

North Yorkshire Council

Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

23rd September 2025

Housing Revenue Account Policy Framework Update Q1 2025

Report of the Corporate Director Community Development

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress made in delivering a harmonised Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Policy Framework.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides an update on the progress made in delivering a harmonised Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Policy Framework across North Yorkshire Council. It outlines the policies that have been developed and approved to date and highlights the alignment of this work with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards. It also sets out the plan for upcoming policy development and review and seeks the Committee's views for items to be included in its work plan.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Prior to Local Government Reorganisation the stockholding authorities of Harrogate, Richmondshire and Selby each had a portfolio of tenancy and property management policies, standards, and procedures. These defined the relationship between landlord and tenant and the landlord's approach to tenancy, property management and maintenance. As North Yorkshire Council came together it highlighted the need to harmonise policy across the Housing Revenue Account functions, to align with the new consumer standards in terms of Safety and Quality, Tenure, Neighbourhood and Community and to promote Transparency, Influence and Accountability. Fundamentally, to document our relationship with our customers and to outline clearly to tenants the service they can expect from North Yorkshire Council.
- 3.3 A policy framework was developed, detailing the policies to be reviewed and the priority in which they would be addressed. The framework supports greater transparency when it comes to compliance and performance monitoring. It also enables tenants and Elected Members to have new, focussed input into policy development and in-turn provide greater assurance around service delivery.
- 3.4 On 18th March 2025 Executive agreed the adoption of a HRA Policy Framework, setting out the Policies, Procedures and Standards required to deliver a harmonised landlord service to our tenants across North Yorkshire.
- 3.5 The decision report set out the need for pace and efficiency to ensure that harmonisation is achieved as soon as possible, whilst not detracting from the quality of the policy development. Therefore, approval routes were suggested and agreed, which expedite decision making and a set of policy development principles proposed to ensure that all policy development, consultation and decision reports are conducted to an agreed standard. It is prudent to regularly review progress to ensure that policy harmonisation is being conducted to those timescales and standards and that tenants and Elected Members are assured and involved in the policy direction.

4.0 HRA POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 As part of the ongoing harmonisation of housing services across North Yorkshire Council, significant progress has been made in developing and approving key policies under the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Policy Framework. This work supports compliance with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and aligns with the Regulator for Social Housing's Consumer Standards.

4.2 To date, several core policies have been successfully approved following consultation. These are detailed in the table below:

Document Title:	Approved:
Rent Collection and Arrears Recovery Policy	January 2023
Allocations Policy	January 2024
Domestic Abuse Policy	April 2024
Housing Complaints Policy	June 2024
Housing Assistance and Disabled Facilities Grant Policy	September 2024
Tenancy Strategy	
Anti-Social Behaviour Policy	April 2025
Good Neighbourhood Management Policy	April 2025
Tenancy Policy	April 2025
Tenant Involvement Strategy	April 2025
Repairs Standard	April 2025
Disrepair Policy	July 2025
Compensation Policy	July 2025
Lettable Standard	July 2025

4.3 Consultation methods have varied depending on the nature and scope of each policy. These have included full public consultation, full tenant consultation, tenant focus groups and presentation to the Tenant Forum. This proportionate approach ensures meaningful engagement with customers, while managing the scale of the policy review programme.

4.4 Elected Member input has also been sought on the policies through the Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including the Committee's first in depth Task and Finish Review which resulted in the Lettable Standard being reviewed and agreed in July 2025.

4.5 Work is currently underway on several important areas. The Interim Asset Management Strategy is being prepared for presentation to the Housing Improvement Board in September 2025 with a key decision expected in December 2025 alongside the Right to Buy Policy. The Tenancy Agreement is under review, with the decision date scheduled for January 2026. A Learning and Development Strategy is also being developed to ensure compliance with the incoming Competence and Conduct Standard.

4.6 The Grounds Maintenance Policy is the subject of Task and Finish Review which has recently convened for a 4th time and the revised policy is scheduled for decision in January 2026 following agreement of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups recommendations.

4.7 Looking ahead, the next batch of policies identified for review includes the Leaseholder Policy and the Shared Ownership Policy, both currently scheduled for decision in March 2026. These policies will further support the council's commitment to delivering consistent, high-quality housing services across North Yorkshire. The work plan is detailed in the table below:

Document Title	Target Approval Date:
Right to Buy Policy	December 2025
Interim Asset Management Strategy	December 2025
Learning and Development Strategy	January 2026
Grounds Maintenance Policy	January 2026
Tenancy Agreement	January 2026
Leaseholder Policy	March 2026
Shared Ownership Policy	March 2026
Mutual Exchange Policy	March 2026

- 4.8 By completing the above, the service will have achieved the aim of harmonising all high priority policies by March 2026, ensuring that the foundational elements of the HRA Policy Framework are in place and operational. This timeline reflects the strategic importance of policy harmonisation in improving service delivery, tenant engagement, and regulatory compliance.
- 4.9 The remaining policies will be harmonised and agreed prior to April 2027 in line with the commitment within the Housing Improvement Plan:

Document Title:	Target Approval Date
Communal Space Policy	30/07/2026
Decoration and Disturbance Policy	30/07/2026
Maintenance of Shared Spaces Policy	30/07/2026
Pets Policy	30/09/2026
Tenancy Sustainment/ Financial Inclusion Policy	30/11/2026
Social Inclusion and Accessibility Statement	30/11/2026
Regeneration Clearance Allocation Policy	30/01/2027
HRA Garage Tenancy Agreement	30/01/2027
HRA Garage Tenancy Policy	30/01/2027
Housing Fees and Charges Policy including Recharges	30/03/2027

- 4.10 Alongside the harmonisation of policy there is also need to review the effectiveness of policies once implemented and on an ongoing basis. This is to ensure that any changes in policy are delivering the expected service outcomes and that the policies remain reflective of tenant voice and regulatory expectations. Also, for any changes in legislation or best practice to be incorporated. Where gaps or unintended consequences are identified, policies will be revised in consultation with tenants and elected members to maintain transparency and accountability.
- 4.11 Each policy will be assessed against a set of performance indicators, including operational metrics, tenant feedback and compliance with the Consumer Standards. These reviews will be informed by both quantitative data and qualitative insights gathered through tenant engagement, complaints analysis and internal service performance reviews.
- 4.12 This commitment to ongoing review reinforces the council's ambition to become an exemplar social landlord, ensuring that policies are not only well-designed, but also effective, inclusive and responsive over time.
- 4.13 The table below details the policies currently scheduled for a review.

Document Title:	Target Review Date
Housing Complaints Policy	March 2026
Lettable Standard	July 2026
HRA Compensation Policy	July 2026
Domestic Abuse Policy	April 2027

5.0 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The service will continue to harmonise the remaining policies as identified above, in line with the commitment in the Housing Improvement Plan. Each policy will be developed using the agreed principles of consultation, transparency and quality assurance.
- 5.2 Tenant involvement will remain central to the policy development process. Engagement will continue through the use of tenant forums and focus groups to gather lived experience and feedback, alongside surveys and consultation platforms to reach a broader audience. Targeted engagement with specific groups will ensure inclusivity and representation. This approach ensures that policies are not only compliant but also reflective of tenant priorities and expectations.
- 5.3 Elected Members will continue to play a key role in shaping and scrutinising policy development. The Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee will continue to receive reports prior to decision and are able to conduct more detailed Task and Finish Reviews where appropriate or where identified. This ensures democratic oversight and alignment with council priorities.
- 5.4 To support the incoming Competence and Conduct Standard, a comprehensive Learning and Development Strategy is being developed. This strategy will define core competencies for housing staff, establish mandatory training, promote a culture of continuous improvement and accountability and ensure staff are equipped to deliver harmonised services consistently.

6.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 6.1 Harmonisation of the HRA Policy framework aligns with the council priority : To ensure that our council housing stock remains decent and continues to improve, with an ambition to become an exemplar social landlord. The harmonised policy framework supports this ambition by promoting consistency, transparency and high standards across all housing services, ensuring that the Council not only meets regulatory requirements, but leads in service excellence.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There may be financial implications of adoption of some of the policies within the framework and these are being identified to consultees, including the Executive Member on a case by case basis as part of the policy drafting, consultation and sign off elements of the policy development checklist.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 It is a requirement of the Regulator of Social Housing Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard for a Registered provider, 'to provide tenants with accessible information about tenants' rights in respect of registered providers' legal obligations and relevant regulatory requirements that registered providers must meet in connection with the homes, facilities or landlord services they provide to tenants' and 'to take tenant's views into account in their decision making about how landlord services are delivered and communicate how tenant's views have been considered.'

8.2 Therefore, having an agreed, transparent HRA Policy Framework covering all aspects of our homes, facilities and landlord services with clear lines of decision-making authority, auditable development processes and timescales for review with policy development and consultation principles is best practice and allows us to meet the requirements of the Regulator and for the benefit of our tenants.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There may be equalities implications of adoption of some of the policies within the framework and these are being identified to consultees, including the Executive Member on a case-by-case basis as part of the policy drafting, consultation and sign off elements of the policy development checklist.

10.0 PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Developing a comprehensive and effective suite of harmonised policies is helping to ensure statutory and regulatory compliance, improved service delivery and greater transparency.

10.2 It empowers staff and enables them to understand what information they are required to gather to inform decision-making. It also sets out the boundaries with regard to discretion around decision-making. The benefits of improvements to policies such as the Compensation Policy are already being felt. The Housing Ombudsman Service will always check that policy has been followed during an investigation and any failure on behalf of the Housing Service to apply policy in a fair and transparent way could result in a finding of maladministration and associated reputational damage.

10.3 The policy framework is also structured to directly link to coherent operational procedures, providing a clear compliance thread and support to consistent service delivery. This will provide greater clarity to both officers and regulators and will involve both the migration of existing procedures and development of new procedures over time.

10.4 All of this development will result in improved performance with the clarity of process and procedure there will be resulting efficiency in decision making and complaints performance. The policy development principles and tenant engagement will lead to the tenant voice being better reflected in policy directions and therefore an increased in tenant empowerment and satisfaction indicators.

11.0 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 The report provides an update on the progress made in delivering a harmonised Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Policy Framework across North Yorkshire Council. It outlines the policies that have been developed and approved to date and highlights the alignment of this work with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards. It also sets out the plan for upcoming policy development and review and seeks the Committee's views for items to be included in its work plan.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

12.1 The Committee is asked to note the progress made to date in delivering the harmonised Housing Revenue Account Policy Framework and indicate which items they would like to see included in their work programme for review and/or co-production.

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Northallerton
15 September 2025

Report Author & Presenter – Vicky Young, Service Improvement Manager

APPENDICES: None

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

[Social Housing \(Regulation\) Act 2023](#)

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.