

Cllr Arthur Coote, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Report to Full Council – 14 October 2025

Introduction

This update provides a comprehensive overview of the current status of our housing services, focusing on the performance of Axis Europe, an update of findings from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) asset appraisal, and the implementation of our new approach to managing damp and mould issues in our properties.

Update on Axis Europe

Following the first six months of our maintenance contract with Axis Europe, we have encountered challenges affecting service delivery. The key issues identified include:

- **Emergency Repairs:** Only 74% of emergency repairs are completed on time, significantly below the target of 93%.
- **Urgent Repairs:** Similarly, 75% of urgent repairs are completed on time, again below the target of 93%.
- **Routine Repairs:** The performance for routine repairs is concerning, with only 71% completed on time
- **Outstanding Jobs:** There are currently circa 200 outstanding jobs past their target date
- **Customer Satisfaction:** The current customer satisfaction rate stands at 90%, which is below the target of 95%.

Immediate Action Plan: In response to these challenges, we have secured commitments from Axis for immediate improvements, including:

- **A full improvement plan** has been created
- **Weekly meetings** to manage and monitor improvements in place
- **Short-term Improvements (Within 1 Month):** Reduce overdue repair jobs to 60 and implement a central job scheduling system for better appointment management.
- **Major Service Transformation (Within 3 Months):** Achieve single-digit numbers of overdue repairs and ensure full compliance with new damp and mould regulations.

We will monitor progress through daily checks, weekly reviews, and monthly updates to the Cabinet.

HRA Asset Appraisal Findings

You will recall that I updated you in July about the HRA Asset Appraisal exercise that was taking place. We have now received the initial findings of this, and the property services team are review and analysing the results This reviewing this data and will be preparing a report to look at further options.

This analysis could recommend, reconfiguration of properties, change of use or disposal in some cases. Where disposal was suggested, this would not mean that we would be looking to displace tenants. Any funds generated would be used to purchase new homes.

Next Steps:

- Conduct detailed viability assessments of all poor-performing units.
- Develop disposal vs. improvement options for the worst 50 performers.
- Implement monthly performance monitoring using SHAPE metrics

New Approach to Damp and Mould Management

In response to the requirements of Awaab's Law and our commitment to tenant safety, we have developed a comprehensive process for identifying and managing damp and mould issues:

- **Proactive Management:** The new approach shifts from reactive maintenance to proactive intervention, ensuring compliance with statutory timescales for addressing damp and mould hazards.
- **Reporting Channels:** Tenants can report issues through multiple channels, including a dedicated helpline, online forms, and in-person reporting during scheduled visits.
- **Response Timelines:** Emergency hazards will be addressed within 24 hours, while significant hazards will be investigated within 10 working days, with clear communication provided to tenants throughout the process.
- **Quality Assurance:** Independent surveys will be conducted to ensure compliance and effectiveness, with follow-up calls to assess tenant satisfaction and the effectiveness of remedial actions.

Key Process Components:

1. **Resident Reporting:** Immediate logging of issues into a damp tracker system, with emergency investigations initiated within 24 hours.
2. **Operative Inquiry Post-Repair:** Mandatory engagement with residents by operatives to identify any damp or mould issues during routine repairs.
3. **Housing Officer Property Visits:** Scheduled inspections prioritising properties with previous damp/mould history, ensuring comprehensive documentation and risk assessment.
4. **Proactive Independent Inspections:** Data-driven selection of properties for systematic inspections based on historical demand analysis.

Compliance with Awaab's Law: The new process ensures full compliance with Awaab's Law, which mandates that emergency hazards posing immediate risk must be investigated and addressed within 24 hours, while significant hazards must be investigated within 10 working days.