

Housing Asset Management Strategy 2023–2028

January 2023



North
Tyneside
Council

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1. Introduction

This strategy sets out our approach towards maintaining our stock portfolio over the next five years. It is reviewed within a five year period to support the 30 year capital business plan.

The strategy is informed by the funding available through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This is for cyclical improvement and replacement works and repairs. It is reviewed on an annual basis.

Since our last asset management strategy was produced, the partnership with Kier has ended, with Property Services returning to the local authority from April 2019.

Effective asset management is greater than carrying out good timely repairs and property improvements. The whole asset base must be reviewed to achieve the balance between quality and need. This ensures that our assets are utilised in the most effective way to meet corporate objectives and current and future customer expectations.

In 2016 Government introduced a four year freeze on social rent increases. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1% resumed in 2020. The current cost of living crisis has resulted in this being reviewed again, with a social housing consultation exercise on preferred rent increase options running September 2022. The outcome of the consultation is not known at the time of this strategy being produced.

The Covid -19 pandemic has also brought its challenges, with the full impact of rising material costs and a reduced labour market yet to be known.

Our key objectives include:

- The provision of homes that are decent, safe, energy efficient and affordable
- Meeting statutory and regulatory requirements
- Delivering value for money, improving the quality and condition of homes
- Continuing to meet the Decent Homes Standard.
- Understanding our stock portfolio and suitability to meet our short, medium, and long term strategic objectives and local housing need
- Sustainability of homes, neighbourhoods, and strong communities
- Customer involvement in setting the Housing Investment Programme

2. National context

Our last strategy was published in 2018. Since then, there have been changes to national policy and legal context, that need to be considered for managing our stock well. These include:

Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018: enacted March 2019, this legislation aims to make sure that landlords must rent out properties that are safe, secure, warm, and dry. If properties do not meet these criteria and may not be safe to live in, then a tenant can take their landlord to court. The court can enforce the landlord to carry out remedial work, rectify health and safety issues, and pay the tenant compensation.

The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper 2020: sets out the actions that government will look to introduce to ensure that social housing is safe to live in, residents are listened to, the provision of good quality homes, and the opportunity for change when things go wrong.

The Energy White Paper 2020: powering our net zero future: sets out a strategy for the UK's energy transition so that by 2050 all buildings will be energy efficient with low carbon heating.

Building Safety Act 2022: provides homeowners and residents more rights, powers, and protection so homes are safer.

Fire Safety Regulations 2022: introduces new duties under the Fire Safety Order for building owners or managers (responsible persons).

3. North Tyneside context

Our **North Tyneside Council Plan 2021 – 2025** has five themes to help create a North Tyneside that is thriving, family friendly, caring, secure and green. The plan builds on the success of previous ones, and recognises the challenges faced following the Covid -19 pandemic.

Our **Customer Promise, we listen, we care** has been developed based on what our residents have told us. This sets out what they can expect from the Authority and what to do if things go wrong.

North Tyneside Tenancy Strategy 2021 – 2025 provides guidance to registered providers operating in the borough, including our own landlord function. The strategy emphasises the need to make best use of the housing stock to meet local housing need, maintain and create successful, sustainable communities and prevent homelessness.

The borough declared a climate emergency in 2019. Substantive work continues to take place to address our **Action on Climate Change**, and for the borough to be carbon neutral by 2030. This is supported by our **Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020**.

The framework in the **Commercial and Procurement Strategy 2022 – 2025** is followed for the appointment of providers.

To ensure health and safety is considered and always adopted, the service **Safety, Health, and Environment Manual** documents our Safety, Health and Environment Management System defining its scope, arrangements, and includes process interaction.

4. Stock portfolio

4.1 Stock condition data

North Tyneside is a retained housing authority and is responsible for the management and maintenance of the housing stock and garages.

The management tool used to manage the stock condition provides robust, accurately maintained data. This information provides a detailed understanding of the future investment requirements of our stock and helps to inform the 30-year investment plan. Information is input from:

- Investment programmes;
- Stock condition surveys;
- Empty homes data collection; and
- Repairs and maintenance information.

This approach ensures that:

- Our homes are well maintained and in a lettable condition.
- Programmed works are carried out effectively and responsively.
- A key priority is necessary investment for our stock
- Our homes are thermally efficient; and
- We meet customer expectations and preferences.

4.2 Decent homes

Government's Decent Homes Standard sets out the minimum standard that all social housing homes must meet. This includes:

- Current statutory minimum standard for housing;
- Being in a reasonable state of repair;
- Having reasonably modern facilities and services; and
- Provision of a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

North Tyneside met the standard in 2010, with work being carried out to a Decent Homes Plus standard. Through a planned cyclical maintenance programme meeting the expected life expectancy of each renewal this continues to be achieved year on year. Work includes the renewal of bathrooms, kitchens, central heating systems, roof covering renewals, structural works, and electrical upgrades:

Working within the financial constraints of the HRA, in 2012 we were able to introduce a 15-year environmental and estate improvement plan focusing on fencing and boundary walls. Additional off-street parking and footpaths that fall within the responsibility of the HRA are also a priority to improve external areas within our estates.

4.3 Repairs and maintenance

In addition to ensuring stock continues to meet the Decent Homes Standard, there is a requirement to respond to day to day and emergency repairs as the result of general wear and tear, failure of specific parts or accidental damage.

Our approach to this and managing tenant expectations remain under review.

A partnership is in place with Solutions for North Tyneside to maintain the 26 sheltered accommodation schemes owned by the Authority. This includes a full building management service, including responsive repairs and capital investment for the lifespan of the contract.

4.4. Compliance

In addition to legislation that has been introduced or amended since 2018, ongoing consideration also needs to be given to:

The **Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)** assesses the health and safety risks within a property. If a property fails, the HHSRS it automatically fails the Decent Homes Standard. All HHSRS failures are treated as urgent and addressed at the earliest opportunity. The identification of HHSRS failures is being carried out as part of the ongoing stock condition survey.

Refresher training for front line staff will be delivered as part of this strategy to ensure failures are identified.

Gas Servicing

There is a legal obligation under the Gas Regulations 1998 to annually check the safety of all gas appliances, pipework and associated fittings within our stock. The Authority currently has Gas Safe accreditation.

Fire Safety

We have an obligation under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to carry out Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) in all our communal areas.

The Authority does not own any domestic buildings higher than four stories (Low Rise)

The fire risk assessment process is managed internally on an ongoing basis. The fire risk assessment process drives both any remedial works and a planned programme of works to ensure fire safety integrity within our properties.

Alongside the FRA process there is an inspection and servicing programme for all our fire safety related equipment. This includes emergency lighting, fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and blankets where applicable

Asbestos Management

We have a duty to comply with the Asbestos Management Regulations 2012 and follow best practice relating to domestic properties. Our asbestos register is contained within our asset management system Keystone and managed by the compliance team.

All communal areas have been surveyed and details of these surveys are held within our asbestos register. All asbestos is managed in situ until it is appropriate to remove. We have an annual programme of re-inspection for all communal areas where asbestos has been identified.

Asbestos surveying and management are monitored through the compliance team and appropriate surveys are carried out prior to any works.

Legionella

Our policy for the control of legionella is designed in accordance with the Approved Code of Practice L8. The code recommends that we carry out routine testing of communal water systems.

Risk assessments of individual sites are used to identify the testing and inspection regime including the frequency. The compliance team are responsible for management of Legionella risk across the stock.

Electrical Safety

We are currently delivering a programme of electrical inspection and testing through our empty homes and internal works programme. As part of our review of compliance a programme of electrical inspections is being introduced and will be delivered through this strategy.

An annual programme of periodic testing to residential properties and communal areas will be delivered to ensure electrical safety.

The Authority currently has NICEIC accreditation.

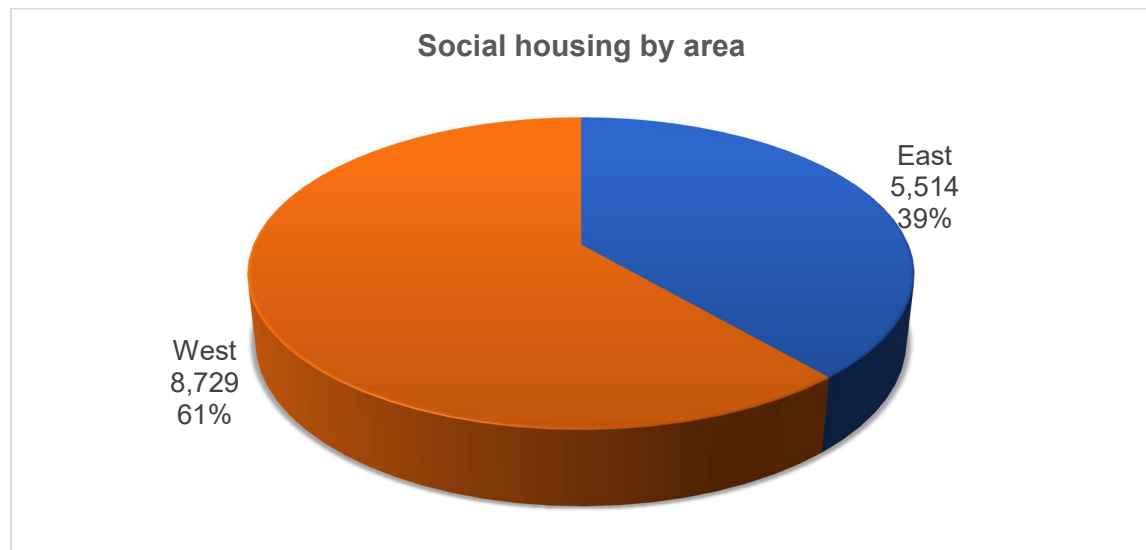
4.5 Stock breakdown

As of 1 April 2022, our stock portfolio consisted of:

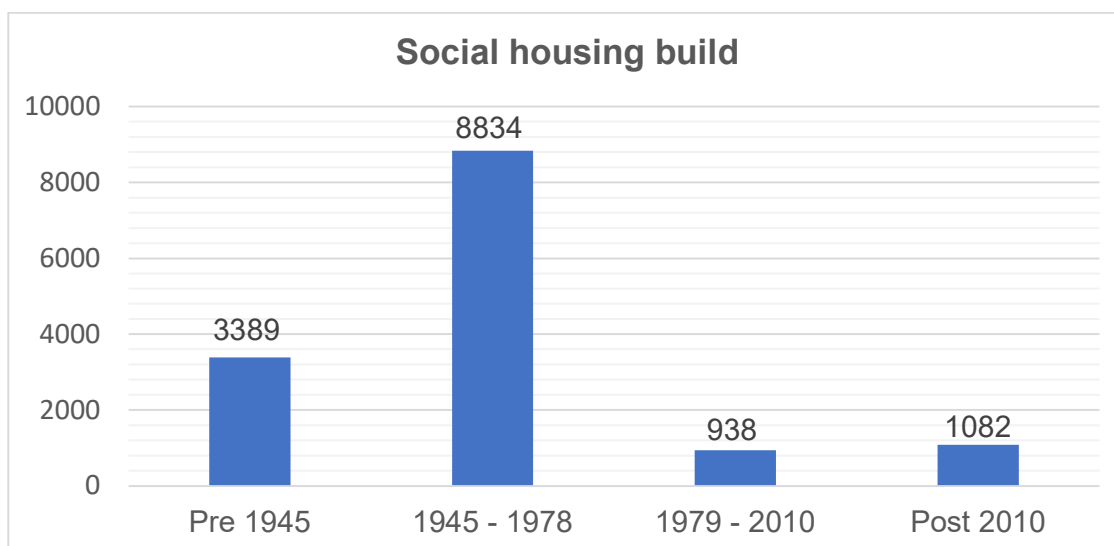
- 14,243 rented homes;
 - 13,319 general need properties
 - 924 North Tyneside Living (sheltered accommodation)
- 1,636 garages; and
- 937 leaseholders.

The HRA is also responsible for 37 commercial assets, approximately 1,100 non adopted footpaths and highways and some small land sites.

For housing management of the stock, the borough is split into two areas, the East and the West. Breakdown of the stock for each area is:



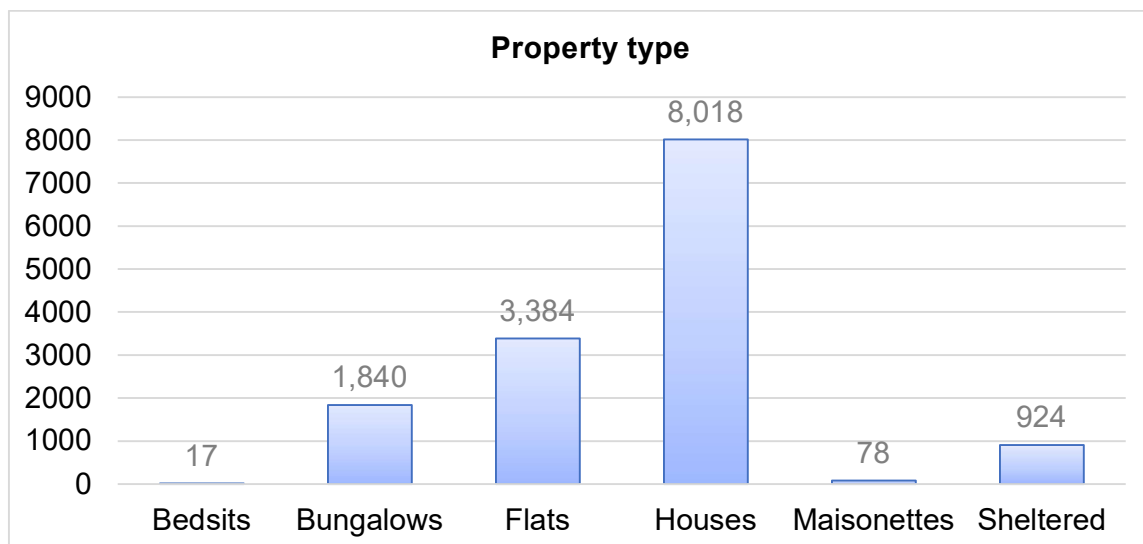
Our stock is predominately traditional build homes with a small number of non-traditional build homes, predominately built before 1979. Since 2010 some investment has taken place in new build properties.



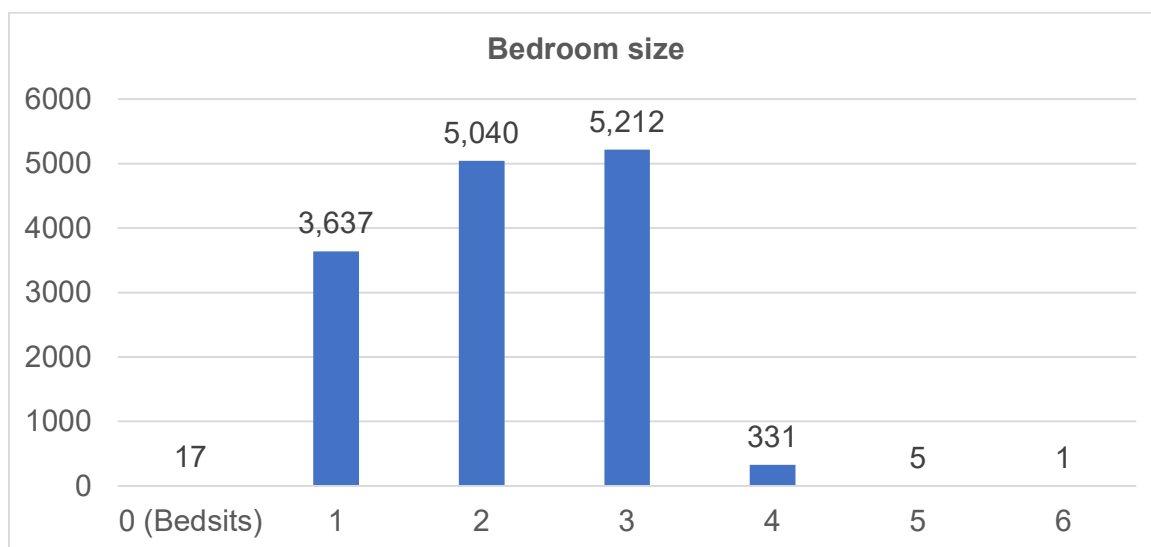
Dispersed throughout the borough there are 830 properties of non-traditional build, split between 10 construction types. All these properties have had substantial improvement works carried out to them and are included in our investment programmes.

| Non-traditional type | Number | % Profile |
|--|---------------|------------------|
| Brims Timber Frame | 190 | 1.3% |
| British Iron & Steel Fabrications | 88 | 0.6% |
| Calder | 28 | 0.2% |
| Cussan Steel Frame | 9 | 0.1% |
| Modified Cussan Steel Frame | 41 | 0.3% |
| Orlit | 160 | 1.1% |
| Shepherd Concrete Frame | 12 | 0.1% |
| Spooner | 54 | 0.4% |
| Trusteel Steel Frame | 27 | 0.2% |
| Wimpy No Fines | 221 | 1.5% |
| Total | 830 | 5.6% |

Six property types make up the housing offer to tenants.



Over 10,000 properties are two and three bedroom homes, followed by one bedroom, of these will be accommodation for older people.



4.6 North Tyneside Living

In March 2014 the Authority entered a 25 year Public Finance Initiative (PFI) arrangement with Solutions for North Tyneside to transform our entire sheltered housing stock. 924 modern apartments, a mix of one and two bedrooms are located across 26 schemes.

4.7 Low demand properties

We are proud of our proactive approach to identifying property types and estate areas that no longer meet housing need and are not fit for purpose. In partnership, extensive regeneration work has taken place to transform areas into sustainable, safe neighbourhoods with thriving communities.

This approach has resulted in fewer properties being classed as hard to let or low demand. To ensure that this remains the case, and investment is not made into properties that may not feature in longer term plans, a criterion has been introduced. This looks at:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Property demand | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of vacant homes • Turnover rates • Ratio of housing register applicants to available tenancies • Length of tenancy • Levels of refusals • Refusal reasons |
| Property | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction type • Condition of property • Property size • Property type • Location • Investment required |
| Sustainability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local housing market • Right to Buy sales • Estate/area environment (including transport links, amenities, open spaces, car parking, levels of anti-social behaviour) |

Since 2018 we have continued to deliver new homes. This has included the redevelopment of a former care home site to provide 12 affordable homes, and a derelict garage site has been remodelled to offer nine bungalows using a modern method of construction known as HUSK. Designed with a low carbon footprint, these properties will contribute to the council's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.

4.8 Right to Buy sales and Leaseholders

Stock continues to be lost through tenants exercising their right to purchase their home through the government's Right to Buy scheme. The annual loss of homes exceeds the number of new homes built.

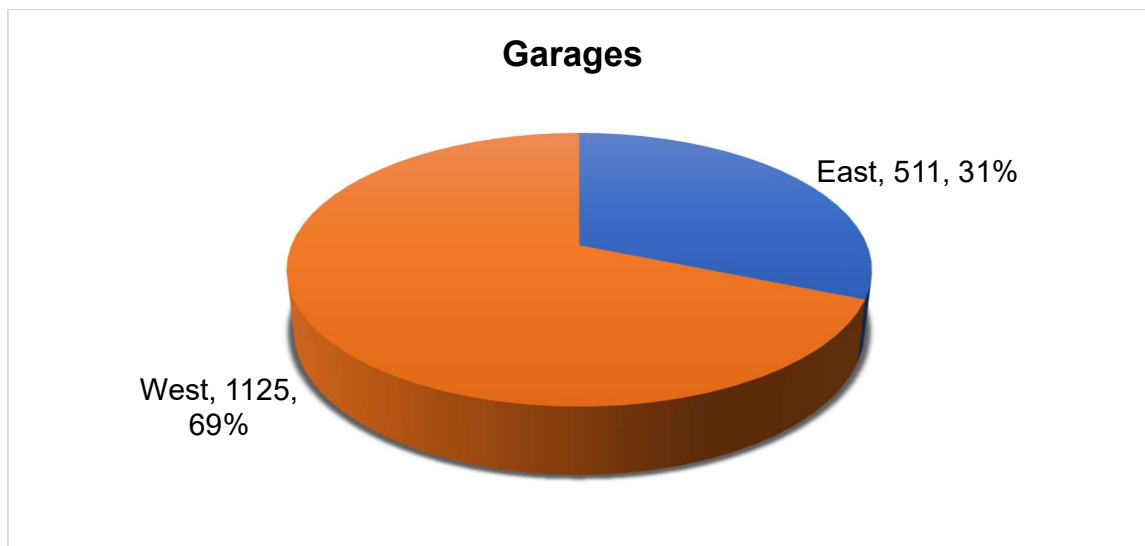
| Year | Properties Sold |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2018 | 151 |
| 2019 | 114 |
| 2020 | 110 |
| 2021 | 156 |
| 2022 (as at 30 September 2022) | 96 |

Leaseholders pay an annual service charge to the council. This is for the services provided to them, such as maintenance of communal areas.

The charges are subject to an annual audit and review. To ensure transparency, leaseholders receive an invoice and statement with a breakdown of costs annually.

4.9 Garages

There are 1,636 council owned garages in North Tyneside. Their construction is either traditional or prefabricated concrete. Some still have their original corrugated asbestos cement roofs.



The demand for garages and their location remains under review. Research has concluded that the build age and size of the garages means they are too small and impractical for car storage use. Some sites are no longer popular or in demand, with others in poor condition.

To make best use of HRA land and meet customer housing need, a selective demolition programme may take place, with the sites being redeveloped and replaced with affordable housing.

5. Affordable housing

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2021 sets out the evidence on housing need within North Tyneside for 2021 – 2039/40. The evidence will inform the update of the Local Plan, other strategies, policies and decisions of the council and its partners.

There are an estimated 96,684 households in North Tyneside. Around two-thirds of properties are houses, followed by flats and bungalows. Almost 65% of households are owner occupiers, with 13% in private rented accommodation and 22% in affordable housing (social housing and shared ownership). There are around 374 affordable home ownership properties in North Tyneside.

Riverside ward is the top area with affordable housing, followed by Benton, Longbenton, Shiremoor and Backworth areas.

There is an annual need of 477 affordable homes. Planning Practice Guidance expects councils to contribute to meeting the local affordable housing need. Our North Tyneside Plan commits to 5,000 affordable homes being delivered by 2025. Our new build affordable housing schemes are designed so that the properties are over and above current building regulations by utilising a fabric first approach.

This encompasses the Code for Sustainable Homes principles, Building for Life 12, nationally recognised space standards and North Tyneside's Housing Design guide.

Demand for affordable housing is supported by the number of applications on the housing register. At any one time there are around 5,000.

The Covid – 19 pandemic has impacted on providers being able to deliver all forms of housing, with rising material costs, supply chain issues and a reduced labour force.

6. Environmental sustainability

Housing is one of the largest contributors to the production of CO₂ emissions. To reduce this and help the Council achieve their carbon neutral ambition, substantial investment has taken place to improve energy efficiency levels within all our traditional and non-traditional build properties.

97% of our general need properties have high efficiency gas boilers with modern controls and magna cleans installed. All our properties have double glazing, cavity wall insulation and high levels of loft insulation.

Our average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) for council housing has increased from 71.24 in 2018 to 72.88 which is a Band C. This is above the national average for England and Wales of 66. This is a Band D.

The partnership with E.on has resulted in 1690 properties having Solar PV installations, as well as a small number of Air Source Heat Pumps installations. This has resulted in a reduction with the level of CO₂ emissions from our housing stock.

In tandem with the investment in our properties, we will support our tenants in addressing fuel poverty and enable them to financially benefit. The installation of any equipment or alternative technologies must not increase their energy bills, especially during the cost of living crisis. Tenants will also be supported to make best use of the appliances in their home.

7. Customer involvement

This strategy and delivery of our objectives have been shaped by customer involvement. A range of involvement opportunities are available for customers to help inform how our services are delivered, including:

- Repairs and maintenance;
- Planned investment programmes; and
- Affordable homes delivery.

Prior to the commencement of any planned maintenance and property improvement works, we will share programme details with involved customers. This includes fixtures and fittings, and colour choice.

Achieving and maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction are paramount to successful programme deliveries. On the completion of planned maintenance works, all customers are invited to complete a satisfaction survey. Responses inform any service delivery improvements that are required to ensure any work remains a positive experience for our customers.

If any customer is dissatisfied with any work carried out, we will try to resolve this to avert a formal complaint being received.