced a policy of reletting vacant properties at formula rent in April 2025.
- Worked closely with external support from stock condition surveyors and Savills to model future options for investment into the stock and services, in conjunction with detailed discussions with the s151 Officer.
- Identified that the outputs from the work undertaken to gather data and insight for the Asset Management Strategy put the Council above benchmark in terms of investment requirements in a number of key areas: energy efficiency and meeting EPC C standards as a minimum across our stock; and the need to address investment in the sewage works that are held within the HRA. The full Asset Management investment profile is incorporated into the Business Plan.
- Determined that the level of depreciation that we had been assuming within the HRA was high compared to benchmarks and following a review of the technical financial assumptions, reduced the amount for 2025/26.

- Benchmarked and reviewed the cost base for Housing Services, focusing on costs represented by services provided by other parts of the Council. Whilst we have not changed the core assumptions relating to the costs of these services, we have agreed that we will subject these costs to further detailed review in time for the 2027/28 financial year.

2.3. Governance, monitoring and review

The Business Plan is approved by the Council prior to adopting the HRA budget, the HRA Capital Programme (represented within the Medium Term Financial Strategy) and the setting of rents and service charges.

The key stages in the approval process are:

- Compilation of the business plan and financial modelling: September-November by the project team, working in conjunction with external advisers, and taking into account financial progress within the current financial year
- Review of business plan by s151 Officer, Senior Leadership Team, informal Cabinet and the Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing: November-December
- Consultation and engagement with stakeholders: November-December with tenants and wider Members
- Finalisation and approval: January-February.

The plans and strategies set out within the Landlord and Asset Management Strategies are able to be delivered with the confidence and assurance that they are financed within the business plan.

Whilst the business plan is refreshed annually to reflect changes in operational, economic and financial conditions, the fundamental building blocks of the strategies and plans are unaffected. We have put in place risk mitigation measures to address any changes which reduce future financial resources and have approved plans to bring forward additional investment should financial resources improve in the future.

The Business Plan is therefore subject to annual refresh only and will be reviewed fully in line with the review of the Asset Management Strategy in the run up to 2030. As this period crosses over with the anticipated timetable for the implementation of Local Government Reorganisation, we would expect this full review to take place in the successor authority to South Holland, noting that this successor is likely to have housing stock from other current Lincolnshire authorities and therefore the business plan would no longer apply just to South Holland's council housing.

3. Inputs and Assumptions

3.1. Economic, financial and policy context

The assumptions that we have used to inform the financial modelling that underpins the business plan projections are established in the context of the economic and financial backdrop for local authorities and social housing. The policy and regulatory framework for council and social housing has a key and critical impact on the assumptions that we have to make about how much income and resources we will receive in the future and what those resources need to be spent on.

A summary of the key influences on our financial assumptions is set out below:

- Substantial increases in capital investment needs within social housing driven by high levels of inflation, updated stock condition data and revised investment assumptions. Based on this, the Council plans to spend over £62,000 per home (at today's prices) over the next 30 years.
- Pressures on repairs expenditure driven by increased demand from tenants for day to day and responsive repairs, especially since the Covid pandemic, but also arising from the implementation of Awaab's Law.
- Inflationary pressure nationally has increased development costs and affected the potential costs of acquisition of new homes due to market driven pressures.
- Continued high levels of interest rates available from the PWLB, albeit with discounts currently applied for HRA borrowing. (PWLB rates are at historically high rate and a factor of three times what they were less than 3 years ago).
- Potential for continuing inflationary pressures on current operating costs which could outweigh income growth in the short-term, particularly affecting the delivery of services by third party contractors and suppliers.
- Government consultations on changes to the Decent Homes Standard and the introduction of a Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) have recently concluded but are yet to be finalised and formalised into a revised comprehensive Standard. These both inform business planning subject to confirmation by government with MEES in particular affecting South Holland, given the energy efficiency position of our stock.
- The Spending Review in 2025 set out a 10 year rent policy with maximum increases allowed up to CPI+1%; providing a much greater level of income in the plan than had previously been provided for.
- A government consultation on the rate and pace at which rent convergence may be reintroduced has not been set for an outcome in January 2026; rent convergence covers how the Council might be able to charge an additional amount of rent on top of the government's maximum rent increase (CPI+1%) in order to bring actual rents up to the level of formula rents far more quickly than reletting at formula rent when properties become vacant.
- Changes to the Right to Buy (RTB), following an extensive government consultation in late 2024, the outcome of which is to restrict access to the RTB whilst also providing a greater degree of flexibility for the reinvestment of RTB receipts, including some measures which are subject to primary legislation yet to be introduced.

3.2. Key financial assumptions

The following is a schedule of the key financial inputs and assumptions to the plan.

- 30-year financial projections are launched from 2026/27, based on the budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) running from 2026-2031.

- Property numbers were 3,780 as at 30th November 2025 including 127 Affordable Rent properties and 46 shared ownership homes.

- Core inflation (subject to scenario testing) projected at the following, and aligned with the latest forecasts from the Office for Budget Responsibility:
  - 3.8% for 2025/26 driven by the September 2025 CPI used as the basis for 2026/27 rent increases.
  - 2.5% for 2027/28
  - 2.0% from 2028/29 onwards.

- Rents of £99.80 average in 2026/27 are increased as follows:
  - Increases of CPI + 1.0% for 10 years, in line with the current rent settlement, before reverting to CPI only from April 2036
  - Homes are relet at formula rent including the rent flexibility, with a 6.6% annual tenancy turnover rate.

- Rent loss from voids is assumed to be 1.0%, and provision for the writing off of bad debts is £75,000 pa (the equivalent of 0.38% of rent income)

- Service charge income from tenants and leaseholders is increased in line with CPI.

- Following the initial MTFS period, management and repairs costs are inflated with CPI throughout. Management budgets include front line landlord services, as well as the costs of services provided to housing from other services within the Council: they are £8.4million in 2026/27 and repairs budgets are £5.3million.

- Provision for depreciation increasing at CPI throughout starting at £4.2million in 2026/27.

- Capital maintenance of the existing stock is modelled at a total of £235m (at today's prices before any adjustment) over 30 years from 2026/27; this provides for an enhanced capital programme for years 1 to 5, an extension of the Investment Plan to year 10 (2036) and phasing of future investment per the outputs from our stock condition survey.

- The overall stock investment profile as financed within the business plan equates to £62,100 per property (at today's prices), which is in line with benchmarks for authorities of a similar size to South Holland. We have specific challenges around bringing all homes up to energy efficiency standards (EPC C) and the need to repair 49 sewage treatment works and 11 pumping stations which are held within the HRA.

  The investment profile has been adjusted from the raw totals based on existing life cycle replacement timeframes; the total investment requirement identified in the Asset Management Strategy is £249.9m, per the strategy. We propose to increase life cycles by 5 years for planning purposes (where our current cycles are below the national standard, whilst reducing those that are beyond the national standard (i.e. roof repairs). whilst maintaining the principle that elements will be replaced when they are in a poor state of repair. This approach reduces the 30 year profile by £16m, albeit that this does not impact the first 5 years as there are already contracts and suppliers in place fully procured for the programme and has only a marginal impact on the period from 2030-2035.

- A steep reduction in the volume of Right to Buy sales has been modelled, at 5 per annum, following the recent reduction of maximum discounts introduced by government in November 2024.

- Inclusion of 5 homes for development and/or acquisition per annum from 2026 to 2031 and then 20 homes for all future years at a gross cost of £220,000 per home at today's prices based on current market, section 106 and other development market conditions, fully financed with right to Buy receipts in the first 5 years and then with the receipt of grant of an estimate 40% of the acquisition or development cost from 2031. The Council will apply for grants such as the Social and Affordable Homes Programme, the Local Authority Housing Fund as well as apply our own Right to Buy receipts to help finance the acquisition of homes into the HRA.

- Interest calculations are based upon a housing debt (the HRA Capital Financing Requirement or HRACFR) of £69.5m, at a rate of at 3.79% in line with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26; a rate of 5.00% has been taken forward throughout the term of the plan acknowledging that current rates are higher than this and that treasury costs must be carefully managed.

3.3. Financing methodology

The overall financial methodology within the plan is founded on the following:

- Net operating income is generated from rents and income less management costs, day to day repairs costs and transfers of depreciation to the Major Repairs Reserve; this is reported as "net Cost of Services" within the HRA.

- This income is then utilised to finance interest costs on debt net of interest income; this results in a net operating surplus that is able to then be used flexibly to finance additional investment, if required.

- The capital programme needs are set out as per the stock survey and other profile inputs plus the development and acquisition programme; this is first financed utilising resources from the Major Repairs Reserve (i.e. depreciation), from capital receipts, then from any grants that might be receivable to support expenditure. If there remains expenditure that is not covered by these, the balance will be financed from additional revenue top-ups (formally revenue contributions to capital) and, if necessary, borrowing.

- Net operating surpluses are first committed to support capital expenditure needs as additional revenue contributions, and if there remain a balance to be financed, the remainder will be covered by borrowing.

Our medium-term policy towards the setting of reserves is to set a minimum of 10% of total rent income; we are currently well above that level and will reduce our reserves prudently to this level by 2030 allowing further investment resources to be released.

The above methodology therefore utilises borrowing as the "financing of last resort" in that it is our policy to only borrow to finance capital expenditure that is unable to be financed from all other possible sources. This approach offers the best value for money for the HRA business plan, especially at a time when interest rates are at a relatively high level.

No provision is set aside to repay debt during the life of the business plan, with refinancing of loans assumed as they mature.

3.4. Managing the financial health of the HRA

Limits on borrowing within the HRA were lifted in 2018. Since then, the Council has a statutory obligation to publish Prudential Indicators for the HRA. These indicators have a dual effect:

- They set out the financial health of the HRA and HRA business plan over the short, medium and long terms.
- They set out the future financial capacity within the business plan to bring forward more investment.

We have worked with our Savills to develop an approach to management of debt levels and future investment capacity within the HRA and a summary is set out below.

We measure the affordability of debt and borrowing on the basis of the Interest Cover Ratio (ICR) which sets a prudent limit on borrowing based upon the underlying net income generated within the plan. Our measure of the ICR is calculated at Net Operating Income – this shows how net income from services is able to cover interest costs. we then set a "Golden Rule" for managing the ICR – at 1.25 – i.e. that the HRA should be generating sufficient income to cover debt costs plus 25%. This approach allows us to operate a risk buffer against any unexpected costs of drops in income during a year such that we should always be able to cover interest costs without dipping into reserves.

There is no obligation to set borrowing at this level; it is adopted solely for prudence and risk management within the HRA. The outputs below show how the plan is able to be managed within the framework set by this risk buffer.

The second key measure is the proportion of rent income that is spent on day to day services. Within 2026/27, net costs of management and repairs (after taking into account service charges and non-rent income) represents some 63p of every £1 of rent income collected. We know that this is relatively high compared to benchmarks and will keep opportunities to seek greater efficiencies under regular review.

Linked to the above "pence in the £", the net operating income determining the availability of revenues to cover interest payments can also be expressed in percentage terms as "Operating Margin". The Operating Margin in 2026/27 is relatively low compared to similar authorities at around 15% representing the investment we are making into day to day service delivery and transformation. We plan to increase this to over 25% within 10 years as rent increases proceed at CPI+1%.

We will monitor the Interest Cover Ratio, Operating Margin and the proportion of rent income we spend on day to day services as three key metrics when assessing the current future financial health of the HRA, and whether there is sufficient risk buffer and resilience within the plan to withstand deterioration in the assumptions we have made.

At the same time, we will also utilise these metrics to express the extent to which we can extend investment programmes into enhanced service standards, increased investment into the existing stock and neighbourhoods and/or investment into new homes delivery or acquisition.

4. Financial projections

4.1. Introduction

We have compiled our financial assumptions into a core projection from 2026 to 2056 which we term the "Baseline Business Plan". The baseline plan represents the approved plan for the next 30 years. In the next section, we have demonstrated how sensitive the baseline plan is to changes in inputs and assumptions. This is termed "stress testing" and has a link to the Risk Management Strategy that we have within the Housing Landlord Service.

The plan is fundable and fully financed over the entire business plan term. However, as the plan incorporates the potential to increase borrowing over a period of up to 15 years, it is not without its financial challenges and it is essential that we a) understand how things might change , b) what the impact of those changes might be on our plans, and c) what we would do to make sure that the plan remained viable.

4.2. Baseline business plan: Revenue, capital and debt

The charts below show the overall financial projections for the business plan. The initial planning period is presented in detail in table form at appendix 1.

Chart 4.1: revenue projection against minimum reserves £'000's

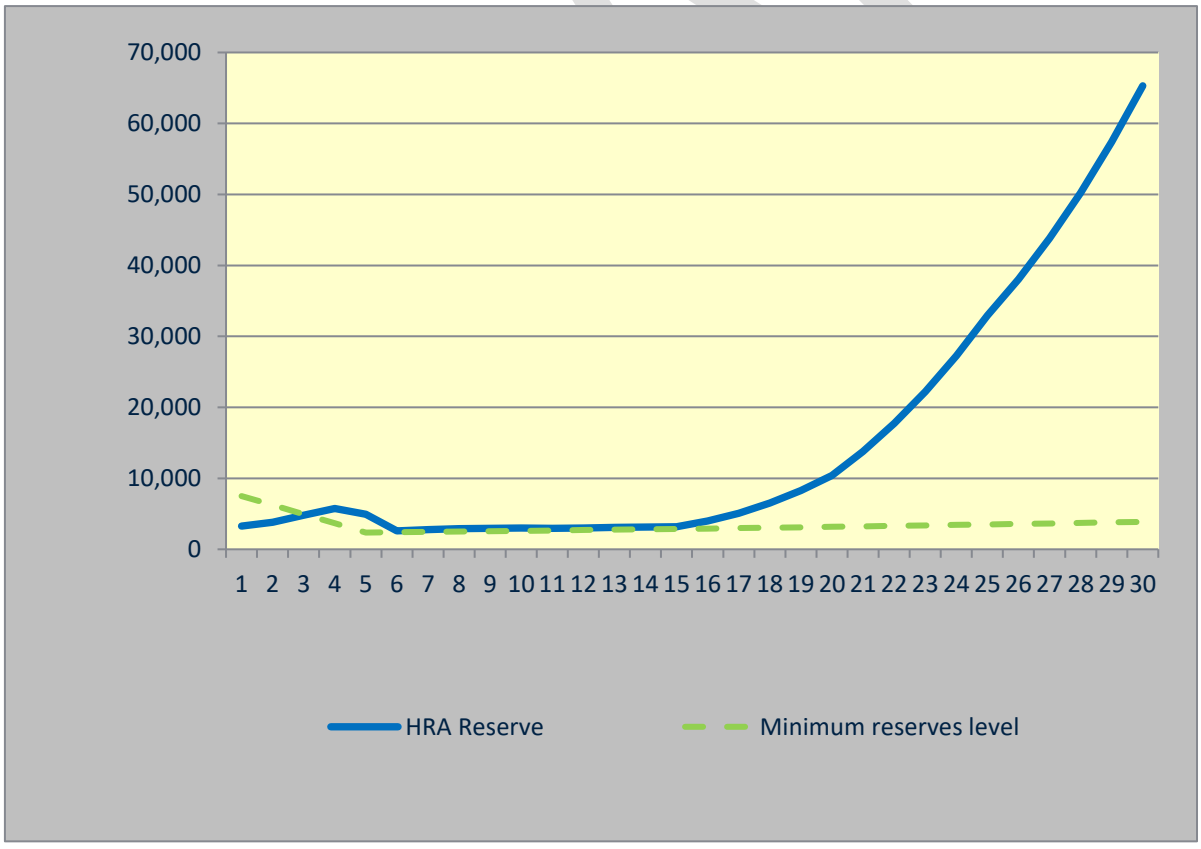


Chart 4.2: forecast capital programme with sources of finance £'000's

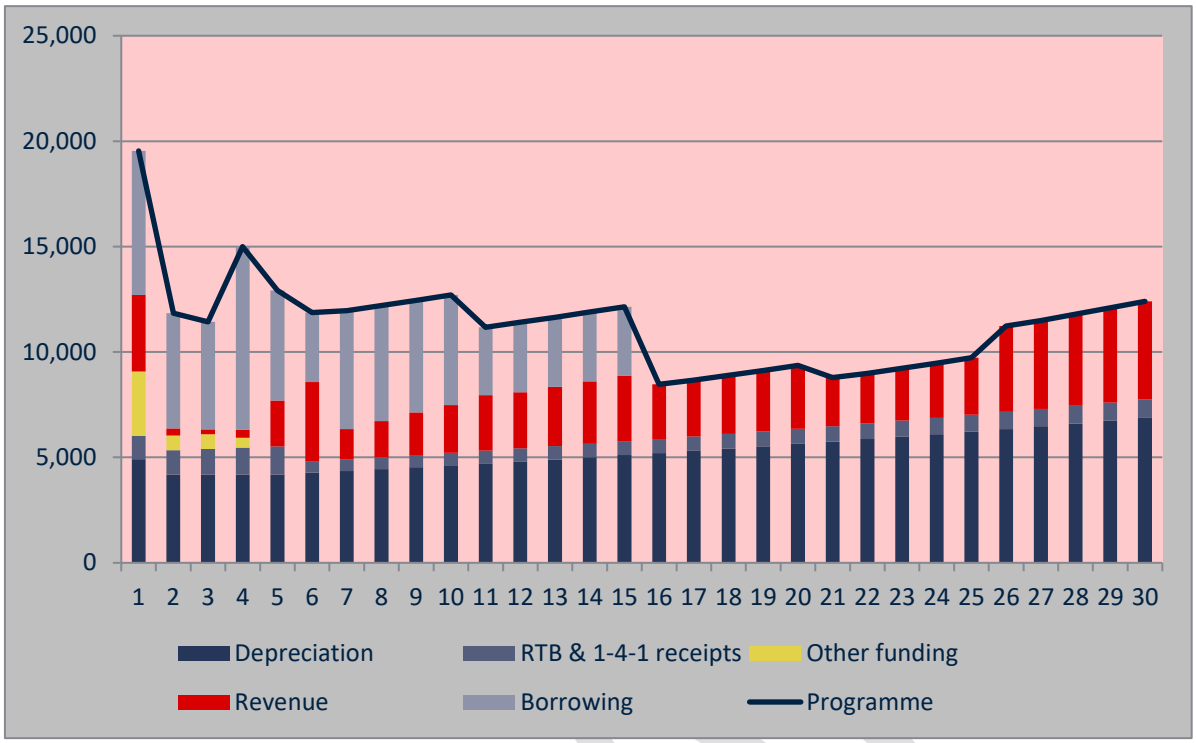
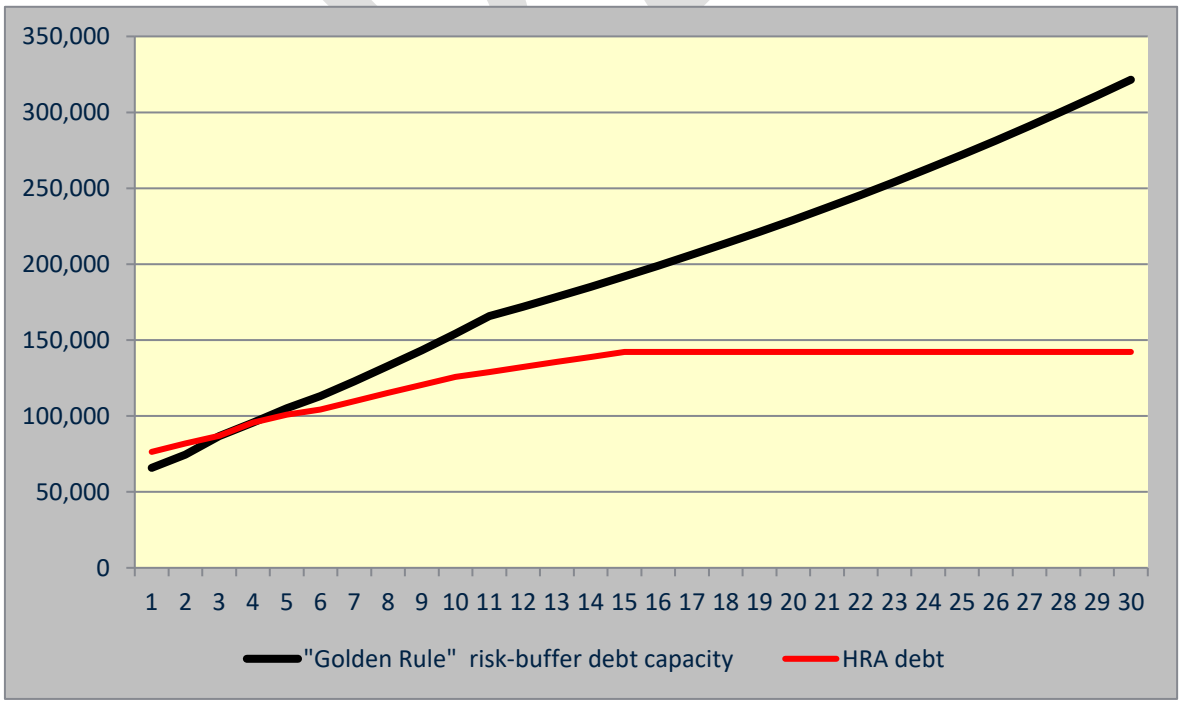


Chart 4.3: forecast debt projection against golden rule debt capacity £'000's



The charts highlight the following headline summary points for our Business Plan.

The revenue reserve is always able to be maintained at or above the minimum reserve level of 10% of total income every year and begins to increase significantly to generate additional capacity for investment from the middle years of the plan.

Revenue reserves are almost entirely used up in the first half of the plan given the need to top up resources for the capital programme.

In the latter half of the plan, reserves grow, generating resources for future investment (for example in the second tranche of sewage works), without the need for additional borrowing from that point.

The capital programme is fully financed throughout the entire term. This is a significant output given the scale of investment required; an investment is envisaged into achieving EPC C by 2030 for all homes, completing works to sewage treatment facilities across the lifetime of the plan, and ensuring that we are still able to deliver life cycle replacement programmes which are at a higher standard than the national average.

Financing the capital programme relies on significant additional revenue top-ups (in every year) plus additional borrowing to year 15 (2040).

The debt chart compares the forecast level of debt against what is able to be afforded given a golden rule interest cover ratio of 1.25. In all but the first two years, the plan operates with capacity for additional investment within this metric, highlighting that there may be the potential to bring forward additional investment in the medium-long term.

4.3. Investment framework

The charts below show the financial projections in terms of the metrics that we have adopted to manage the financial health of the HRA and assessment of future investment capacity.

Chart 4.4: operating margin over 30 years

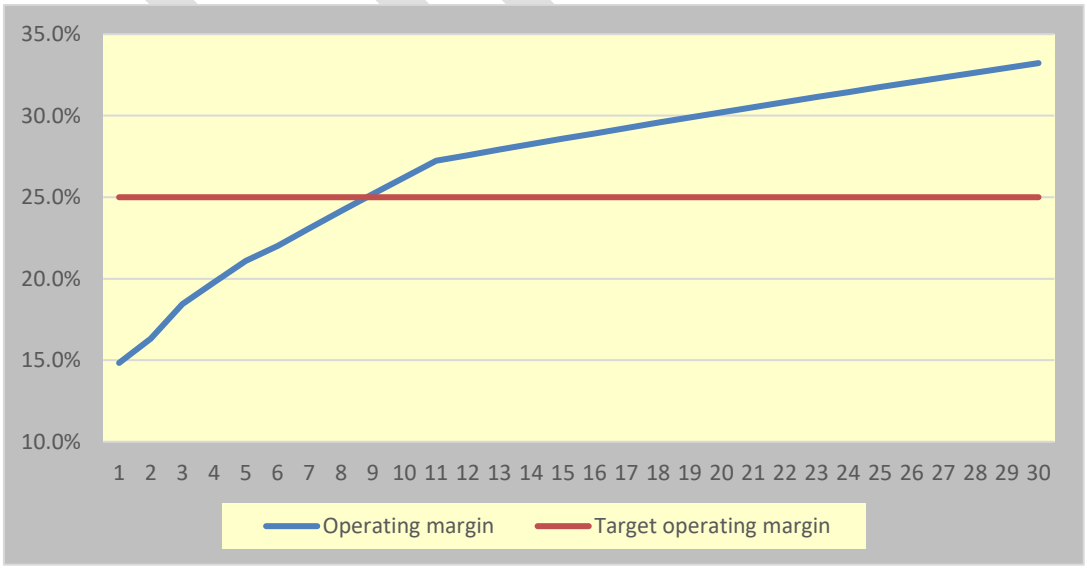
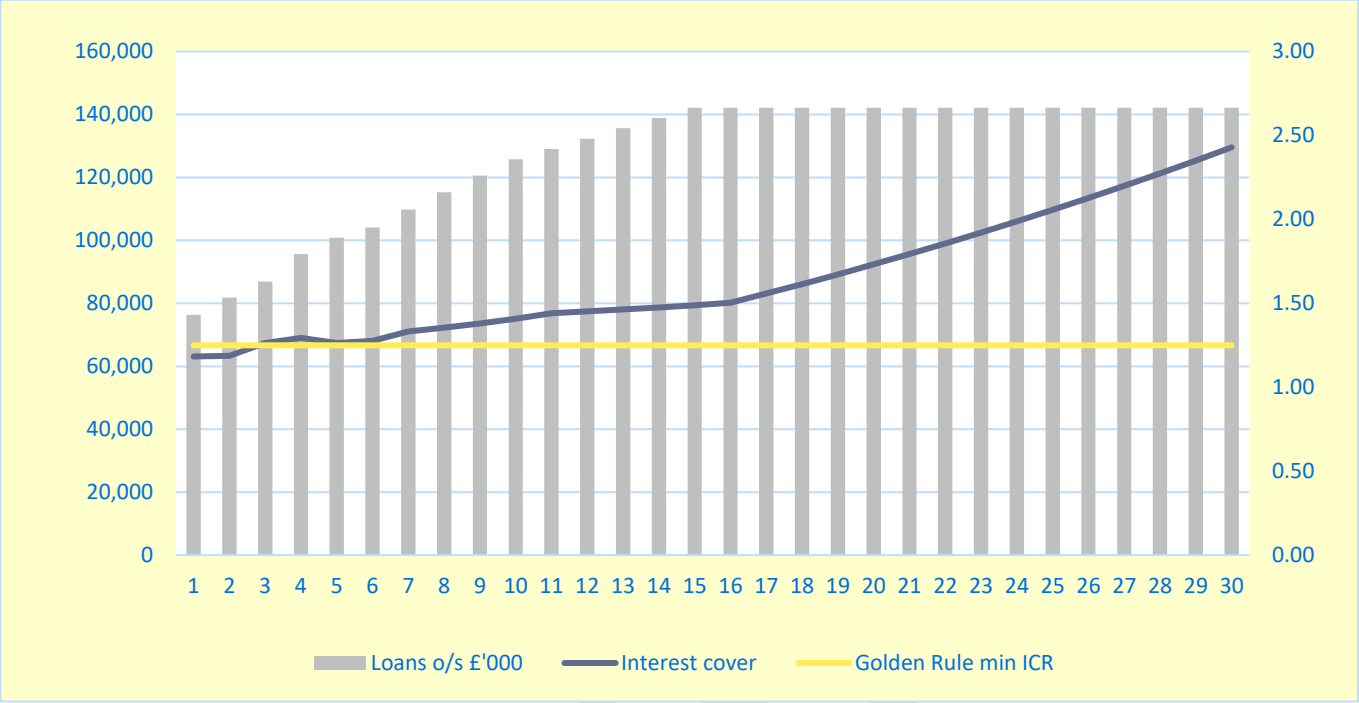


Chart 4.5: interest cover against borrowing and debt plans £'000's (golden rule 1.25)



The charts highlight that following an initial period when the financial metrics are managed to come to our target levels, the plan is sustainable.

4.4. Summary

In summary, the Baseline Business Plan represents a significant development in the evolution of our planning at South Holland. The Plan:

- Is based on much more robust data than it ever has been before.
- Allows investment into the stock at a level substantially above anything the Council has been able to finance previously.
- Continues to provide for investment into services to support transformation plans, controlling them to real terms levels (i.e. increasing with inflation) at a time when rents are set to increase at a higher rate.
- Allows a limited but significant programme of development or acquisition.

This is a substantial achievement for the Council at a time when finances are under pressure across the social housing sector.

Notwithstanding the above, given the reliance on borrowing to support investment and the projected increase in debt to above £140million by 2040, additional financial pressures do have the potential to affect the delivery of the plan over the medium term. We will need to monitor the delivery of the plan carefully and refine and review in detail on an annual basis to ensure that our plans are able to continue to be delivered.

4.5. Sensitivity and stress testing

The Regulator of Social Housing requires all housing associations to develop a robust approach to stress testing to test the financial viability of business plans against changes in assumptions (known as "downside" stresses).

There are also some possible changes which might work to the benefit of the HRA, including for example if the government were to allow rent convergence, and the Council were to implement higher rent increases as a result.

Whilst the Regulator does not have oversight of HRA business planning, the rules around future delivery mean that it is best practice for councils to operate similar stress testing within the business planning process. We have therefore applied the following sensitivities to the baseline plan and summarised the outputs below.

Table 4.6 Stress testing and upside modelling outputs

	Debt at year 30	Debt capacity at year 30	Minimum Interest Cover Ratio after year 3	Maximum operating margin
Baseline plan	**142,189**	**321,467**	**1.26**	**33.2%**
Stress tests				
Management & Maintenance costs increase by 1% above all years	189,928	184,195	1.03	23.9%
Interest rates on new debt are 1% higher	150,061	321,467	1.19	33.2%
Life cycle changes not implemented	144,888	321,467	1.26	33.2%
CPI+1% rent increases for 5 years not 10	157,475	278,335	1.17	30.1%
Capital costs increase 1% above inflation for 10 years	180,085	321,467	1.22	33.2%
Possible "upsides"				
Rent convergence £1 to 2036	135,692	334,248	1.34	34.1%
Increased acquisitions to 40pa to 2035	119,292	282,420	1.44	31.6%

The outputs above highlight the following:

- The plan is relatively resilient to changes in capital costs driven by inflation of shorter life cycle replacements.
- However, the key challenges from downside stress testing arise from expenditure inflation outpacing income inflation, be that cost pressures on the expenditure side, or the inability to increase rents at CPI+1% beyond an initial 5 year period.

- Interest rate increases are also a downside stress given the reliance in the plan on additional borrowing to meet investment needs.

All of these sensitivities highlight the importance of managing budgets to ensure that income and cost levels are aligned over the long-term, which may include reducing budgets for day to day services, increasing efficiency in service delivery and/or reducing investment in the stock and in neighbourhoods.

On the possible "upsides", should the government allow convergence to formula rent at £1 per annum up to 2036 (by which time all but a handful of properties would have converged), this enhances investment capacity in the short-medium term. The long term positive impact is more limited as all properties would eventually be relet at formula rent without convergence, hence the real benefit of convergence would be in managing short-term investment opportunities.

Both of the scenarios with increased new build or acquisition are accretive to the plan overall but result in higher borrowing rates but with the substantial upside of much increased investment capacity.

4.6. Summary

The HRA Business Plan for 2026-2056 represents a substantial investment into our communities, services for our tenants and residents and into our stock.

The plan is fundable, sustainable and delivers on all of our principal objectives.

At the same time, we recognise that a business plan of this scale and magnitude is a departure from previous practice and represents a significant shift in terms of the scale of delivery and therefore the risks that such a plan includes, particularly given the proposal to finance much-enhanced investment through borrowing.

The plan will be kept under regular review, refresh annually, and updated fully in the run up to 2030 as the next phase of the Asset Management Strategy is developed. We will also need to be sensitive to changes in policy at the national level and in respect of the regulation of the Council as a provider of social housing.

Appendix One: MTFS projections

Revenue projection

Year	1	2	3	4	5
Financial Year	2026.27	2027.28	2028.29	2029.30	2030.31
Dwelling rents	19,660,787	20,275,807	20,893,249	21,529,480	22,185,070
Non-dwelling rents	100	100	100	100	100
Service charge income	1,364,800	1,375,100	1,385,700	1,396,600	1,407,700
Other income and contributions	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Total income	**21,027,187**	**21,652,507**	**22,280,549**	**22,927,680**	**23,594,370**
Repairs & maintenance	5,263,700	5,321,000	5,325,000	5,417,300	5,508,500
Management (incl RRT)	8,372,200	8,532,500	8,580,600	8,711,300	8,842,000
Bad debts	75,313	75,638	75,901	76,164	76,450
Dwelling Depreciation	4,196,500	4,188,500	4,188,500	4,188,500	4,188,500
Depreciation of Right of Use assets	0	0	0	0	0
Debt management	0	0	0	0	0
Total costs	**17,907,713**	**18,117,638**	**18,170,001**	**18,393,264**	**18,615,450**
Net income from services	**3,119,474**	**3,534,869**	**4,110,549**	**4,534,416**	**4,978,920**
Interest payable	-2,635,816	-2,977,294	-3,251,178	-3,505,900	-3,940,397
Interest income	327,000	327,000	327,000	327,000	327,000
Net income/expenditure before appropriations	**810,658**	**884,574**	**1,186,371**	**1,355,516**	**1,365,523**
Set aside for debt repayment	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue contributions to capital	-3,631,500	-334,030	-226,193	-374,400	-2,168,181
Voluntary top-up to MRR	0	0	0	0	0
Allocation (to) / from other reserves	0	0	0	0	0
Other appropriations	0	0	0	0	0
Net HRA Surplus/Deficit	**-2,820,842**	**550,544**	**960,178**	**981,116**	**-802,658**
HRA Balance brought forward	**6,093,553**	**3,272,712**	**3,823,256**	**4,783,434**	**5,764,550**
HRA surplus/(deficit)	-2,820,842	550,544	960,178	981,116	-802,658
HRA Balance carried forward	**3.272.712**	**3.823.256**	**4.783.434**	**5.764.550**	**4.961.892**

Capital programme projection

Year	1	2	3	4	5
Financial Year	2026.27	2027.28	2028.29	2029.30	2030.31
HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME					
Stock capital investment	17,282,700	10,405,700	9,889,208	13,526,029	11,579,617
Other Improvements	0	0	0	0	0
Development/Acquisition	2,110,000	1,155,000	1,212,750	1,273,388	1,337,057
ICT and vehicles	144,000	283,000	322,200	196,400	0
Capital programme	**19,536,700**	**11,843,700**	**11,424,158**	**14,995,817**	**12,916,674**
Scheduled Debt Repayment	0	0	0	0	0
Financed by...					
Major Repairs Reserve	-4,922,640	-4,188,500	-4,188,500	-4,188,500	-4,188,500
RTB receipts	0	0	0	0	0
1-4-1 receipts	-1,108,000	-1,155,000	-1,212,750	-1,273,388	-1,337,057
Other receipts, Reserves and grants	-3,045,000	-688,500	-702,270	-469,585	0
Revenue contributions	-3,631,500	-334,030	-226,193	-374,400	-2,168,181
Release of revenue reserve	0	0	0	0	0
HRA borrowing	-6,829,560	-5,477,670	-5,094,445	-8,689,945	-5,222,936
Capital financing	**-19,536,700**	**-11,843,700**	**-11,424,158**	**-14,995,817**	**-12,916,674**
Net balance on capital programme	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

South Holland District Council

Housing Revenue Account Asset Management Strategy

Investment Plan 2026-2035

Draft v3.1 (22 December 2025)

Contents

Headline Summary

Welcome to South Holland's Asset Management Strategy for council housing in the district.

The Strategy sets out our plans for the management and maintenance of our housing stock over the long term, and in particular our Investment Plan in the period to 2035.

Within this strategy, we make the links to our other key corporate and landlord strategies and focus on what we need to invest into our homes and neighbourhoods, how much we will invest and how we will do it.

This strategy has been developed during the course of 2025 in the context of an enhanced regulatory regime introduced following the tragedies at Grenfell and Rochdale, with the associated requirement to comprehensively update our investment planning following a detailed home by home stock condition survey. The Government has consulted on a revised Decent Homes Standard to be achieved by 2035 and a new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) to achieve EPC C in all homes by 2030. This strategy is closely linked to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan which sets out how the strategy will be financed.

We have engaged with tenants, councillors, staff and other stakeholders to test out their priorities and our investment planning pays close attention to those priorities.

Our investment needs over 30 years from 2026 to 2056 total £235million, around £62,000 per home. In the first 9 years we plan to invest over £106million into our homes and neighbourhoods, and in the first 5 years from 2026 to 2031 we will be investing over £70million including provision for a small programme of new homes acquisition.

We are prioritising the following investment in the period to 2035:

- Life cycle and elemental replacements, such as kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors, in a revised and comprehensive programme addressing all elements that will be in need of repair in that period; we are extending some of the expected life cycles for some of the key elements within properties (e.g. kitchens and bathroom) and planning some to be done in a shorter life cycle (e.g. roofs) but are committed to continue to repair elements as they become due whatever their planning life cycle.
- Achievement of EPC C for all our homes by 2030
- A programme of upgrades to sewage treatment works
- An extensive commitment to invest is aids and adaptations to respond to the changing needs of our residents
- A small acquisition programme of 5 homes per annum to 2031 followed by a prospective extension of up to 20 homes per annum from 2031.

This strategy sets out a key action plan which will ensure we achieve value for money in procurement and delivery.

The strategy will be reviewed annually and will be subject to a detailed refresh in the run up to 2030.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Welcome to South Holland's Asset Management Strategy for council housing in the district.

The Strategy sets out our plans for the management and maintenance of our housing stock over the long term, and in particular our Investment Plan in the period to 2035.

Following the tragedies of the Grenfell fire and the death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale, legislation has been strengthened and regulation is being enhanced. Along with all housing providers, the Council faces the challenge of ensuring we get the basics right whilst contributing to the wellbeing of tenants and communities. How we maintain our housing stock, and all the components and elements within it, and how we maintain the areas around our housing, are absolutely critical to the safety of our tenants. It is also critical to how we meet the standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing, in particular the Safety and Quality Standard. This Strategy is the primary basis for the Council to meet and maintain compliance with this Standard.

Our Asset Management Strategy is designed as a robust, evidence-based strategy to lead our investment decisions. We have worked hard during 2024 and 2025 to develop good data on the condition of our stock and understanding the work needed to maintain safety and to improve energy efficiency to keep our residents warm and safe.

We have also been keen to enhance our knowledge of what is important to our residents and their views have been utilised to inform our strategy and to refine our investment planning.

The strategy seeks to deliver value for money for the Council and for current and future residents. It is supported by an investment and action plan that we will use to direct and monitor activity.

1.2. Scope

This strategy sets out our overall approach to asset management of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) stock. It includes all our housing assets and other HRA assets including community centres. It also covers, at a high level, the requirement for the Council to maintain sewage treatment works.

It is a high level strategy for asset management, with implementation supported by operational plans and policies.

1.3. Purpose

The Asset Management Strategy structures our ability to deliver the three core components of asset management:

- **Stock and community investment**: Investing to maintain the stock to a standard that meets customer and Council needs and regulatory requirements.
- **Active Asset Management**: Ensuring that long term we have housing that meets the need of local communities, that is fit for purpose for the future and reflects resident priorities.
- **Supporting wider objectives**: Being clear where and how asset management supports wider objectives, such as energy efficiency, increasing the supply of new homes and creating sustainable communities.

1.4. Context

The current economic conditions, with the ongoing cost of living crisis, means challenges for our residents and for our business plan. There are many different demands on our resources and this strategy provides a framework to meet these challenges.

There is a significant focus on data and safety. The Fire Safety Act 2021 and the Building Safety Act 2022 introduce additional costs and management obligations for our buildings. Landlord compliance activity is critical to ensuring our homes are safe. The strategy sets out how we will continue to strengthen our delivery in key areas and across all of our projects and programmes.

Our Housing Landlord Strategy 2024-2026 provides a key overarching framework for this Asset Management Strategy. The Housing Landlord Strategy was approved by the Council in 2024 and sets our plans for transformation of the housing landlord service, of which repairs, maintenance and investment are an integral part.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 reformed regulation and strengthened our landlord obligations around transparency and accountability to our residents. It also stresses the importance of good data to demonstrate compliance.

The Government consulted in the summer of 2025 on updating the Decent Homes Standard with a key proposal to introduce a minimum standard for energy efficiency for the first time, and for this minimum energy efficiency standard to itself become part of the Decent Homes Standard. At the time of drafting this strategy, the outcome of the consultation process is awaited, although we have made some assumptions around future requirements that we believe will ensure that we are compliant with the new standard when it is finalised.

The Council also faces a shortage of affordable homes. We want to use our asset management strategy to support the Council's ambitions to deliver new social homes. The strategy sets out how we will begin to review our existing housing stock to identify opportunities for growth.

1.5. Links to other strategies and documents

Our Housing Landlord Strategy sets out our ambitions to deliver on four overarching themes:

1. Culture and Operational Excellence

   We will deliver a service that meets the needs and aspirations of our tenants, whilst keeping them safe

2. Quality Homes and Connected Neighbourhoods

   We will be well governed and financially resilient, operating efficiently and responsibly, and investing wisely to fulfil our social purpose.

3. Accountability and Transparency

   We will deliver well maintained, safe, affordable homes and neighbourhoods, where people are proud to live that supports their health and wellbeing.

4. Tenant Voice and Opportunity

   Tenants will be at the heart of everything we do and every decision we make.

In turn, our Housing Landlord Strategy and Housing Transformation Plan represent an integral part of the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership Alignment and Delivery Plan, a plan which is annually updated to reflect the priorities of the Council in its sub-regional and wider Lincolnshire context. Asset management links to all four of strategic sub-regional priorities:

- Growth and Prosperity – the expanded investment programmes set out within this strategy mean opportunities for increased jobs locally
- Healthy Lives – the safety and quality of our homes directly impacts the health and wellbeing of our tenants and residents
- Safe and resilient communities – investment in our homes and in our communities within our council housing estates provides the basis for community resilience
- Environment – investing in the environment through increased energy efficiency.

1.6. Asset management strategic objectives to support our corporate landlord priorities

We have developed four overall objectives for asset management which underpin this strategy.

1. **Continue to grow knowledge and understanding about our stock and neighbourhoods:** we have achieved c.90% surveys of our stock, and will develop our knowledge and analysis further as we gain more insight.
2. **Bring stock to the revised Decent Homes Standard**: noting that there are increases in the standard compared to the current level, subject to formal government confirmation including compliance date (2035/37).
3. **Meet Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards by 2030 and beyond**: in practice this will mean aiming to achieve a minimum EPC C rating for as many homes as it is technically possible to do so
4. **Set a high standard for our neighbourhoods and invest to that standard**: involving agreeing a minimum standard for investing in the environment outside of physical properties.

1.7. Planning requirements and tools

We have a range of tools to help us to deliver effective management and maintenance of our assets.

Central to effective asset management is the collation and use of robust and integrated management information to enable effective planning. The new strategy relies on information in the following areas which will need to be regularly updated to ensure it is fit for purpose.

- Stock condition data

The strategy is based on recent survey data. At the time of drafting, around 90% of the stock had been surveyed, with further surveys ongoing to achieve complete coverage and support investment planning. We are also developing an enhanced process to capture data from our responsive repairs services.

- **Data and governance to support compliance**

We have a suite of key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor compliance across all key areas and have management arrangements in place for fire, asbestos, legionella, electric, gas, lifts, damp and mould.

- **Asset Performance**

We are beginning the process of building a detailed understanding of asset performance from a financial perspective, and are developing our understanding of the extent to which assets help us to meet our social objectives. A key element of our strategy will be to make an assessment of the performance of assets to inform future investment planning, strategic asset management, housing management and neighbourhood planning. We will use the information to make informed decisions about where and when to invest in our assets and how best to support our residents to have good quality homes that they can afford.

- **Skills and expertise**

The Property Services Team and Housing Repairs Team within Housing Landlord Services are responsible for setting policies and standards relating to repairs and maintenance, statutory reporting, the storage and management of asset-related data, and also leading on projects to ensure our homes reach the standards set and we make the best use of our assets.

- **IT systems**

We are committed to ensuring we have robust asset management databases and systems. We continue to invest time improving our management of risk and the organisation of data for future stock maintenance.

These are the core tools required so that we can understand our assets, make informed decisions about their future, and deliver the component parts of this strategy.

1.8. Investment Planning

We already have a comprehensive Investment Plan for the investment of nearly £50million into the stock and our neighbourhoods over the five years from 2025-2030. Our investment plan is updated annually and approved as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy which runs over a rolling 5 year period. We plan to extend our asset planning to a 10 year rolling period as this strategy matures over the next few years.

A key element of this strategy will be to refine the priorities within the Investment Plan so that it continues to reflect the needs and requirements of the stock and the views of our tenants.

Key dates for our Investment Planning focus on the following:

- 2030 – the deadline for the achievement of a Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) for our stock, set by the Government to be the equivalent of EPC 'C'.

- 2035 – the deadline for the achievement of the remainder of all parts of the Government's revised Decent Homes Standard.

The strategy and planning for these dates are the practical and principal short-medium term objectives for this Asset Management Strategy.

2. Demand, need and regulation

2.1. Housing demand and need

In common with almost all council housing services in the country, South Holland has a growing population and growing demand for affordable housing.

Housing need is measured through our Housing Register (the housing waiting list). As at 30th November 2025, there were 745 households on the Housing Register, formed of 2% emergency banding, 6% urgent banding, 16% high banding and remaining 76% identified housing need. This need compares to our stock holding of 3,780, from which less than 6.6% of homes are relet during the year.

Whilst pressures on homelessness and temporary accommodation in South Holland are not as great as in some parts of the country, the Council has a statutory responsibility towards supporting homeless households in finding accommodation, and the pressure is growing. The Council had 27 households in temporary accommodation on 30th November 2025.

We have therefore incorporated provision for a programme of stock acquisition and development into this strategy so that we have some resources to provide the additional homes that we need.

At the same time, the demographics of our tenant and resident population influences the types of need that we have for housing in the district, with an increased focus on the need for the following:

- Adapted homes for the elderly and disabled (see below)
- Larger family homes, many of the former stock having been sold to former tenants under the Right to Buy.
- More energy efficient homes to reduce heating and fuel bills for our tenants.

2.2. Adaptations and other specialist housing

The Council is committed to adapting properties to meet the changing needs of our tenants and plans to invest over £5.5 million in such adaptations from 2026-2031 with 231 adaptations completed during 2024/25 and a forecast of 216 adaptations for 2025/26.

It is important that we have strong data on the location and type of adaptations present across our stock. Stock condition surveys completed during 2024-25 collated data on adaptations and this information is built into our asset database to ensure residents needs are met and to inform investment. The housing register ensures accessible properties are allocated to households needing adaptations, maximising the use of adapted properties at relet.

A review of our approach to installing aids and adaptations was completed with tenants and members during 2025 resulting in a new policy framework to drive consistency and efficiency. While the Council continues to deliver an intensive disabled aids and adaptations programme, the budget for the programme is modelled to reduce from 2031 onwards in response to substantial and ongoing investment in adapting stock for disabled households, alongside wider capital programme improvements including installations of wet rooms in sheltered housing at upgrade. It is anticipated that these initiatives in conjunction with a new policy framework will lead to a gradual decline in demand for disabled adaptations, as homes are increasingly adapted to meet accessibility requirements.

2.3. Resident engagement and priorities

A key priority in our Housing Landlord Strategy stresses the critical nature of how we inform our services and investment plans through customers' views. The Regulator's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard provides a regulatory backdrop emphasising the importance of resident engagement

The ambition is for residents to benefit from accessible, high quality services and be involved in decisions that affect them.

We undertook a tenant and resident engagement process during the autumn of 2025 to inform the priorities within this strategy. The process comprised two key strands:

- Two focus groups with engaged tenants, during which there was extensive discussion of the themes around asset management and how the Council should go about taking decisions around future priorities for investment
- An online survey for all tenants, asking ten questions to gain views on future investment priorities.

The key questions we wanted responses to were as follows:

1. Should we extend life cycles – since 2012, the Council has operated to element replacement life cycles that are relatively short compared to the standards adopted by other housing providers; this is because at that time, the Council had the money to be able to repair and replace large elements such as kitchens and bathrooms in a shorter timeframe; given the greater financial pressures that the Council is now under, we asked whether we should extend these life cycles.

2. Should the Council maintain a stock replacement, acquisition and/or development programme? What is the right balance between investment in the existing stock and in new homes?

3. How important is investment in the neighbourhood and environment compared to investment into the actual physical fabric of the properties?

4. How important is the capability to invest in aids and adaptations for the elderly and infirm/disabled or otherwise vulnerable tenants and residents?

5. Is there a role for regeneration and development of "obsolete" and/or high-cost homes; whilst the Council will need to be proactive around managing asset performance, we wanted to understand tenants' views on how plans for redevelopment might be applied.

The outcomes from the engagement process are summarised below.

Focus Groups

The discussion feedback (which was also echoed by several specific survey comments – see below) is summarised as:

1. Extend lifecycles for kitchens, bathrooms, and boilers, provided the original specification is of sufficient quality to ensure durability.

2. Avoid unnecessary replacements of kitchens and bathrooms where they remain in good condition.

3. Importance of accessibility of bathrooms.

4. Mixed views on fencing: one group favoured fencing around communal and outdoor areas for security, while both agreed the external environment should remain attractive.

5. Supportive of property disposals where costs to bring homes up to standard would be excessive.

6. Strong support for new builds, designed to enable ageing in place, future-proofed, and located on brownfield sites.

7. Positive backing for investment in Aids and Adaptations to improve accessibility and independence.

8. Raise the void property standard to ensure homes are ready for occupation at a higher quality level.

9. Focus on green energy solutions, including solar panels, small wind turbines in rural gardens, and electric vehicle charging points (particularly for tenants with mobility needs transitioning to electric vehicles).

10. Council support for home and garden maintenance where tenants require assistance.

11. Ensure that tenants who fail to maintain their properties or gardens are recharged.

Online Survey

There were over 100 responses to the survey, representing c 4% of households. This represents a reasonable response rate, especially when the findings and outcomes are taken together with the discussions within the focus groups.

Graph outcomes from a selection of the questions are set out overleaf. In summary, the resident feedback summary headlines:

- Extending life cycles is supported as long as the specification is high and that repairs are still undertaken when required.

- It is good to find space for a new homes/acquisition programme but it is not number 1 priority, and not at the expense of safety and quality of the existing stock.

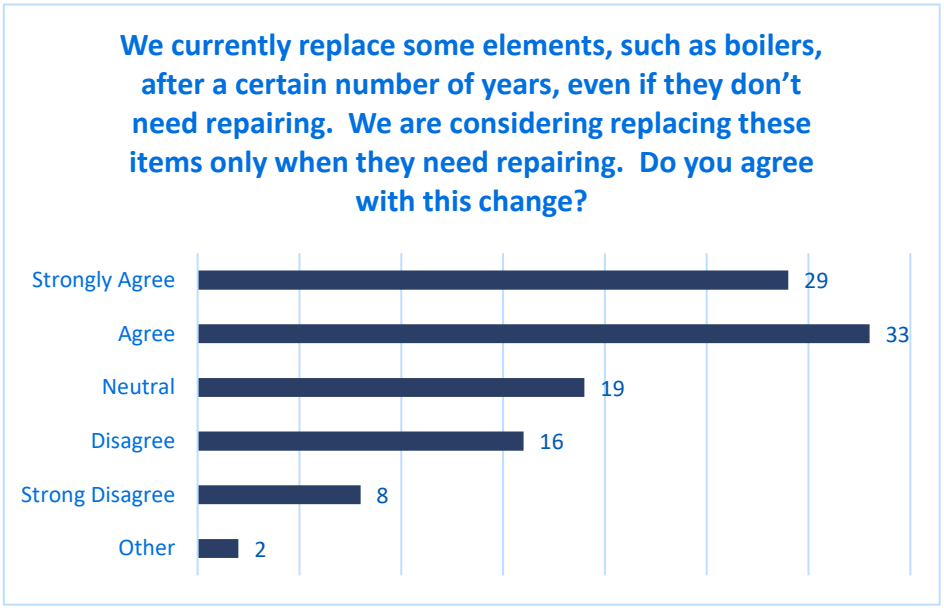
- Continue to provide programme of aids and adaptations to a high standard.

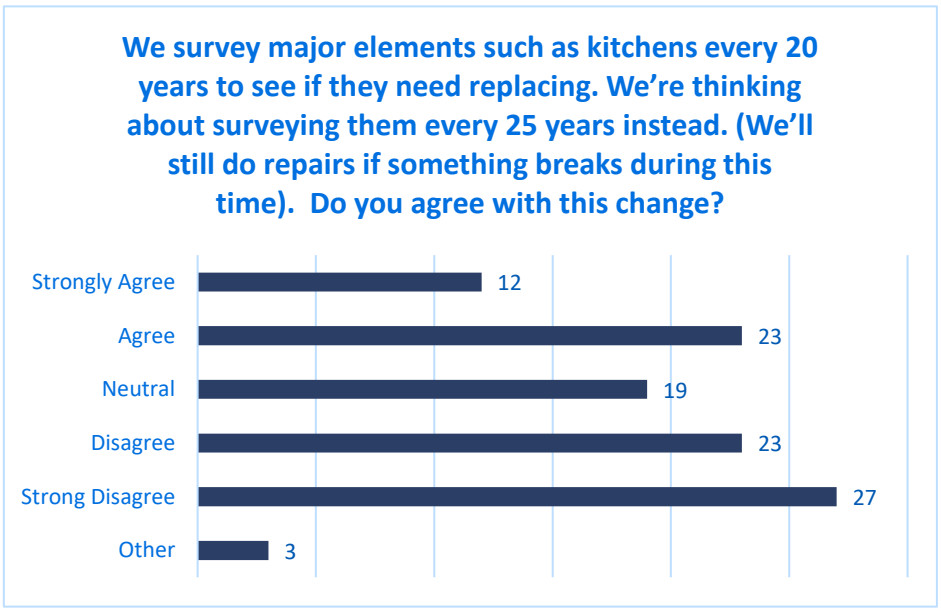
- It would be important to find space for a limited, but focused, programme of works outside of properties within the curtilage of estates and neighbourhoods.

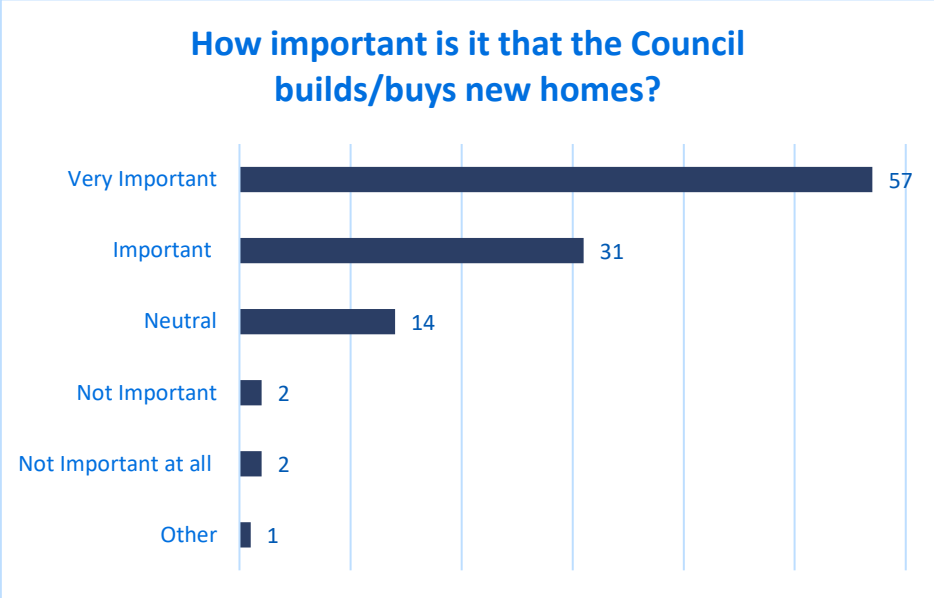
- Review the void standard

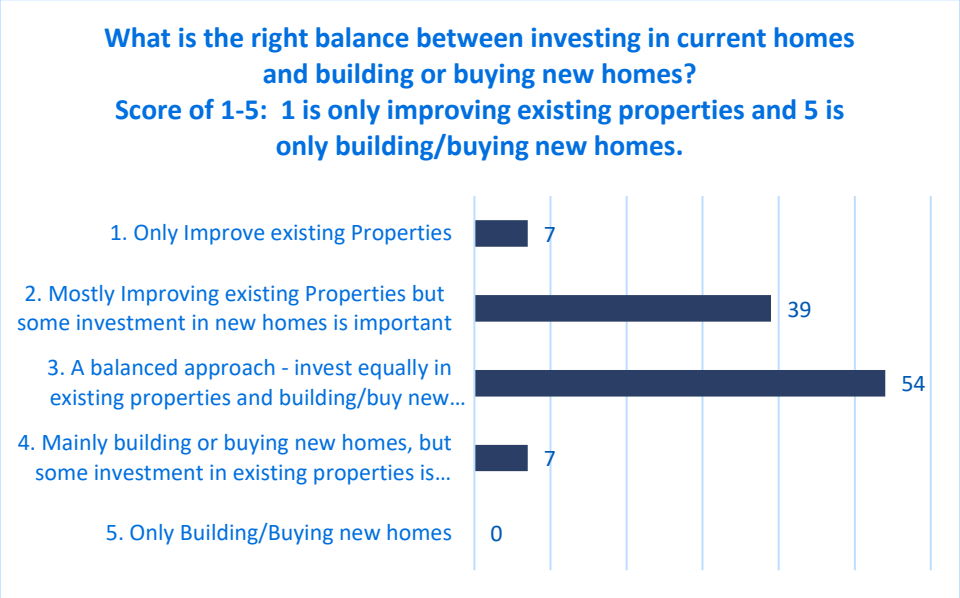
- Explore opportunities to provide support for tenants in keeping homes and gardens to high standard.

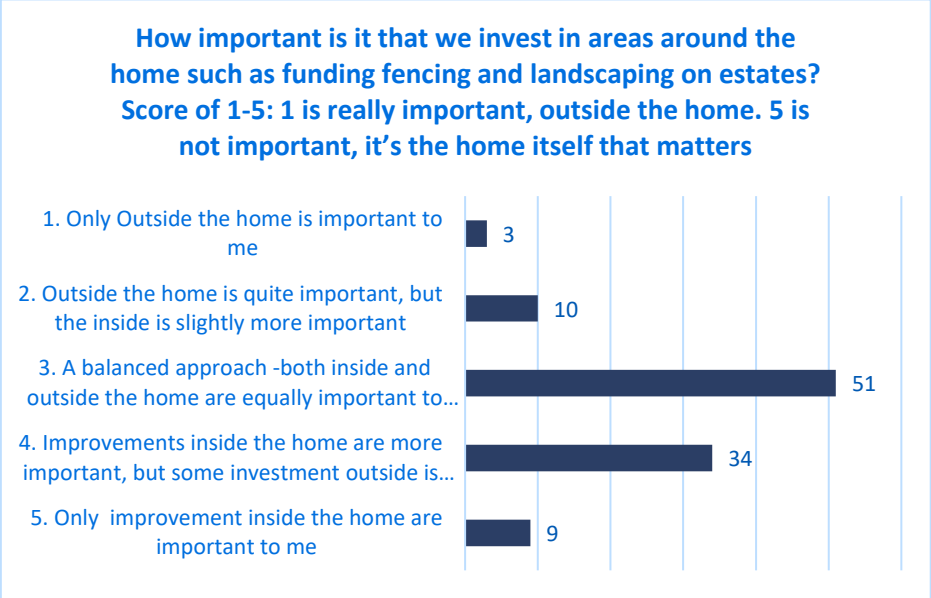
- Review asset performance and bring forward options for redevelopment as necessary.

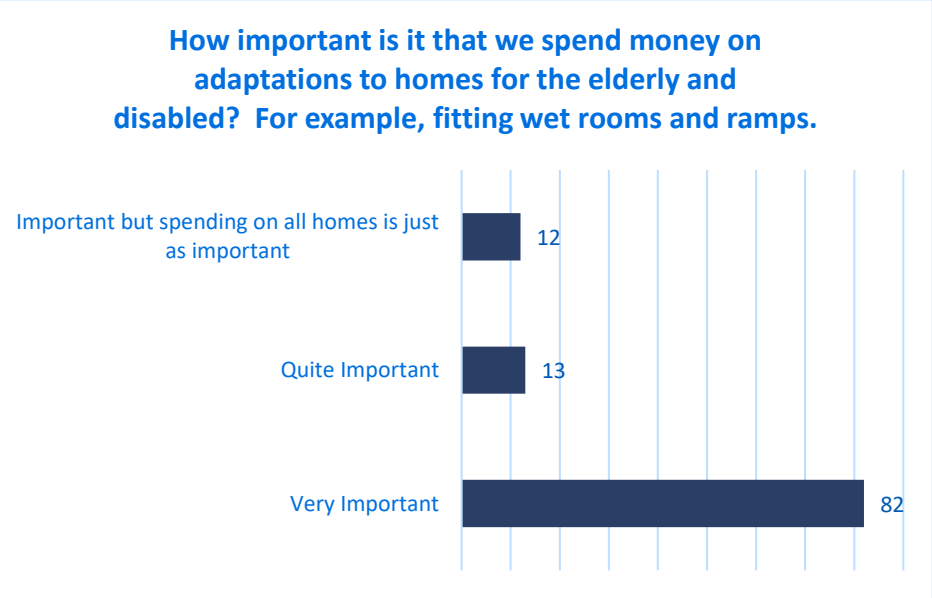

We currently replace some elements, such as boilers, after a certain number of years, even if they don't need repairing. We are considering replacing these items only when they need repairing. Do you agree with this change?
Strongly Agree
29
Agree
33
Neutral
19
Disagree
16
Strong Disagree
8
Other
2


We survey major elements such as kitchens every 20 years to see if they need replacing. We're thinking about surveying them every 25 years instead. (We'll still do repairs if something breaks during this time). Do you agree with this change?
Strongly Agree
12
Agree
23
Neutral
19
Disagree
23
Strong Disagree
27
Other
3


How important is it that the Council builds/buys new homes?
Very Important
57
Important
31
Neutral
14
Not Important
2
Not Important at all
2
Other
1


What is the right balance between investing in current homes and building or buying new homes?
Score of 1-5: 1 is only improving existing properties and 5 is only building/buying new homes.
1. Only Improve existing Properties
7
2. Mostly Improving existing Properties but some investment in new homes is important
39
3. A balanced approach - invest equally in existing properties and building/buy new...
54
4. Mainly building or buying new homes, but some investment in existing properties is...
7
5. Only Building/Buying new homes
0





2.4. Councillor priorities

We also conducted a short series of discussions with all councillors to test their priorities for investment against the same overall questions. As would be expected, the main priorities were very similar to those of tenants and residents:

- General support for extending lifecycles of kitchens, bathrooms, and heating systems so long as they remained in good condition.
- Support for a stock replacement/acquisition programme on the basis that investment in existing stock is prioritised and consideration around selling high-cost or isolated properties to reinvest in newer stock. New build / acquisition programme should be focussed on property types which meet local housing need.

- Strong support for improving neighbourhoods (fencing, landscaping, communal areas), recognising the impact on wellbeing and estate appearance. Awareness that some gardens are large and tenants struggle to maintain.

- Positive support for ongoing investment in aids and adaptations due to ageing population and rising demand.

- Role for regeneration where properties are costly to maintain or have poor energy efficiency and supported exploring redevelopment opportunities/disposal of units.

Additionally, members had a strong interest in solar panels (based on resident feedback) and that there should be a linked initiative around the "optimal" use of stock, with, for example, the offering of incentives for downsizing to those residents under-occupying larger properties in order to free homes up for larger families in need.

2.5. Regulation

The legislative and regulatory backdrop is critical to inform our investment plans. The regulatory environment for social housing has developed significantly in recent years, placing compliance, safety, and transparency at the centre of asset management practice. Meeting these requirements is not only a statutory obligation but also a moral imperative, ensuring that tenants can live safely and with confidence in their homes.

A summary of the key elements is set out below.

Decent Homes Standard

The Decent Homes Standard (DHS) is being revised to include a new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard with proposals including the need to provide floor coverings when homes are relet to incoming tenants.

The new standard is expected to change in one other key specific way. Currently, it is possible to meet the DHS whilst still having some elements of homes not up to modern standards or in a good state of repair; this "minimum" approach to meeting the standard (for example, having a modern kitchen but an older bathroom in need of replacement) is being replaced by the removal of such flexibility; from now on, all elements must be in a good state of repair. Our stock condition survey covers the replacement of all components within the home and this will provide the basis for ensuring that we meet the DHS going forward.

Whilst the earlier consultation in 2025 was not specific around the standards to be set for the introduction of a requirement to provide floor coverings in properties, most providers are allowing for additional investment. For South Holland, we have assumed that the costs would be incorporated into repairs budgets for the reletting of void properties.

Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022

These have introduced the most significant changes to fire and building safety regulation in many decades. Whilst the Council has no high rise buildings, we must be mindful of the need to ensure the safety of high risk buildings, which could include properties which house vulnerable tenants. We have a regular and ongoing programme of carrying out fire risk assessments and a programme to address where those risks have been highlighted as needing repairs.

Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

This has reformed the powers and role of the Regulator, giving an explicit remit to proactively regulate Consumer Standards. From April 2024, all registered providers were required to comply with the new Safety and Quality Standard, which sits alongside other Consumer Standards.

The Safety and Quality Standard requires landlords to:

1. Maintain all homes in a safe condition, including through rigorous compliance with gas, electrical, fire, water, lift, and asbestos safety requirements (the “big six”).

2. Ensure that all homes are maintained to at least Decent Homes Standard, with transparent reporting to tenants and the regulator on compliance.

3. Demonstrate that tenants are living in properties that are of an acceptable quality, free from hazards, and that meet statutory fitness requirements.

4. Provide clear assurance to both tenants and the regulator that compliance frameworks are robust, validated, and subject to independent scrutiny.

A key element of enforcement of regulation of the Safety and Quality Standard is knowledge about our stock, and about the tenants that live in the homes, the former recorded through a stock condition survey, the latter through a comprehensive data recording system around tenants and customers.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

This was introduced under the Housing Act 2004, provides the statutory framework for assessing housing conditions and identifying hazards that may pose a risk to occupants’ health and safety. It underpins much of the legislation governing property standards, including the Decent Homes Standard, the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018, and the recently introduced requirements of Awaab’s Law. We use the HHSRS framework to assess and prioritise risks across the stock, ensuring that homes remain free from Category 1 hazards such as damp, mould, excess cold, or structural instability.

Awaab’s Law

This was introduced in 2024 to further strengthen the statutory duty to provide safe and healthy homes. The death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak in Rochdale in 2020 exposed the devastating consequences of unmanaged damp and mould. The new legislation requires landlords to investigate and remedy such hazards within defined timescales, reinforcing a culture of zero tolerance. For the Council, this means strengthening inspection processes, triage systems and data recording, ensuring that reports are acted upon promptly and that tenants receive clear information about progress. The approach to damp, mould and condensation management forms a central part of the Council’s compliance framework and risk management processes. Phase 1 of Awaab’s Law (focusing on damp, mould and condensation, and emergency repairs) was introduced on 27th October 2025. Phases 2 and 3 are scheduled to commence in 2026 and 2027, respectively.

Net Zero Carbon

The national and regional focus on climate action and carbon reduction has been a key area for social housing landlords in preparing strategies for managing assets since the commitment of the Government to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 introduced in 2019. Whilst the financial challenges facing social housing have meant that many providers have scaled down their plans to achieve net zero in the long term, the Council remains committed to achieving standards which deliver greater energy efficiency, sustainability and affordability for our customers.

Funding

The progression of consumer standards inspections by the Regulator since April 2024 has highlighted that knowledge, insight and planning are central to compliance with the various standards, particularly the Safety and Quality Standard. The Council is aware that lack of funding is not deemed to be a reason for not focusing on the basics around safety and quality, and whilst there are financial challenges across the entire social housing sector, we cannot assume that more money will become available from Government and must therefore plan on the basis of the funds we know we have.

3. Our Homes

3.1. Stock profile

We own just under 3,800 social and affordable homes and manage a further 22 leaseholder properties.

The profile of our stock is captured in the following three tables (stock totals are as at November 2025).

We have a relatively low level of flats compared to other social housing providers (only 264 or 7% of the stock). However, we have a high proportion of bungalows (44%), and around two thirds these are designated sheltered for elderly residents.

46 of our homes are offered on a shared ownership basis, where the resident has acquired a part-share in the property, paying rent on the proportion that the Council owns.

Table 3.1: housing stock by type and tenure

Archetype	General needs (social rent)	General needs (affordable rent)	Sheltered Housing (social rent)	Shared ownership	Total
Flat	195	4	65	0	**264**
House	1,695	115	0	37	**1,847**
Bungalow	690	8	962	9	**1,669**
Total	**2,580**	**127**	**1,027**	**46**	**3,780**

Table 3.2: housing stock by age

Age	Number of properties	Percentage
Pre 1919	69	1.83%
1919-1944	803	21.24%
1945-1964	1,671	44.21%
1965-1979	1,023	27.06%
1980-1999	30	0.79%
Post 2000	184	4.87%
Total	**3,780**	

Some of the properties that have been provided as council housing in the district were built of non-traditional construction methods. These property types are particularly challenging in terms of their energy efficiency, thermal comfort and other repairs, damp and mould issues. The table below highlights that around 13% of our stock is non-traditional in build, and we will need to closely monitor property conditions over time.

In time, we will need to replace non-traditional stock types with new homes, however our strategy at this time is focused on keeping these homes in a good state of repair with modern facilities.

Table 3.3: housing stock by construction type

Construction type	Number of properties	Percentage
Airey	91	2.41%
Prefab	101	2.67%
Steel	22	0.58%
System built	17	0.45%
Timber	11	0.29%
Traditional	3,298	87.25%
Wates	240	6.35%
Total	**3,780**	

3.2. Non-housing properties

In addition to the homes we own, we also own a number of non-housing properties within the HRA, including 14 community centres and 13 guest rooms.

Given the highly rural nature of much of our stock, the Council owns a significant number of sewage treatment works - 49 sewage treatment works and 11 pumping stations in total. This is significant because for as long as there are no plans for adoption of these facilities by Anglian Water, it falls to the Council to manage and maintain them. Whilst the management of day to day treatment is contained within our main repairs budgets, the upgrade and modernisation of these facilities represent a potentially significant cost to the Council and therefore within the Asset Management Strategy and the Business Plan.

Some works are contained within our Investment Plan (see below) and we have estimated the long-term requirement to be around £4.7million over 30 years.

3.3. Stock condition survey progress

Survey work began in earnest in the summer of 2025 and as at November 2025, we have completed c.90% of surveys. We have a target for all our stock condition data to be up to date (less than five years old) by January 2026, with the exception of hard to reach properties where we have been unable to secure surveys.

The focus of our surveys has been in assessing current condition (including Housing Health and Safety Rating System surveys), remaining useful life of components, and measuring the long-term expenditure profile driven by estimated life cycles for each major element. Surveys also included assessments of energy performance (where certificates were outstanding or due to expire imminently), cases of damp and mould and outstanding repairs.

In addition to the core life cycle elemental replacements driven by survey data, we have also collected data around energy efficiency, sewage treatment works and made an assessment of investment in the homes and communities (including a small allocation for fencing and the environment around properties and within estates).

The data around energy efficiency is based on compliance with EPC C. Our current Investment Planning includes a programme of investment into over 600 homes to bring these to EPC C by 2030, a programme which is part-funded by grant from Warm Homes funding from the Government (formerly called the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund).

Alongside this programme, we will need to make provision for a further programme to complete EPC C work for the remainder of the stock below that standard (in total some 1,200 homes, around a further one third of our stock). These works will primarily focus on replacement windows, replacement heating systems and loft insulation. These works have been incorporated into our programme to 2030.

3.4. Stock condition survey life cycles

A feature of South Holland's asset management and business planning since 2012 has been the use of different life cycles than the standards set within the national Decent Homes Standard. The life cycles currently in use by the Council reflect a decision taken by Council in 2012 to provide a higher standard of repair and shorter waiting period for replacement than was standard at the time.

This decision was taken in consultation with tenants at that time and arose from the additional resources that the Council had available within the HRA following the change in financial regime for council housing in March 2012.

These life cycles are shown in the table below for a range of key elements. Only roof replacements have a longer replacement cycle at South Holland compared to the national standard approach.

Table 3.4: South Holland life cycles compared to national standards

Element	South Holland	Standard
Kitchen	20	30
Bathroom	25	40
Windows Main Building	30	40
Heating System	15	15
Main Pitched Roof	65	50
Pitched Roof Structure	65	50
External Painting	8	-
Flat Roof Adjoining Outbuilding	15	-
Chimney	35	50
Wall Insulation Cavity	30	-
Radiators	30	40

In the light of increasing costs and the introduction of greater flexibility around life cycles within the prospective revision to the Decent Homes Standard, a key feature of this Asset Management Strategy is consideration of a proposal to extend life cycles. This is discussed below.

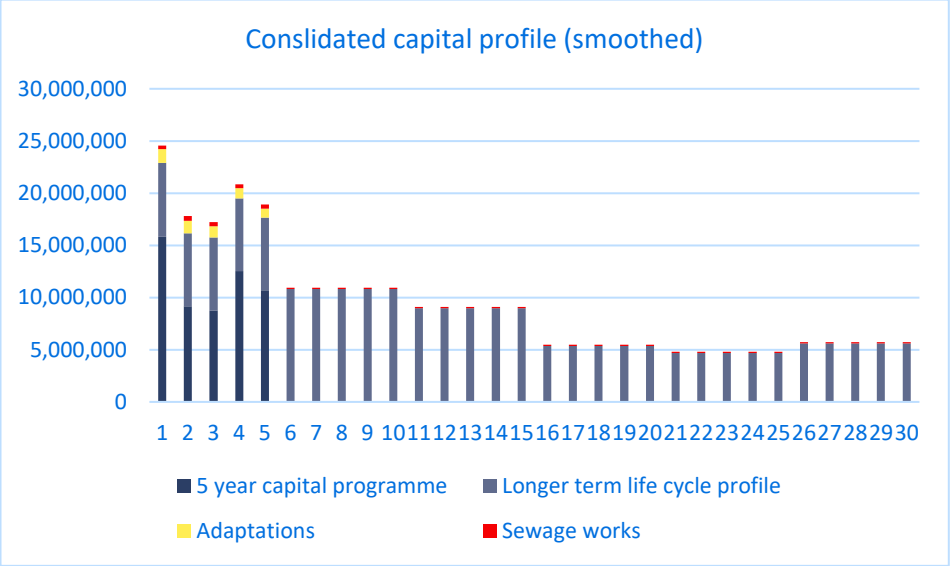
3.5. Stock condition survey and investment profile

The total investment profile required for the Asset Management Strategy over the next 30 years is therefore built up from the components set out above, summarised in the table below.

Table 3.5: total stock and asset investment profile 2026-2056 £'000's

Investment Area		2026-2031	2031-2036	2036-2041	2041-2046	2046-2051	2051-2056	Total	Per home
Life cycle investment			47,784	40,036	27,849	27,588	26,009	**169,266**	44,779
Current Investment Plan		55,324						**55,324**	14,636
Adaptations		5,459	3,137	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	**20,596**	5,449
Sewage treatment		1,900	562	562	562	562	562	**4,710**	1,246
Total		**62,683**	**51,483**	**43,598**	**31,411**	**31,150**	**29,571**	**249,896**	**66,110**

Chart 3.6: capital investment profile over 30 years (today's prices)



Taken together, the profiles show a total investment requirement of £249.9million (or just over £66,100 per home) across the lifetime of the strategy. This level of investment is relatively high compared to many other small district councils (information from the Local Government Association research of 2024 suggests a national benchmark of around £62,000 per home over 30 years).

The relatively high level reflects the inclusion of an extensive programme to complete EPC C works where current performance on EPC C is below the national average (we have 58% below this standard as of November 2025) and the inclusion of sewage treatment works.

3.6. Extending life cycles

Taking into account the size, scale and ultimately affordability of the above profile within the HRA business plan, we have proposed an extension to life cycles of 5 years where our current cycles are below the national standard, whilst reducing those that are beyond the national standard (i.e. roof repairs).

Feedback from residents strongly suggests that whilst there should be flexibility around setting life cycles, and therefore not replacing elements such as kitchens and bathrooms until they are in a poor state of repair, that repairs should still be undertaken if elements do not last the full length of the revised life cycle.

This has the impact of "pushing out" around £15 million of life cycle repairs beyond the 30 year period resulting in a revised 30 year total of £238.5 million or £62,100 per home.

We will continue to evolve our practice towards elemental replacement programmes to maximise value for money on the principle that no element is replaced unless it is necessary to do so. Regular and ongoing stock surveys will be an essential tool to ensure that elements in need of repair are spotted early and placed in a replacement programme as soon as practicable. We will continue to complete condition surveys before major components are replaced. Where components remain in good condition, their replacement date will be extended beyond the life cycle.

3.7. Repairs

In the Council's Housing Landlord Strategy, we have committed to strengthening the management of our contracts, getting things right the first time, and improving our communication with residents to keep them updated on outstanding repairs with clear timelines for completion of works. Our repairs service is a crucial part of our relationship with our residents and is a significant determinant of satisfaction for tenants and leaseholders alike.

We currently recharge tenants for deliberate damage to properties and will review our approach to recharging tenants during 2026/27 as part of our review of the Housing Repairs and Fitness for Habitation Policy. This review will be informed by both a review of our repairs service and feedback from residents.

We will ensure that a robust process continues to be in place for referrals between repairs and planned investment, for example when responsive repairs become major works and for repairs teams to be aware of when works are due in the investment plan. We will also ensure that programmes are sufficiently flexible to take advantage of existing programmes when reactive repair requests, void relet repairs and/or stock surveys suggest capital replacement is required.

4. New homes, acquisition and regeneration

4.1. Delivery of new homes

A key component of this strategy is our commitment to the delivery of new homes.

South Holland has a good track record of delivering new homes and acquiring existing homes within the HRA. In the last 7 years since the opportunity to invest in new homes programmes was effectively reintroduced for the HRA, we have delivered 172 homes at a programme cost of £20.2m. This has been delivered through bringing in grant and subsidy from Homes England and the Government to part-finance the programme.

However, recent financial challenges combined with the enhanced regulatory regime has led us to prioritise resourcing within the existing stock. This has resulted in the temporary cessation of new build programmes with the final scheme at Holbech due for completion in January 2026.

4.2. Meeting our new homes ambition

Notwithstanding the current position, we feel it is essential to make provision for the acquisition and/or development of new homes within the Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy.

The government has announced substantial additional resources for a new Social and Affordable Homes Programme from 2026-2036 totalling £39billion plus a further wave of funding under the Local Authority Housing Fund programme – wave 4 from April 2026 totalling £950million.

We intend to take advantage of these opportunities by reintroducing provision for the acquisition or development of a specimen total of new homes within the strategy; we have identified that resources to deliver 5 new homes per annum in the 5 years from 2026 to 2031 and up to 20 homes per annum from 2031 onwards should be achievable, based on current market, section 106 and other development market conditions, using the receipts we have collected from the Right to Buy, coupled with the receipt of grant of an estimate 40% of the acquisition or development cost into the long-term.

We have made provision for a net investment programme of £1.1million per annum (at today's prices) commencing in 2026/27.

Taken together with the reduction in Right to Buy sales to 5 per annum arising from the restriction of discounts since November 2024, we plan to grow our housing stock once more.

4.3. Active asset management

Now that we have a comprehensive set of data round the current condition of our stock and the profile for investment over the long-term, we will be in a position to analyse in detail the financial performance of our properties. A process known as Asset Performance Evaluation will be adopted to measure future income against future costs in order to identify which properties may be prohibitively high cost to repair, or where properties may be obsolete and in need of replacement.

We are committed to taking decisions about the future of the stock in full consultation with tenants and residents, and to also take account of whether there may be properties that are high cost but are also in relatively short supply and therefore worth the investment to bring up to standard.

4.4. Options appraisals

During the consultation process for this strategy, there was general support for the notion that we should not be “throwing good money after bad” and that we should explore opportunities to add to the stock where, for example, there are large property footprints and low density estates.

The framework for options appraisals will be aimed at properties which perform poorly on a financial basis and informed by an understanding of social performance and market context. All feasible options for improvement will be explored where these deliver the Council’s objectives and improve our offer to residents.

5. Investment Planning

5.1. Resources and Business Plan affordability

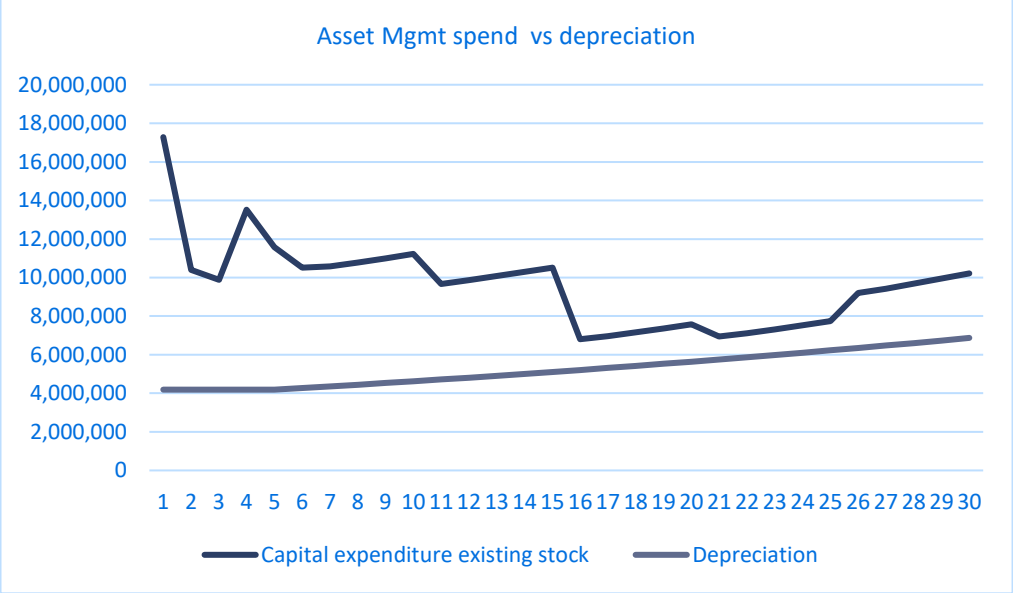
We have updated our HRA business plan with the most up to date survey data, along with all of the other costs set out in section 3 above.

This allows us to test affordability and provides a golden thread from recently collected information through to the plan. The business plan currently includes for the full provision of capital spend against survey and all other requirements, assuming that life cycles are lengthened by 5 years.

The existing Investment Plan will be continued to 2030 as there are already contracts and suppliers in place and fully procured for the programme. The life cycle phasing arising from the stock survey provides challenges for the business plan given a high level of life cycle works required in the period immediately after 2030. We will keep this under continual review as we develop our detailed approach to the programme up to 2035. Investment into energy efficiency will be extended from the current programme to complete EPC C for all stock by 2030. It is felt that these would only be able to be procured effectively and added to the existing programme in time for the 2027/28 financial year.

There are three primary sources of resources for investment into the existing stock: depreciation transfers from rent income to the Major Repairs Reserve, top-ups to depreciation from rent income (known as revenue contributions to capital) and borrowing. The chart below highlights the difference between the total investment requirement (at outturn prices – i.e. including year on year inflation) to the level of depreciation annually.

Chart 5.1: comparing total investment requirements against depreciation transfers



The chart shows that in the early period, there is a need to top-up depreciation with additional revenue and borrowing, and that this continues throughout the entire period with particular additional needs in the period from 2030-2040 and from around 2048 onwards. The implications of the requirement for life cycle investment to 2035 are shown within the chart.

As a matter of financial prudence, we will always provide additional resources to support the capital programme from revenue if we are able and minimise reliance on borrowing wherever possible.

Notwithstanding the high costs of investment over the short, medium and long terms, the level of investment is affordable within the business plan, on the basis that rents and income increases provide the necessary spending and investment headroom to support programme delivery.

5.2. Grant and subsidy

Where programmes of investment are supported by Government, we will be proactive in making bids for additional resources to be brought into the district to help finance our investment requirements.

Key areas of focus will continue to be:

- Warm Homes Funding, to help support the delivery of Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES), for the purposes of this strategy this means supporting the delivery of EPC C to a further 1,200 homes by 2030.
- Social and Affordable Homes Programme grant for new build or acquiring stock.
- Local Authority Housing Fund grant to support the acquisition of existing homes.

5.3. Investment Planning to 2030

We have an established programme incorporated within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). A schedule of the current spending areas within the programme is summarised in the table below/overleaf.

All works included within the programme have been assessed as required and contribute towards compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

Table 5.2: 5 year investment planning totals £'000's

Investment Programme	2026-2031
Central Heating - Gas Boiler Replacements	6,725
Kitchen / Bathroom Replacement	13,391
Green Homes Energy Efficiency Grant SHDF Wave 3	8,745
MEES	3,721
Smoke Alarms	1,686
Electrical Upgrade - Capital	34
Roofs and Gutters	3,755
Doors & Windows	12,390
Fire Remedial works	443
Chimneys	342
Paths and Drives	575
Boundary Walls	20
Fees	3,263
Sewage Treatment Refurbishment	1,900
Car Parks	135

Community Centre Refurbishment	100
ICT Strategy	170
Replacement Laptops	257
Major Adaptations	5,459
HRT Vehicle Replacement	300
Final payments prior schemes	10
Purchase of Homes South Holland	700
Purchase Homes Holbeach	300
New Acquisition Schemes	6,078
New Scheme- ICT	219
Total	**70,717**

All works included within the programme have been assessed as required and contribute towards compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

5.4. Resourcing the plan to 2030

The table below shows the financing for the updated Investment Plan to 2030. The table shows the reliance on grant availability to support energy efficiency investment and the need for revenue top-ups and borrowing to ensure the programme is able to be fully financed.

Table 5.3: asset investment plan with sources of finance (2026-2030 £'000's)

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	Total
Programme	**19,537**	**11,844**	**11,424**	**14,996**	**12,917**	**70,717**
Depreciation via Major Repairs Reserve	4,776	3,941	4,468	4,286	4,171	**21,642**
Grant and subsidy assumed	3,045	689	702	470	0	**4,905**
RTB Receipts	1,108	1,155	1,213	1,273	1,337	**6,086**
Revenue top-ups	3,632	334	226	374	2,168	**6,734**
Borrowing	**6,976**	**5,725**	**4,815**	**8,593**	**5,241**	**31,349**

The programme and sources of finance will be updated on an ongoing and annual basis along with approval of the Council's budgets and MTFS, to take account of income and resource availability and the actual delivery of programme areas.

5.5. Developing the plan to 2035

A key requirement of the Asset Management Strategy is to demonstrate how the achievement of compliance with all relevant statutory and regulatory standards can be delivered. The proposed update to the Decent Homes Standard is likely to require compliance by 2035 (or possibly 2037, depending on the Government's final decision).

Whilst decent homes compliance at South Holland is positive (only 0.64% were classified as “non-decent” at 30th November 2025), we will need to make sure that the position is 100% compliance (where technically possible) as soon as possible and in any case by 2035. In practice, implementing the investment requirements set out within the stock condition survey and life cycle replacements will support the delivery and maintenance of compliance with the Decent Homes Standard.

As it addresses the replacement of all key elements upon expiry of their surveyed useful life, and with replacement on life cycle bases that largely remains on shorter cycles than national standards, we believe that the investment profile derived from the survey will form a robust basis for the achievement and maintenance of the Decent Home Standard.

Therefore, we will plan to extend the Investment Planning framework arising from this Asset Management Strategy to 2035 by incorporating the implied investment requirements from life cycle replacements, alongside continuing to deliver a programme of adaptations and a small annual programme of fencing and other environmental upgrades as required.

In overall terms, we plan a total investment of over £106million into the stock, our neighbourhoods and communities over the 9 year period from 2026 to 2035.

There is substantial reliance on revenue top-ups from rent income and from borrowing. However, the level of borrowing remains sustainable in the HRA business planning context and the capability to fully finance the programme provides a high degree of assurance that the plans we have arising from this strategy are both based on robust and solid core data and able to be fully financed.

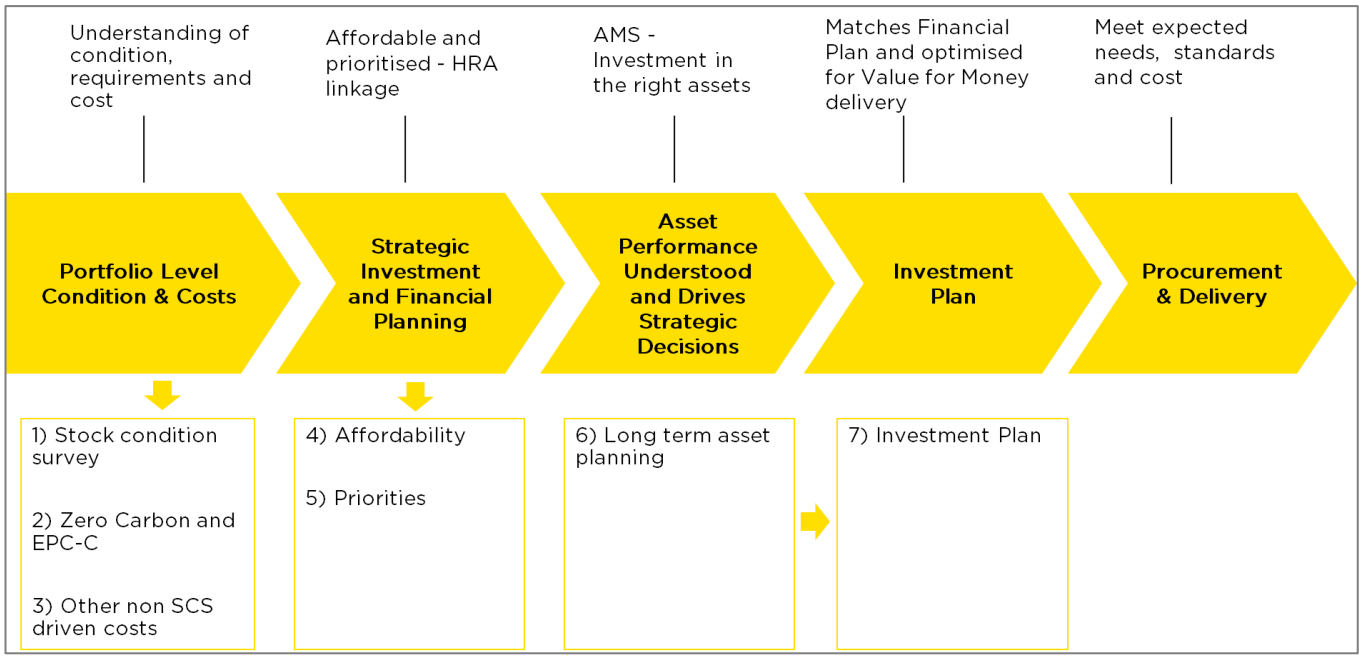
The second 5 year phase of the above Investment Plan will be subject to many factors, including the performance of assets in use, the requirement for earlier or later replacements depending on how individual elements perform in practice, unit costs of components, contractors/supplier costs and updated for ongoing surveys. We will continue to undertake a detailed and forensic analysis and review of the stock survey totals when placing properties in programmes and update our data as required, which will then inform the revision to programme spend totals.

The programme is large and comprehensive, and represents a significant potential increase in programme delivery over the course of the next 9 years. Effective procurement, commitment to value for money, and robust monitoring on an ongoing basis will be essential to ensure that the Council is able to deliver the priorities set out in the programme.

6. Procurement, value for money and monitoring

6.1. Delivering investment plans

Whilst we are currently working to a five year capital programme, we plan to extend to a 10 year programme. The five-stage development and delivery process is summarised in the diagram below. It will be important that steps 2 and 3 around strategic investment planning and asset performance become further integrated into our investment planning.



Our longer term aspiration is to establish a rolling 10 year plan with a golden thread between our stock condition data, what is affordable in our business plan and what is delivered on the ground.

As the analysis of our data becomes more developed, this will provide residents and contractors/suppliers with greater visibility of the pipeline of work followed by a clear direction for investment over the following period. Whilst the plan can be fully financed, financial conditions can change, and there may be competing requirements for investment and we will use the investment priorities outlined above to prioritise the work to be delivered. The allowances in the investment plan will continue to be aligned to the business plan to ensure affordability.

Once priorities and work packaging rules are agreed, we produce a property level schedule of works. This identifies the work required at property level and whether further survey work is required. This will be formatted in accordance with requirements to support effective procurement activity (see below).

The process also needs to consider the results of future asset performance evaluation, when and if it is completed. Unless it is essential, works associated with properties prioritised for options appraisal would be highlighted in the investment programme and excluded from early years programming so that long term decisions can be taken before major expenditure is incurred. Clearly any essential work relating to ensuring properties meet statutory and regulatory requirements will be delivered where it is required.

We will continue to engage with tenants and residents through the new engagement and scrutiny structure and through regular feedback to improve the way we deliver works programmes.

6.2. Procurement

The Investment Plan is important to support effective procurement and value for money in delivery, and to provide visibility on these key points for tenants and residents.

Many of the programmes set out in the 10 year Investment Plan are already in some form of delivery and therefore have either contractors or suppliers in place, or we are in advanced plans to procure suppliers.

There will need to be a dovetailing of existing procured contracts with the expanded requirements for future investment. We will consider the implications of expanded programmes for existing suppliers, continuing to monitor their performance and ensure that market engagement is effective in ensuring either existing contracts are extended or re-procured, or a mixture of both.

The Procurement Act 2023 gives the Council a little more flexibility in how it procures contracts for the delivery of new programmes and we will ensure that all suppliers are procured in compliance with this Act.

6.3. Value for money

We are committed to driving value for money in our Asset Management Strategy, planning and delivery. This will enable us to increase investment in other areas of the stock, service or in new homes.

The approach to investment planning set out in this strategy will be a key factor in driving value for money, as we work to improve our data. It will enable us to target investment where it is most needed and provide clear indications of components and volumes over a longer time frame to improve value for money from our contracts. Our review of capital delivery will reduce slippage and improve our delivery to timescale. A measure of success will be the extent to which we deliver against the need identified in the survey.

We will monitor outturn costs against our schedule of rates to ensure we can control cost variation. A measure of success here will be a clear relationship between outturn costs and affordable rates within our investment plan.

The proposed approach to active asset management set out in section 4 will enable us to maximise return on assets (both financial and social) by ensuring expenditure is targeted to improve our long term sustainable assets over time, releasing resources for reinvestment that increases the number of social rented homes. This provides scope to broaden our concept of value to include social and environmental factors.

6.4. Performance monitoring

We will report on our performance across all areas of the strategy – to colleagues, members, our residents, and other key stakeholders. We will measure our success through a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which currently include:

- Growth in new social housing
- Resident satisfaction
- Decent Homes compliance
- Building and Fire Safety compliance
- Actions on damp and mould complete within timescales of Awaab's law
- Percentage of stock with up-to-date stock condition survey data
- Percentage of properties reaching EPC-C.

In addition, KPIs on the following will be explored:

- Percentage of capital plan delivered
- Capital investment contributing to Net Zero Carbon
- Delivery of Asset Performance analysis (growth in Net Present Value across the stock).

We will regularly report against KPIs in this strategy to senior leadership and to Cabinet. In addition, progress on the Capital Programme is reported on a quarterly basis at the Capital Programme Clinic, attended by the Assistant Director – Housing and Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing.

The principal actions within this strategy support the Housing Landlord Strategy and we will continue to report against the KPIs within that strategy as they are delivered via the Asset Management Strategy.

6.5. Risk management

The strategy recognises that housing assets can also become liabilities, creating a risk to business plan financial sustainability as well as significantly impacting on tenants' and residents' lives.

Operational risks are registered in our HRA Operational Risk Register and strategic risks are recorded in the Corporate Risk Register overseen by the Cabinet and fed into the broader council risk strategy. Key risks arising within this strategy include:

- The Governmental is delayed in confirming the final position regarding the revised Decent Homes Standard and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards leaving the Council unable to plan with complete confidence for compliance.
- Failure to manage health and safety compliance could put residents, staff and contractors at risk.
- Failure to meet statutory or regulatory standards can carry penalties and will damage the Council's reputation.
- Failure to maintain the golden thread between the understanding of stock condition and investment need and what can be financed within the HRA Business Plan.
- An incorrect scope or poor quality of stock investment will have a key influence on customer satisfaction.
- Poor value for money in stock investment will have a major impact on our finances as this represents the largest proportion of our HRA expenditure.
- Failure to sufficiently manage disrepair or damp contribute to component degradation, creates additional expenditure to maintain homes, and can impact resident health and wellbeing.
- Internal and external factors impact on investment need and expenditure. Key amongst these are currently Fire Safety and energy efficiency. We will need to remain aware of the impact of these on investment levels in existing stock and any subsequent impact on our investment plans.
- Internally and externally published standards will need to be reviewed - changing standards may carry financial and reputational risk.
- Failure to accurately reflect compliance and performance in IT systems creates inefficiencies, jeopardises the success of business plan and access to requisite resources, and leads to lapses in compliance

6.6. Internal controls

The main internal controls supporting the delivery of this strategy are in the following areas:

- **Data –** maintaining quality and integrity with regular review.
- **Stock Condition Surveys -** regularly reviewing rates to ensure consistency with benchmarks and outturn costs, updating stock condition data regularly, with results captured by the asset management database and reporting results to maintain golden thread between stock condition, investment and business plans.

- **Investment plans –** the establishment of a planned investment programme with clear and robust contract management arrangements. Effective and regular monitoring of agreed performance measures. Demand analysis and customer feedback from responsive repairs used to update planned programmes. Council and resident scrutiny of performance.
- **Procurement and staffing –** Management systems in place to recruit, select, train and appraise staff with the skills to deliver the strategy. We will work within the Council's corporate procurement process and aligned with the Procurement Act 2023 to deliver value for money services.
- **Responsive repairs –** detailed contract controls and performance measures in place. Service outcomes and measures used to inform forward planning of both planned and responsive repairs. Resident satisfaction measures reported annually. Regular testing of customer satisfaction and analysis of complaints.
- **Long term asset planning –** mechanisms to review asset performance are in place and regularly updated. Asset performance forms an integral starting point for investment and long term asset planning.
- **Business planning –** HRA Business Plan review process will explicitly evidence the golden thread from the business plan through to the Asset Management Strategy, cash flow models, investment and procurement programmes and stock condition surveys.
- **Internal audit –** independent assurance to periodically review asset management and landlord compliance.

This approach aims to ensure we continue to improve our practice and performance, have a golden thread from asset model to stock condition survey, and make best use of all of the key links in between.

6.7. Review

This strategy covers the period from 2026-2035. Investment plans will be reviewed annually. The strategy will be refreshed in late 2026 to reflect progress in key areas around asset performance and continued forensic analysis of the outcomes of the stock survey. The strategy will be next updated in the run up to 2030.

6.8. Accountability and control information

Accountability for the strategy is with the Director of Communities. Operationally, responsibility is with the Assistant Director – Housing to ensure agreed programmes are in place and delivered effectively.

7. Action planning

A summary of the key actions arising from the Asset Management Strategy is set out below. We will:

Continue to engage tenants and residents on refreshes and updates of the Strategy.

1. Complete and maintain 100% of stock surveys (including where appropriate through enforcement of access).
2. Continue forensic analysis of survey outputs, conducting validation checks of survey outputs.
3. Move towards a rolling 10-year Investment Plan commencing with an extension of the existing 5 year plan to 2035.
4. Consult further on the approach to recharges as part of the review of the Housing Repairs and Fitness for Habitation Policy during 2026/27.

5. Introduce a robust process to ensure referrals from responsive repairs engagement are translated into investment programme repairs.

6. Carry out a detailed evaluation of asset performance.

7. Introduce a robust process of option appraisal of stock that is evaluated as poor performing financially.

8. Extend life cycle replacement timeframes where appropriate but remaining below national standards.

9. Bid for all subsidy and grant programmes, including Warm Homes, Social and Affordable Homes Programme and Local Authority Housing Fund.

10. Introduce an allocation of funding for, and subsequently deliver, the acquisition of 5 new homes per annum to 2031 and 20 per annum thereafter for all years.

11. Refresh this strategy in the autumn of 2026 and conduct a full review in the run up to 2030.

12. Ensure that the procurement of all suppliers and contractors is carried out in line with the Procurement Act 2023 and align the future Investment Plan including extensions of existing programmes with existing providers as far as possible to achieve value for money in the programme.

13. Monitor schedule of rates costs against what is being achieved through procurement.

14. Monitor the delivery of this strategy through regular KPI reporting to Cabinet and residents.

Appendix C

SHDC Business Plan Consultation outcome report.

Contents

Introduction

This report summarises the outcomes of the consultation undertaken on the Housing Landlord Business Plan, prepared by Savills.

The consultation aimed to:

- Inform tenants about how rent income is currently spent and how it is proposed to be allocated over the next 30 years.
- Provide tenants with the opportunity to influence priorities for future expenditure.
- Ensure tenants' views shape the Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy and demonstrate that the Council values tenant feedback and scrutiny.

Consultation programme

To maximise participation, the consultation programme included:

- **Pre-engagement**: Officers engaged with the Tenants Forum and Focus Groups to encourage participation.
- **Surveys**: Available online and in hard copy, promoted via texts, emails, posters, and the Council website.
- **Events**: Two face-to-face consultation sessions (morning and evening) with presentations delivered by Savills.

The consultation survey received 138 responses, with 11 tenants attending the consultation events.

Prior to the launch of the consultation a period of pre-engagement took place between Officers and engaged tenants on the Tenants Forum to encourage attendance at the events or to complete the survey. The launch of the consultation was advertised to those tenants who attended the Tenant Forum event in October 2025 and at Focus Group meetings.

The consultation sought to encourage a broad range of responses from across the tenant group. All information about the consultation was posted on the Council website.

To promote the face-to-face events; 2555 texts and 4154 emails were sent to tenants directly throughout October and November 2025. Posters were displayed in various locations across the district and email footers added to Officers emails to encourage participation and promote awareness.

To promote the survey; 2484 texts and 4176 emails were sent to tenants directly throughout November 2025, advertising the on-line survey but informing tenants to

contact Tenant Engagement if they required a paper survey. All tenants who attended the consultation events were also given paper surveys to distribute amongst neighbours.

Housing staff were made aware of the consultation and asked to encourage tenants to take part. Tenants on the Tenants Forum were also asked to speak to neighbours and friends to encourage them to take part.

Consultation event

To encourage maximum attendance, two consultation events were organised—one in the morning and another in the evening.

A presentation was delivered by Savills with opportunities for questions and clarification, with tenants having the chance to discuss various aspects of the proposals from a tenant lived experience.

Survey

The survey was a questionnaire which was made available in hard copy or via the Council website via MS forms. The questionnaire was available on request in alternative format and large print. The survey encouraged responses via questions asking tenants to prioritise the importance of how we maintain and upgrade elements within their properties, how important it was for us to build new properties and what they thought about the external environment around them.

Free text boxes were available to allow respondents to offer open comments about why they had responded and to give other comments they felt were required.

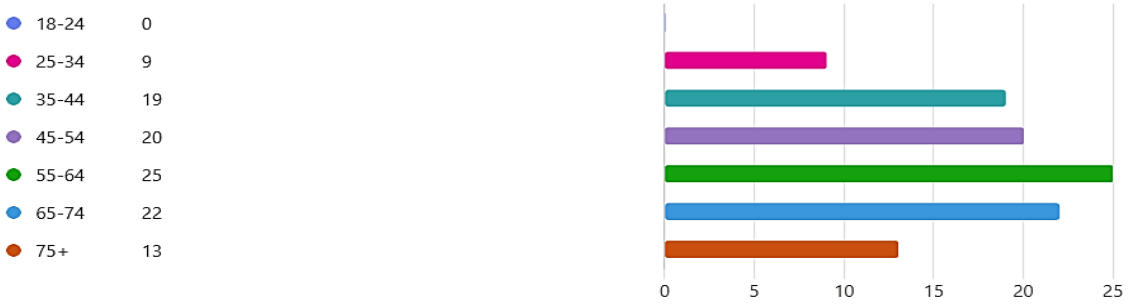
Completed hard copies were returned to the Council Offices at Priory Road, Spalding using free post return envelopes.

The survey was incentivised with the offering of a £20 shopping voucher prize draw.

Demographics of those taking part

Ages

Survey:



Consultation:

Age Range	Numbers
45-54	1
55-64	1
65-74	4
75+	5

Gender

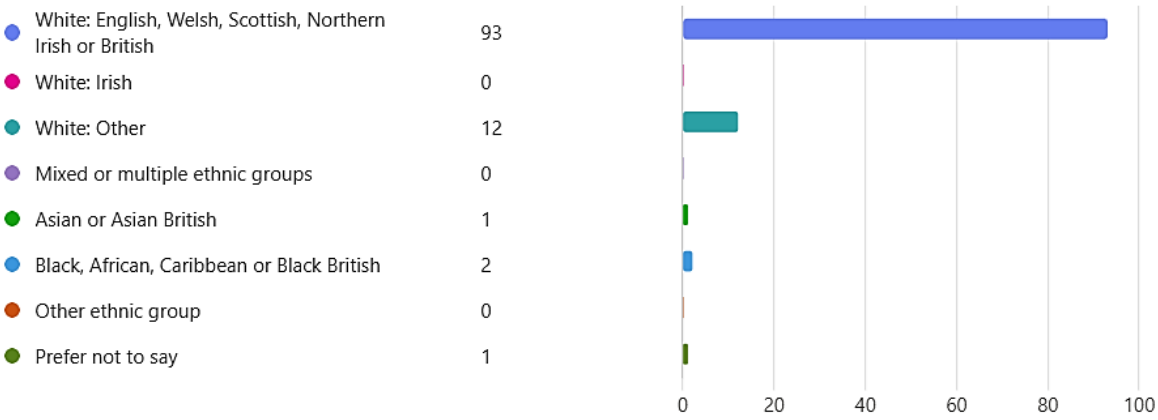
Survey:

Consultation

Male	Female
4	7

Ethnicity

Survey:



Consultation:

White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	10
Asian Or Asian British	1

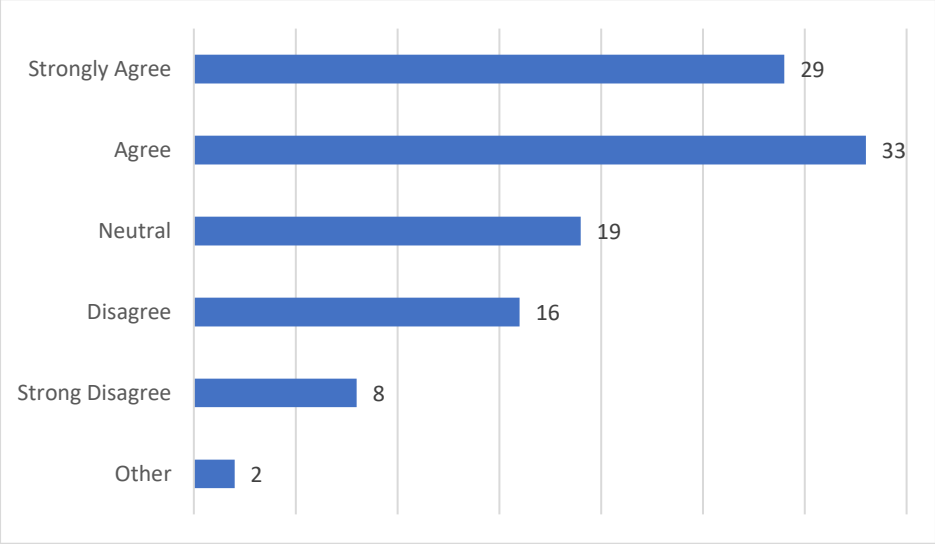
Survey response analysis.

The analysis is reported in the order of the questionnaire. The questionnaire received 138 responses.

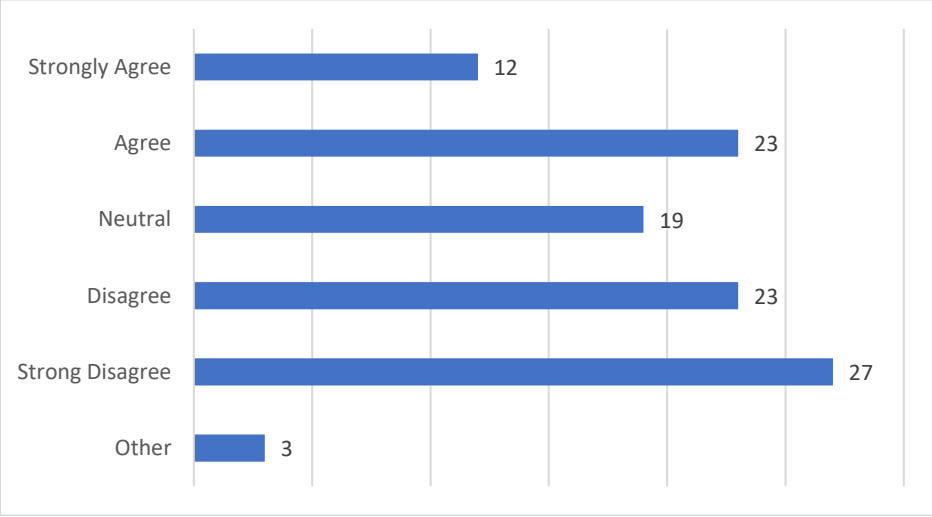
The following questions were asked to ensure they could be entered into the prize draw and to ensure the service could follow up with tenants to tell them about any changes made based of their feedback.

- Q1 - respondent's name.
- Q2 - respondent's age group
- Q3 - respondent's gender
- Q4 - respondent's ethnic background.

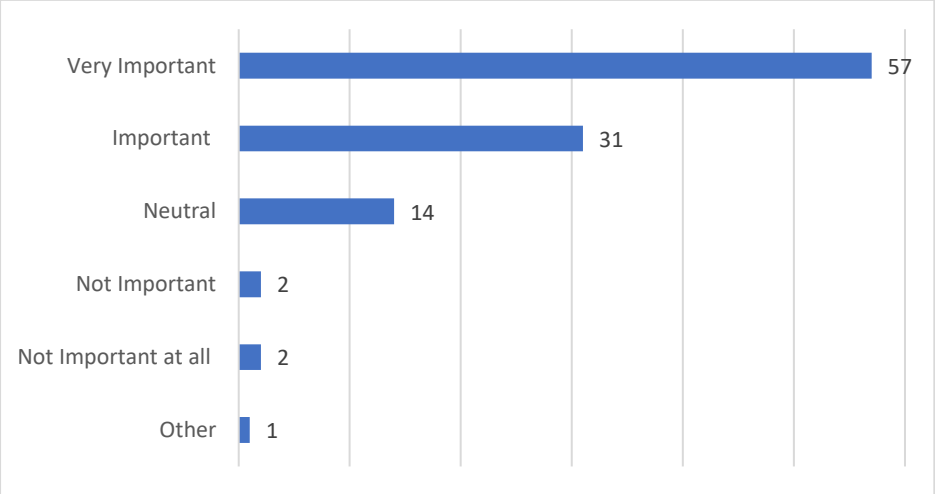
Q5. We currently replace some elements, such as boilers, after a certain number of years, even if they don't need repairing. We are considering replacing these items only when they need repairing. Do you agree with this change?



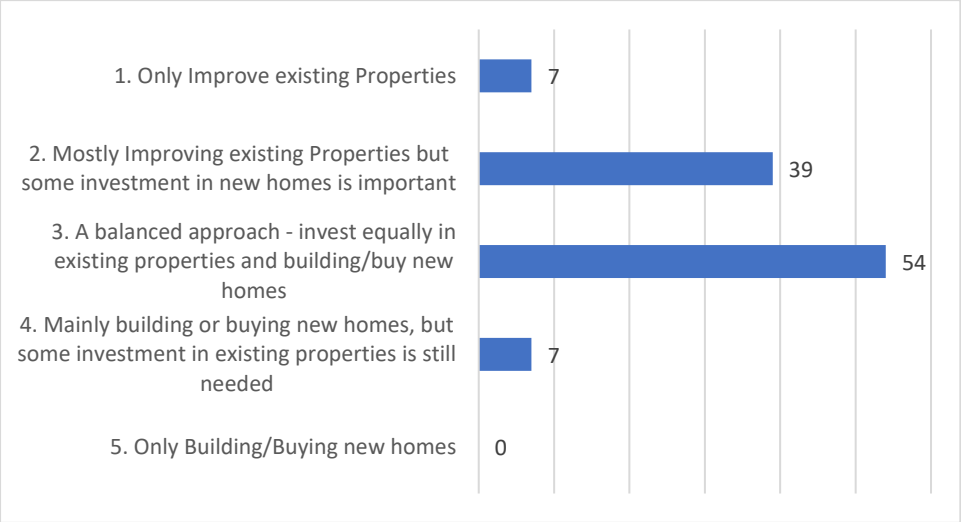
Q6. We survey major elements such as kitchens every 20 years to see if they need replacing. We're thinking about surveying them every 25 years instead. (We'll still do repairs if something breaks during this time). Do you agree with this change?



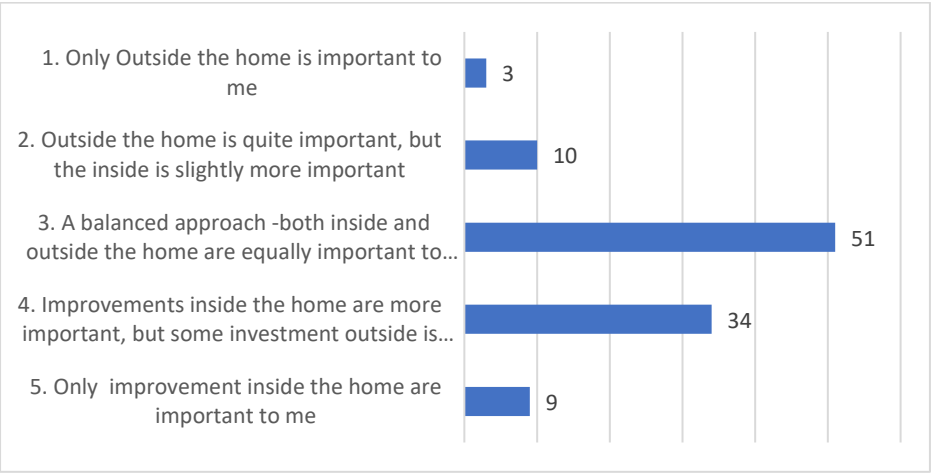
Q7. How important is it that the Council builds/buys new homes?



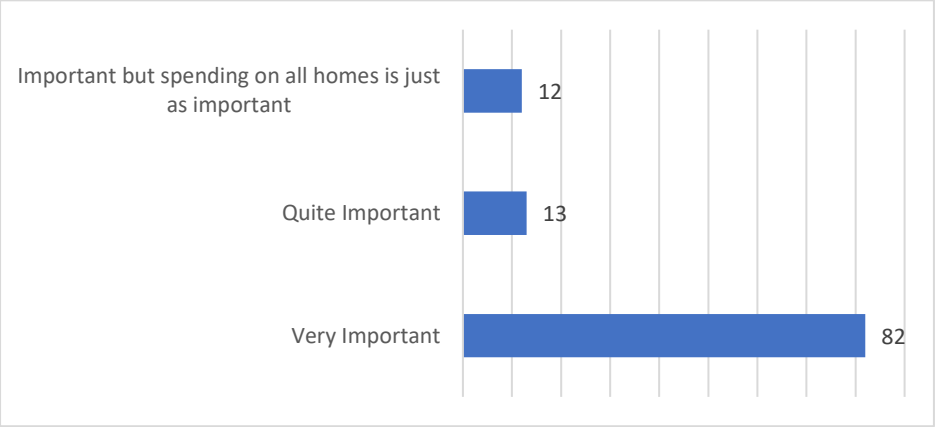
Q8. What is the right balance between investing in current homes and building or buying new homes? Score of 1-5: 1 is only improving existing properties and 5 is only building/buying new homes.



Q9. How important is it that we invest in areas around the home such as funding fencing and landscaping on estates?
Score of 1-5: 1 is really important, outside the home. 5 is not important, it's the home itself that matters.



Q10. How important is it that we spend money on adaptations to homes for the elderly and disabled? For example, fitting wet rooms and ramps.



Q11. Are there any other points you wish to raise?

- 7 wanted an improved aids and adaptations service
- 6 wanted more accessible bathrooms / wet rooms and felt this was more important than kitchens
- 5 wanted better windows and improved energy efficiency in homes
- 3 mentioned the void standard, suggesting improvements
- 5 wanted help to maintain gardens (as a payable service)
- 3 mentioned recharging tenants for not keeping their home in good condition.

In addition, some tenants raised specific queries about their tenancy/property, all of which have been distributed to the teams to investigate and update tenants direct.

Consultation Event analysis

Eleven tenants attended the face-to face consultation events and were given a presentation by Savills. The theory behind some of the questions asked, i.e. extending the time to replace kitchens and bathrooms was explained – giving the tenants more information to make comments on.

The following feedback was received:
Replacing elements only when need repairing / kitchens and bathrooms
The tenants in attendance were clear that they didn't want money to be wasted. They found it frustrating if items were being removed when they were in good working order.

There was lot of discussion around this with all but 2 being happy to extend the lifecycles of kitchens, bathrooms, and boilers on the caveat that the specification for the kitchens and bathrooms was of quality so it would last.

Discussions were also held around replacing some elements within kitchens and bathrooms rather than a full upgrade.

Discussion leaned towards the fact that tenants felt bathrooms were more important to be upgraded on need (for the disabled etc) than the kitchens – the survey echoes this as there are 6 tenants who stated in the comments that bathrooms are more important and should be made accessible.

Importance of new builds
Attendees were keen purchasing new builds – which were done to a specification that meant tenants could age well in them and were future proofed, rather than having to spend money on adaptations later. Discussions also had around building on brownfield sites.

Tenants were keen on disposals of properties that were going to cost too much to bring to an acceptable standard and maintain.

There was a lot of discussion around energy efficiency of homes including solar panels and the use of small wind turbines in the gardens in rural. Electric car charging was also mentioned. Many tenants feel that utility costs are extremely high and want to be able to combat this with more energy efficient homes.

Outside environment
The two groups had different views around fencing communal areas, however all agreed that they wanted the area to look nice. Again, this is echoed in the survey when most tenants stated they wanted a balanced approach to this.

Aids and Adaptations
Both groups supported spending money on disabled aids and adaptations. Discussions also held around re-using some items.

Other Points raised:

- Queries around how leaseholders paid for some services such as sewerage treatment and maintenance
- Approach to clearing gutters and materials used when replacing fascias
- Both groups mentioned the void standard and that it should be raised – to give tenants something to be proud of.
- The tenants were also keen on a mechanism to penalise and recharge those tenants who didn't look after their properties / gardens (not because they couldn't through ill health).

Key Findings

Discussions at the consultation events reflected similar themes to the survey:

- **Lifecycle of Property Elements**: Tenants supported extending replacement cycles for kitchens, bathrooms, and boilers, provided specifications were of sufficient quality. Bathrooms were prioritised over kitchens, particularly for accessibility needs.

- **New Homes**: Strong support for new builds, particularly future-proofed designs on brownfield sites. Tenants favoured disposal of properties requiring disproportionate investment.

- **Energy Efficiency**: Tenants emphasised the importance of solar panels, small-scale renewable energy, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure to reduce utility costs.

- **External Environment**: Mixed views on fencing and landscaping; overall preference for a balanced approach to external improvements.

- **Aids and Adaptations**: Strong support for investment, with suggestions to explore re-use of equipment and review funding arrangements.

Conclusion

The consultation demonstrates that tenants want the Council to:

- Spend resources wisely, avoiding unnecessary replacements.
- Prioritise bathrooms and accessibility improvements over kitchens.
- Balance investment between maintaining existing homes and building new, energy-efficient properties.
- Improve external environments while ensuring value for money.
- Support tenants in maintaining gardens through optional paid services.
- Raise the void property standard to instil pride in new tenancies.
- Ensure fair service charges for leaseholders.
- Hold tenants accountable for property upkeep, with appropriate recharging where neglect occurs.

Overall, tenants emphasised energy efficiency, accessibility, and prudent financial management as central priorities for the Housing Landlord Business Plan.

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Equality Impact Assessment

Report title	**HRA Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy 2026**
Completed by	**Adel Gardner, HRA Transformation Manager**
Approved by	**Vikki Cherry, Assistant Director – Housing**
Date	**5th December 2025**

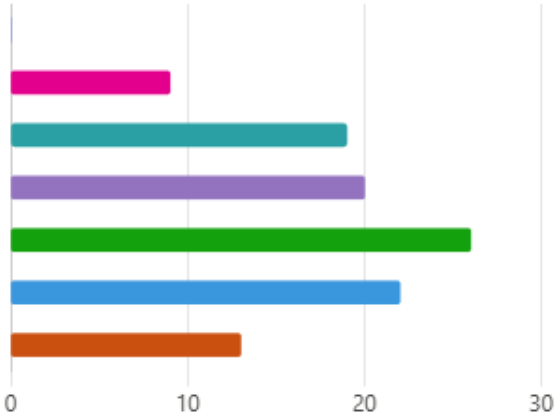
The following statements will help you decide whether an EIA is necessary:	**Tick all that apply**
Does it affect customers, colleagues or the wider community, and therefore potentially have an effect in terms of equality (for example, removing a service, workforce restructure, employment practices)	✓
Could it result in a decision being made that would significantly affect how functions and services are delivered (for example, reducing a service or introducing a charge for a service)	✓
Does it relate to a service that previous engagement has identified as being important to people	✓
Does it, or could it in the future, affect different groups of people differently	✓
Does it relate to a policy or service where there is significant potential for reducing inequalities or improving Outcomes	✓
Have there been, or are there likely to be, any public concerns about the policy or proposal	
Does it have an effect on how other organisations operate in terms of equality (i.e. commissioned services)	

Section 3 Equality impacts

Briefly explain what the policy/service/project aims to achieve	The HRA Business Plan sets out the Councils vision for the future of SHDC housing stock over the next 30 years. It is first and foremost a financial document, which determines how the council will meet the needs of present and future tenants, demonstrating that Government and local targets can be achieved and ensuring the long-term viability of the stock. It sets out the: • National and local strategic context and corporate priorities under which we are currently operating • Our challenges and strategic priorities, specifically over the next five years as well as identifying longer term issues and goals for the next thirty years. • Our investment priorities include, modernisation of existing stock, replacing heating systems and managing sewage treatment, and adaptations to help older and/or disabled tenants remain in their homes.
Have you undertaken consultation or involved people who are most likely to be affected or interested? Please include: data or community feedback, gaps in data, and how you intend to fill these gaps (where possible)	Consultation was undertaken through both online and hard copy surveys during November 2025. In addition, two face-to-face engagement events were held for tenants, with one scheduled outside normal office hours to improve accessibility. A total of 138 responses were received to the survey, 107 of these were tenants.

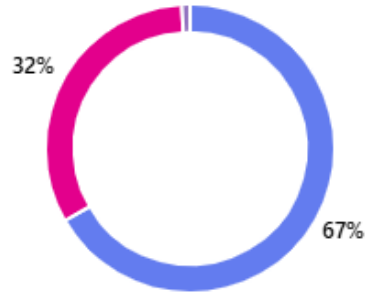
2. What is your age group?

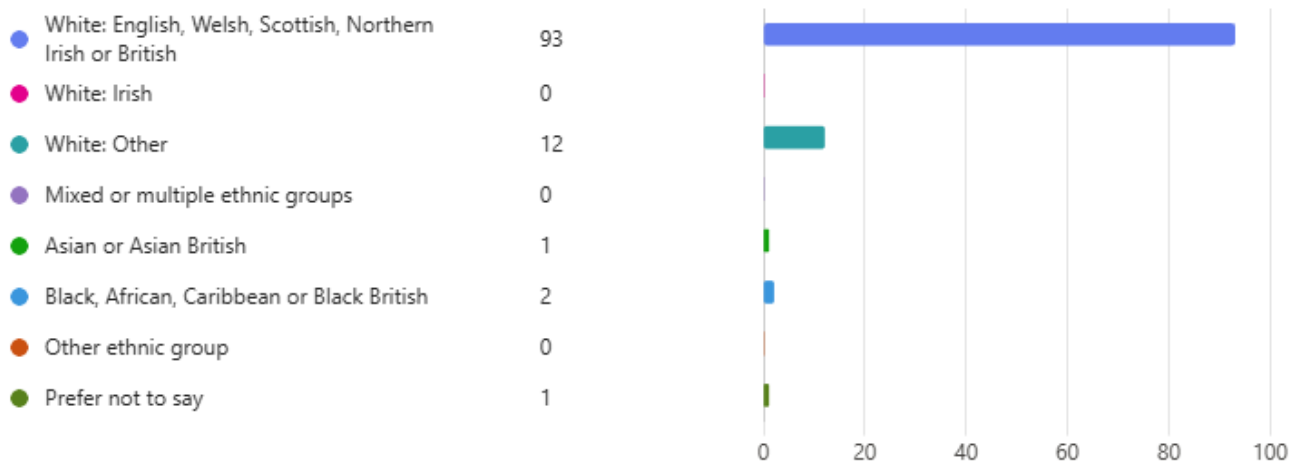
18-24	0
25-34	9
35-44	19
45-54	20
55-64	26
65-74	22
75+	13



3. What is your gender?

Female	72
Male	35
Non-binary	0
Prefer not to say	1



Page 156	4. What is your ethnic background? 
Is there any evidence or research that demonstrates why some individuals or groups are, or are not, affected	No

Characteristics	Positive and negative impact
Sex	The tenant census (2023) reported that 56% of residents in our properties are female (compared with 51% in South Holland (national census 2021). There is not expected to be either a positive or negative impact on this community of identity group. **Any mitigation required:** N/A
Age	The tenant census (2023) reported that the median age for tenants is 63 (52 in the national census for South Holland, 2021). The average age profile of residents in our properties is 48 (46 in the national census for South Holland, 2021). **Positive:** Ongoing investment in existing housing stock will ensure homes remain safe, warm, and energy-efficient, which is particularly beneficial for older tenants who may spend more time at home and have higher vulnerability to cold or damp conditions. Continued investment in property adaptations such as level-access showers, handrails, and other accessibility improvements will support older tenants to live independently for longer, reduce the risk of falls, and improve overall quality of life. These measures also help reduce social isolation by enabling tenants to remain in familiar communities rather than moving to specialist accommodation. **Negative:** None identified **Any mitigation required:** N/A

Disability

The tenant census (2023) reported that 51% of tenants have a limiting disability and 40% of residents have a limiting disability, compared with 41% and 19% for South Holland respectively (national census 2021). Further to this, the tenant census recorded the type of disability:

Type of disability	Tenant census (%)	Number of tenants
Mobility issues	42	558
Mental health issues (incl anxiety & depression)	30	398
Stamina or breathing or fatigue conditions	29	385
Other significant medical condition	23	305
Dexterity (e.g. lifting or carrying objects or using a keyboard)	19	252
Hearing impairment	15	199
Memory issues	14	186
Visual impairment	9	119
Social or behavioural condition (e.g. ADHD or ASD)	8	106
Mobility issues (temporary)	7	93
Learning impairment	6	80
Speech impairment	3	40

In the Housing Ombudsman report on Attitudes, Rights and Respect, 58% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability, and 68% of those said their landlord had not made reasonable adjustments for them, despite being asked. Many respondents referred specifically to the lack of aids and adaptations in their home, reflecting the EHS findings that over half of housing association tenants lack the adaptations they need.

Independent living officers have become aware of issues whereby tenants with disabilities such as visual impairment or hearing impairment are facing barriers when trying to access our services.

	Positive: Ongoing investment in existing housing stock will improve the safety, comfort, and energy efficiency of homes, which is particularly important for tenants with disabilities who may have specific health needs or spend extended periods indoors. Continued investment in property adaptations such as level-access showers, ramps, widened doorways, and other accessibility features will enable tenants with disabilities to live more independently, reduce reliance on carers, and improve overall wellbeing. These measures also help prevent accidents and support inclusion by allowing tenants to remain in their homes and communities rather than moving to specialist accommodation. **Negative:** None identified **Any mitigation required:** N/A
Race	The tenant census (2023) reported that 8% of tenants are from ethnic minority groups consisting of 6.4% Other White (2.5% Polish, 1.4% Lithuanian, 1% Portuguese and Latvian). The 2021 census reported 9% ethnic minority groups for South Holland, with 6.7% (4% Poland, 2.6% Lithuania and 1.5% Romania). In 2021, 0.6% of South Holland residents identified their ethnic group within the "Other" category ("Arab" or "Any other ethnic group"), up from 0.1% in 2011. There is not expected to be either a positive or negative impact on this community of identity group. **Any mitigation required:** N/A
Religion or belief	We do not record data around religion or belief, however the National census reported 33% of South Holland residents reporting to have 'no religion; followed by 58.9% as Christian.

	There is not expected to be either a positive or negative impact on this community of identity group. **Any mitigation required:** N/A
Sexual orientation	The tenant census (2023) reported that 1.7% of tenants who identify as LGBTQ+ sexual orientation, compared with 2.8% in South Holland (National Census 2021). There is not expected to be either a positive or negative impact on this community of identity group. **Any mitigation required:** N/A
Gender reassignment	We do not collate data regarding gender reassignment. There is not expected to be either a positive or negative impact on this community of identity group. **Any mitigation required:** N/A
Pregnancy, maternity and paternity	We do not collate data regarding pregnancy, maternity and paternity. There is not expected to be either a positive or negative impact on this community of identity group. **Any mitigation required:** N/A
Marriage and civil partnership	The South Holland census recorded 49.2% of residents married or in a civil partnership. There is not expected to be either a positive or negative impact on this community of identity group. **Any mitigation required:** N/A

Rural isolation	South Holland is a rural area spanning 74,238 hectares, with limited access to public transport. **Positive:** Energy Efficiency Upgrades, lower energy bills and warmer homes reduce financial stress and health risks, which are often higher in rural areas due to fuel poverty. **Negative:** None identified **Any mitigation required:** N/A
Socio-economic factors	The overall income deprivation score for South Holland is 10.3%**.** Exploring local income deprivation (ons.gov.uk) Of the 316 local authorities in England (excluding the Isles of Scilly), South Holland is ranked 174th most income-deprived**.** Sutton Bridge is among the 20% of most income-deprived neighbourhoods in England. **Positive:** Energy efficiency improvements (insulation, heating upgrades) may lower energy bills, which is particularly beneficial for low-income households. Investment in stock reduces emergency repairs and improves predictability of housing costs for tenants. Planned works create jobs for local contractors and suppliers, supporting the local economy. **Negative:** None identified **Any mitigation required:** N/A
Additional category: **Carers**	We do not hold data around tenants with caring responsibilities. The national census reported that 4.25% of South Holland residents (aged 5 years and older) provided up to 19 hours unpaid care each week (2021). In 2021, just under 1 in 50 people (1.9%) reported providing between 20 and 49 hours of unpaid care each week. Census 2021 was undertaken during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This may have influenced how people perceived and managed their provision of unpaid care, and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond.

	There is not expected to be either a positive or negative impact on this community of identity group. **Any mitigation required:** N/A
Additional category: **Domestic abuse and ASB victims**	During 2024, 96 anti-social behaviour cases were reported to the Housing Landlord Service, with noise complaints and behavioural issues being the most common, 1 Hate crime incidents 2 mate crime. 69% of residents surveyed in the TSMs reported being satisfied with our approach to handling complaints of ASB. The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that 3.8 million people aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2025. During 2024/25, 15 households were housed in social housing following fleeing domestic abuse. There is not expected to be either a positive or negative impact on this community of identity group. **Any mitigation required:** N/A
Overall, if there is a potential adverse impact after the mitigation, please state why and whether this is justifiable.	**N/A**
How will you monitor this to ensure there is no adverse effect in the future?	
Outcome of EIA:	Our analysis demonstrates that the proposed HRA Business plan and Asset Management Strategy is robust. The evidence shows minimal potential for discrimination, and we have taken all opportunities to advance equality subject to continuing monitoring and review

ends

REPORT TO:	Cabinet.
DATE:	20 January 2026
SUBJECT:	Transfer of Open Space to Sutton Bridge Parish Council.
PURPOSE:	To secure Cabinet approval to transfer land to Sutton Bridge Parish Council using the provisions set out within Circular 06/2003.
KEY DECISION:	*No*
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Henry Bingham – General Fund Assets & Planning
REPORT OF:	Andy Fisher, Deputy Chief Executive, Programme Delivery and Assistant Director – General Fund Assets
REPORT AUTHOR:	Andy Fisher, Deputy Chief Executive, Programme Delivery and Assistant Director – General Fund Assets
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Sutton Bridge.
EXEMPT REPORT?	No.

SUMMARY

This report recommends that Cabinet rely on the provisions contained within Circular 06/2003 and approve the transfer of the parcel of land shaded blue on the plan presented at Appendix 1 at the King Street Playing Field, Sutton Bridge, to Sutton Bridge Parish Council at an undervalue of £29,999; noting that the land edged red on that plan is already subject to an extant Portfolio Holder Decision to transfer it to the Parish Council at its unrestricted market value of £1.

The use of the land shaded blue will be restricted in any resulting conveyance to car parking for and other uses attendant to the use and enjoyment of the adjoining recreational land only, with a 100% overage clause in favour of this or any successor Council being included within any conveyance and triggered by any alternative use the land may be put to.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

1. Relies on the provisions contained within the Local Government Act 1972 - General Disposal Consent 2003, as conveyed through Circular 06/03 and approves the disposal of the land shaded blue on the plan attached at Appendix 1 for £1, representing an undervalue of £29,999 to Sutton Bridge Parish Council as doing so '*is likely to contribute to the achievement of…… the promotion or improvement of social well-being……. of all or any persons resident or present in its area.* (Circular 06/03).

2. Delegates authority to the Strategic and Operational Property Manager, General Fund Assets, to conclude the transfer, following any and all advice received from the Council's legal advisors in securing suitable and sufficient restrictive covenants within any resulting conveyance that limit the use of the land shaded blue to car parking for and other uses attendant to the use and enjoyment of the adjoining recreational land only, with a 100% overage clause in favour of this or any successor Council being included within any conveyance and triggered by any alternative use the land may be put to, and that;

3. Notes that the Strategic & Operational Property Manager, General Fund Assets has effected the process set out by Section 123 (2A) of the Local Government Act, 1972, in respect the land edged red and shaded blue on the plan at Appendix 1 as the necessary precursor when considering the disposal of any land that is or could be considered to be 'open space' under the Act, with no representations being received.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations made will enable the Parish Council to take the land into 'local' ownership in order to maintain and enhance the community value and social well-being that it offers residents now and into the future, whilst reducing this Council's costs and liability and protecting its long-term financial position through the inclusion of a 100% overage clause.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

1. Not to dispose of the land in this way and continue to maintain the asset at an ongoing cost to SHDC – not recommended.

2. Put the land to the open market with a view to securing a capital receipt at or close to the unrestricted market value assessed in accordance with the Act by the

Council's appointed Registered Valuer – not recommended in this case as set out within this report.

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Sutton Bridge Parish Council have been working with members and officers to secure the transfer of the Council's King Street and Lime Street Playparks and recreation grounds to it; at the time of writing this report, the Portfolio Holder had issued a decision to transfer all land and assets forming Lime Street park and grounds to the Parish, together with the land and assets edged red on the plan attached at Appendix 1 of this report, at their unrestricted market value of £1.

1.2 In addition, the Portfolio Holder has taken a decision to dispose of land currently used as a car park adjoining the King Street play park on the open market (shaded green on the plan attached at Appendix 1), with a sale forecast in the medium-term future. At the juncture that land is sold, there is no requirement for it to provide parking to serve the play park and recreation grounds.

1.3 By transferring the land shaded blue on the plan presented at Appendix 1 to the Parish Council, it will ensure the ongoing provision of off-street parking to service the use and enjoyment of the play park and its grounds for local and wider residents. Whilst that preservation could also be enabled by this Council, this Council would remain liable for all management, maintenance, insurance, enforcement and other costs that the Parish Council is able and willing to assume, hence it is recommended that the land shaded blue be transferred to the Parish Council for £1, representing an undervalue of £29,999, for it to maintain and protect.

1.4 Whilst many land and property decisions can be taken by the Portfolio Holder, this report is tabled to Cabinet because the Constitution precludes Portfolio Holders from disposing of land at a price that is '*less advantageous than a qualified valuer's valuation*' as recommended by this report. (See SHDC Constitution, section 3, p.37).

2 REPORT

2.1 The law governing the disposal of land owned by a principal council is prescribed within section 123 of The Local Government Act, 1972, as amended , and is set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Local Government Act, 1972, s123.

123 Disposal of land by principal councils.

(1) Subject to the following provisions of this section, [F1 and to those of the Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions) (Wales) Measure 2010,] a principal council may dispose of land held by them in any manner they wish.

(2) Except with the consent of the Secretary of State, a council shall not dispose of land under this section, otherwise than by way of a short tenancy, for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained.

(2A) A principal council may not dispose under subsection (1) above of any land consisting or forming part of an open space unless before disposing of the land they cause notice of their intention to do so, specifying the land in question, to be advertised in two consecutive weeks in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the land is situated, and consider any objections to the proposed disposal which may be made to them.

(2AA)Subsection (2A) does not apply to a disposal to which the provisions of regulations made under section 1 of the Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions) (Wales) Measure 2010 apply.

*(2B) Where by virtue of subsection (2A) above or in accordance with the provisions of regulations made under section 1 of the Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions) (Wales) Measure 2010.**]** a council dispose of land which is held—*

(a)for the purpose of section 164 of the Public Health Act 1875 (pleasure grounds); or

(b)in accordance with section 10 of the Open Spaces Act 1906 (duty of local authority to maintain open spaces and burial grounds),
the land shall by virtue of the disposal be freed from any trust arising solely by virtue of its being land held in trust for enjoyment by the public in accordance with the said section 164 or, as the case may be, the said section 10.

(7) For the purposes of this section a disposal of land is a disposal by way of a short tenancy if it consists—

(a) of the grant of a term not exceeding seven years, or
(b) of the assignment of a term which at the date of the assignment has not more than seven years to run,

and in this section "public trust land" has the meaning assigned to it by section 122(6) above.

Source: Local Government Act, 1972 - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/section/123

2.2 Whilst the disposal of the land recommended in this report is a '*disposal*' of '*open space*', it has already been subjected to the due process prescribed within section 123 (2A) of the Act, with no representations being received, meaning Cabinet need only note that position.

2.3 The land shaded blue on the plan attached at Appendix 1 has been independently valued by a suitably qualified and experienced Registered Valuer appointed by the

Council in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 - General Disposal Consent 2003, with that independently assessed value (ie unrestricted market value) being £30,000.

2.4 In terms of disposals at an undervalue, the Council does have the power to dispose of the land for a consideration *less than the best that can be reasonably obtained* in *specified circumstances*; those *specified circumstances* are set out within the Local Government Act 1972 - General Disposal Consent 2003, and conveyed through Circular 06/03 as follows:

> *2. The specified circumstances are:*
>
> "*a) the local authority considers that the purpose for which the land is to be disposed is likely to contribute to the achievement of any one or more of the following objects in respect of the whole or any part of its area, or of all or any persons resident or present in its area;*
>
> *i) the promotion or improvement of economic well-being;*
> *ii) the promotion or improvement of social well-being;*
> *iii) the promotion or improvement of environmental well-being; and*
>
> *b) the difference between the unrestricted value of the land to be disposed of and the consideration for the disposal does not exceed £2,000,000 (two million pounds)."*

Source: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a79ec3740f0b66d161af22b/462483.pdf

2.5 As it is recommended to restrict the use of the land shaded blue on the plan attached at Appendix 1 to car parking for and other uses attendant to the proper use and enjoyment of the adjoining recreational land only, the land will clearly make a valuable contribution to *the promotion or improvement of social well-being* of local and wider residents, meaning the Council can rely on the '*specified circumstance'* set out within Section 2 a) ii) of the Consent in order to dispose of the land at less than the best price that could be reasonably obtained.

2.6 As the recommendation is to dispose of the land for £1, Cabinet is being asked to approve disposal of the land at an undervalue of **£29,999** with the recommendations being:

> That Cabinet:
>
> **1.** Relies on the provisions contained within the Local Government Act 1972 - General Disposal Consent 2003, as conveyed through Circular 06/03 and approves the disposal of the land shaded blue on the plan attached at Appendix 1 for £1, representing an undervalue of £29,999 to Sutton Bridge Parish Council as doing so '*is likely to contribute to the achievement of…… the promotion or improvement of social well-being……. of all or any persons resident or present in its area.* (Circular 06/03).

2. Delegates authority to the Strategic and Operational Property Manager, General Fund Assets, to conclude the transfer, following any and all advice received from the Council's legal advisors in securing suitable and sufficient restrictive covenants within any resulting conveyance that limit the use of the land shaded blue to car parking for and other uses attendant to the use and enjoyment of the adjoining recreational land only, with a 100% overage clause in favour of this or any successor Council being included within any conveyance and triggered by any alternative use the land may be put to, and that;

3. Notes that the Strategic & Operational Property Manager, General Fund Assets has effected the process set out by Section 123 (2A) of the Local Government Act, 1972, in respect the land edged red and shaded blue on the plan at Appendix 1 as the necessary precursor when considering the disposal of any land that is or could be considered to be 'open space' under the Act, with no representations being received

3 CONCLUSION

3.1 Given the extant decision that will see the Parish Council acquire the freehold title of both the King Street and Lime Street Playing areas identified in the local plan as recreational land, it is lawful, reasonable, justified and proportionate to transfer the land shaded blue on the plan attached at Appendix 1 in addition in order to support and safeguard the '*social well-being'* of local and wider residents in accordance with the Act and the Council's adopted Asset Strategy 2023 – 2028.

EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

Supports SELCP Sub-Regional Strategy Priorities – Healthy Lives; Environment.

IMPLICATIONS

SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

Supports SELCP Sub-Regional Strategy Priorities – Healthy Lives; Environment.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

None

STAFFING

None.

WORKFORCE CAPACITY IMPLICATIONS

Positive implications

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The report sets out the due process necessary to be followed to meet the Council's lawful and constitutional obligations in terms of land and property matters. Legal advisors will be engaged to ensure that any resulting conveyance incorporates the any decision taken by the Cabinet in respect of this report.

DATA PROTECTION

None.

FINANCIAL

The financial implications are positive for the District Council in that transfer will remove all future grounds, repairs and maintenance costs and insurance and risk liabilities, however, the savings will be enjoyed through efficiency and diversion of resources rather than being cashable.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Following the due process described within this report will mitigate any process related risks.

STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

Consultation has been undertaken with the portfolio holder and local ward members.

REPUTATION

No detrimental reputational issues have been identified; disposing of assets to the most 'local' level of local government should however be positive.

CONTRACTS

None.

CRIME AND DISORDER

Ensuring more local management and supervision of the assets should further protect against crime and disorder.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

None.

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Enabling and enhancing opportunity for recreational participation and wide resident and community access will provide ongoing health benefits for all using the facilities provided by the asset.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

NONE.

ACRONYMS

SELCP – South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership.

APPENDICES

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -	
APPENDIX 1	The land referenced and subject to this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -	
Document title	**Where the document can be viewed**
Valuation Report – King Street, Sutton Bridge PE12 9RB	Estates and Assets team, South Holland District Council.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT
A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body.

REPORT APPROVAL	
Report author:	Andy Fisher, Deputy Chief Executive, Programme Delivery and Assistant Director, General Fund Assets.
Signed off by:	Andy Fisher, Deputy Chief Executive, Programme Delivery and Assistant Director, General Fund Assets.
Approved for publication:	Councillor Henry Bingham – Portfolio Holder for Assets and Strategic Planning.

Appendix 1.

The land shaded blue on the plan below is the parcel of land Cabinet are recommended to transfer to Sutton Bridge Parish Council at an under value of £29,999, relying on the specified circumstances set within Circular 06/2003 to do so lawfully.

The land edged red is subject to an extant Portfolio Holder decision to transfer it at its unrestricted market value of £1 to Sutton Bridge Parish Council.

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Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	Tuesday, 20 January 2026
Subject:	Debt Write Off
Purpose:	To seek approval for the write off of uncollectable debt
Key Decision:	N
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Paul Redgate, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Report Of:	Russell Stone, Director of Finance (S151)
Report Author:	Sharon Hammond, Head of Revenues & Benefits
Ward(s) Affected:	All Wards
Exempt Report:	Y The Appendices to this report are exempt by virtue of Paragraphs 1 (Information relating to any individual), 2 (Information which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual) and 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))

Summary

This report provides an update on the collection, recovery and enforcement of debt, and seeks Cabinet approval for the write off of amounts identified in this report.

Recommendations

That Cabinet approves: -

1. The write off of debts identified in this report,

and

2. An increase in the Section 151 write off delegation level, from £1,050 to £5,000

Reasons for Recommendations

All recovery methods have been considered and where appropriate pursued, before making the decision to write off. Debts will be written off against provisions in the Councils accounts. Officer time can be maximised on greatest returns, at the same time as ensuring robust procedures for debt management are in place across all revenue streams.
The increase in the level of delegation to the Section 151 Officer will ensure an efficient mechanism to move irrecoverable debt through the authorisation process.

Other Options Considered

Do nothing, however this would leave uncollectable debt showing on the council records.

1. Background

1.1. Efficient and well administered debt management is crucial to the Council. The approach to debt management and write offs is in line with policies previously approved by Cabinet.

1.2 Collection, recovery, and enforcement of debt continue to present significant challenges against the backdrop of ongoing cost-of-living pressures and the residual impacts of the pandemic. While in-year collection rates provide a useful performance indicator, they represent only a snapshot in time and do not reflect the ultimate collection position for any given financial year. Through sustained recovery efforts and enforcement of arrears from previous years, overall collection rate typically reaches 99%.

1.3 Since the Debt Respite Scheme was introduced in May 2021, 267 South Holland debtors have entered breathing space with debt totalling £687k. 23 remain in breathing space currently, with debt totalling £78k. This is twice the number and amount compared to the same point in 2024.

2. Write Offs for Cabinet Approval

2.1. Despite extensive efforts to recover debt, the need to write off debt can arise for several reasons, including debtors being untraceable, insolvent, ceased trading with no assets, or deceased with insufficient funds in the estate. All methods of recovery are considered and pursued in line with legislative provision, before making the decision to write off. This can include internal recovery action, use of debt enforcement agents, external tracing agents and procedures through the Courts.

2.2. Case management has concluded that recovery and enforcement options in respect of the debts presented in this report have been considered, and exhausted, and there is no prospect of recovery. Cabinet approval for write off is now requested.

2.3. A summary of these debts is shown in the table below, totalling £114,957.44 (of which the indicative loss to South Holland District Council is £42,481.33).

Reason	Council Tax	Business Rates	Housing Benefit Overpayment	Sundry Debt	Total
Absconder		£3,132.07	£19,704.91		£22,836.98
Deceased	£1,734.54		£5,143.69		£6,878.23
Insolvency	£43,530.96	£19,316.06	£1,286.54		£64,133.56
Uncollectable	£2,394.55		£16,304.44	£2,409.68	£21,108.67
Total	**£47,660.05**	**£22,448.13**	**£42,439.58**	**£2,409.68**	**£114,957.44**
	11.81%	40%	60%	100%	
Indicative loss to SHDC	**£5,628.65**	**£8,979.25**	**£25,463.75**	**£2,409.68**	**£42,481.33**

2.4. Details of individual debts are shown in confidential Appendices 1 to 4. The reason provided for write-off is consistent with the policy approved previously by Cabinet. Where applicable, multiple debts for a debtor are shown together.

2.5. In line with the policy, prior to this report being presented, consultation has taken place with the Section 151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Finance. Cabinet Members can therefore be assured that the debts listed are irrecoverable, and that write off is the correct course of action.

2.6. In all cases collection options have been considered, and exhausted and there is no realistic prospect of recovery. All debt approved for write off will be set against existing bad debt provisions and can be resurrected in full or in part at any time should new information come to light suggesting that they might be recoverable after all.

2.7. **Delegated Write Offs**

2.7.1 The Councils Constitution provides full delegated authority to the Section 151 Officer for the authorisation of debt write off. It is however presently custom and practice for the debts as set out in this report with a value above £1,050 to be brought to Cabinet for approval.

2.7.2 A review is timely as the current process is no longer representative of the amounts of revenue that the council deals with. It is important that officer resource is able to focus effort on debt that is recoverable, and, whilst ensuring that all possible avenues of recovery are exhausted in all cases, to have a mechanism to move irrecoverable debt through an efficient authorisation process.

2.7.3 Cabinet is therefore asked to approve an increase in the level of debt write off brought to Cabinet from £1,050 to £5,000, and in doing so to increase the authority of the Section 151 Officer to approve debts up to £5,000. In line with current practice, a summary of write offs approved under delegation would continue to be reported to Cabinet as part of future write off reports.

2.7.4 The following table shows the approved write-offs of amounts up to £1,050 for 2025/26, based on the authority given to the S151 Officer.

Reason for Written off	Council Tax		Business Rates		HBOP		Credit Control		Total	
	£	No	£	No	£	No	£	No	£	No
Absconder	£7,402.22	18	£0.00	0	£6,913.66	26	£1,298.58	3	**£15,614.46**	**47**
Deceased	£1,968.49	4	£0.00	0	£3,203.99	15	£147.70	4	**£5,320.18**	**23**
Insolvency	£6,880.68	13	£169.77	1	£356.96	2	£504.00	2	**£7,911.41**	**18**
Uneconomical to collect	£49.15	11	£0.00	0	£154.35	12	£106.54	23	**£310.04**	**46**
Unenforceable	£684.83	1	£0.00	0	£1,683.28	20	£2,423.93	9	**£4,792.04**	**30**
Total Amount	**£16,985.37**	**47**	**£169.77**	**1**	**£12,312.24**	**75**	**£4,480.75**	**41**	**£33,948.13**	**164**
Indicative loss to SHDC	**11.81%**		**40%**		**60%**		**100%**			
	£2,005.97		**£67.91**		**£7,387.34**		**£4,480.75**		**£13,941.97**	

3. Conclusion

3.1. All recovery options have been considered and exhausted in relation to the debts presented in this report for write off. In line with good accounting practice, approval is now sought to remove these debts, and for the value to be offset against bad debt provisions already made.

3.2. Debts can be resurrected in full, or in part, in the event new information comes to light.

3.3. An increase in the level of debt write off that can be approved by the Section 151 Officer will ensure an efficient mechanism to move irrecoverable debt through the authorisation process.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

None

Corporate Priorities

None

Staffing

None

Workforce Capacity Implications

None

Constitutional and Legal Implications

None

Data Protection

None

Financial

Clear processes for writing off irrecoverable debt represents sound financial management practice.
These debts will be offset against the bad debt provision. There is no budgetary impact.

Risk Management

By the nature, volume, and value of annual revenue to the council there will always be uncollectable amounts which will be recommended for write off once avenues to recover are exhausted. Provision for bad debt is made and reviewed regularly.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

None

Reputation

None

Contracts

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

None

Health and Wellbeing

None

Climate Change and Environment Impact Assessment

None

Acronyms

None

Appendices

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report:

Appendix 1	Council Tax Debts
Appendix 2	Business Rates Debts
Appendix 3	Housing Benefit Overpayment Debts
Appendix 4	Sundry Debts

Background Papers

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report**.**

Chronological History of this Report

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body.

Report Approval

Report author:	Sharon Hammond, Head of Revenues & Benefits Sharon.Hammond@pspsl.co.uk
Signed off by:	Russell Stone, Director of Finance (S151) Russell.stone@sholland.gov.uk
Approved for publication:	Councillor Paul Redgate, Portfolio Holder for Finance

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