

# Bristol Consumer Standards Improvement Strategy

## Background

Bristol City Council (the council) commissioned Savills to review its compliance with the newly introduced Consumer Standards. This review identified a number of failings, in particular in respect of the Safety and Quality Standard, which we subsequently self-referred to the regulator in line with its co-regulatory approach. Following its responsive engagement the regulator issued a C3 judgement, reflecting serious concerns failings in us delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards that require significant improvement.

Issues identified in the judgement included a lack of electrical and asbestos surveys, a number of remedial actions outstanding relating to fire, electrical works, and damp and mould, poor understanding of our stock as a result of out of date stock condition surveys, and a substantial number of outstanding and overdue repairs.

The council accepts the regulator's findings and is committed to addressing these issues and delivering the required consumer standards outcomes. To this end, the council has commissioned external support and compiled a comprehensive H&SC Improvement Plan (the improvement plan).

This strategy summarises the strategic outcomes that are intended to be delivered, the principles with which will guide our decision making, the governance around this programme of works, and anticipated timescales.

## Objectives

The council has been developing and refining its approach to ensuring its residents feel safe and listened to and their homes are safe, warm and dry. A programme board has been established with a mandate to 'ensure that Bristol provide excellent resident focused services that meet the requirements of the Consumer Standards, Building Safety and other related social landlord statutory compliance obligations. Where compliance gaps exist, the issues will be fully understood and improvement plans implemented and effectively delivered.'

A number of improvements required to achieve this, captured in the improvement plan.

These actions are grouped into five high-level workstreams that address the specific issues identified in our regulatory judgement, in addition to broader actions that will enable us to deliver sustainable improvements that help us achieve our aim. A summary of our improvement plan workstreams and intended strategic outcomes is included below:

Workstream	Strategic outcomes
1. Safety and Quality: Data and Delivery	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Complete and up-to-date assurance that all of our homes and communal areas are safe and free from hazards</li><li>Complete and up-to-date assurance that all of our properties meet the Decent Homes Standard</li><li>An investment plan that is underpinned by comprehensive and recent stock condition survey information</li><li>An effective, efficient and timely repairs service that meets the diverse needs of our tenants</li></ol>

Workstream	Strategic outcomes
2. Complaints and Resident Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A complaints service that ensure issues are addressed fairly, effectively and promptly in line with Housing Ombudsman expectations</li> <li>b. Established processes alongside a positive complaints culture that provide insights to help facilitate continuous improvement in service delivery</li> <li>c. Established tenant engagement structure that also allow quantitative and qualitative insights into performance to again facilitate continuous improvement in service delivery</li> </ul>
3. Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Effective partnership working with stakeholders to ensure the safety of shared spaces</li> <li>b. Effective partnership working with stakeholders to deter anti-social behaviour and tackle domestic abuse</li> </ul>
4. Tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Fair and transparent allocations and lettings that takes into account prospective tenant needs</li> <li>b. Delivery of support that promotes tenancy sustainment</li> </ul>
5. Strategy, Structure and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A culture that promotes accountability, learning, continuous improvement, inclusion, and proactive communication with key stakeholders</li> <li>b. Governance arrangements that facilitate effective oversight and scrutiny of performance based on tenant insights</li> <li>c. Robust and accurate data that underpins decision making</li> </ul>

## Workstream 1 Data and Delivery – Key Actions

Key actions (and improvement plan references) to deliver the outcomes of this priority workstream are:

- Completion of the stock condition survey programme (including HHSRS) and investment plan (1.1, 1.2, 1.10)
- Complete inspections and remedial works for Big 7 landlord health and safety compliance areas to bring in line with policy position (1.14 -1.42)
- External review of repairs, data, systems, processes and controls for sustainable change (1.3, 1.5)
- Completion of the prioritised repairs delivery plan to bring in line with policy position (1.5 – 1.9)
- Establish staff training programme (1.12)

## Prioritisation principles

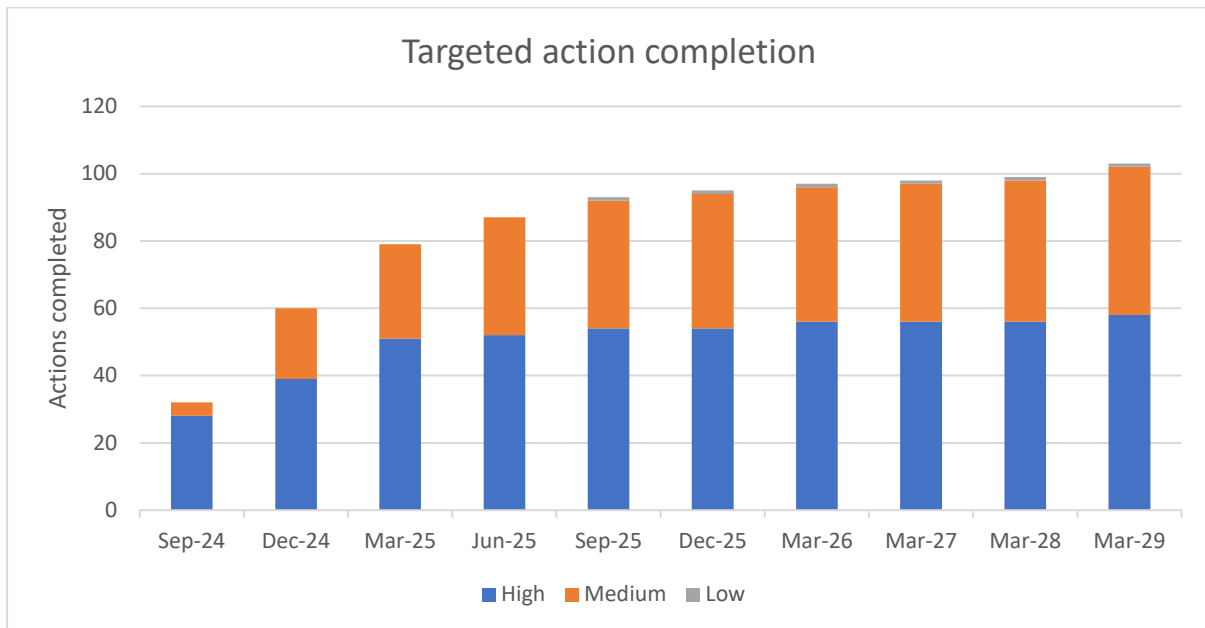
The council recognises that the improvement plan is extensive and wide-ranging. To this end the priority will always be to ensure that the council's tenants live in safe and decent homes. Where issues are identified that threaten this the council will prioritise remediation in a risk-based way. The council will also address gaps in our understanding of properties through H&S assessments and stock condition surveys, and again prioritise any remediation works arising out of these in a risk based way, using our risk identification and mitigation tool.

Providing an effective and timely repairs service, and developing engagement with residents so that the council better understand their concerns and work together to deliver better services will also be vital.

## Timescales

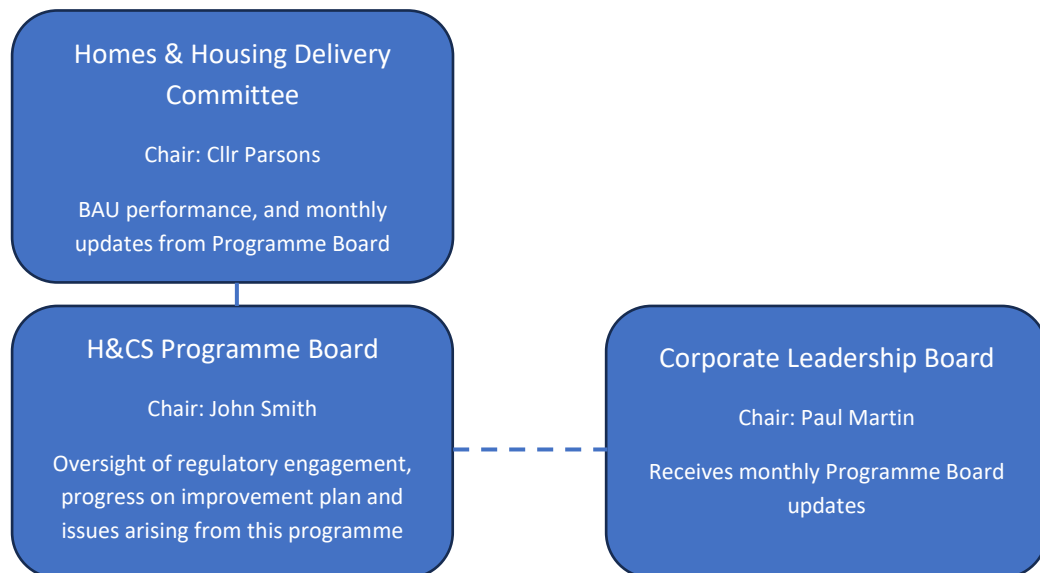
The council aims to complete the vast majority of high rated actions (and a large proportion of overall actions) included within our improvement plan by March 2025. There are some areas where extensive

work is required, in particular in undertaking physical stock condition surveys of all the council's properties and in moving to five-yearly electrical inspections, that will take some time to complete. As such it is envisaged all improvement actions will be completed by Summer 2028:



## Governance

To oversee the timely and effective delivery of these improvements the council has established a dedicated Housing & Consumer Standards Programme Board. The Programme Board is chaired by the Interim Executive Director of the Growth and Regeneration Directorate and meets monthly. Monthly updates on progress are reported to both the officer led Corporate Leadership Board and councillor led Homes & Housing Delivery Committee:



## Verification and assurance

The council will demonstrate that the improvements it has made have been effective and are sufficiently embedded into the business. This will be done by commissioning independent reviews to provide third party assurance on delivery of its improvement actions and associated strategic outcomes.

In addition, the council will assess the extent to which the following end benefits (as set out in the mandate) are realised:

- 1 Our residents will tell us they are proud of their homes, and neighbourhoods and that they feel safe in and around both.
- 2 Our residents will tell us they can influence the council and hold us accountable for service delivery through respectful and proactive two-way engagement.
- 3 Our workforce will be clear about their job purpose, will be trained and equipped to carry out their duties, and will create and sustain the right culture.
- 4 All council residential buildings will meet all legal and regulatory safety standards and we will comply with all regulatory requirements from the regulator of social housing.