

Introduction

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) inspects all social landlords at least once every 4 years, to assess their delivery of services against four Consumer Standards: Safety and Quality, Neighbourhood and Community, Tenancy, Transparency, Influence and Accountability

RSH determines grade:

- C1 level (the highest rating available, nationally only one local authority has achieved this)
- C2 (some weaknesses and improvement needed)
- C3 (serious failings and significant improvement needed)
- C4 (very serious failings and fundamental changes required)

And then works with landlords to support them to improve to C1 status

Our Inspection

Took place during September 2024 following extensive document request / review by the RSH. Onsite activity included:

- Observation of a Tenant Challenge Panel meeting
- Meetings with the Leader, Cabinet Member for Housing and CEX
- Meeting with senior housing managers
- Range of officer meetings to assess services against all areas of the Consumer Standards
- Meeting with tenants
- Observation of a Strategic Housing Board meeting
- Observation of a Scrutiny Select Committee meeting
- The inspectors had also attended a Cabinet meeting in July where a range of housing related reports were discussed
-

Outcome

The outcome was a grading of **C2** which we consider to be a fair reflection of how we are performing.

Key positives

- Outcomes across all key areas of health and safety compliance are good and performance is actively monitored by senior officers, councillors and involved tenants.
- We have a good understanding of our stock condition and use data to inform strategic investment planning.
- We work effectively with the police and other relevant organisations on a range of interventions to deter and tackle anti-social behaviour and hate incidents.
- We support tenants to sustain their tenancies.
- We provide a range of opportunities for tenants to influence and scrutinise services.

Outcome

The Inspectors acknowledged that for the few areas where more work is needed in order to achieve the highest rating, which is C1, the housing service has already implemented plans to address these:

- The Housing Property Services transformation programme has been launched, which involves a review of trades employees' terms and conditions, a reshape of the management and office functions, and procurement of a new repairs ICT system.
- An external contractor has been commissioned to help address the backlog of empty council homes.
- Additional staff have been approved to improve performance on housing complaints handling, and embed learning from complaints across the service.

Good progress is being made in all of these areas.

Before the inspection

- Reshape phase 1: more front-line housing management staff and more tenant engagement opportunities
- Strong focus on landlord compliance and safety, implementation of a robust monitoring regime, excellent performance
- Procurement of a new asset management ICT system to enable a more joined up approach to housing stock maintenance and investment
- Reshape of the Housing Assets service to further strengthen our approach to compliance
- Establishment of the Housing Advisory Board
- Launch of the Housing Property Services transformation programme
- Approval for additional staff resources to deal with housing complaints
- Commissioned external contractor to address the backlog of empty council homes
- Establishment of a tenant satisfaction action plan, co-designed with tenants

Safety and Quality

- Outcomes across all key areas of health and safety compliance are good and performance is actively monitored by senior officers, councillors and involved tenants.
- We are managing the risks associated with damp and mould and taking steps to adopt a more planned approach and improve reporting.
- We have a good understanding of our stock condition and use data to inform strategic investment planning.
- Good assurance was found in relation to planned maintenance and improvements.

Safety and Quality

Further actions:

- We will complete the migration of stock data from the current Keystone system, to the NEC Asset Management module.
- We will reaffirm our strategic approach to fire safety in the five-storey blocks at Flamsteed Crescent.
- We will complete delivery of the Housing Property Service transformation programme, to improve the timeliness of repairs and keep customers better informed of progress with their repairs.
- We will continue to deal with the backlog of void properties.

Neighbourhood and Community



- We work effectively with the police and other relevant organisations on a range of interventions to deter and tackle anti-social behaviour and hate incidents.
- We have appropriate policies and procedures to deal with antisocial behaviour and are following them.
- We have strengthened our approach to reporting on hate crime incidents.

Tenancy

- The RSH noted good assurance in general against this standard, including the action we take to support tenants to sustain their tenancies, and the fair and transparent processes we follow to allocate council properties.

Further actions:

- We will carry out additional analysis of the equalities and diversity data for new tenants, and regularly review the equalities impact assessment.
- We will improve the way we measure and report on outcomes from our tenancy support service.

Transparency, Influence, Accountability CHESTERFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

- The RHS noted that we are committed to treating tenants and prospective tenants with fairness and respect.
- We provide information in a range of formats, and work with our Tenant Communication Group to ensure information is accessible, for example the Repairs Handbook.
- The enthusiastic and positive approach of our tenant engagement team was recognised, and we provide a good range of opportunities for tenants to influence and scrutinise services.
- Our performance information is generally good, and the inspectors provided positive feedback on our tenant performance group and bespoke tenant performance indicators.

Transparency, Influence, Accountability CHESTERFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Further actions:

- We will provide more regular performance information and feedback on how we have responded to tenants' views – in a way that reaches all tenants, not relying on the website.
- We will improve the coverage and accuracy of data on tenants' protected characteristics.
- We have a robust approach to equalities impact assessments, but will do more in terms of going back and retrospectively reviewing them.
- We collect equalities data for tenants who have made a complaint, but will do more in terms of analysing and learning from this data.
- We will improve our performance on responding to complaints within timescale.
- We will fully embed a culture of learning from complaints, to improve service delivery.

Next steps

- Committed to working towards C1 status
- Added feedback from inspection to the TSM Action Plan
- Progress to be reported via HAB and published on website
- Report back to Cabinet in November 2025