

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhood and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 25th February 2021

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WARD(S): All Wards

PART I **FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION**

HRA Tenanted Stock Landlord Statutory Compliance Update (RMI Contract)

1. **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the compliance in HRA tenanted stock.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Panel are recommended to note and comment on:

- a) The contents of this report
- b) Future reporting requirements and agree quarterly or 6 monthly updates on landlord statutory compliance.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The provision and maintenance of good quality and affordable housing can reduce housing need for local households and contributes to the identified priorities of the JSNA. The RMI contract is contracted to provide landlord statutory compliance through a partnership approach between Osborne Property Services Limited and the Council to sustain good quality homes that will improve the safety, health and well-being of the boroughs tenants.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The RMI contract is housing revenue funded from a 30-year business plan that has enabled the investment required to sustain a HRA Housing Asset Management Strategy to meet objective 4 'Our residents will live in good quality homes'. The RMI is intended to focus on making the best use of the borough's existing stock and provide better solutions to the needs and challenges through delivery of services, landlord compliance and adopting excellent customer care and safeguarding and working to find these solutions in partnership.

4. Other Implications

(a) Financial

The RMI is a 7-year contract with an option to extend for three years. The contract is funded from the Housing Revenue Account and the business plan has set aside £100m for the Contract Administrator to fund the annual expenditure of day-to-day repairs and maintenance, voids properties refurbished for reletting, and the major works programme e.g. kitchens, bathrooms, windows. The total spend can be up to £14m per year.

(b) Risk Management

The committee are requested to note that the contractual governance offers a formal basis for management of risk through contract management, a framework for discussion intended to seek not just solutions but foster innovation through partnership initiatives. The structure of governance allows for a forum for the raising of issues, discussion on performance as well as commercial initiatives across the breadth of the contract. The levels of escalation and accountability are set out alongside basis for contractual scrutiny by members and residents.

The Table outlines the context of risk management.

Recommendation from section 2 above	Risks/Threats/ Opportunities	Current Controls	Using the Risk Management Matrix Score risk	Future Controls
a) Completion of the Electrical Testing programme to dwellings.	Risk of properties not having the Electrical installation tested within the specified 5 year period.	Working with Neighbourhood Teams and Osborne to gain access and arrange appointments for all necessary visits.	6 Medium	Need establish method for warrant to be obtained to enter the properties if necessary.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 (the 'Act') adds hazards listed in the governments housing health and safety-rating system (HHSRS) set out in the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985. Tenants will therefore be able to legally compel their landlord to address any of the 29 HHSRS hazards, which ranges from fire safety issues to damp & mould or poor natural lighting and ventilation. The Act came into effect for new tenancies on 1st March 2019, but now applies to all existing tenancies.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

The contractor routinely carries out equality Impact Assessments as part of operational service delivery.

(e) Workforce

The workforce delivering the RMI are Osborne direct employees or sub-contracted services. The RMI has a contractual payment framework that offers a monthly establishment fee and thereafter payment is based on the work delivered.

5. **Supporting Information**

SBC and Osborne meet once a week to discuss all matters relating to compliance, including a fire safety group, regular contact with Royal Berkshire Fire Service and weekly meetings with Housing (People) Services staff relating to fire safety.

In addition, the RMI Client Team attend monthly meetings of the SBC Building Compliance Group, chaired by Richard West, Strategic Director of Customer & Community, and a monthly exception report on compliance is taken to CMT by the council's Senior Health & Safety Advisor to ensure oversight and assurance to the senior management team.

5.1 **LGSR (Landlord Gas Safety Record)**

Annual Statutory Requirement across all Housing Stock

Total Tests Required	Total Completed	% Compliant
6029	6029	100%

- 100% compliant on Landlord gas safety checks for the past 33 consecutive months on all HRA properties
- During COVID-19 pandemic introduced specialist contractor Cablesheer to attend properties where residents were affected by COVID
- Housing (People) Services, the RMI Client Team and Osborne work closely in order to resolve any matters arising on gas servicing
- The RMI Client Team risk assess individual tenant's circumstances to ensure the service is carried out in a safe manner for both our residents and operatives
- All testing is carried out within public health guidelines Including social distancing, hand sanitising and protective equipment
- Gas servicing programme was realigned again due to the excessive number of services completed in April and May this year to achieve an even flow month on month
- Quarterly servicing of commercial boilers is ongoing to ensure that these units are kept in good working condition
- Pendeen Court heating plant and radiators replacement works were completed and new boilers commissioned in October 2020. Third party auditor inspected the installation with positive feedback.
- Independent third party audit reports are being reviewed on a monthly basis and performance discussed with Osborne and PCM

5.2 **Water Hygiene**

Monthly Statutory Requirement

Total Tests Required	Total Completed	% Compliant
19	19	100%

Water Hygiene regime has progressed with a robust schedule of testing. Following a review of Water Risk Assessments, the RMI Client Team have worked closely with Osborne and third party auditors to expand the inspections and maximise safety of our residents. We are continuing to review the water

testing regime and adding additional tasks to ensure that SBC remains compliant.

Current water hygiene regime includes:

- Cold water storage tank testing
- Tap temperature testing
- Weekly flushing of little used outlets
- Point of use water heaters
- Descale of shower head and spray taps
- TMV fail safe and maintenance
- Calorifier inspection
- Water connections to outside services
- Mixer Units
- Hot Water Cylinders
- Expansion Vessel
- Disinfection
- Combination Water Heater Inspection
- Thermal Insulation Check
- Closed Water Systems
- Water sampling
- Water pumps

Upon completion of Water Risk Assessments performed in June 2020, all sites were issued with action plans to highlight the hazards identified. The RMI Client Team reviewed and instructed all works which commenced in October 2020 and are planned to complete by the end of February 2021. So far we have completed 21 hazards out of 53.

5.3 Asbestos

Annual Inspection of Communal Areas

Total Inspections Required	Total Completed	% Compliant
491	491	100%

- 100% annual re-inspection surveys of communal areas have been completed to all 491 blocks of flats requiring a re-survey.
- Asbestos removal works to communal loft spaces, that require these works have commenced in February 2021 which will enable fire compartmentation and/or repairs works to be undertaken safely.
- The RMI Client Team are currently preparing a specification and documentation to procure a new Asbestos Survey and Consultancy Service contract (via Fusion21 Framework), to be tendered in April 2021. The main aim of this contract is to undertake Asbestos Management Surveys to all Council domestic dwellings over a five year period.
- All new survey information is to be downloaded to Risk Monitor, which will act as the Councils new Asbestos Register. All existing asbestos surveys and information currently stored on Osborne sub-contractor's database (Alpha Tracker) is in the process of being transferred to Risk Monitor.

5.4 Fire Risk Assessment

The FRA programme continues to progress with various work streams currently underway including:

- Total properties where FRAs were carried out is 507 and 49% of actions have been completed.
- 12,858 actions (to date) resulting from FRA's
- 6,284 actions have been completed to date
- 6,569 open actions to be completed*
- 1,384 actions outstanding (but not overdue)
- 5,185 actions outstanding which are overdue.

*These actions involve a variety of programmes and availability of specific items such as fire doors, asbestos removal works and are being managed by the compliance coordinators and capital investment programmes. A New programme of remedial works was issued to Osborne in October 2020 to complete outstanding actions.

Communal Fire Rated Doors at De-designated Units

New communal fire doors have been completed at all the de-designated schemes - Calstock House, Apsley House, Redwood House, Armstrong House, Allington Court, Seymour House, Kennedy House, Harrow Road & Primrose Hall.

Fire Rated Flat Entrance Doors

- De-designated schemes – Programme of works to install new flat entrance fire doors is due to commence in March/April 2021, starting at Seymour House and following on with the remainder of the schemes.
- Flat Blocks – Programme of works to install new flat entrance fire doors is due to commence in May 2021. The Section 20 leasehold consultation process to run alongside with works to commence at leasehold blocks on completion of this process.

Loft Compartmentation

- Programme of works to provide fire separation and compartmentation to communal lofts is due to commence in March 2021, starting at de-designated units, all asbestos surveys and necessary removals have been carried out in these schemes. The Section 20 leasehold consultation process to run alongside, with works to commence at leasehold blocks on completion of this process.

Fire Alarm & Detection Systems to De-designated Units

- Design requirements agreed and Osborne are currently in the process of obtaining quotations. Works programmed to commence at Seymour House in April 2021 – and then to follow on with the remainder of the schemes
- 5000 fire stopping actions have already been completed across the de-designated schemes.

5.5 EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report) Domestic Properties
5 yearly Statutory Requirement

Total EICR Required	Total Completed	% Compliant
6252	5636	90%
EICR Required 2020/21	Total Completed	% Compliant
1463	847	42%

- 90% compliant on electrical testing to domestic dwellings on a programme that started in 2019/20
- In order to achieve 100% compliance on electrical testing 2020/2021 programme of 1463 inspections was formalised and issued to Osborne in July 2020, works commenced on sites on 27th July 2020.
- During COVID-19 pandemic all testing is carried out within public health guidelines Including social distancing, hand sanitising and protective equipment
- It has been noted that access rates during the latest national lockdown decreased, therefore the target of achieving 100% compliance by 31st March 2021 is at greater risk. The RMI Client Team is working closely with Housing (People) Services and the contractors to minimise the number of outstanding inspections.
- Third party audit reports are being reviewed on a monthly basis and performance discussed with Osborne and the auditors.

5.6 Fixed Wire Testing
Communal Areas - 5 yearly Statutory Requirement

Total Fixed Wire Testing 2020/21	Total Completed	% Compliant
382	373	98%

- 98% compliant. Target to achieve 100% compliance by the end of February 2021.
- Following the Fire Risk Assessments which were carried out on all HRA blocks it was identified that electrical testing in the communal areas of the blocks was overdue
- The RMI Client Team formalised the large programme of electrical inspections and remedial works which is currently being delivered by Osborne
- Electrical Testing and works were not affected by COVID-19 pandemic and all testing continues to be carried out within public health guidelines including social distancing
- Third party audit reports are being reviewed on monthly basis and performance discussed with Osborne and the auditors.

5.7 ELT (Emergency Lighting Testing)

Monthly Statutory Requirement

Total ELT Required	Total Completed	% Compliant
323	323	100%

- 100% compliant on emergency lightning testing
- Third party audit reports are being reviewed on monthly basis and performance discussed with Osborne and the auditors
- The RMI Client Team is working closely with Osborne and auditors in order to reduce the time of completing remedial works related to emergency lighting units
- Emergency Lighting Testing was not affected by COVID-19 pandemic and all testing continues to be carried out within public health guidelines including social distancing

5.8 Communal Passenger Lifts Servicing

Monthly Statutory Requirement

Total Services Required	Total Completed	% Compliant
19	19	100%

- 100% compliant on communal passenger lifts servicing
- 19 lifts in our stock are managed through a cyclical programme of servicing
- The RMI Client Team and Osborne are reviewing special component orders and timescales associated with lift repairs to understand what changes may be required to improve the repair service
- Lift servicing inspections were not affected by COVID-19 pandemic and all testing continues to be carried out within public health guidelines including social distancing
- All passenger lifts are thoroughly examined by independent insurance provider, Allianz and the records of inspections are regularly reviewed

5.9 Domestic Stair Lifts Servicing

Six-Monthly Statutory Requirement

Total Services Required	Total Completed	% Compliant
76	41	54%

- Currently 54% compliant.
- It was identified that the council did not have a servicing regime for all lifting equipment which is installed within HRA properties
- Records available on the installation of these major adaptations (have been unreliable and condition and servicing inadequate, therefore the RMI Client Team instructed Osborne to carry out a condition survey at a number of properties where we believed that lifting equipment was installed.
- As a result of the surveys completed, we have identified that the lifting equipment in the properties is in poor condition and the remedial works are required in order to bring the lifts to safe functioning; remedial works

commenced in September 2020 and the 6 monthly servicing was implemented in November 2020. To date we have completed 41/76 servicing visits.

- The transformation of the council's operating model has placed all responsibility of major adaptations in HRA properties within the remit of the RMI Client Team. This will ensure, going forward we have complete records of all new installations and can ensure maintenance and servicing levels are maintained by the Team. In the meantime, we continue to work with Osborne and tenants to identify any gaps in records to ensure these are identified and compliance servicing is established.
- Due to the latest national lockdown, the serving programme was suspended due to the vulnerability of the stair lifts users. The contractor is still attending emergency repairs and we are reviewing the situation continually with the residents, to programme in visits.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

None

7. **Conclusion**

The report sets out the current position in regards to all areas of statutory compliance, and that requirements are continuing to be delivered by Osborne and the RMI Client Team working together with our third party auditors. The areas of focus for this final quarter will be water/legionella remedial works, domestic stair lift servicing, the EICR programme which is at risk due to the latest national lockdown and access issues. In addition the programmes for fire and asbestos works will be progressed in 2021/22.

8. **Appendices Attached**

None

9. **Background Papers**

None