Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	11 November 2025
Subject:	Social Housing Regulation – Q1 and Q2 2025/2026 update
Purpose:	To provide Cabinet with an update on progress made towards meeting the outcomes of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, including revised consumer standards.
Key Decision:	No.
Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing
Report Of:	Vikki Cherry, Assistant Director - Housing
Report Author:	Adel Gardner, Housing Transformation Manager
Ward(s) Affected:	All wards.
Exempt Report:	No.

Summary

The Regulator of Social Housing adopts a co-regulatory approach, holding Councillors responsible for ensuring that the Council, in its role as a registered provider of social housing, is delivering the outcomes of consumer standards.

On 30th July 2025 the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) published a formal regulatory judgement following a programmed inspection of South Holland District Council's Housing Landlord Service. This judgement forms part of the regulatory framework introduced under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, which aims to strengthen accountability and improve service delivery across the sector.

This report provides assurance to Members that the Council is addressing areas of weakness identified in the Regulator of Social Housings C2 judgement of the Council against the Consumer Standards as part of its proactive regulatory inspection regime.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet approves the Regulatory Improvement Plan (appendix a), and notes the progress made in addressing areas of weakness identified in the Regulator of

Social Housings C2 judgement of the Council against the Consumer Standards as part of its proactive regulatory inspection regime.

2. That Cabinet notes the feedback from Performance Monitoring Panel regarding the Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) Analysis scrutinised on 15 October 2025 (included as appendix b)
3. That Cabinet notes the Tenant Engagement Impact Assessment Report. (included as appendix c)

Reasons for Recommendations

To provide oversight, awareness and assurance of the Councils compliance with regulatory requirements as a Social Landlord.

Other Options Considered

Do nothing – to retain progress updates through operational arrangements with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing. This option is not considered to be appropriate as the Regulator of Social Housing is clear that Councillors are responsible for ensuring that the Council, in its role as a registered provider, is meeting the regulatory standards set.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 As a social landlord, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) expects the Council to meet the outcomes of the Consumer Standards. These standards are designed to ensure that social landlords provide high-quality services and maintain safe, decent homes for tenants. The Regulator is not prescriptive about how landlords should achieve the required standards, instead emphasises that landlords should work with tenants to define the services and approaches that meet tenants needs and service expectations, agreeing them on a local level.

1.2 Quarterly updates are provided to Cabinet to provide assurance on the Council's progress towards meeting the outcomes of the consumer standards.

2 REPORT

2.1 Programmed inspection

2.2 An inspection of South Holland District Council as a social landlord took place between February – July 2025. All four of the Consumer Standards were considered as part of the inspection and the Regulatory Judgement has been published on 30th July 2025.

2.3 The Council has been awarded a C2 grade, the second highest available. Cabinet received a report on 16th September detailing the findings of the judgement.

2.4 The Judgement has confirmed that the Council has provided assurance that it meets the Consumer Standards overall but identifies that further work is required in some areas.

2.5 The RSH confirms within its guidance that “where we judge a landlord to be C2 this is because we have identified some weaknesses which we consider are material to the landlord’s delivery of the outcomes of the Consumer Standards, which if not addressed, are likely to lead to poor outcomes for tenants. We expect that landlords graded at C2 will develop a plan to drive relevant improvement and will be able to show that weaknesses have been addressed so that outcomes for tenants are improved. We expect landlords to share relevant improvement plans with tenants.”

2.6 All providers are required to produce an improvement plan setting out details of how they plan to improve and address weaknesses identified. Even C1 providers are expected to continue to review, evaluate and improve their services to tenants.

2.7 An improvement plan for the housing landlord service has been produced in collaboration with the RSH.

2.8 As part of the Council’s Housing Transformation Programme, several workstreams are already in place, and these cover most areas identified by the Regulator as needing improvement. It is therefore planned that these projects will continue.

2.9 As part of the Judgement it was acknowledged the Council has a number of projects and improvement plans in place and the Regulator emphasised the importance of full delivery against these plans which include:

- Housing Transformation Programme
- Housing repairs online
- Tenant Engagement and Influence Strategy
- Stock condition survey programme
- ASB framework.

2.10 **Regulatory Improvement Plan**

2.11 The improvement plan has been developed following a comprehensive root cause analysis and has been reviewed by the Regulator of Social Housing. It incorporates a range of activities that are already accounted for within the wider Transformation Programme, ensuring alignment between the regulatory expectations and the Councils aspirations for the Housing Landlord Service.

2.12 The improvement plan sets out clear actions, timelines and accountability to drive the improvement. The improvement plan is included in appendix A.

2.13 The improvement plan and the existing Housing Transformation Programme will continue to be driven by the Housing Transformation Team and overseen by the Assistant Director – Housing on the journey towards a C1 grading.

2.14 It is intended that progress will be monitored by the Assistant Director Housing and the Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing and will feed into the Social Housing Regulation update reported to Cabinet quarterly.

2.15 **Social Housing sector update**

2.16 The table below summarises the gradings to date (with C1 being the highest grade - “delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards” and C4 the lowest grade - “very serious failings with improvement needed”).

Outcome of inspection	C1	C2	C3	C4
Programmed inspection	4	18	15	4
Landlord self-referred to RSH	0	0	17	0
Total number of gradings	**4**	**18**	**32**	**4**

*2 of the 60 council's who've been inspected are yet to receive their grading which is reflected in the figures above.

2.17 **Meeting the specific expectations of the consumer standards**

2.18 The Assistant Director – Housing and the Director – Communities now meet monthly with the Regulator of Social Housing providing updates on progress towards C1.

2.19 Progress towards meeting the outcomes continues to be monitored by Assistant Director-Housing and Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing, with quarterly updates reported to Cabinet and HRA Transformation Board.

Tenant Satisfaction Analysis

2.20 A report was presented to scrutiny on 20 May 2025 on analysis of the 24/25 TSM survey responses and further analysis of dissatisfaction was presented to scrutiny on 15 October 2025 (Appendix B). Feedback from Performance Monitoring Panel (PMP) is summarised below. The full report is attached as Appendix B.

2.21 The most commonly occurring reasons stated for dissatisfaction centred around repairs, property maintenance and communication. The term 'repairs' includes repairs, programmed work and safety checks of which our internal repairs department and external contractors provide these wors. It is not possible to differentiate between internal and external provider for dissatisfaction.

2.22 To support tenants to scrutinise the performance a focus group was help on 24th September 2025. During this session tenants examined the report on dissatisfaction, shared their views and considered whether they agreed with the findings and the action plan.

2.23 The action plan has been agreed at Housing Landlord Board and it will be implemented during 26/27. Based on HouseMark advice it can take up to 18 months for service improvements to impact TSM survey results.

2.24 PMP received the report on dissatisfaction and responded positively, noting that it was encouraging to see satisfaction levels either increasing or remaining consistent. They also acknowledged the action plan that had been put forward. In response to a query from the panel regarding the achievability of the action plan, Officers provided assurance that the proposed timescales had been carefully considered and agreed upon at the Housing Landlord Board. These timescales took into account other competing priorities, including the improvement plan for the Regulator, and Officers expressed confidence that the actions were achievable within the set timeframe.

Tenant Engagement and Influence Impact Assessment

2.25 It is important to monitor and share the impact of the Tenant Engagement and Influence Strategy that was adopted in June 2025. Cabinet will receive quarterly updates on Tenant Engagement Activity and the impact on tenants and the service (Appendix C).

2.26 To ensure the Tenant Engagement and Influence Strategy delivers meaningful outcomes, feedback mechanisms are embedded throughout all engagement activities. Tenants are encouraged to share their views through regular surveys, focus groups, and direct conversations, ensuring a wide range of voices are heard. All feedback received is reviewed, and resulting actions are clearly tracked and reported on by the Tenant Engagement Lead. This approach not only demonstrates accountability but also enables the service to evidence how tenant input directly shapes improvements.

2.27 The establishment of the Tenant Forum has provided a platform for tenants to influence decision making and ensure their voices are heard. Feedback from tenants has directly informed the development of key policies coming forward such as Aids and Adaptations and Reasonable Adjustments Policy, ensuring they are grounded in real experiences and priorities.

2.28 The Reading Group's "seal of approval" has added an extra layer of tenant scrutiny, helping to ensure that communications and policy documents are accessible and relevant.

2.29 Additionally, tenant input has been used in the implementation of Awaab's Law letters, ensuring that information provided to tenants is clear, timely, and responsive to their needs.

2.30 These initiatives demonstrate the Councils commitment to the journey of meaningful tenant involvement and continuous improvement across all aspects of the service.

2.31 **Rent standard**

2.32 Social housing landlords must meet the Rent Standard, set by the Regulator of Social Housing.

2.33 A rent standard is published annually by the Regulator, confirming the maximum rent adjustment for the following financial year. A submission was submitted before the deadline of 11 July.

2.34 **Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (1 April 2024)**

2.35 A year-end report on complaints, including compliance with the Code, was presented to scrutiny on 20 May 2025 and Cabinet on 10 June 2025.

2.36 The submission to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Service was submitted by the deadline of 30 September 2025.

2.37 **Housing Landlord Strategy and Transformation and Service Improvement Programme update**

2.38 <u>Landlord Strategy</u>

2.39 The following progress has been made:

- Culture and Operational Excellence – Annual report being sent to tenants in Autumn 2025 based on tenant communication preferences including literature on how to report a repair and join the Tenant Forum. Some managers have completed Chartered Institute of Housing Studies, supporting professional development across the services in line with the Competence and Conduct Standard expected from October 2026, with some still studying. A new cohort of Officers due to start in 2026. Report to Scrutiny in October on the dissatisfaction reported in the Tenant

Satisfaction Measures for 24/25 and action plan to address. Capital Programme Clinic established to monitor the ongoing delivery of the capital works programme.

- Quality Homes and Connected Neighbourhoods – over 82% of stock condition surveys completed (representative sample fed into HRA business plan modelling by Savills of which Members are being consulted on during Winter 2025). Phase 2 of stock condition survey programme. Introduction of Phase 1 of Awaab's Law. Adoption of the ASB Framework. This document sets out a commitment to ASB case management prior to commencing a transformation programme. Actions in this report are being delivered by the Housing ASB Lead. A new policy co created with tenants on the Disabled Aids and Adaptations Survey was considered by scrutiny on 23 September 2025 and will be presented to Cabinet in November 2025 for adoption. No access working group established.
- Accountability and Transparency – A Reasonable Adjustments Policy was drafted and consulted with tenants and external bodies, this was presented to scrutiny on 23 September 2025 and will be presented to Cabinet in November 2025. Tenant census data used to prioritise stock survey remedial works. Annual report being sent to tenants in Winter 2025 with information on how we spend their rent, and specific TSM breakdowns to support tenants to effectively scrutinise the Councils performance following focus group feedback.
- Tenant Voice and Opportunity – Tenant Engagement strategy adopted in June 2025. Tenant Forum launched in July 2025 including a series of in person events held across the district. First newly established tenant focus groups launched in August and September 2025 including a property focus group, tenancy focus group and complaints and performance focus group. These groups provide tenants with meaningful opportunities to shape forthcoming policies, including the Disabled Aids and Adaptations Policy, and to scrutinise our performance against Tenant Satisfaction Measures. The complaints and performance group has also been an opportunity for tenants to scrutinise the data at a more granular level.

2.40 Upon receiving notification of the Programmed Inspection early in 2025, the Housing Transformation Team's focus shifted to supporting the Council through its regulatory inspection.

2.41 Once the inspection was complete in July 2025 the Transformation Teams focus shifted back to delivery of the Transformation Programme and resetting the programme based on the anticipated findings of the Judgement.

2.42 A revised programme for 25/26 was established based on the Regulatory inspection, whilst awaiting the findings. During this time, the Transformation Team focussed on delivering existing projects including:

- Damp, condensation and mould (Awaabs Law)
- Aids and adaptations
- Data and information management
- Tenant engagement
- Competence and conduct.

2.43 **Responses submitted to MHCLG/Housing Ombudsman consultations**

2.44 Registered Providers have been consulted on the following, with findings and next steps as follows:

- Awaabs Law

    - Phase 1 to be implemented by 27 October 2025
    - Phase 2 and 3 expand to a wider range of hazards in 2026 and 2027
- Competence and Conduct Standard
    - To be implemented from October 2026 with a three-year transition period.
- Decent Homes 2
    - Consultation completed; findings and next steps are pending publication.
- Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES)
    - Consultation completed; findings and next steps are pending publication.
- Rent Convergence
    - Consultation completed; findings and next steps are pending publication.

3. Conclusion

3.1 The legislative and regulatory changes introduced are both significant and far-reaching, reshaping the strategic and operational delivery of housing services. These developments influence how resources are allocated, the scope and depth of data collected, and the ways in which tenants are actively involved in shaping services. The council's response, through its Improvement Plan and Transformation Programme, ensures that these changes are embedded into practice, supporting compliance, transparency, and continuous improvement across the housing service.

4. EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

4.1 There are no immediate benefits to the Partnership. However, South Holland as a sovereign partner Council continues to contribute to the overall reputation of the Partnership, sharing best practice and working across directorates to improve the services received by residents as well as tenants.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

None.

Corporate Priorities

None.

Staffing

None.

Workforce Capacity Implications

A second cohort of Housing Managers are due to begin studying for relevant Chartered Institute of Housing qualifications. Whilst officers are committed to completing the qualifications, it should be noted that the Chartered Institute of Housing advises that the study requires a commitment of 8 hours per week to be completed (over a period of 12 months).

Constitutional and Legal Implications

None.

Data Protection

None.

Financial

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 has directed the Council to engage in specific activities. The associated costs for 25/26 to date are detailed in the table below.

Financial year 2025/26			
Q1	*Three new permanent posts added to establishment (ASB Lead Officer, Housing Service Insight and Improvement Lead Officer, and Tenant Engagement and Influence Lead Officer). (Amount includes on-costs).*	*£166,262*	*the costs are covered by existing HRA budgets*
Q2	*Altair – for support post inspection (including review of evidence submitted to RSH)*	*£20,000*	*the costs are covered by existing HRA budgets*
Q3	*No costs committed at present.*	*-*	
Q4	*No costs committed at present.*	*-*	
Total spend for 2025/26		***£186,262***	

Risk Management

None.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

The Portfolio Holder - Strategic and Operational Housing and Director for Communities have been consulted. They continue to be regularly updated as Chair and Sponsor, of the Housing Transformation and Improvement Programme Board.

Regular briefings are being held with Housing Landlord Service Managers, the wider Housing Service, Senior Leadership Team and all Members (informally) to keep them updated on the progress of the Housing Transformation and Improvement Programme and sector updates.

Quarterly updates are provided to Cabinet on progress made towards delivering the outcomes of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, including revised consumer standards.

Tenants will be kept informed of the progress made towards delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards through the annual report, newsletters, website and specific focus groups such as TSM scrutiny groups.

PMP were consulted on the contents of the report into further understanding of Tenant dissatisfaction areas from the 2024/25 Tenant Satisfaction Survey.

Reputation

The Council welcomes the Regulator of Social Housing's recent judgement and acknowledges the C2 grading as a valuable opportunity for growth and improvement. This outcome reflects the Council's commitment to transparency and continuous learning, and the Council is encouraged by the recognition of our strengths alongside areas for development. The judgement provides a clear framework for enhancing housing services, and it is already taking proactive steps to address the improvement areas identified. The Council view this as a pivotal moment to strengthen governance, deepen tenant engagement, and ensure homes meet the highest standards of safety and quality. The focus remains firmly on delivering excellent outcomes for tenants and communities.

Contracts

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

None.

Health and Wellbeing

The C2 judgement provides a constructive foundation for improving housing services in ways that directly support the health and wellbeing of our tenants. By addressing the identified areas for improvement, the Council is better positioned to ensure homes are safe, well-maintained, and responsive to tenant needs creating healthier living environments and promoting greater quality of life across our communities.

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

None.

Acronyms

- SELCP – South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership
- MHCLG – Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government
- RSH – Regulator of Social Housing.
- TSM – Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- PMP – Performance Monitoring Panel

Appendices

Appendix A - Regulator of Social Housing Improvement Plan
Appendix B – Report to PMP on 15th October 2025 - Further understanding of Tenant Dissatisfaction areas from the 2024/25 Tenant Satisfaction Survey
Appendix C – Tenant Engagement and Influence Impact Report

Background Papers

Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Regulator of Social Housing - Consumer Standards	www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-consumer-standards
SHDC Landlord Strategy 2024-2026	https://www.sholland.gov.uk/media/24482/SHDC-Housing-Landlord-Strategy-2024-2026/pdf/SHDC_Housing_Landlord_Strategy_2024-2026.pdf?m=1707905746373
SHDC Regulatory Judgement	South Holland District Council (32UF) - Regulatory Judgement: 30 July 2025 - GOV.UK

Chronological History of this Report
A report on this item has previously been considered by a Council body:

Name of Body	Date
Cabinet	June 2025

Report Approval

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