

**Committee:** Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** Monday, 13  
July 2026

**Title:** Housing In-sourcing Update: Repairs and  
Maintenance

**Report  
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**Lead  
Member:** Cllr Arthur Coote, Portfolio Holder for Housing  
and Equalities

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## Summary

1. On 16 July, Cabinet will meet to consider an update on the work to bring the Housing Repairs and Maintenance service directly within the Council's control.

## Recommendations

2. Scrutiny Committee is requested to consider and provide comment on the Cabinet report set out in (Sections 4 to 26 of this report)
3. Scrutiny Committee is requested to provide comment to Cabinet on the progress of the work.

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## Summary

4. In December 2025, the Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet were provided with a detailed update on the repairs and maintenance service. Due to commercial sensitivity, the update and detailed discussions were held in private.
5. Cabinet took the decision to bring the Housing repairs and maintenance service under direct Council control from 1 April 2026 to improve service delivery and responsiveness to tenant needs.
6. In February 2026, the Scrutiny Committee were provided with an update on the progress of work to bring the service in-house. The Scrutiny Committee asked officers to provide regular updates to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee regarding the progress of the in-house establishment and performance metrics.
7. The in-house Uttlesford Housing Repairs and Maintenance Service went live as planned on 1 April 2026 with the safe transition of employees and staff, and with no interruption in service for the tenants and properties for which the Council care. Immediate actions taken included boosting capacity for dealing with new and aged repair jobs, creating a new operational monitoring and reporting framework and improved technical specifications.

8. Early performance insight demonstrates significantly improved performance on completion of jobs within core service level targets, a reduction in the volume of complaints and feedback from tenants has demonstrated a positive experience when engaging with the service for responsive repairs.
9. After a period of stabilisation, the Service have developed an improvement plan that will stabilise service delivery, strengthen control and create a sustainable in-house property service. The improvement plan forms part of The Corporate Programme theme for Housing, and includes early discovery work on a repairs management system.
10. The Strategic Director for Housing and Communities has engaged regularly with key stakeholders: tenants and leaseholders, councillors, and the Regulator for Social Housing which has been pleased to receive regular and proactive updates on the in-sourcing and development of improvement plans.

### **Recommendations**

11. That Cabinet note this report.

### **Financial Implications**

12. None in respect of this report.

### **Background Papers**

13.
  - Cabinet Report December 2025
  - Scrutiny Committee report December 2025
  - Scrutiny Committee report February 2026
  - Cabinet Report Housing Forward Plan for Procurement June 2026

### **Impact**

- 14.

Communication/Consultation	Tenants of the council's housing and wider stakeholders have been kept up to date on the changes in the repair and maintenance provision. Communications and engagement activities will continue to form part of the service improvement plan.
Community Safety	The establishment of the in-house service incorporated measures to ensure community safety is prioritised in all housing repairs and maintenance activities. This includes adherence to safety

	standards and protocols during all repair works.
Equalities	<p>The council is committed to addressing the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups through an equity-focused approach. Social housing often serves higher proportions of individuals from these communities, including older adults, people with disabilities, and minority groups. By improving housing quality to the required standards, we are not only ensuring safety and compliance but also making a meaningful equity impact, reducing disparities, and enhancing health and wellbeing for those most affected by systemic inequalities.</p> <p>A full Equality Health Impact Assessment will be required in the event that a change is made to the repair and maintenance provision.</p>
Health and Safety	<p>Health and Safety responsibilities are a priority in the establishment of the new service. Additional support has been secured to ensure compliance with all relevant policies and procedures, including regular training for staff and contractors on health and safety best practices.</p>
Human Rights/Legal Implications	<p>The Council provides its housing stock pursuant to Part II of the Housing Act 1985. The Council has obligations both implied by statute and set out within tenancy agreements to maintain its stock in a reasonable state of repair and amongst other duties in respect of the provision of housing, under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, a property must be fit for human habitation and free from health and safety hazards. Local authorities (as landlords) must also keep the structure and exterior of dwellings in good repair and maintain installations for water, gas, electricity, sanitation, heating, and hot water.</p> <p>The Social Housing Regulation Act came into effect from 1 April 2024 and requires social landlords to comply with the</p>

	<p>standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)</p> <p>A good repairs and maintenance service is one of the most important services provided by a social landlord. Not only is it the service that affects the greatest proportion of tenants, but it is also the service that is most highly valued and can have the greatest impact on tenants' quality of life and the overall level of satisfaction with their landlord.</p> <p>A failure to effectively repair and maintain properties can be subject to legal challenge with a resulting negative impact upon the finances, reputation and image of the Council, leading in turn to a loss of public confidence.</p>
Sustainability	The improvement plan for the in-house service includes a focus on sustainable policy and practices in housing repairs and maintenance, aligning with the Council's commitment to environmental responsibility.
Ward-specific impacts	No specific ward impacts.
Workforce/Workplace	The transition to an in-house service has created new opportunities for employment at the Council, fostering a more integrated and responsive workforce dedicated to delivering high-quality housing services. Training and development programs will form part of the improvement plan to equip staff with the necessary skills for effective service delivery

## Situation

15. The work to bring the Housing repairs and maintenance service under direct control has been delivered through a project structure governed by a Project Board chaired by the Chief Executive and comprising key leads for all areas of the organisation. The Project Board has met fortnightly as a minimum and regular updates have been provided to the portfolio holder and wider Cabinet members. The Transformation & Projects Service has actively supported the project with project management resource.
16. The In-sourcing project included workstreams covering; Governance, Communications & Engagement, Human Resources, Finance Legal and

Commercial, Procurement and contract management, Service Delivery, and IT Data and Facilities.

17. The Communications and Engagement workstream ensured that key stakeholders received timely and relevant information concerning the changes to the repairs and maintenance service. Engagement workshops were delivered to secure tenant input to the future service design. Structured and proactive communication with the Regulator for Social Housing has ensured that the Council's approach and decision making is shared in a timely and transparent manner.

18. Within the Human Resources (HR) workstream, key successes included:

18.a. programme of engagement and consultation activity delivered jointly with the outgoing contractor secured a smooth and supported transition for 8 staff under Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) legislation (TUPE)

18.b. securing agreement for, and supporting the service to recruit at pace, additional resources to boost capacity and capability for operational delivery

18.c. the HR team worked closely with the service leadership team to deliver induction and onboarding activities aligned to the needs of the transferring and newly recruited team members

19. Within the Procurement and contract management workstreams notable deliverables have included:

19.a. completing governance activities to regularise legacy and transitional arrangements for supply of goods and services.

19.b. sourcing vehicles, tools and equipment for staff and agency workers

19.c. discovery and governance activities to generate a forward plan for procurement to support the service through to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

20. The Finance, Legal and Commercial workstream has supported the service through:

20.a. work to build a Housing Repairs and Maintenance budget for approval by Council in February

20.b. securing external specialist advice for progressing the Commercial and legal work to exit the incumbent contract

20.c. developing a robust position for the Council as final financial settlement is worked towards

21. The Service Delivery workstream was responsible for:

- 21.a. designing how the service would operate at the point of transition, ensuring continuity of a safe service
  - 21.b. mobilising and equipping additional resources in advance of 1 April to address workstreams handed back early from the incumbent provider and to ensure readiness to deliver an effective responsive repairs service from day 1.
  - 21.c. developing a suite of day 1 operating procedures and ensuring compliance with health and safety regulations
22. Although full performance metrics are not yet available, of the 1049 new repairs jobs logged by the Council between 1 April and 31 May 2026, 959 have been completed of which 721 were completed within service targets. The remainder are on track for completion within expected service level agreement (SLA). Performance data shows improving trends and high performance for each category of job raised (For April and May 2026 the following percentages of jobs were responded to within defined SLA targets, 100% of Emergency out of hours, 90% of Emergency within 24 hours, 86% of Urgent and over 70% of Routine jobs). The service have also noted that the quality of work has improved with repair work encompassing resolution of root cause defects to reduce repeat visits and requirement for follow-on works. There has been a notable reduction in the volume of upheld or partially upheld complaints, reducing from an average of nearly 17 per month to less than 6 per month.
23. Alongside transition of the service, considerable work has been carried out to build a detailed service improvement plan that will ensure the Council continues to develop its repairs and maintenance service.
24. The IT Data and Facilities workstream has supported delivery of:
- 24.a. IT equipment and system access to fully equip the Housing Repairs and Maintenance service site at Newport Depot, together with temporary and transferred staff
  - 24.b. support for sourcing and implementation of new tools to support diagnostics for repair jobs and creation of information packs to document the hand back and handover of properties
  - 24.c. modifications to the existing Housing Management system to enable repair jobs to be logged and allocated to in-house and sub-contractors
  - 24.d. discovery work and market analysis for a housing repairs management solution
  - 24.e. discovery work for oversight of data migration and hand back from the incumbent provider
25. Priorities for the Repairs and Maintenance service over the next 6 months are:
- 25.a. delivery of the first phase of the service improvement plan

- 25.b. implementation of a repairs management solution
- 25.c. enhanced performance reporting
- 25.d. continued engagement with tenants and wider stakeholders
- 25.e. development and adoption of the Housing Revenue Account 30 year Business Plan with associated policies, strategies and plans that will establish the foundations and frameworks for future delivery.

## Risk Analysis

26.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Poor performance leading to an increase in complaints and ombudsman referrals			Continued strong management oversight and regular reporting on KPIs
Legal claims arising from failure to maintain properties			Continued strong management oversight and regular reporting on KPIs. Ensure prioritisation is robustly applied to ensure maintenance work is scheduled and completed
H&S failures and inadequate responses			Continued strong management oversight and regular reporting on KPIs. Quality Assurance checks on H&S records and management responses.
Poor performance leading to increased costs arising from intensive			Regular review of current funding and cost position. Ensure all cost recovery

management and oversight			options are explored with current provider.
Potential for increased costs arising from current contract or from alternative provisioning			Establish project framework for any proposed changes to current provision and ensure projected costs are mapped.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.