



COUNCIL: 5 April 2023

Report of: Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor N Pryce-Roberts

Contact for further information: Alan Leicester (alan.leicester@westlancs.gov.uk)

SUBJECT: HRA - DAMP AND MOULD STRATEGY

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek approval of the newly developed Housing - Damp and Mould Strategy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

2.1 That Council approves the Damp and Mould Strategy attached at Appendix A.

2.2 That delegated authority is granted to the Head of Housing Services to make amendments to the strategy, in consultation with the portfolio holder, to address newly arising issues and to incorporate amendments following wider consultation.

2.3 That delegated authority is granted to the Head of Housing Services to make minor, inconsequential amendments to the Damp & Mould Strategy.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Officers have identified the need to produce and implement a Damp and Mould Strategy to address issues raised nationally by the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

4.1 Officers have produced a strategy to formalise our approach to managing mould and dampness issues within the Council's retained housing stock, this is included as appendix A.

- 4.2 The strategy outlines the causes of dampness, the regulatory and legislative framework, how we will invest in our homes to minimise dampness issues, and our approach in dealing with dampness and mould issues when they occur. It also details how we will ensure awareness of dampness issues is maintained and enhanced. In addition, the strategy addresses how the Council will monitor and report on its performance.
- 4.3 The Strategy is designed to provide details of the overarching position in respect of the Council's response to Damp and Mould issues. In addition to the Damp & Mould Strategy, a Damp & Mould Policy is currently being developed which will be brought back to Council for approval at a later date.

5.0 ONGOING WORK SUMMARY

- 5.1 Our surveyor partners, Savills, have recently completed surveys on 4,839 our properties. This puts the Council in a good position to understand future investment requirements but also the extent of damp and mould issues within our stock. We are continuing work to achieve 100% survey coverage.
- 5.2 Work is ongoing to address damp and mould issues that have already been identified, either through the stock condition surveys or via reports made by tenants or our staff.
- 5.3 In addition, at the time of writing this report officers were in the process of contacting all tenants either directly or in writing asking them to report any damp and mould issues and to make them aware of how to report them in the future.
- 5.4 A working group has been put in place involving officers from across teams. The group have developed an action plan and a work tracker to address issues of mould and damp. The group meets regularly to monitor progress against the agreed actions and agrees additional actions as necessary. A written update was provided to Cabinet on 7th March 2023 outlining the actions already taken and planned to combat issues of damp and mould in council homes.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 During the development of the imminent Damp and Mould Policy consultation will be carried out with customers and any feedback on the strategy will also be taken into consideration and appropriate amendments made.

7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and no significant impact on crime and disorder.

8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are financial / resource implications arising from this report in respect to delivering the strategy. Specific HRA budgets have been approved for 2023/4 and 2024/5 to support this work.

9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 The strategy provides a robust framework for managing the risks associated with damp and mould in Council owned homes. It will ensure a responsive customer focussed service is provided and reduce complaints or disrepair claims.
- 9.2 Failure to have a strategy in place would potentially been seen as weakness by the Regulator of Social Housing. A comprehensive strategy will help provide the regulator assurance that our approach is robust and effective.

9.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The strategy will help ensure that the Councils Housing stock provides a safe and healthy place to live, thus promoting good health and wellbeing and enabling people to flourish. The strategy will also potentially prevent and tackle the causes of ill health.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required however one will be produced as part of the introduction of the Damp and Mould Policy

Appendices

Appendix A – Damp and Mould Strategy 2023 - 2025