

Cabinet

4 August 2026

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Performance 2025/26

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Louwella Prenter, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Homelessness

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Summary

The report provides Members with an update in respect of performance within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Landlord Services. This is an annual report to the Cabinet, the contents of which are provided on a quarterly basis to the HRA Governance Group.

1. Recommendation

1.1. The Cabinet is requested to note the contents of the report.

2. Suggested reasons for decision

2.1. The report ensures the Cabinet is fully informed in respect of performance within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Landlord Services.

3. Budget and policy framework

3.1. The HRA is ringfenced and therefore sits outside of the General Fund budget.

3.2. The activity referred to in this report relates to functions that are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).

4. Background

4.1. The Council's HRA Landlord Services (Tenant Services Team and Property & Development Team) provide tenancy management and maintenance services to tenants and leaseholders of Medway Council. The HRA manages approximately 3,038 council homes and 209 leaseholders across a geographical area from Brompton to Rainham, with significant stock levels in Gillingham and Twydall.

- 4.2. Ensuring that the Council has effective scrutiny and transparency of performance information in relation to its housing portfolio and tenancy management is a fundamental part of complying with the new Consumer Standards as set out by the RSH on 29 February 2024 and effective from 1 April 2024.
- 4.3. The HRA senior management team, AD for Culture & Community and the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Homelessness review compliance and performance monthly, which compliments the quarterly reports that are presented to the Tenants Panel and HRA Governance Group.
- 4.4. Updates on HRA performance and compliance are provided on a quarterly basis through the One Medway Council Plan, however this report covers information specifically relating to the 2025/26 financial year. Information is also reported to and scrutinised by the HRA Governance group which has cross party and tenant participation on a quarterly basis.
- 4.5. Following the re-tender of the HRA's repairs, maintenance and compliance contracts during 2023/24, these services moved from a single contractor to a main repairs and maintenance contract and single steam compliance contractors.
- 4.6. The move away from a single contractor was for a number of reasons, including tenant recommendations following engagement, value for money, competent and complainant skilled contractors and assurance that the service could comply with the new Consumer Standards. All nine contracts were on-boarded between April and August 2024, with all new workstreams commencing from 01 September 2024. Therefore, 2025/26 was the first full year of the contracts being fully in place.
- 4.7. The HRA's Landlord Services completed a programmed inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing in 2024/25. The inspection was undertaken between July and September 2024, with the service receiving a C2 Judgement in November 2024. The HRA continues to deliver against its RSH approved continuous improvement plan in 2025/26.
- 4.8. The HRA continued quarterly engagement with the Regulator throughout 2025/26 against the RSH approved continuous improvement plan.

4.9. **Comments from the Chairperson 2025–2026**

Councillor Louwella Prenter

- 4.10. As Chair of the HRA Governance Group, I am pleased to support the continued and robust scrutiny of activities relating to the HRA's Landlord Services.
- 4.11. The Group continues to review, monitor and scrutinise the service's continuous improvement plan in response to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) C2 grading. This is undertaken on a quarterly basis alongside the

Tenants' Panel, ensuring that performance targets are maintained as the service works towards achieving a C1 grading.

- 4.12. In addition to overseeing the improvement plan, the Group continues to monitor the performance of the HRA service across key areas. These include tenant satisfaction through the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, tenancy management services such as rent collection and arrears, and property-related performance, including repairs and statutory compliance workstreams.
- 4.13. A clear understanding of the safety and quality of our homes remains essential to delivering positive outcomes for residents. This is supported by increased transparency through the quarterly publication of performance information within the One Medway Council Plan, alongside this annual report to Cabinet detailing compliance with, and progress against, the Consumer Standards.
- 4.14. I am particularly encouraged by the commencement of a £2.5 million programme of improvement works at St Albans Close in Gillingham, one of our largest estates. This programme includes full balcony replacements, fire door upgrades, enhanced insulation, and a range of improvements to communal areas.
- 4.15. Regulatory and financial due diligence has commenced in relation to the proposed transfer of a Registered Provider's housing portfolio within the borough into the HRA. Subject to approval, this transfer represents a cost-effective opportunity to increase the Council's housing stock, ensure existing tenants benefit from safe and well-managed homes, and contribute to meeting future housing demand within Medway.
- 4.16. The HRA has continued to expand its portfolio of affordable homes, with 29 new homes delivered over the past year. I am pleased that delivery is now projected to exceed the original target of 336 homes set out in the 10-year HRA Development Strategy. In addition, 44 homes currently delayed due to external factors are expected to be completed during the summer, alongside a further 19 units at Lennoxwood due for completion by the end of June 2026.
- 4.17. As the Cabinet is being requested to note the content of the report, there is no exploration of options.

5. Advice and analysis

- 5.1. The report attached in Appendix 1 details the key areas of performance in relation to the HRA Landlord Services.
- 5.2. Most tables and information provided are self-explanatory; however, the body of this report will focus on areas that officers have highlighted.

Repairs & Works in Progress [WIP]

- 5.3. Mears were awarded the new repairs, planned work, energy and voids contract from 1 September 2025 under a new framework and improved client lead performance indicators.
- 5.4. Within the responsive repairs contract, each type of repair is given i) a priority (emergency, urgent and routine); and ii) a response timescale. This enables both the tenants and the service to manage the timescales for works to be raised and completed.
- 5.5. Repairs performance is closely monitored by the HRA Property Services Team; this includes holding monthly operational contract meetings (to review day-to-day works) and bi-weekly meetings (to discuss complaints, disrepair claims, inspections, scheduling and updates on works in progress (WIP)).
- 5.6. Strategic core group meetings with senior officers from Mears, the HRA and the Repairs Champion from the Tenants Panel are held quarterly to agree the strategic direction of travel for the contract and any required operational changes.
- 5.7. Key areas to note:
 - The service has seen an increase in jobs being raised as a result of the new contract requiring one job per trade rather than one job being assigned to numerous trades. This is to enable the service to collate and review repairs data more efficiently so trends and improvements can be identified more clearly.
 - This change in process has resulted in approximately 20% more jobs being raised compared to the old contract. The repairs WIP target has been increased to take this into account.
 - The increase in jobs being raised is also because of the service taking a more proactive approach to engagement and repairs identification. Officers are now raising jobs during Big Door Knock events, Tenancy Audits, Stock Condition Surveys and Proactive 'Tenant Touch Base' calls.
 - Repairs performance remained strong for emergency and out-of-hours services, achieving near 100% completion on time. Urgent and routine repairs performance slightly dropped compared to the previous year, with a slight increase in completion times, a small drop in appointments being kept, reflecting capacity, access, and scheduling pressures.
 - At year end there were 1,042 open repairs jobs, with 332 overdue. Although levels reduced from Q3, most outstanding cases had future appointments booked or were impacted by tenant availability and resource constraints, with performance actively managed through regular contractor reporting and review.
 - The service maintained a proactive approach, achieving over 97% tenant contact rates in Q4 and raising 252 jobs, alongside preventative works

including improved insulation, heating and ventilation to reduce recurrence and support long-term property condition.

- Strong progress has been made in preparation for Awaab's Law, including implementation of a dedicated performance dashboard and improved reporting, with most delays occurring at early stages of cases and only a small number of unmitigated overdue cases, while downstream inspection and remedial stages are performing effectively and not driving non-compliance.

Compliance: Electrical – Domestic

- 5.8. In social housing, an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) is recommended to be carried out at least every five years to ensure electrical safety, although it is not yet a mandatory legal requirement as it is for the private rented sector. This means social landlords should ensure their properties' electrical installations are inspected and tested by a qualified person, and a report is provided to tenants.
- 5.9. In preparation for the expected change to mandatory checks on electrical installations for social housing to every 5 years, the HRA Property Services Team amended its electrical testing programme from April 2023 to bring forward domestic electrical tests to align with 5-year testing requirements.
- 5.10. The initial programme commenced with Mears and was transitioned to RGE Services following the retendering in September 2024.
- 5.11. As of 31/3/2026, the service achieved a 5-year EICR compliance position of 98.72% and 100% 10-year EICR compliance for domestic dwellings. This is an increase in the previous year
- 5.12. All non-compliant properties are either on programme to be completed or are seeking to gain entry via a variety of routes after not being able to get access.
- 5.13. The service also achieved 100% 5-year EICR compliance for communal areas (Q4 average 100%).
- 5.14. Key areas to note:
 - The transition from Mears to RGE Services has gone well.
 - The service is now using True Compliance which delivers efficiencies in compliance and document management.
 - PCM continue to audit the quality of the testing and certification.

Compliance: Asbestos

- 5.15. Asbestos compliancy for social landlords is that there is a requirement to report on asbestos in communal areas. In the case of the HRA, this consists of 240 general needs blocks and eight homes for independent living (HFIL) schemes.

- 5.16. The service has an asbestos survey for each block/HFIL scheme which are stored on an asbestos register.
- 5.17. Re-inspections are undertaken based on existing and historical communal surveys. The frequency of these inspections follows a risk management matrix which is based on the following: asbestos type, location and risk of disturbance.
- 5.18. The frequency of the inspections is completed every 1-5 years depending on the outcome of the risk management matrix.
- 5.19. The service achieved 99.04% compliance for asbestos as of 31/3/2026.
- 5.20. Asbestos surveying is undertaken by Acorn Analytical and Asbestos Removal is completed by Rhodar. Both contracts were awarded from 1 September 2025, and both contractors are performing well.
- 5.21. Key areas to note:
- The service will be using True Compliance to record the surveying and inspection compliance but will continue to use Alpha Tracker as the asbestos register.

Compliance: Lifts

- 5.22. Compliance for lifts covers two areas - passenger lifts which are required to be monitored under the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) and domestic lifts which are in individual council homes (in some case this can be multiple lifts).
- 5.23. The HRA currently has eight passenger lifts, which are located in the HFIL schemes, with each lift receiving a six-monthly survey.
- 5.24. The service also manages and maintains around 90 domestic lifts situated in tenants' homes and in the HFIL schemes.
- 5.25. The service achieved a year end compliance position of 99.16% for domestic lifts and 100% LOLER compliance for passenger lifts.
- 5.26. Key areas to note:
- Higher Elevations commenced the Lift Maintenance contract from 1 September 2025, taking over from Norse. This will enable the service to have direct control and contract with the contractors in line with the other 9 contracts that were awarded from 01 September 2025.
 - Non-compliance in Q4 was due to access issues, with the year-end average compliance at 99.16%.

Compliance: Gas

- 5.27. The gas contract is held by Sureserve Compliance South (novated from Swale Heating in March 2025).
- 5.28. Following the recovery from the initial transition issues in 2024/25, the service maintained strong gas compliance performance throughout 2025/26 with a monthly average of 99.59%.
- 5.29. Average Q4 compliance was 99.55% (10 non-compliant properties).
- 5.30. The Property Service Team continues to work closely with Sureserve with an end of year compliance average of 99.59%.
- 5.31. Key areas to note:
- The service is now using True Compliance which delivers efficiencies in compliance and document management.
 - PCM continue to audit the quality of the testing and certification.

Compliance: Fire (FRA – Fire Risk Assessments)

- 5.32. The service re-negotiated its SLA with STG Building Control to undertake Fire Risk Assessments to the HRA's communal areas.
- 5.33. As part of the SLA, STG Building Control completed the following functions for the HRA, ensuring that the service meets its legislative and regulatory requirements.
- STG will oversee and ensure the delivery and compliance of all FRA related workstreams.
 - STG will carry out an annual inspection of all communal fire doors that are in common areas including HFIL schemes and to 11m & 18m+ buildings.
 - Inspect flat entrance doors to 11m+ buildings annually.
 - STG will report any issues found to the HRA for the subsequent repairs to be carried out.
 - STG carry out the FRA and undertake the annual reviews inclusive of providing certs and documents.
 - STG to offer advice on new build acquisitions as and when required.
 - STG review contractors spec for the FRA showing what needs to be done to achieve compliance.
- 5.34. The service achieved a year end compliance position of 100% for FRAs and annual reviews in 2025/26.
- 5.35. The service also appointed Bell Group to undertake FRA remedials and Fire Door replacements, and RGE Services to complete FRA servicing works. Both contracts commenced on 1 September 2025 and are performing well.

5.36. Key areas to note:

- The service is now using True Compliance which delivers efficiencies in compliance and document management.
- True Compliance will be used to generate works identified on FRAs that can be instructed to Bell Group and RGE.

Compliance: Water Management

5.37. The service has a requirement to undertake L8 Risk Assessments in accordance with HSG 274, Part 2. This is to ensure that Legionella risk assessments are completed and regular servicing to stored water systems are undertaken.

5.38. The service awarded its water management tender to Envirocure on 1 September 2025 who undertake works such as annual inspections to cold water storage tanks, temperature checking, and shower head flushing.

5.39. The service achieved 100% L8 compliance at year end for 2025/26.

5.40. Key areas to note:

- PCM continue to audit the quality of the testing and certification.
- Water Management functions are mainly undertaken to the HFIL schemes due to a communal heating system being in place.

Compliance: Remedial works

5.41. The service has a requirement to ensure that any remedial works identified across the 'Big 6' compliance work streams are recorded and completed. A lot of this reporting is currently being done via the contractors' systems or manually by officers.

5.42. The service reports each compliance workstream's remedial position quarterly, and this is presented at each HRA Governance Group.

5.43. The service is in the process of transitioning over to True Compliance, which is a cloud based, compliance management solution that was recommended by the Regulator of Social Housing during Medway's inspection.

5.44. True compliance will have the ability to interface directly with Medway's contractors' systems to enable works to be instructed, reports to be fun and documents to be transferred directly.

5.45. True Compliance also can audit certificates and check for errors which could lead to something becoming non-compliant.

5.46. The service transitioned to True Compliance by December 2025, which is now the primary compliance management system.

Asset management

- 5.47. Under the Consumer Standards (Safety and Quality), there are five key expectations which include stock quality, decency, health and safety, repairs, maintenance and planned improvements.
- 5.48. Stock quality – the expectations are that the HRA must have an accurate, up to date and an evidenced understanding of the condition of their homes that reliably informs the provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for tenants.
- 5.49. The service achieved a year end Decent Homes compliance position of 97.49% for 2025/26 which was an increase in the previous year's year end position. A total of 67 properties were deemed as non-decent at year end. These non-decent properties were on programmes for 2025/26 but were not completed (mainly due to no access or lack of responses to waiver requests). Note: compliancy reduces at the beginning of each financial year as the new planned works programme commences.
- 5.50. In 2023, a revised and updated 5-year cyclical programme of stock condition surveys (SCS) was implemented. The service has continued this programme in 2025/26, building on the foundations established in 2024/25.
- 5.51. This highlighted a risk for the HRA, which resulted in the introduction of two actions to mitigate the risks while completing the stock condition surveying programme – mitigation actions included the creation of decency surveys (mini stock condition surveys) and Housing, Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) surveys.
- 5.52. Decency and HHSRS surveys are undertaken by Technical Property Services Officers every time they enter a property.
- 5.53. In addition to the mitigating actions, the team has continued to work on a gap analysis for the Consumer Standards to drive the SCS programme forward. The second permanent full-time HRA stock condition surveyor recruited in 2024/25 continued in post throughout 2025/26.
- 5.54. The service continued to use South Thames Gateway (STG) Building Control and Fairthorn Farrell Timms (FFT) to supplement the in-house surveying programme throughout 2025/26.
- 5.55. Key areas to note:
- In 2025/26 the service continued its programme of Stock Condition Surveys, Decency Surveys, HHSRS assessments and EPC surveys.
 - The service completed 1084 Stock Condition Surveys, 213 Decency Surveys, 1237 HHSRS assessments and 205 EPCs.
 - As of 31 March 2026, the HRA's stock condition survey coverage continued to increase. The service achieved a year end, 5-year valid stock

condition compliance position of 75.41%. In addition to this, many properties were void or had a decency survey undertaken. This resulted in a final year end position of 91.11% of the stock either having a valid 5-year stock condition survey, a valid 5 year decency survey, or has been void and relet at the lettable standard within the last 5 years.

- The service has a Stock condition programme in place with a target of achieving 100% full 5-year stock condition survey compliance by December 2027. The service is currently on track to deliver this ahead of that deadline.

Energy

- 5.56. As of 31 March 2026, the service continued to maintain EPC coverage for the housing stock, with energy efficiency works to 108 properties underway using fabric first measures including low energy lighting, monitoring sensors, insulation and windows.
- 5.57. The average SAP score for properties with an EPC was 71.42 (EPC C) as of year-end, which is an increase on the previous year.
- 5.58. The service has an Asset and Energy Manager and a Retrofit Coordinator who are responsible for obtaining external funding and delivering energy efficiency work to the HRA's stock.
- 5.59. Mears are delivering energy efficiency works (including Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding Wave 2 works) in conjunction with HRA Officers.
- 5.60. Key areas to note:
- The HRA Retrofit Coordinator has also been trained to the level of a Domestic Energy Assessor and is now able to complete EPCs directly.

Damp & Mould

- 5.61. The team has continued with their proactive approach to managing and mitigating damp and mould and the reduction of disrepair claims.
- 5.62. The Property Services Team continued its proactive approach to contacting tenants in 2025/26 to ask if they had any damp or mould, any health and safety concerns, and if there were any other issues with the property.
- 5.63. The service has demonstrated a strong and proactive approach to managing damp and mould, making 1,925 contact attempts during the year and successfully engaging with 1,702 tenants. This high level of engagement has enabled early identification of issues, with 757 damp and mould cases reported, reflecting an effective preventative approach rather than reliance on reactive responses.

- 5.64. Importantly, the majority of identified cases were progressed to action, with 700 treatment jobs raised, showing a clear and effective pathway from identification to resolution. Overall performance reflects a well-established, responsive service that is actively managing risk across the housing stock, with activity levels appropriately increasing during colder months while maintaining consistent delivery throughout the year.
- 5.65. In addition to the proactive calls, all tenants contacted during Big Door Knocks are asked if they have D&M in their property and officers will review, raise repairs or inspections.
- 5.66. Key areas to note:
- This proactive approach has been well received by tenants.
 - This approach has stood the service in good stead when it comes to refuting disrepair claims.
 - The service is in the process of installing remote monitoring devices to properties where historic damp and mould jobs have been raised, or if a property is potentially at risk of damp and mould forming based on asset data.
 - The service has also worked closely with Mears to create a specific D&M reporting system in accordance with the requirements of Awaab's Law.

Planned maintenance

- 5.67. The 18-month planned works programme commenced 1 September 2024 and concluded 31 March 2026, with a new programme commencing for 2026/27.
- 5.68. Planned works for the full year 2025/26 were delivered under the new contracts, with over £3.5m delivered against the Capital budget.
- 5.69. Since 1 September, a variety of planned works programmes have been instructed to Mears, Sureserve Compliance South, RGE Services and Bell Group.
- 5.70. Several workstreams have performed well over the last six months, completing at least 50% of the total works required, these have included front door replacements, windows (houses), full rewires and Communal five-year EICR testing.
- 5.71. The 18-month planned works programme concluded at 31 March 2026 with works continuing into 2026/27 where required.
- 5.72. Key areas to note:
- The service began scoping works to complete a large refurbishment project to the 3 x blocks at St Albans Close. Works will include new doors, windows, balconies and walkways, decorations, and some social value projects.

- Overall delivery: Of 3,998 works instructed, 3,464 remain live once deferrals (148) and cancellations (386) are removed. For 2025/26, 2,526 elements have been completed, equating to 63.2% against total programme and 72.9% against live, achievable scope, meaning headline figures understate delivery performance.
- Key distortion factors: Lower headline completion rates are primarily driven by deferrals, cancellations, late contractor mobilisation, and persistent access issues, rather than contractor underperformance on live works.
- Mears – kitchens and bathrooms: Completion improves materially when measured against live scope, with kitchens at 74.4% and bathrooms at 54.8%. Lower overall performance reflects labour constraints reducing active scope, not stalled progress on live properties.
- Mears – doors and windows: Strong performance across most programmes, with front entrance doors (97.7%), rear/patio doors (91.1%), and windows to houses (91.9%) complete against live works, despite additional referrals increasing scope.
- Mears – roofing: Roofing remains the main delivery concern, with pitched roofs to houses at 23.2%, blocks at 0% (pending S20), and flat roofs at 50%, reflecting late starts, access issues, and earlier commercial constraints. These have now been addressed and a programme is underway on 2026/27.
- RGE Services: Adjusted completion rates are consistently strong, particularly rewires (89.2%) and PIR Domestic (87.5%); remaining works across smoke alarms, CO detectors, and gateways are predominantly constrained by historic access issues.
- Sureserve Compliance: Boiler replacements are 82.3% complete against live scope, with the remaining backlog largely attributable to access limitations rather than delivery capacity. A total of 377 properties had new boilers installed in 2025/26.

Rent collection

- 5.73. Current rent arrears at the end of Q4 were at 1.14% compared to 1.06% at the end of the previous financial year.
- 5.74. An Increasing number of HRA tenants are being migrated from HB to UC (1602 tenants – approx. 50% of HRA tenancies) which carries risk of an increase, though close working with the revenues and benefits team will minimise the impact.
- 5.75. Tenancy sustainment supported the financial generation of over £150k paid directly into rent accounts. This includes payments for PIP/UC appeals, DHPs, underpaid benefits and Household Support Grant payments.
- 5.76. DHPs and the Household Support Fund are being replaced by the Crisis and Resilience Fund.

Estate Management

- 5.77. A new cleaning contract was procured following a full procurement exercise. The winning bidder was the incumbent, Medway NORSE.
- 5.78. The contract has an improves specification and this is being publicised to HRA tenants, along with information on fly tipping.
- 5.79. All 66 Scheduled Estate Inspections were completed in year, graded against a published scale, with 0 rated as red, 48 amber and 18 green through the year.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

- 5.80. Following the 2024/25 TSM perception survey (commissioned in October 2024), the team commissioned the 2025/26 TSM perception survey.
- 5.81. A full report was presented to the Tenants Panel and HRA Governance Group. The report provided a review of the outcomes which included the breakdown of satisfaction where tenants have participated in a Big Door Knock.
- 5.82. The 2025/26 TSM perception survey achieved a formal response rate of 18.7% (573 of 3,068 tenants completed), with 30% online 69% via telephone and 1% by post.
- 5.83. Overall satisfaction rose by 4.5% and increased across 7 of the 12 tenant perception measures. A decrease in satisfaction was recorded on 3 of 12 measures, with the most statistically significant being the 7% drop in satisfaction with the approach to complaints handling. Satisfaction levels remain a focus area with key actions within the RSH continuous improvement plan.
- 5.84. Key areas to note:
 - Tenants who had engaged with the Big Door Knock were more likely to be satisfied over a range of measures.
 - Follow up calls were made to all who reported making a complaint in the TSM survey response
 - Complaints training has been delivered across Housing Services, and will be delivered as annual internal training, with the Tenant Scrutiny panel also reviewing complaints annually
 - The largest satisfaction increases were with time taken to complete the most recent repair (+3.5%) and that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect (+2.7%)

Anti-social behaviour

- 5.85. Over the last 12 months (2025/26), the HRA continued to improve the ASB offer to tenants. The new ASB case management system ReACT is live and

being used to manage all cases. In Q4, 12 new cases were opened and 9 were closed, with 30 live cases at year end.

- 5.86. There were 20.3 ASB cases per 1000 homes in the year 25/26 with 1 ASB case involving hate incidents per 1000 homes in the year.
- 5.87. ASB case management offering was improved with the recruitment to specialist ASB officer and ASB apprentice roles.
- 5.88. Planning is underway for a campaign linked with national ASB week to provide information and pop-up events targeting areas with high perception levels of ASB.
- 5.89. Domestic abuse cases are now logged in ReACT improving visibility of cases and preparing the service to seek DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) Accreditation.
- 5.90. Keys areas to note:
- 5 members of the Tenant Services team are now trained in mediation.
 - A programme of bitesize training has been delivered to the tenancy team to improve the understanding of risk assessments, action plans and non-legal remedies.
 - A monthly legal surgery is now in place which provides the opportunity to discuss complex cases and receive advice on proportionate next steps.
 - Good neighbour agreements are now included in all new tenancies.
 - Members of the team now attend Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and Community Safety Taskforce meetings.

Knowing our residents – tenant & leaseholder engagement

- 5.91. Over the last year (2025/26), the team has been working on knowing our residents better, by collecting and making better use of data. This allows us to deliver services in ways that suits our customers and ensures that resources are targeted.
- 5.92. Through the year we have doubled the proportion of households who we hold personal attributes for from 26% to 52% by year end. This is a key requirement for the regulator, that we know our residents and use this data to shape service delivery.
- 5.93. The number of lines of personal information such as accessibility and health needs has more than tripled, from 1423 at the beginning of the year to 4629 by the end.
- 5.94. The Big Door Knock (BDK) continues to be a key service activity for the HRA, where once a month (except December) officers visit a specific neighbourhood where council homes are and knock on all our tenants' doors. The BDK allow officers and tenants to have conversations around service provision (including repairs and growing awareness of 2 hour repair slots,

damp & mould, ASB, neighbourhood improvements and complaints) and allows for better understanding of the diverse needs of our tenants.

- 5.95. Tenant surgeries play a key role in providing accessible, face-to-face support for residents and in strengthening trust, engagement, and early intervention within tenancies.
- 5.96. Leaseholder Forums continued in 2025/26 following the introduction of the forum in 2024/25.
- 5.97. Data from our complex case panel has been used to identify staff development needs. In response we have delivered a range of training.
- 5.98. Learning from a serious case review led us to launch tenant roadshows in September 25 with a follow up roadshow in the run up to Christmas. The roadshows are wellbeing based, providing tenants with access to multi-agency support in a non-judgemental, drop-in environment.
- 5.99. On the back of the roadshows Care Packs were procured and made available to vulnerable residents. These were funded through a Social Value bid and there has been a further 100 care packs funded for the forthcoming year from a further social value fund bid.
- 5.100. Key areas to note:
 - Identified training needs resulted in:
 - Delivered trauma informed training for all staff in the service, ensuring interactions with tenants and empathetic and informed by best practice.
 - Designed an Equality Act training session in conjunction with Medway's legal services team to support ethical decision making and proportionality.
 - Introduced monthly reflective practice sessions to support staff dealing with complex situations Our new engagement panel will ensure that we make data driven decisions around events and how we engage with our tenants.
 - We are promoting tenant surgeries using email prompts and targeted contacts which has increased attendance significantly, with 54 tenants attending surgeries.

Complaints

- 5.101. Complaint handling remained an area of focus in 2025/26. The service continued to see improvements following actions taken in 2024/25.
- 5.102. Complaint trends analysis is presented to the Tenants Panel and the HRA Governance Group on a quarterly basis, this includes the number of complaints (Stage 1, Stage 2 and Ombudsman) received throughout the quarter, general causes, lessons learnt and any financial remedies.
- 5.103. Additional complaints training continued to be provided to officers and managers in 2025/26, building on the programme undertaken in 2024/25. A

critical friend review of complaints handling across the whole of Housing Services was completed in Q4. The findings from this review will be used to enhance the complaints handling process and to inform the training programme for the coming year.

5.104. The Housing Ombudsman have a legal duty to monitor compliance with the Code of Practice (Housing Ombudsman), this is undertaken through the review of an organisations self-assessment against the Code. All social housing landlords are required to comply with the Code in practice and policy, failure to do so can result in a Complaint Handling Failure Order (CHFO).

5.105. Key areas to note:

- The service has been promoting how to make complaints through social media, in Housing Matters publications and on Big Door Knocks. This has resulted in many more complaints being received, and many more opportunities for the service to put things right for tenants.
- While complaint numbers have increased this is not considered a negative and is in line with the sector more widely.
- Senior managers have been checking responses for the correct language and empathy, ensuring that our correspondence is written in plain English, with further training being developed including the use of plain English checking tools.

Programmed inspection – Regulatory of Social Housing

5.106. An inspection of Medway Council's Landlord Services took place between June and September 2024. All four Consumer Standards were in the scope of the inspection.

5.107. Medway Council was the first local authority landlord in the Southeast to have a programmed inspection under the new regulatory inspection regime launched in April 2024.

5.108. The Regulatory Judgement published in November 2024 awarded Medway Council a C2 grade. Continued engagement with the Regulator is ongoing quarterly against the continuous improvement plan.

5.109. The next meeting with the Regulator is scheduled for 18th June and work is ongoing to provide evidence and reassurance to seek a regrade of C1 status.

5.110. The team had to create an improvement action plan specifically to address the service improvements identified as part of the inspection. This has enabled the on-going engagement to be reduced from monthly to quarterly as of April 2025.

5.111. The Tenants Panel and HRA Governance Group will monitor the RSH improvement action plan on a quarterly basis, with Corporate Management Team reviewing on a bi-annual basis and Cabinet on an annual basis within this report moving forward.

RSH continuous improvement plan – Appendix 3

5.112. The RSH continuous improvement plan has been split into three key areas as noted below. Each area is monitored on a quarterly basis by the Tenants Panel and HRA Governance Group.

5.113. The update and monitoring will then be shared with the Regulator during the quarterly engagement meetings; this will provide assurance to the Regulator the HRA's commitment to on-going improvement and route to a C1 grade.

5.114. Key areas to note:

- On going improvement to landlord services which has positive outcomes for tenants and residents.
- Positive engagement with the Regulator.
- The Chief Housing Officer and Head of HRA Property & Development has presented to a number of organisations including Kent Housing Group, Heart of Medway's Board, Town & Country Housing Association and a Mears Group away day.

6. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Stock safety	The HRA Landlord Services fails to comply with regulatory safety requirements	Review how compliance remedial actions are monitored. Continue to undertake HHSRS assessments on every technical officer visit. Performance reporting to be discussed at monthly Housing Senior Management Team meeting. Quarterly updates to Tenant Panel and HRA Governance Group. Review compliance software packages with a view to moving away from spreadsheets.	B3
Stock Condition	The HRA Landlord Service fails to complete the targeted of a minimum of 675 stock condition surveys per annum.	Monthly reviews of completed surveys by the Portfolio Holder, AD Culture & Communities and Chief Housing Officer. Quarterly review of completed stock condition surveys to ensure	C2

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
		programme is on target reported to the Tenants Panel & HRA Governance Group for further scrutiny.	
ASB	Low satisfaction rate for TSM Perception survey and ASB case closure survey	Action plan created, to be fully implemented and monitored.	C3
Tenant Satisfaction Measures	Reduced satisfaction rates for all TSM Tenant Perception (TP) Survey outcomes.	Continue to promote the participation with the TSMs via Housing Matters, Big Door Knocks (BDK) and social media promotion.	C2
Complaints	Reduced satisfaction from TSM Perception Survey outcomes. Failure to comply with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code which can result in a Complaint Handling Failure Order.	Action plan created and monitored. Continue to promote how to complain via Housing Matters, BDKs, social media and poster campaign. Complaint handling survey for all complaints. Completion and publication of the Complaint Handling Code Annual Submissions Form within the prescribed timeframe.	C2
RSH continuous improvement plan	To review and monitor compliance with the RSH's approved continuous improvement plan.	Governance arrangements of the HRA do not comply with the Consumer Standards as set out by the RSH. On-going engagement with the Regulator.	C2

For risk rating, please refer to the following table:

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely B Likely C Unlikely D Rare	1 Critical 2 Major 3 Moderate 4 Minor

7. Consultation

- 7.1. No formal consultation has been undertaken in respect of this paper, however tenants representatives are present at the Tenants Panel and the HRA Governance Group that review the HRA's performance on a quarterly basis.

8. Climate change implications

- 8.1. [The Council declared a climate change emergency in April 2019](#) - item 1038D refers and has set a target for Medway to become carbon neutral by 2050.
- 8.2. All Housing Revenue Account (HRA) new build developments are built to a minimum of EPC B. The HRA's recently completed several projects championing energy efficiency into the specification. Aburound House had photovoltaic panels (PV) to support the communal area electrical use included. Lennoxwood which consisted of 19 houses also had PV fitted to support the household's electrical consumption and reduce the cost of the annual electricity bill. The service also purchased Warick Crescent which is the first HRA scheme to be power by renewable technology by the way of air source heat pumps.
- 8.3. Under the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2, the HRA completed energy retrofit works to over 100 of the Council's worst energy performing homes using the "fabric first" method to support the climate change agenda. Works included insulation upgrades, glazing and boiler upgrades, ventilation improvements and low energy lighting.
- 8.4. There is an expanded property survey programme, to ensure that all council homes have a valid stock condition survey within 5 years. This target is set for March 2027. These surveys are comprehensive reviews of the fixtures and fittings, life cycles which then influence the review and management of the HRA 30 Year Business Plan.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1. There are no direct finance implications arising from the recommendations in this report. All expenditure and income in relation to the HRA is funded from the HRA ringfenced budget.

10. Legal implications

- 10.1. Although there are no direct legal implications arising from this report, the new regulatory framework could have an impact going forward if the service requires to **self-refer** under the specific expectation: 2.6 Self-referral of the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard of the Consumer Standards.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

Appendix 1: HRA Annual Performance 2025/26

Background papers

Consumer Standards - [Regulatory standards for landlords](#)