

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive for Decision 15 July 2024

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Housing
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Housing Consumer Standards</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Housing
<b>Corporate Priorities:</b>	Provide Housing Choices

**Purpose:**

To seek Executive agreement to an Action Plan for Fareham Housing. The Action Plan intended to achieve confident compliance with the new Consumer Standards for social housing providers.

**Executive summary:**

As a Registered Provider of social housing, Fareham Borough Council must now comply with new Consumer Standards which came into force on 01 April 2024. The standards introduce a co-regulatory approach with the Regulator of Social Housing and include a set of specific expectations around the safety and quality of homes, transparency and influence for customers, safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods, and a tenancy standard.

An Action Plan for Fareham Housing has been developed, with the objective to achieve confident compliance with the new Standards.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (a) agrees the content of the Action Plan at Appendix A to this report, noting that this will be an iterative document to be kept up to date by the Director of Housing following consultation with the Executive Member for Housing; and
- (b) notes the governance and assurance measures outlined in Appendix A, which will collectively provide on-going scrutiny and regular review of Fareham Housing in the context of the new Consumer Standards.

**Reason:**

To outline the actions for Fareham Housing that are intended to achieve confident compliance with the new Consumer Standards.

**Cost of proposals:**

The anticipated costs of ensuring confident compliance with the Consumer Standards will fall within existing budgets.

**Appendices:**

**A:** Action Plan (To achieve 'confident compliance' with the housing Consumer Standards)

**B:** RAG rating assessment at June 2024 (internal officer assessment)

**Background papers:** None

**Reference papers:**

08 February 2024 Housing Scrutiny Panel Report (New Consumer Standards from the Regulator of Social Housing)

11 July 2024 Housing Scrutiny Panel Report (Housing Consumer Standards Update)

Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards [Online via [Regulatory standards for landlords - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-standards-for-landlords)]

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Executive Briefing Paper

<b>Date:</b>	15 July 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Housing Consumer Standards
<b>Briefing by:</b>	Director of Housing
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Housing

#### INTRODUCTION

1. On 01 April 2024 new Consumer Standards for social housing providers came into force. The new standards are intended to protect tenants and to drive improvement in the services that social landlords provide. The new standards will apply to Fareham Housing and all other Registered Providers of social housing nationally.
2. Through changes in legislation, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) (the Regulator) will undertake inspections and have stronger enforcement powers to make social housing providers address issues.
3. On 08 February 2024 the Housing Scrutiny Panel considered a report which (a) outlined the draft new standards; (b) explained the anticipated inspection regime by the Regulator; (c) provided an assessment of current performance against the draft standards; and (d) identified initial actions to improve compliance.
4. Now that the final Consumer Standards have been published, a detailed Action Plan has been developed for Fareham Housing. The Housing Scrutiny Panel will have the opportunity to consider the Action Plan at their meeting on 11 July 2024.
5. This report seeks agreement to the Action Plan, which also incorporates detail on the intended assurance/governance approach.

#### THE ACTION PLAN

6. An Action Plan, intended to achieve confident compliance with the new housing Consumer Standards, has now been developed. This is provided at Appendix A to this report.
7. The Action Plan includes: -
  - Objective

- Background
  - Summary of the Consumer Standards
  - Self-Assessment position in February 2024 (against the then draft standards)
  - Inspections and Results (the process of)
  - Governance and Assurance
  - Actions (including general actions, specific actions, and governance, assurance, and monitoring actions).
8. The Action Plan is intended to be an iterative document that will record progress against actions, where actions have been completed, and have additional actions added when necessary.
9. Through informal discussion with the Regulator, Officers have been advised that a key part of their Inspection process will be looking for landlords to demonstrate that they have an awareness of where there are gaps that need to be filled, and improvements that need to be made. In this respect the Action Plan at Appendix A (and the RAG rating self-assessment referred to in the Action Plan and included at Appendix B) are key to demonstrating this and providing a framework for on-going action and improvement.
10. The Action Plan is designed to be an iterative document that will be updated by the Director of Housing in conjunction with the Executive Member for Housing.

## **THE WORK AHEAD**

11. As can be seen from the Action Plan at Appendix A there are several specific actions that will be taken forward. These are intended to clearly demonstrate compliance against the new standards. Several of these actions include policy and strategy development.
12. Although staffing has been restructured in the Housing team to help address these actions, it will not be possible to deliver on all the actions in 2024/25. Some actions are anticipated to be delivered in 2025/26 (with indicative timetables for some workstreams still to be developed). Officers have prioritised those actions for 2024/25 that are deemed to be more significant or pressing as part of demonstrating compliance with the standards.
13. Table 4 of the Action Plan at Appendix A articulates the governance, assurance, and monitoring actions that are anticipated. This includes Member involvement through Executive Member briefings and reports to be provided to the Housing Scrutiny Panel.
14. In the case of Local Authority Registered Providers (such as Fareham Housing) the Regulator expects Councillors to be responsible for the delivery of the outcomes of the standards. The governance proposed at Table 4 of the Action Plan is therefore intended to allow Councillors the opportunity and format to oversee and review progress, and to hold Officers and the Executive Member for Housing to account.

## **ANTICIPATED PROGRESS IN THE SHORT TERM**

15. Figure 1 below shows the internal RAG rating assessment at the end of February 2024. Figure 2 shows the anticipated RAG rating assessment at the end of September 2024, should the identified actions up to and including September be achieved.

RAG rating for 'confident compliance'  
(February 2024)

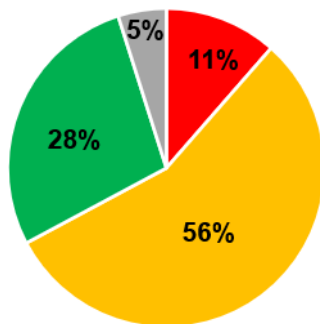


Figure 1

Anticipated RAG rating for 'confident compliance' in September 2024

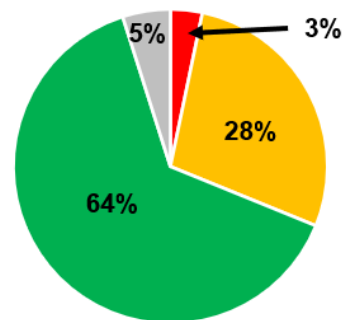


Figure 2

## RISK ASSESSMENT

16. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report. It is however of note that Fareham Housing could be selected for an Inspection by the Regulator at any point, with only 6-weeks' notice provided. The likelihood of achieving a C1 or C2 grading, i.e. 'compliant' (see Appendix A for more detail on 'Inspections and Results'), will increase as more actions are successfully progressed/completed during 2024/25.

## CONCLUSION

17. In response to the new Consumer Standards for social landlords, Fareham Housing have developed an Action Plan which identifies actions that will collectively increase confidence in being compliant with the new standards. The Action Plan is an iterative document that can be used as an ongoing reference point, with the intention to drive and monitor positive progress against the standards.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS/CARBON IMPACT ASSESSMENT

18. The subject matter of this report is not anticipated to have an impact on the Council's carbon footprint, nor is it expected to have a detrimental or beneficial impact to the wider environment.

### Enquiries:

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