

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN | WARDS: All |
| REPORT TITLE: Update on proposed new Decent Homes Standard | |
| REPORT OF: Director of Property Management | |
| FOR SUBMISSION TO: Housing Fire Safety & Building Safety Panel | DATE: 14 April 2026 |
| <p>STRATEGIC CONTEXT The Council is required to ensure all social rented homes meet the Decent Homes standard; this was introduced in 2004, and the Government is currently proposing a major update to the standard.</p> | |
| <p>SUMMARY OF REPORT The report provides a summary of the proposed changes to the Decent Homes standard and the timeline for implementation.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Sinéad Burke, Chief Asset Management Officer Sinead.Burke@camden.gov.uk</p> | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATIONS The Panel is asked to note and comment on the report</p> | |

Signed



Date 1st April 2026

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of a proposed New Decent Homes Standard which was consulted on in 2025 and announced in a policy statement in January 2026.

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1 The Decent Homes Standard was introduced in 2004 and amended in 2006 as a minimum quality standard for social housing in the UK. The aim was to ensure homes were safe, warm and in good repair. The 2006 version of the standard is still in effect today. For most homes, the target was that decency should be achieved by 2010.
- 2.2 The Council reports its figure annually to Government as part of an annual statistics return, and since 2023/24 has reported it to the Regulator of Social Housing as one of 22no. Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). The Decent Homes standard has significant impacts on the Council's approach to investment in its homes, and maintaining compliance with the standard is one of the key aims of the Council's Asset Management Strategy.
- 2.3 A consultation was run in 2025 about changes to the Decent Homes standard (DHS); this was long expected. The new standard will apply to both social and privately rented homes. The Government note on the new standard states: *The new DHS will move beyond its current role as a stock management tool for social landlords only. It reflects modern expectations, improving the quality of housing for millions of renters. It is a proportionate standard, prioritising safety, decency and warmth. It will act as a common standard for both private and social rented housing. It is designed so tenants can more easily understand the requirements their homes must meet to be considered safe and decent.*
- 2.4 On 28 January 2026, the Government issued a policy statement on the New Decent Homes Standard and gave a broad indication of the changes. The full detail is not yet published but expected to follow this year.
- 2.5 The standard will apply to privately rented homes, including privately rented leasehold homes in social blocks. However, ultimately it will be the responsibility of the leaseholder to demonstrate compliance with the standard and the Council does not expect to report on these as it will not have access to all the relevant information required to assess the home.
- 2.5 The policy statement is available online here: [The New Decent Homes Standard: policy statement - GOV.UK](#)
- 2.6 The current standard is available online here: [A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation](#)

3. PROPOSED CHANGES

3.1 The current Decent Homes standard is in four sections, and the proposed new version will have 5. In both versions, if a home fails against any section, it is considered non-decent. These are summarised in the table below with a summary note on the changes. At the time of writing, final details have not been published.

| Section | Current Version | Proposed Version |
|---|---|---|
| A – Free of the most dangerous hazards | The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), considers 29 risks in the home (including Damp & Mould, falls, excess heat/cold etc). Any home where a serious (or Category A) hazard is observed fails this section. | There is no proposed change to this section. |
| B – Reasonable state of repair | The standard has 15 components; 12 of which are considered key components. Each component has a definition of being in ‘poor condition’. If any one key element, or two non-key elements are in poor condition, the home fails decency. Key elements include windows, roofs, wall finish, chimneys and electrical systems. Non-key elements include kitchens and bathrooms. | In general, the approach is the same; there are key and non-key elements, and the failure threshold is as before. However, the list of elements has been extended to 17 key and 3 non-key components. Kitchens and bathrooms are proposed as key elements. New elements include internal doors, fire safety signage and fire alarm systems (all key), and door entry systems, and rainwater goods (both non-key). Also, the examples of the definition of ‘poor condition’ have been amended and often captures more minor repair issues; i.e. the threshold for failure is higher. However, it is expected that the age of an element will have less influence on decency. |
| C – Reasonably modern facilities and services | This section has a list of 6 criteria; a home which does not meet three or more fails decency. The criteria are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a reasonably modern kitchen (20 years old or less); - a kitchen with adequate space and layout; - a reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less); - an appropriately located bathroom and WC; - adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem); and | The age of kitchens and bathrooms is removed; both are now key elements assessed on condition only. Window restrictors (where necessary owing to the location of the window) are introduced as an essential requirement. The standard then has 4 criteria for flats, and 3 for houses. In both cases the home can fail on 1 criterion and still be considered decent, but not two or more. |

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats | <p>The criteria are (first three relate to houses and flats, the last one only applies to flats):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a kitchen with adequate space and layout • an appropriately located bathroom and WC • adequate external noise insulation • [flats only] adequate size and layout of common entrance areas for blocks of flats |
| D – Thermal Comfort | <p>This criterion requires dwellings to have both effective insulation and efficient heating.</p> <p>This required a SAP rating of more than 35, adequate heating controls, and loft insulation where relevant.</p> | <p>The new standard incorporates a Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (which itself was the subject of a separate consultation).</p> <p>It is proposed that homes must meet a specific level of fabric performance and heating efficiency. The specific details are yet to be published, but it is generally expected to be similar to a current level of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C.</p> |
| E – Free of Damp and Mould | <p>This section is not in the current version (though Damp & Mould is covered in the HHSRS in Section A).</p> | <p>This is a new section. It is proposed that for Damp & Mould, even minor cases will cause a home to fail the decent homes standard.</p> |

4 IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The policy statement indicates that the standard will be effective from 2035; this long lead time is reflective of the level of change in the policy and the need for housing providers (private and social) to have the appropriate time to make the necessary investments. The statement also notes that there will be monitoring in place during the implementation period; during this period, we expect to report against both the current and the new standard.
- 4.2 For criteria D, relating to thermal comfort there are slightly different timetables. There is an interim target for 2030, and a second target to 2039. The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) consultation also makes proposals to change how energy performance is measured. Therefore the 2030 target is against the current EPC rating system, and the 2039 target is against a proposed updated rating system (one that considers fabric performance and heating performance separately).
- 4.3 Camden is working to assess the impacts of this new standard. However, a full analysis of the impacts, associated costs, and programme requirements to achieve new standards, can only be fully understood once the full detail of the proposed new standard is introduced. The council

does expect there will be significant financial impacts, and notes that these are not costed for in current budgets.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The current Decent Homes standard has provided a threshold for the quality of social homes over the past 20 years; however, the standard is in need of a review. The proposed standard sets a higher quality threshold, particularly in the areas of damp and mould, and energy performance.

6.0 COMMENTS OF THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR

6.1 The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no comments to add.

7. COMMENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

7.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the proposed changes to the Decent Homes standard and the timeline for implementation. There are currently no financial implications arising from this report.

7.2 Finance will work with the service to monitor and ensure as much as possible that associated costs are funded from existing resources

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The proposed Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards will drive the delivery of additional energy efficiency works.

ENDS