

OUTCOME OF HOUSING INSPECTION (CONSUMER STANDARDS)

Cabinet Member & Portfolio	Cllr Steve Tuckwell, Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing & Growth Cllr Jonathan Bianco, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property
Responsible Officer	Dan Kennedy - Corporate Director of Residents Services
Report Author & Directorate	Sam Strong, Assistant Director Homes and Neighbourhoods, Residents' Services
Papers with report	Appendix 1 - Regulator of Social Housing Regulatory Judgement

HEADLINES

Summary	<p>This report presents to Cabinet the findings of an inspection of the Council's Social Housing landlord service by the Regulator of Social Housing. Overall, the judgement from the Regulator was a grade of C2, the second highest grade possible. The inspection found many strengths and some areas for improvement to achieve the highest grade of C1. This includes continuing to deliver the approved programme of works to council homes to achieve the decent homes standard and delivering agreed actions to strengthen tenant engagement and scrutiny of the landlord service. Actions are being actively delivered, and progress will be reported regularly to Cabinet Members and the Regulator of Social Housing.</p>
Putting our Residents First Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026	<p>This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: An efficient, well-run, digital-enabled council working with partners to deliver services to improve the lives of all our residents</p> <p>This report supports our commitments to residents of: A Digital-Enabled, Modern, Well-Run Council</p>
Financial Cost	There are no direct costs arising from the recommendations set out within this report.
Select Committee	Residents' Services Select Committee
Ward(s)	All

RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

1. the regulatory judgement from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) awarded to Hillingdon Council for its council housing service (consumer standards), which confirmed a consumer grading of C2, the second highest grade possible (appendix 1), be noted.
2. authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Residents Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property and the Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing & Growth, to approve (and publish) the action plan in response to the findings of the inspection, to work towards achieving the highest C1 grade, and to provide this to the Regulator of Social Housing along with regular updates on progress.
3. the work already underway to implement service changes to work towards achieving the highest grade of C1, be noted.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

The recommendations are based on the regulatory judgement by the Regulator of Social Housing following an inspection, which identified areas where some of the council's regulated housing services do not fully meet the requirements of the relevant consumer standard

Addressing these areas is crucial to ensure good quality, well-maintained, and safe homes for tenants, effective repairs, clear communication, fair and equitable outcomes for all tenants, and improved tenant engagement and complaint handling. Hillingdon Council has already engaged constructively with tenants and the Regulator and has plans in place to address these issues.

The implementation of a comprehensive service improvement programme is essential not only to prevent the risk of a future downgrade but also to ensure the council can achieve a C1 (full compliance) grade, demonstrating full adherence to regulatory standards and a commitment to good outcomes for our residents.

Alternative options considered / risk management

1. Do Nothing / Continue with the current arrangements – This would not meet the requirement from the Regulator of Social Housing to continue to improve services to achieve the highest grade of compliance possible (C1).
2. Continue to improve services and the housing offer – this option will ensure the service is fully compliant with regulatory standards and deliver the best possible outcomes and value for money, for residents.

Select Committee comments

The Residents' Services Select Committee has been kept updated on the inspection process and reviews the Landlord Service Annual Complaints annually. The Select Committee reserves its right to review the implementation of any approved action plan going forward.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) published a regulatory judgement for the London Borough of Hillingdon (LB Hillingdon) on 30 July 2025, following responsive engagement that began in August 2024, and an inspection by the Regulator, which completed in July 2025.
2. This judgement confirms a consumer grading of C2, which is the first time a consumer grade has been issued for LB Hillingdon and is the second highest grade possible. The judgement was made following a performance assessment against all four consumer standards: Neighbourhood and Community, Safety and Quality, Tenancy, and Transparency, Influence and Accountability.
3. The grade of C2 indicates that there are many areas where good outcomes are being achieved for tenants delivering the consumer standards with some areas where further improvement is needed to achieve full compliance. Specifically, improvement areas were identified in the Safety and Quality Standard; the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard; and to a lesser extent, the Neighbourhood and Community Standard.
4. The inspection in 2025 involved the inspectors reviewing a range of documents and reviewing meetings of the Cabinet, Residents' Services Select Committee, Corporate Resources and Infrastructure Select Committee, Landlord Board, and two Special Interest Group tenant meetings were observed. Engaged tenants, officers, and councillors, including the Deputy Leader of the Council were interviewed as part of the inspection process. A wide range of documents provided by LB Hillingdon were reviewed, and the regulatory judgement is based on all information obtained during the inspection, responsive engagement, regulatory returns, and other regular engagement.
5. Safety and Quality Standard – the following summarises the findings:
 - Condition of Homes: LB Hillingdon has an understanding of the condition of 87% of its homes, based on physical assessments and other information. Plans are in place to physically survey all remaining homes by the end of 2025, followed by a rolling programme
 - Decent Homes Standard: While some homes do not meet the Decent Homes Standard, a costed improvement plan has been developed and adapted based on identified risks. The majority of required works are lower risk, and higher risk hazards have been addressed. The RSH will monitor progress in addressing this area.
 - Health and Safety: The Council is currently meeting legal health and safety requirements for tenants in homes and communal areas. Steps are being taken to improve performance reporting for robust oversight.
 - Tackling Damp and Mould: An improved approach to damp and mould has been developed, but there is a need to improve performance reporting on overdue cases and ensure consistencies in reporting to senior officers and councillors. Ongoing engagement by the Regulator will seek assurance on addressing this area.

- Repairs Service: The council was found to provide an efficient and effective repairs service in general, with recent improvements in timeliness. Improvement is needed in reporting repairs performance to senior leaders and councillors, and in providing clear and timely communication to tenants about repairs timescales and planned improvements.
 - Areas where the council's services do not currently meet the requirements were also found in communicating assistance for housing adaptations services. Improvement plans are in place to address these issues.
6. Neighbourhood and Community Standard - the following summarises the findings:
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Hate Incidents: The council has a consistent approach to deterring and tackling ASB and hate crime and meets the Standard's requirements. However, the ASB policy is not yet formally approved, and evidence of meeting service standards in relation to ASB could not be provided. LB Hillingdon is reviewing its ASB service and planning improvements, which will be monitored.
 - Domestic Abuse: LB Hillingdon provided assurance that it is meeting expectations for working with agencies to tackle domestic abuse and enable tenants to access support.
7. Tenancy Standard – the following summarises the findings:
- LB Hillingdon offers tenancies compatible with accommodation purpose, household needs, community sustainability, and efficient housing stock use. The Tenancy Policy outlines its approach to tenancy management, with procedures and systems in place. Assurance was provided on supporting mutual exchanges for eligible tenants.
8. Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard – the following summarises the findings:
- Fairness and Respect: the council is committed to treating tenants fairly and with respect, with examples of tailored service delivery. However, a limited understanding of tenant characteristics and needs restricts the ability to fully evidence fair and equitable outcomes for all tenants. Actions are being taken to develop this understanding, and improved outcomes will be sought.
 - Accessible Information: Performance reporting to tenants is limited, with reliance on online sharing and promotion of digital access. Improvements are needed in information provided to tenants on safety and quality standards. Developing a communications approach based on tenant needs and preferences, with more transparent reporting, will enhance accessibility and support tenant scrutiny. Improvement plans include objectives to improve service accessibility.
 - Tenant Views and Engagement: the council's tenant engagement approach is in its early stages. While tenants have influenced operational service design, assurance could not be provided that feedback is systematically heard at strategic levels. This gap was identified by LB Hillingdon, with plans for more tenant-led scrutiny, which the RSH will monitor.
 - Complaints Handling: the council has recently enhanced its complaints reporting, with assurance that most complaints are responded to promptly and performance against timescales has improved. Complaints accessibility for residents was identified as an area for improvements accessibility of the complaints approach, with information only directing tenants to online reporting. A plan is in place to further improve the complaints approach,

and assurance will be sought that changes lead to improved outcomes and sustained performance.

9. Engagement and Future Monitoring - the Regulator reported that the council has engaged constructively following its self-referral and throughout the inspection. A number of issues have been successfully addressed, and appropriate and resourced plans are in place to rectify remaining weaknesses. The RSH will continue to engage with LB Hillingdon and seek assurance of robust reporting structures for effective oversight as issues are addressed.
10. The Council is continuing to expedite a range of actions following the inspection, including planned programmes of works to deliver decent homes and strengthening tenant engagement, scrutiny and involvement of tenants in the landlord service, to ensure services offer value for money and deliver positive outcomes for residents.

Financial Implications

11. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report.
12. Indirect financial implications indicate that the plan being implemented as part of the aim to achieve C1 will also generate efficiencies in specific areas because of process reengineering and focused expenditure and investment on decent homes. This will reduce costs to tenants and enhance Value for Money of the housing delivery service. Specific areas where efficiencies are envisaged include improved repairs and maintenance alerts leading to earlier intervention, improved voids management and reletting processes, better rent collection processes improving collection rates, and reduced temporary accommodation throughput due to proactive tenants' engagement. These efficiencies will translate into financial benefits that will reduce costs for tenants over time.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

The recommendations set out in the report will ensure that the council addresses identified areas for further improvement in its delivery of the Regulator of Social Housing consumer standards, which directly impacts Hillingdon residents. Improvements in the Safety and Quality Standard will lead to good quality, well-maintained, and safe homes for tenants, meeting health and safety requirements, and an effective and timely repairs service, including better communication about repairs and adaptations.

Addressing improvement areas within the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard will ensure tenants have access to clear and timely information about services and standards, and have their views systematically taken into account in decision-making. Improved complaints handling will also directly benefit residents by ensuring concerns are addressed fairly, effectively, and promptly. These improvements will ensure the council's vision of putting our residents first is met.

Consultation & Engagement carried out (or required)

At this stage, no formal consultation has been undertaken with residents. However, the regulatory judgement itself was informed by engagement with a range of stakeholders, including engaged tenants, officers and Cabinet Members.

Tenant engagement and empowerment are now a core part of service delivery going forward. It is an objective of the service to be open and transparent and to work with residents on co-designing the improvement journey ahead. This will be followed by regular programme updates to the council and tenants on the delivery of future improvements and changes.

In 2024, Special Interest Groups (SIG's) with tenants were created as follows:

- caretaking
- grounds maintenance and green spaces
- compliments, complaints and learning
- neighbourhood management (ASB)
- repairs, planned works and maintenance
- reviewing policies and procedures
- tenancy management and welfare reform tenancy support.

These aim to foster resident engagement on key service areas and as noted by the Regulator have made rapid progress. The council is working towards securing resident involvement in decision-making panels and a full training programme will be provided to support this. As part of this new commitment to resident empowerment, a Resident Scrutiny Panel has started in July 2025 and resident-led conference, which has been designed and produced by residents themselves, is scheduled for the 26th of September 2025.

Improvement plans are in place to deliver more tenant-led scrutiny, and this will be monitored. The council will also be meeting with the RSH on a monthly basis to provide updates on progress.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance have reviewed this report and concur with the Financial Implications set out above, noting the recommendations to note the Regulator of Social Housing's C2 grading for Hillingdon Council's housing service and the work already underway to implement service changes to achieve C1 grading, alongside the recommendation to delegate authority to approve and implement the associated action plan contained in this report.

Furthermore, it is noted that the recommendations do not present any direct financial implications. Any costs or savings that arise from the implementation of the action plan to achieve a C1 grading will be monitored through the monthly monitoring cycle along with the wider MTFs and the overarching thirty-year Business Plan.

Legal

The Council has various statutory duties placed upon it by numerous pieces of legislation. More recently, the implementation of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 introduced a system of proactive regulation against the new consumer standards as set out in the body of this report. As such, there are no particular legal implications arising from this report and approval of the recommendations will facilitate the Council in addressing the requirements suggested in the Regulator of Social Housing Judgment awarded to the Council in July 2025.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL