

Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	20 April 2026
Subject:	Housing Damp and Mould Policy
Lead Member:	Councillor Robert Stedmond, Lead Member for Housing, Temporary Accommodation and Estate Renewal
Chief Officer:	Pat Hayes, Executive Director, Regeneration, Housing and Environment
Contact Officer:	Victoria Boateng, Director of Housing
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of report:	For decision
Key Decision:	Yes
Exempt:	NO
Decision Subject to Call In:	YES
Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Damp and Mould Policy

1. Summary and Recommendations

1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval for the revised Damp and Mould Policy. This document provides the governance and professional standards to comply with statutory duties. These include compliance with: Awaab's Law, the Housing Act 2004, the Decent Homes Standard and the RSH Safety and Quality and Transparency and Accountability Standard.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to approve the revised Housing Damp and Mould Policy at Appendix 1.

Reason:

Approval of this policy will ensure that the Council is compliant with regulatory requirements set out by: Awaab's Law, (as per the Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025), the Housing Act 2004 and the Decent Homes Standard.

These recommendations will facilitate compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing Safety and Quality Standard, and Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, with performance reporting to council tenants ensuring full transparency and public scrutiny.

Commissioner Review

As a local authority registered provider of social housing, the Council has a duty to meet any legal requirements imposed upon it by law. Therefore, ensuring that the Council's homes are safe, in a good state of repair, and warm are an integral part of these requirements as well as ensuring compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Standards. There is budget identified for these damp and mould related works within the approved 2026/27 HRA budget and it will be essential that not only is that budget envelope adhered to but that all required works are carried out systematically, based on this policy too. Regular meetings with the RSH, given the Council's current rating of C3 ("serious failings") have reinforced the importance of delivering against this policy in order to improve outcomes for tenants. The Housing Improvement Board will expect regular updates on delivery of damp and mould targets set in the context of this policy framework.

2. Report

Introductory paragraph

2.1 Approval of this policy will support the Council in delivering its vision and the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2023–27, particularly the commitment to provide safe, high-quality homes, protect vulnerable residents, and strengthen trust through transparent and professional services. The policy directly support compliance with the RSH Safety and Quality Standard and the Transparency, Influence and Accountability (TIA) Standard by ensuring staff are competent, accountable, and equipped to deliver services that meet tenant expectations.

Options considered

Option 1: Approve the Damp and Mould Policy

This Option ensures that the Council meets regulatory requirements of the RSH: Safety and Quality and Transparency, Influence and Accountability standards and provides assurance that staff have comply with mandatory time frames for dealing with Damp and Mould, set out by Awaab's Law and commitment principles regarding Health and Safety, Response to and Diagnosis of Damp and Mould and Communication with tenants. It strengthens governance, improves service delivery, and aligns with expectations of Awaab's Law (The Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements)(England) Regulations 2025), the Housing Act 2004, and the Decent Homes Standard.

Option 2 – Do nothing

This option is not viable. Failure to adopt these standards would place the Council at significant regulatory risk and undermine its ability to meet statutory requirements.

Background

Following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak in 2020 due to prolonged exposure to damp and mould, Awaab's law was introduced as part of the Hazards in the Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025. Therefore, the Council must update its Damp and Mould Policy to be legally compliant.

The policy is based on the statutory requirements of Awaab's Law (Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025), the Housing Act 2004, and the Decent Homes Standard. The policy explains the mandatory timeframes and

procedures the Council must follow to manage the investigation and treatment of damp and mould in its homes and communal areas.

In the development of this policy there has been an initial staff consultation to review the initial draft, which highlighted the importance of adding clarity to the scope of the policy and the adjustment to timelines to mirror the statutory timeframes set out by Awaab's law in order to make the policy realistic.

A public consultation was held. This included an online survey on Citizenspace, the Council's consultation page, an online session and an in-person session. From these sessions, changes were made to the language in the policy to make it easier to understand to a lay audience. Furthermore, the participants of the consultation sessions highlighted the importance of communicating and explaining to tenants, what kind of work is being completed in their homes, in order to facilitate mutual understanding and transparency.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

3.1.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agree the revised Housing Damp & Mould policy which seeks to provide governance and professional standards to ensure the council complies with statutory requirements arising from Awaab's Law (Hazards in Social Housing Regulations 2025), the Housing Act 2004, and the Decent Homes Standard. The approved HRA Revenue Budget 2026/27 provides adequate budget of £1m for the council to address any repairs to the Housing stock arising from Damp & Mould. The budget provision of £1m is based on the service assessment of annual need which is consistent with spend this year and last year.

3.2 Legal implications

3.2.1 As a local authority registered provider of social housing, the Council has a duty to meet any legal requirements imposed upon it by law. This includes the requirements of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 that amended the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 to extend the power of the Regulator of Social Housing to set standards for the provision of social housing, including the safety, energy efficiency and quality of accommodation, facilities or services provided by registered providers.

3.2.2 The primary legislation for Awaab's Law was first introduced through the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, which also amended the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 to imply into social housing tenancy agreements a term that requires social landlords to comply with the requirements that are set out in these and other relevant regulations. This includes the requirements on social landlords, including the Council, as set out in the Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025 that came in to force for the social rented sector from 27 October 2025. Obligations to deal with further categories of hazard will be implemented in 2026 and 2027.

3.2.3 If the Council does not comply with these standards tenants can hold their social landlords to account by taking legal action through the courts for a breach of contract. Other avenues of redress are available to tenants such as the social landlord's complaints procedure and the Housing Ombudsman Service. Social

landlords have a defence if they have taken all reasonable steps to comply with the requirements (section 10A(5) of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985).

3.2.4 The implementation of the Damp and Mould policy will assist the Council by setting out its approach to dealing with damp and mould issues in its social housing stock within the required timescales.

3.2.5 Under Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council's Constitution dated 15th May 2025, part 3.5, table 3 states that the responsibilities of the Cabinet include approving other policies (not forming part of the Policy Framework) and plans for implementation by lead members and officers.

3.3 *Risk management implications*

3.3.1 The government and RSH has identified the need to deal with damp and mould quickly and have regular and communication with tenants to reduce the risk of worsening health from damp and mould. Therefore, it is essential that the council uses this policy to adhere to regulatory standards.

Failure to implement this policy exposes the Council to:

- Regulatory action, including investigations or enforcement notices.
- Significant reputational damage and loss of tenant trust.
- Inability to demonstrate compliance with the Regulator of Housing's consumer standards.
- Increased risk of service failures leading to potential health and safety breaches.

Adopting this policy provides a clear framework that can be used by staff to ensure that staff are working to meet the regulatory standards, as described in the policy. This policy will reduce the risk of the loss of tenant trust, as it ensures improved communication commitment principles and promotes the sharing of performance around damp and mould to increase transparency and accountability.

3.4 *Environmental implications*

3.4.1 There are no direct environmental impacts arising from this decision. However, the policy contributes to better management of the council's homes, including repairs, maintenance, and asset stewardship—areas that support the Council's sustainability ambitions outlined in the Corporate Plan.

3.5 *Equality implications*

3.5.1 Slough remains one of the most diverse communities in the UK, with significant variation in language, ethnicity, age, disability and socio-economic factors (Slough Insights September 2024). Approval of this policy will support fair and consistent service delivery, help tackle historic inequalities in housing services, and ensure staff are trained to recognise and respond appropriately to the needs of different groups in relation to damp and mould.

Damp and Mould Policy commits to:

- Record Characteristics of a tenant or household member with a protected characteristic, which may be impacted by damp and mould, or which may limit their access to the service.

- Make reasonable adjustments to its service delivery, communication methods and scheduling to meet the specific needs of individuals with protected characteristics.

4. Background Papers

None