

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Audit Committee
Subject: Housing Services Update
Report of: Strategic Director Neighbourhoods

Summary

Audit Committee have monitored progress in the implementation of recommendations made by the Internal Audit Service, and this has included previous reports on actions being taken to address risks in Housing Services.

This report provides an update on the actions taken to address risk in these areas.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to: -

Note the assurance updates.

Wards Affected:

Ancoats & Beswick, Charlestown, Cheetham, Crumpsall, Gorton and Abbey Hey, Harphurhey, Higher Blackley, Moston, Ardwick, Clayton & Openshaw, Miles Platting & Newton Heath and Piccadilly

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

The Housing Service is a key deliverer of the City's Net Zero 2038 ambitions through the Housing Retrofit Programme (SHDF) and energy efficiency works.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments
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Good quality housing is at the heart of the Making Manchester Fairer programme and tackling inequalities in the City.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	As the largest single landlord in the City, MCC Housing Services is a major source of contracts and supplies that ideally are sourced locally
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Access to appropriate affordable housing and services will support residents to achieve and contribute to the city's ambitions.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	The council's housing service is resident led and includes tenants directly in the provision of the social landlord function
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	The housing service is pioneering the retrofitting of existing social housing homes to achieve Manchester's zero carbon housing ambitions
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	The housing service is a major contributor to the North Manchester infrastructure and regeneration.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose key facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

Previous internal audit reports to Audit Committee (25 July 2023)

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report provides an update on Building Safety Compliance in Housing Services and, in particular to the Internal Audit report on Fire Safety of 25 July 2023 where a Limited Assurance opinion was issued.

2.0 Fire Risk (Assessment, Actions and Audit)

2.1 There have been significant recent changes to the legal and regulatory framework governing the management of building safety during design, construction and occupation, and more specifically the new Fire Safety Act 2021 (implemented May 2022) and Fire Safety Regulations 2022. Non-compliance with Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) actions has been identified as a key risk for the Council and is recognised as a key priority for Housing Services for 2023/24.

As such, in March 2023 the Director for Housing Services, Director for Development and Director of Capital Programmes jointly commissioned an audit of the Council's current processes in relation to Fire Risk Assessment.

2.2 The aims of the audit were to provide assurance over the developing approach and processes to support the timely completion of actions arising from Fire Risk Assessments of the Council's residential buildings. Specifically.

- Roles, responsibilities and expectations are clearly defined and understood.
- Adequate systems and processes are in place to support the work of the team.
- Management information and reporting is sufficient to support monitoring, challenge and decision making.

2.3 The final report was issued on 10 July 2023 and the findings presented at Audit Committee on 25 July 2023. With the report setting out a Limited Assurance option as well as the following commentary. *'It was clear that issues were understood, and management agreed actions to develop a fire risk strategy and approach to address the current backlog of actions but also ensure that there is an agreed Council-wide approach for all future compliance and fire risk assessments and the management of risk across all areas of Council-owned housing.'*

2.4 Table 2.1 overleaf sets out the agreed actions, the action owners, and the update against each.

Table 2.1 FRA Agreed Actions and Owners

Agreed Action	Due Date/Owner	Update
<p>1. Development of a coordinated plan for responding to fire safety related recommendations not covered by the 10 phased programme</p>	<p>30th Sep 2023 David Lynch, Director of Development</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>FRA process appendix created and forms part of MCC Fire Safety Plan and Fire Safety Management Procedure suite of documents.</p> <p>Drafts have been commented on by Health & Safety, Housing Services and Audit and Assurance and will be presented to the Housing Board for approval on 13 December</p> <p>MCC Housing Services are currently working to the updated draft Fire Safety Plan and Procedure in terms of existing working practices</p> <p>For completion by 13th December 2023</p>
<p>2. Development and roll out of a corporate access strategy</p>	<p>30th Sep 2023 David Lynch, Director of Development Dave Ashmore, Director Housing Services</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>Initial draft circulated and comments received, meeting with all stakeholders to further progress w/c 6th Nov.</p> <p>Completion by mid-December</p>
<p>3. Improvements in the ownership and priority assigned to the completion of FRA actions across relevant teams and services</p>	<p>31st Dec 2023 David Lynch, Director of Development Dave Ashmore, Director Housing Services</p>	<p>Action Complete</p> <p>Ownership of the social housing FRA management data base 'RiskHub' now resides within the new Housing Services Assets Team.</p> <p>An FRA action structure allocation review has been completed resulting in the identification and reallocation of all previously allocated FRA actions. All new FRA inspection findings are triaged by the qualified Fire Safety Manager prior to allocation in accordance with the previously completed structure review.</p>
<p>4. Establishment of contingency arrangements for key</p>	<p>31st Dec 2023 Richard Woolfall, Housing Services Assets Lead</p>	<p>Action Complete:</p> <p>In support of the new FRA action triage allocation approach, all</p>

<p>parts of the process. Ensuring the assessment, interpretation, and allocation of actions is undertaken by a technical role.</p>		<p>actions are either directly assigned to a supplier or assigned to a specialist FRA assessor.</p> <p>The FRA action assessment is initially completed by the MCC Fire Safety Managers and/or the MCC Building Safety Manager.</p> <p>If deemed required, additional third-party specialist FRA assessor support is called upon to assess FRA actions and project manage any resulting works through to completion.</p>
<p>5. Maximising value from the contract (FRA) through robust contract monitoring and management activity</p>	<p>31st Dec 2023</p> <p>Richard Woolfall, Housing Services Assets Lead</p>	<p>Action Complete:</p> <p>The council with its additional investment in specific building safety roles and expertise has improved the contract management of these services and works with third-party specialist suppliers too, to further strengthen our approach. This includes both cost appraisal and qualitative assessment</p> <p>The executive oversight of FRA is reflected in the monthly strategic meetings between MCC and our main reactive repairs supplier Equans, in that additional assurance mechanisms have been put in place</p>
<p>6. Optimising the capability of the Risk Hub system and addressing the duplicate actions</p>	<p>31st Dec 2023</p> <p>Richard Woolfall, Housing Services Assets Lead</p>	<p>Action Complete:</p> <p>As per audit action No.3, a Risk Hub allocation review was completed that identified and mitigated duplicate actions with new, more robust processes put in place.</p>
<p>7. Development of a framework for reporting to provide assurance through management reporting and</p>	<p>30th Sep 2023</p> <p>Dave Ashmore, Director of Housing Services</p>	<p>Action Complete:</p> <p>FRA performance monitoring is facilitated via regular RiskHub performance reports.</p> <p>Performance reports are presented to Housing Services Improvement Board, Neighbourhoods SLT and</p>

quality assurance		Housing Services Management Meeting and the Housing Advisory Board (residents, co-opted housing specialist and elected members)
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2.5 All of the actions above are overseen at the Housing Improvement Board, chaired by the Strategic Director Neighbourhoods, which is focussed specifically on ensuring Manchester is compliant with the Home Standard, which is a legal requirement to ensure that residents receive decent quality of accommodation, a good and a cost effective, repairs service and that the council meet all applicable statutory, health and safety requirements. Through this improved approach the council continues to reduce the number of outstanding Fire Risk Actions.