



Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	30 June 2026
Subject:	Social Housing Regulation – Q4 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, Service Director - Housing
Report Author:	Adel Gardner, Change and Improvement Manager (HRA)
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 continues to address areas of weakness identified in the Regulator of Social Housing's C2 judgement of the Council against the Consumer Standards as part of its proactive regulatory inspection regime.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet notes the progress made in addressing areas of weakness identified in the Regulator of Social Housing's C2 judgement of the Council against the Consumer Standards as part of its proactive regulatory inspection regime.

2. That Cabinet approves changing the frequency of this report, and its accompanying appendix (Tenant Engagement and Impact Assessment report) to 6 monthly, and that the HRA Governance Framework is updated accordingly to reflect this change.
3. That Cabinet notes the quarterly Tenant Engagement Impact Assessment Report. (included as appendix B)

Reasons for Recommendations

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

This approach reflects the maturing position of the improvement programme while ensuring continued oversight through regular Portfolio Holder engagement and quarterly reporting to the Housing Transformation Board.

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 have been provided to Cabinet to date to support governance following the C2 judgement. Building on demonstrable progress and strengthened internal governance arrangements, it is now proposed that Cabinet receives this report on a six-monthly basis going forward.

2 REPORT

2.1 Improvement Plan – Progress Update

- 2.2 Following the inspection of South Holland District Council as a social landlord between February and July 2025, and the subsequent publication of the Regulatory Judgement on 30th July 2025, the Council received a C2 grade. This confirmed that while the Consumer Standards were broadly met, weaknesses required attention to avoid poor outcomes for tenants, specifically in the Transparency Influence and Accountability Standard.

2.3 In response, the Council adopted an improvement plan at Cabinet on 11th November 2025, developed in collaboration with the RSH and shared with tenants.

2.4 Since adoption, the Council has made measurable progress against the improvement plan. Key actions have been implemented across several workstreams within the Housing Transformation Programme, which were already aligned with the areas identified by the Regulator.

2.5 Since the last update further progress against the improvement plan actions includes:

- Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the stock condition survey programme complete, Phase 3 progressing with 91.66% as at 23 Mar 26. Offering tenants flexible appointment options to support access.
- Review and analyse stock condition survey data to verify decent homes position – reported to cabinet on 11 November 25 and 28 April 2026.
- Access to services analysis carried out across ten core areas, including repairs, rent arrears, complaints, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and tenancy support to identify any barriers to accessing services. The assessment was reported to Cabinet on 28 April 2026 and showed no evidence of systemic or structural barriers linked to age, gender, disability, ethnicity or nationality.
- Recruitment to and establishment of the new Tenant Influence Panel. Live Policy work scrutinised as part of the tenant panel training in March 2026 with the first formal panel meeting scheduled for 6th May 2026.
- Improvement of ASB case management – New Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Policy developed with tenants. Scrutinised by the Tenant Influence Panel on 28 March 2026 and Policy Development Panel on 21 April 2026.
- Engagement plan established with tenants and promoted.
- Hosted a repairs roadshow consultation on the Transformation Repairs project in February and March 2026 to gather tenant feedback on the current provision and the future aspirations for the repairs service.
- Engagement with tenants on the Competence and Conduct Policy and Code of Conduct for Staff in March.
- An informal session was held for all Members on 25 March 2026 to explain the purpose of the new Tenant Influence Panel, clarify tenant and Member roles, and outline how tenant scrutiny will inform service delivery and Member decision-making.

2.6 Full improvement plan details and progress can be found in appendix A.

2.7 Social Housing sector update

2.8 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	9*	29	20	4
Landlord self-referred to RSH	0	0	17	0
Total number of gradings	9	29	36	7

*2 Upgraded

2.9 Meeting the specific expectations of the consumer standards

2.10 The Service Director of Housing and the Executive Director of Communities initially met

with the Regulator of Social Housing monthly to provide updates on progress toward achieving a C1 grading. As the Regulator has recognised significant progress against the improvement plan, the frequency of these meetings has since reduced to bi-monthly.

- 2.11 Progress towards meeting the outcomes continues to be monitored by Service Director-Housing and Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing, with updates reported to Cabinet and quarterly updates to HRA Transformation Board.
- 2.12 The most recent annual self-assessment against the consumer standards reported to Cabinet 17 February 26 did not highlight issues of material concern. Since then, the following items have been updated:
- Tenant engagement and scrutiny – Tenant Influence Panel established in March 2026.
 - Stock condition data – over 91% of homes surveyed with standalone reports presented to Cabinet.
 - Tenant census data being actively used by Officers to meet the needs of tenants.
 - HRA business plan and asset management strategy developed with Tenants and adopted by Council.
 - Policies continue to be produced with tenants most recent being Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Damp Condensation and Mould Policy.
 - Reasonable Adjustments Policy and translation services advertised on the website and the annual report.
 - Communications campaign on how to report repairs and damp condensation and mould.
 - Communications campaign on how to report ASB.
 - Competence and Conduct Policy and Staff Code of Conduct developed with Tenants, Staff and Members.
 - ASB Framework continued to be delivered with the development of the ASB Policy.
 - ASB satisfaction surveys rolled out in February 2026.

Tenant Engagement and Influence Impact Assessment

- 2.13 It is important to monitor and share the impact of the Tenant Engagement and Influence Strategy that was adopted in June 2025. Cabinet receives quarterly updates on Tenant Engagement Activity and the impact on tenants and the service (Appendix C)
- 2.14 Since the last update tenant input has been used in the following ways:
- To develop the ASB and Hate Crime Policy through the tenancy focus group, tenant forum, survey and tenant influence panel.
 - To develop the DCM Policy through the property focus group, tenant forum, survey and tenant influence panel.
 - To develop the Competence and Conduct Policy and Code of Conduct through the tenancy focus group, property focus group, complaints and performance focus group, tenant forum, and tenant influence panel.
 - Complaints focus group reviewed service performance including TSMs and looked at what was important for tenants to know and how they wanted this information sharing.
 - Property focus group discussed transactional surveys and shaped what the questions should be and how the surveys should be carried out.

- Surveys have been conducted across a variety of service improvement work streams (DCM, ASB and Housing Repairs project) over 300 responses have been received to the surveys collectively. Survey results are directly shaping policy development.
- To develop the Tenant Influence Panel agenda items.

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

2.16 **Rent standard**

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

2.18 A rent standard is published annually by the Regulator, confirming the maximum rent adjustment for the following financial year.

2.19 The Rent Standard applying from 1 April 2026 allows social landlords to increase rents for social and affordable rented homes by up to CPI + 1% each year, in line with the government's 10-year rent settlement.

2.20 Rent setting for the financial year 2025/26 was considered by Full Council on 28 January 2026 and tenants have been notified of their new rent figures.

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

2.22 This is now covered by a standalone report, shared with Cabinet annually. Year end report due in September 2026.

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

2.24 Landlord Strategy

2.25 The following progress has been made:

- Culture and Operational Excellence – Over half of relevant 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. A new cohort of Officers due to start in August 2026. Promotion of the future leaders programme to support retaining and growing talent. Development of the Competence and Conduct Policy and Code of Conduct with Tenants, Members and Staff. All Staff briefings held with guest speakers from Customer Contact and Corporate Transformation. Job descriptions updated to reflect the mandatory qualification element of relevant roles. Access to Services analysis carried out with an action plan established. Updated complaints comments compliments and compensation policy reflecting tenant feedback and advice from the Housing Ombudsman.
- Quality Homes and Connected Neighbourhoods – over 91% of stock condition surveys completed. Phase 3 of stock condition survey programme. Using data to determine the frequency of future stock condition surveys. Compliance with Phase 1 of Awaab's Law. Delivery against the ASB Framework. Actions in the framework are being delivered by the Housing Transformation Officer and Housing ASB Lead. A new policy co created with tenants on the ASB policy to be adopted by Cabinet 30 June 2026. Repairs transformation project launched to work with tenants to get

the best out of our repairs service. Data used to inform decision making such as use of updated stock condition data to set the capital programme for 26/27.

- Accountability and Transparency – 25/26 TSMs reported to Members and Tenants to support scrutiny of the service. Benchmarked ourselves against neighbouring authorities and promoted this to tenants. Measuring and monitoring Awaabs Law performance, which is reported to tenants, compliance clinic and PMP. Constitution amended to reflect tenant influence panel. Utilise HouseMark membership for wider sector benchmarking and to inform key projects such as Housing Repairs Transformation. Held our first Aids and Adaptations Appeal Panel meeting (includes tenant representation). Established an approach to surveying tenants on satisfaction regarding completed capital programme works.
- Tenant Voice and Opportunity – Launched a new Tenant Facebook page “Tenant Talk” to broaden digital engagement. A variety of focus groups continue to be held across the district on a variety of topics such as property, tenancy and complaints and performance. Recruitment to and establishment of the Tenant Influence Panel. Constitution now reflects the Tenant Influence Panel in the governance arrangements. Service improvements regularly reported back to tenants at focus groups, tenant forum, on the website, in the annual report and in sheltered newsletters.

2.26 Responses submitted to MHCLG/RSH/Housing Ombudsman consultations

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

- Revisions to the Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard, Consumer Standards Code of Practice and TSMs
 - Consultation launched on 9th December 2025 to 3rd March 2026.
 - Changes to the Transparency, Influence and Accountability (TI&A) Standard relating to:
 - Competence and Conduct
 - Social Tenant Access to Information (STAIRs) - This introduces requirements for providers to give tenants access to certain information. This is not directly relevant to the Council because it already operates under the Freedom of Information Act and existing statutory transparency obligations.
 - Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)
 - Changes to the associated Code of Practice
 - The introduction of a new electrical safety checks TSM.Consultation response pending.

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.

3.2 Whilst it is proposed to reduce the frequency of Cabinet reporting to six monthly, robust governance arrangements remain in place. Progress against the improvement plan and compliance with consumer standards continues to be:

- Monitored operationally by the Service Director – Housing
- Reported regularly to the Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing
- Reviewed quarterly through the Housing Transformation Board
- Supported by ongoing engagement with tenants and scrutiny through the Tenant Influence Panel

This ensures that performance, risk and delivery remain subject to regular oversight, with escalation routes in place should any concerns arise between Cabinet reporting cycles.

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 Actual expenditure	
Tenant Engagement and Influence Lead Officer	£63,355
ASB Lead Officer	£27,209
Housing Service Insight and Improvement Lead Officer	£47,489
Altair - for support post inspections (including review of evidence submitted to RSH)	£12,242
Total Spend for 2025/26	£150,295

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.

Six-monthly updates will be provided to Cabinet, supported by quarterly reporting to the Housing Transformation Board and regular updates to the Portfolio Holder.

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.

Reputation

The C2 grading continues to be 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
- ASB – Anti-Social Behaviour
- DCM – Damp Condensation and Mould

Appendices

Appendix A – Regulatory Improvement Plan – update

Appendix B – Quarterly 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	February 2026
Report Approval Report author:	Adel Gardner, Change and Improvement Manager (HRA)

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