

Thurrock - An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future

## Cabinet

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **7 February 2024**

**Council Chamber, CO3,Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex RM17 6SL**

### Membership:

Councillors Andrew Jefferies (Chair), Deborah Arnold (Deputy Chair), Adam Carter, George Coxshall, Barry Johnson, Ben Maney and Graham Snell

### Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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To approve as a correct record the minutes of Cabinet held on 10 January 2024.	
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To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
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Exclusion of the Public and Press

Members are asked to consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of an agenda item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 or it being confidential for the purposes of Section 100A(2) of that Act.

In each case, Members are asked to decide whether, in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption (and discussing the matter in private) outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

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**Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:**

Please contact Rhiannon Whiteley, Senior Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)

Agenda published on: **30 January 2024**

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### **Access to Information and Meetings**

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# DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

## Helpful Reminders for Members

- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

## When should you declare an interest *at a meeting*?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

**What is a Non-Pecuniary interest?** – this is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest.

### Pecuniary

If the interest is not already in the register you must (unless the interest has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive) disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting

If the Interest is not entered in the register and is not the subject of a pending notification you must within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the register

Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:

- Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;
- Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and
- leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon

If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps

### Non- pecuniary

Declare the nature and extent of your interest including enough detail to allow a member of the public to understand its nature



You may participate and vote in the usual way but you should seek advice on Predetermination and Bias from the Monitoring Officer.

## Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future.

1. **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay
  - High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
  - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
  - Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together
  
2. **Place** – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future
  - Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places
  - Clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
  - Fewer public buildings with better services
  
3. **Prosperity** – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations
  - Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
  - Vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all
  - Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 10 January 2024 at 7.00 pm**

**The deadline for call-ins is Monday 22 January 2023 at 5.00pm**

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**Present:** Councillors Andrew Jefferies (Chair), Deborah Arnold (Deputy Chair), Adam Carter, George Coxshall, Barry Johnson, Ben Maney and Graham Snell

**Apologies:**

**In attendance:**

Mark Bradbury, Interim Director of Place  
Claire Demmel, Interim Director Public Realm  
Asmat Hussain, Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer  
Steven Mair, Interim Chief Financial Officer/Section 151 Officer  
Patrick McDermott, Chief of Staff to the Thurrock Commissioners  
Dave Smith, Chief Executive and Managing Director  
Commissioner  
Ewelina Sorbjan, Assistant Director of Housing Management and Development  
Stephen Taylor, Head of Freeport  
Luke Tyson, Chief Intervention Officer  
Ian Wake, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health  
Rhiannon Whiteley, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

## **216. Minutes**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 13 December 2023 were approved as a correct record.

## **217. Items of Urgent Business**

Councillor Jefferies explained that he had agreed to an urgent item of business and that was the urgent report titled Update on Procurement of Housing Contracts for Works through a Partnership Model.

Councillor Johnson introduced the report and stated that the tendering process is underway. The Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee had sight of the report yesterday. The Committee raised questions around the

tender exercise timetable and the overall state of the construction contract market. There is a Housing Working Group already set up and they will be fully working through those questions with senior officers at those meetings. The report stems from a Cabinet report last November where it was agreed that the Council will go out to tender for a single delivery partner. This update report which will be presented to Cabinet regularly on a monthly basis outlines the progress made on the financial and legal processes. The financial and legal implications remain the same. The model still plans to go live on 1 March 2025.

**RESOLVED:**

**1.1 Cabinet Members are requested to note and comment on the contents of the report.**

**218. Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

**219. Statements by the Leader**

The Leader stated that he hoped everyone had a lovely Christmas and wished everyone a Happy New Year. The Leader thanked those that worked over Christmas and during Storm Henk. The Leader also thanked Mary Carter the sister of Councillor Carter who arranged a Christmas dinner for carer's in Thurrock. It was a great way of thanking those that care for the most vulnerable. Council teams and colleagues worked throughout the storm last week and their service was valued and appreciated by the whole borough. The Leader also confirmed that a new Christmas Tree Recycling service had been introduced and 1120 bookings have been made.

The Leader explained that the Council has adopted a position to go out to consultation on the Local Plan, the Leader stated that he looks forward to hearing resident's voices on the future of Thurrock and the consultation in the coming weeks and months. The Leader also noted that there had been some interest concerning the Ferry service between Tilbury and Gravesend. The Leader thanked Thurrock's Member of Parliament who asked questions today in Parliament and got the support of the Prime Minister. The Leader confirmed that he had spoken with Kent Council's Leader that evening and they have agreed that officers will work together on both sides to come up with a solution so that the ferry service continues without any redress to public funds. The consultation that Kent are completing will continue. Thurrock are not withdrawing the funding and want to find a working solution that provides people with a ferry service between Tilbury and Gravesend.

**220. Briefings on Policy, Budget and Other Issues**

Councillor B Maney confirmed that the Planning Advisory Service Peer review was carried out last year between the 30 October and 2 November 2023.



Councillor B Maney explained that the review was thorough and both he and Councillor Jefferies had met with the inspection team. The review resulted in a final report which has a number of recommendations and issues identified for the Council to respond to. The Council is committed to making sure the peer review is a worthwhile exercise and is committed to acting on all of the recommendations. Councillor B Maney stated that there is a resource issue and it will take time to digest the report but it should be made public from today. A report will be prepared to explain how the Council will embed it in the planning service. Councillor B Maney thanked the inspection team for the work they completed.

Councillor Jefferies echoed what Councillor B Maney said and confirmed officers are working on an action plan as to when the recommendations can be implemented.

**221. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public**

There were no Petitions submitted by Members of the Public.

**222. Questions from Non-Executive Members**

There were no Questions from Non-Executive Members.

**223. Matters Referred to the Cabinet for Consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

There were no matters referred to Cabinet for consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**224. Delegated Decisions taken since the last meeting**

Councillor Jefferies confirmed that there has been two delegated decisions taken since the last Cabinet meeting which are listed on a separate document regarding substance misuse services and sexual health services dated 4.12.2023.

**225. Gas Services Contract Modification Report (Decision: 110691)**

The Leader decided to hear item 15 before item 11.

Councillor B Johnson introduced the report and explained that the current contract expires on 29 March 2024. The Council are proposing that the single delivery partner model will be in place by March 2025 and this leaves a period of time where support will need to be in place. The report looks to extend the current contract for 1 year with the potential to extend it for a further year.

The Leader commented that it is straightforward, and the Council needs to have a gas contract.

**RESOLVED:**

**1.1 Approve the recommendation set out in the report to modify and extend the existing domestic and commercial gas servicing, breakdown, repair and installation contract for a further year to 1st March 2025 with the potential extension for a further year.**

**1.2 Approve delegated authority to implement the contract modification for the domestic and commercial gas servicing, breakdown and repair to the Executive Director of Adults, Housing and Health in consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holder, Commissioners and Section 151 Officer.**

**226. Progress on Thurrock Council's Improvement and Recovery (Decision: 110687)**

The Leader introduced the report and welcomed the progress Thurrock has made on improvement and recovery. The Council has taken its situation and challenges seriously and implemented measures to improve. The Leader highlighted that there is always more work to be done but they should be proud of what has been done in a relatively short period of time. The Leader thanked the Senior Leadership Team for their support in delivering the changes the Council needs. The Leader stated that it is his strong belief that the Council will overcome its challenges and where there aren't plans in place to tackle these challenges they have started work on creating these plans. The Leader assured everyone that the challenges are being monitored and tackled. They are in the process of setting the budget for 2024/25 and in the process of embedding a new Senior Leadership Team.

The Leader highlighted the following achievements: -

- A Working Group is in place to develop a new operating model stream
- Started development on a corporate plan
- Made Appointments to senior posts
- Delivering a new arrangement for Overview and Scrutiny and the Standards and Audit Committee to encourage more member engagement and scrutiny of decisions.

Councillor D Arnold confirmed that culture change may take a number of years. In the new quarter of the next municipal year measurements and controls over the improvement plan will be introduced. Councillor D Arnold queried how important is it that the 12 key outcomes are used as a test in seeing if the improvement and recovery plan is working.

The Leader responded that to see if anything is working, you have to test it against something. It is therefore that we have something tangible to test the implementation of the Improvement and Recovery Plan against. I believe that it is important that we have a test for the Improvement and Recovery Plan so that we can continue making tweaks and adjustments to continue improving Thurrock Council. The Leader agreed the 12 key points needed to be

monitored and reported back on a regular basis to ensure the Council is making the improvements needed.

Councillor Carter queried how the improvement and recovery plan helps to improve the quality of officers.

The Leader responded that there is a new range of training being offered to officers so that they can be better prepared and equipped in carrying out their roles in the council and supporting and implementing member's decisions. One of the outcomes of going into special measures was that we needed to support out officers and ensure they get the support they need. The feedback we are getting from officers at various roadshows is promising.

Councillor Coxshall queried whether the Leader could provide an update on the divestment strategy.

The Leader stated that the Council has made good progress on divestment. The aim is to have 90% of investments divested or underway by the end of March. The Leader confirmed that he could not comment on individual investments but he hoped that there will be more news in the next few weeks and months to share.

**RESOLVED:**

**That Cabinet:**

- 1.1 Note the progress made on the Council's improvement and recovery.**
- 1.2 Refer this report to Full Council for all Members to consider and comment on the progress to date.**

**227. 2024/25 Revenue Budget Savings Proposals (Decision: 110688)**

The Leader explained that the next 3 reports have some exempt appendices and therefore reminded members and officers not to discuss the exempt appendices whilst the meeting is being live streamed. If anyone does wish to discuss the contents of the exempt appendices the meeting will go into a closed session and members of the press and public will be asked to leave the meeting.

Councillor Snell introduced the report and confirmed that the report sets out the revenue budget saving proposals for 2024/25. The savings total 18.2 million and there are 53 proposals considered deliverable in 2024/25. Some of the proposals require further investigation before outcomes can be fully established. Cabinet is being asked to note and not agree the proposals tonight. Some savings have gone out to public consultation which are still open and some are yet to go through the scrutiny process. Councillor Snell stated that they wanted to be open and transparent and there will be a

scrutiny meeting on the 14 February 2023. Cabinet is also being asked to approve the transformation expenditure in para 3.10 which will be met from transformation budget of 11.3 million.

Councillor Snell confirmed that they are not considering a 10% rise in Council Tax this year.

The Leader commented that it is important that the budget savings proposals go through scrutiny and he welcomes suggestions from the council and public consultations.

Councillor Coxshall highlighted how important the budget meeting was with all 49 councillors present. It was very different from how they had dealt it previously, the meeting was a marathon and they went line by line through the proposals. Councillor Coxshall thanked members and officers.

Councillor D Arnold stated that for the first time fully worked business cases were sitting around the proposals and the best work has been done to realise the proposals. The budget savings proposals have been presented to all 49 councillors and subject to 5 hours of scrutiny. The budget has been given a greater level of due diligence than she has seen in her time as a councillor.

Councillor Carter agreed the scrutiny of the budget has improved and he welcomed it.

Councillor B Maney responded to Councillor Snell's comments that they are not considering a 10% rise in Council Tax this year. He welcomed it but made clear that they are not ignoring the fact that Thurrock has a very difficult job to do and they need to address the deficiency in their base budget.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1.1 That Cabinet note the savings proposals at paragraphs 3.2.3 and 3.2.4 and 3.6.2, for which consultation started on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and ends on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and 7<sup>th</sup> January 2024, respectively.**
- 1.2 That Cabinet note that the remainder of the savings proposal at paragraph 3.9.7 will be reported as noted as a separate item to the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 for final consideration.**
- 1.3 That Cabinet note that the Outline Business Case savings reported to Overview and Scrutiny on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023, are to be re-presented when at the Full Business Case stage on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 for final consideration, these are at listed at paragraphs 3.3.5 and 3.9.1, 2 and 3.**

- 1.4 That Cabinet approve the estimated expenditure as set out in paragraph 3.10, which will be met from the Transformation budget.**
- 1.5 That Cabinet note that those proposals presented at Overview and Scrutiny on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and noted as needing a CEIA (Appendix B) at the second stage will be reported to Overview and Scrutiny on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 for final consideration.**
- 1.6 That Cabinet approve all proposals totalling £11.3m as listed in Appendix C that are able to progress to implementation and maximise achievable benefit in 2024/25.**
- 1.7 That Cabinet note that there are a number of proposals that are being consulted on, have outstanding CEIA's or require further development; these total £6.9m. Details are at Appendix C.**
- 1.8 That Cabinet note the savings form part of the wider budget setting process and that the overall 2024/25 budget will be reported for Full Council Approval in February 2024.**

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report  
This decision is subject to call-in*

## **228. Thames Freeport Accountable Body Decisions (Decision: 110689)**

Councillor D Arnold introduced the report and stated that Thurrock Council is the accountable body for Thames Freeport and is responsible for overseeing the management of public money within the Freeport programme. The Thames Freeport prepared a 2023/24 business and financial plan which is annexed to the report at Appendix 1. The plan was approved by the Thames Freeport Governing body in September 2023. The Council as accountable body carried out the due diligence on the plan to ensure best value spend of public purse and this is summarised at Appendix 2. Councillor D Arnold explained that as it is a new organisation, the spend is primarily set up costs and staffing. The Public funding of the Thames freeport operating costs is via retained business rates via a s31 grant to the value of rates forecast for 2023/ 24 meaning the council receive 2.275 million of grant funding. The report asks for approval to release funding of 1.165 million to the Freeport Operating Company in line with the approved business plan and for the remaining 0.606 million to the Director of Legal and Governance to meet the costs the council will incur as the Accountable body. A Cabinet Sub-Committee will be introduced to provide better oversight and support. Cabinet is being asked to approve the Terms of Reference for the Sub-Committee set out in Appendix 3.

**RESOLVED:**

**Cabinet is asked to:**

- 1.1 subject to establishing the subsidy control position approve funding of £1,651,275 to enable the Thames Freeport Operating Company to deliver the Thames Freeport Business Plan 2023/4. Funding to be taken from the £2.257m s31 grant relating to Thames Freeport held by the Council**
  
- 1.2 delegate authority to the S151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holder for Governance, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer to**
  - (a) to take all necessary action to establish the subsidy control position in relation to recommendation 1.1**
  
  - (b) subject to subsidy control requirements release funding to the Freeport Operating Company and once the appropriate legally binding agreements are in place between all parties to allow the Council to discharge its obligations as Accountable Body including a signed funding agreement between the Council and the Freeport Operating Company.**
  
- 1.3 delegate authority to the Director of Legal and Governance or Executive Director Corporate Services as appointment, in consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holder for Governance, Chief Executive and S151 Officer to release the balance of funding from the remainder of the s31 grant of £0.606m to deliver the Accountable Body functions and to use on projects that support delivery of the Freeport.**
  
- 1.4 approve the Terms of Reference for the Thames Freeport Cabinet sub-committee established by Cabinet in September 2023.**

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report*

*This decision is subject to call-in*

**229. Re-Commissioning of Public Health Contract - Healthy Families Service (Decision: 110690)**

Councillor G Coxshall introduced the report and explained that the report was presented back in January. There has been a slight change to what was previously agreed as the tender process previously did not include an annual uplift and the contract length has changed from 5 + 1 + 1 to 3 + 2. It is an important statutory service.

The Leader queried the reason for the change in length of the contract.

Councillor Coxshall responded that it is to ensure the Council is not being exposed.

**RESOLVED:**

**1.1. Further to the recommendations agreed by Cabinet on 11th January 2023, that Cabinet agrees:**

**1.1.1. to commence the procurement of the Healthy Families Service Contract in line with the revised financial envelope detailed in this paper;**

**1.1.2. that the power to award the Healthy Families Service Contract be delegated to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education, Portfolio Holder for Health, Adult Social Care, Community and Public Protection, and the s.151 Officer.**

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report  
This decision is subject to call-in*

**The meeting finished at 7.36 pm**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**

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<b>7 February 2024</b>	<b>ITEM: 11</b>
<b>Cabinet</b>	
<b>Update on Procurement of Strategic Delivery Partner for Housing Works</b>	
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-key
<b>Report of:</b> Cllr Barry Johnson, Cabinet Member for Housing	
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Ewelina Sorbjan, Assistant Director of Housing and Development	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Ian Wake, Executive Director of Adults, Housing and Health	
<b>This report is</b> Public	
<b>Date of notice given of exempt or confidential report:</b> N/a	
<b>Version:</b> Final / Cabinet	

## Executive Summary

On 8th November 2023 Cabinet approved the procurement of a single Delivery Partner to consolidate all housing works contracts through a Partnership Delivery Model. Since the Cabinet approval a number of developments have progressed leading up to the publication of the Contract Notice on the Government Tenders portal on Friday 15th December.

An update report to Members/Cabinet was provided in January 2024 on the issuing of the contract notice, the term and potential monetary value of the contract.

This report is to provide Members a further update on progress on procurement activities since January 2024. Monthly updates to Cabinet on this procurement exercise will continue. For brevity the report to Cabinet in November 2023 and January 2024 will be referenced but not replicated in this report.

**Commissioner Comment:** None

### 1. Recommendation(s)

**1.1 Members are requested to note and comment on the contents of this report.**

### 2. Introduction and Background

**Version Cabinet** – Final version ready for Cabinet/Executive decision

- 2.1 On Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024 a briefing session was held with interested bidders on the tender documents released with the Selection Questionnaire issued on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023. The briefing session was in keeping with the procurement protocols for this type of competitive dialogue process. At the briefing session a number of issues were raised by the prospective bidders.
- 2.2 The issuing of the Selection Questionnaire on 15<sup>th</sup> December generated significant interest from the market with over 30 expressions of interest. This in turn stimulated several issues and clarification queries from prospective bidders.
- 2.3. Section 3 provides further detail as to the issues raised from this briefing session with the prospective bidders and the response from Thurrock.

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 Following the issuing of the Selection Questionnaire on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023 prospective bidders were afforded the opportunity to highlight and discuss any issues directly with Thurrock at a briefing session on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024. Six prospective bidders accepted this opportunity to attend the briefing session. This briefing session was an opportunity for open and transparent engagement with the market early in the procurement process to address any issues in a timely and constructive manner.
- 3.2 The key issues raised by the prospective bidders on the Partnership Model were in the main on the risk profile and apportionment, Thurrock's clienting capacity; contract governance structures to support the partnership model particularly around the parameters of the allocated revenue and capital budgets; Pensions and TUPE implications. The full list of queries is below:
  - Some of the bidders raised questions on the financial model and the revenue and capital expenditure splits and how this would meet current and future service demands.
  - There were queries on the capital budget and the level of capital investment required on Thurrock's stock over the contract term given Thurrock's restricted borrowing capacity and whether the capital budget would be sufficient to meet the investment requirements.
  - There was a query whether the level of capital budget was sufficient to meet compliance requirements and the increasing regulation of social housing.
  - There were queries over the risk profile and if the current risk apportionment was proportionate and reflected current and future market conditions.
  - There were queries on the financial model and how profit calculations were directly linked to KPI and delivery performance.
  - The risk profile and projected profit calculations was something that would have to be approved at the relevant governance boards by shareholders of the bidders and who may adopt a more cautious assessment of this bidding opportunity.
  - There was some discussion on the anticipated efficiencies to be generated through the model.
  - There were queries on the pensions and TUPE implications for the eventual Delivery Partner.
  - There were queries regarding the level of support from the Thurrock housing team post contract award particularly with regards to asset management and investment planning.
  - Timescales for bidding was an issue for the bidders.

3.3 The Assistant Director and the Thurrock housing team agreed to address the issues raised in these discussions in order to facilitate and preserve the level of interest from prospective bidders to the next stage of the procurement process. Please see the tender briefing note which is appended to this report.

3.4 Thurrock formally issued the Tender Briefing note on the Find a Tender portal on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January with a corrigendum stating the following:

*Following the briefing on Friday 12th January Thurrock are issuing a Tender Briefing Note to further clarify their intention and ambition with this Tender. This has included some changes to the information previously published. Therefore, Thurrock are also restarting the Tender Period for the Selection Questionnaire stage from today, the new deadline will be 23rd February 2024.*

3.5 As a follow up to this tender briefing note an invitation to a second briefing session has been issued on the Find a Tender portal which will take place on Wednesday 31st January. This invitation will be open to not only those prospective bidders who attended the first briefing session but also open to any new prospective bidders. The restarting of the Selection Questionnaire period is in line the Public Contracts Regulations procurement process and has been endorsed by Thurrock's legal advisors.

3.6 At the briefing session on 31st January Thurrock will present comprehensive data in relation to existing compliance performance of the HRA estate. This performance data will be shared on the Find a Tender portal and is intended to allow prospective bidders to have greater comfort and understanding of performance levels of the HRA estate in relation to:

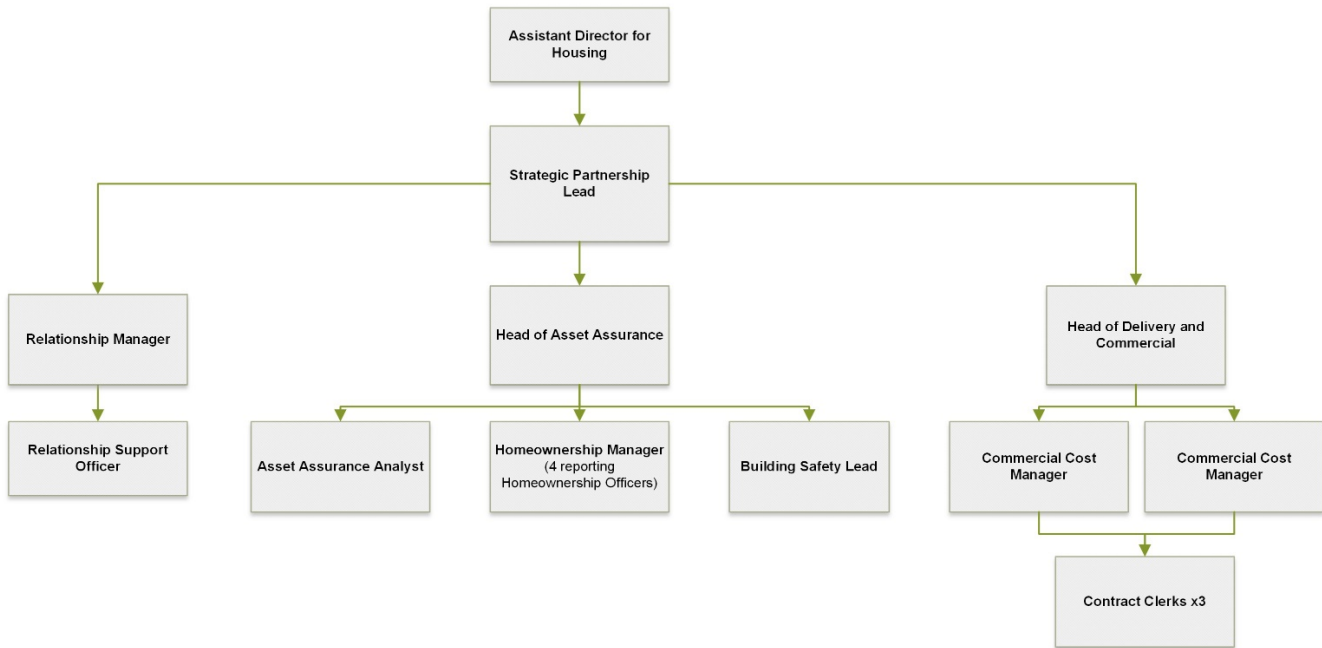
- a) Repairs
- b) Voids
- c) Regulatory Compliance
- d) Damp and mould
- e) Disrepair.

This Performance data is appended to this report.

3.7 Prospective bidders at the briefing session of 12th January raised a query as to Thurrock's capacity to support the new partnership and contractual arrangements. The Tender Briefing note sets out Thurrock's intention to resource a sufficiently sized client team with the relevant experience and expertise to support the partnership in delivering successful outcomes and Thurrock's ongoing landlord responsibilities.

3.8 Included below is a structure chart which sets out Thurrock's anticipated structure, for the management of the Contract, engagement with the Provider and the delivery of responsibilities to be undertaken by Thurrock. High-level role descriptions have been included in the tender briefing note to give further clarity to the prospective bidders.

3.8 This proposed client team structure builds upon the staffing structure presented to Cabinet in the report on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 by adding two new positions (Building Safety Lead and an additional Commercial Cost manager) to boost the capacity of the Thurrock team in meeting its responsibilities.



3.8 With the new deadline for the submission of the Selection Questionnaires from prospective bidders moving from 25th January to 23rd February, all other procurement gateways and timeframes have been amended accordingly **except** the selection of a preferred bidder, notification letter, Standstill Period, Mobilisation Period and Go Live date. These dates remain as per the original procurement timetable.

Table: Indicative Procurement Timetable	
Activity	Indicative date or period
FTS Contract Notice sent for publication	14/12/2023
SQ deadline for Applicant clarification questions	17:00 16/02/2024
SQ submission deadline	12:00 23/02/2024
SQ Evaluation Period	26/02/2024 – 07/03/2024
SQ Notification letters issued	19/03/2024
Invitation to Submit Outline Solutions Issued	20/03/2024
ISOS Bidders Briefing	Indicative 02/04/2024
Deadline for Bidder ISOS clarification questions	17:00 17/04/2024
ISOS submission deadline	12:00 24/04/2024
ISOS Evaluation Period	25/04/2024 – 03/05/2024
ISOS Notification letters issued	17/05/2024
Competitive Dialogue Period	27/05/2024 – 14/06/2024
Invitation to Submit Detailed Solutions	01/07/2024
Deadline for Bidder ISDS clarification questions	17:00 26/07/2024
ISDS Submission Date	12:00 06/08/2024
ISDS Notification letters issued	13/09/2024
Standstill Period	16/09/2024 – 26/09/2024

Mobilisation Period	30/09/2024 – 28/02/2025
Contract Go Live	28/02/2025

#### 4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 This report is an update to Cabinet and there are no fundamental changes to the initial Cabinet decision from 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

#### 5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 The Lead Portfolio Holder for Housing, Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Working Group made up of members from Housing O&S have been kept abreast of developments from the outset of this procurement and continue to be engaged with regular meetings and briefings. Working Group meetings have been aligned to coincide with key gateways of the procurement process. The next session of the Working Group is on 15<sup>th</sup> February.
- 5.2 A resident engagement strategy and stakeholder matrix is being developed for this procurement. Residents will be integrated into the process of engagement and evaluation post competitive dialogue. The development of communications that will give residents information about this opportunity has begun.

#### 6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 The recommendations within this report align with the strategic theme of the Improvement and Recovery Plan to be a focussed, cost-effective, sustainable organisation, with a co-designed approach to service provision which is delivered in partnership with residents and other key partners, with collaboration across multi-disciplinary teams

#### 7. Implications

##### 7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**  
**Assistant Director - Strategic and Corporate Finance**

The reports provides an update on the Procurement process for a Strategic Delivery Partner for Housing Works.

There are no changes to the financial implications provided for the Cabinet report of 8 November 2023, which detailed the proposal.

As the procurement exercise develops, the financial implications pertaining to future reports will be updated accordingly.

## 7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Kevin Molloy**  
**Principal Solicitor**

As this is an update report the legal implications remain as reported to Cabinet for this procurement in November 2023.

## 7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**  
**Community Development Team**

As this is an update report the legal implications remain as reported to Cabinet for this procurement in November 2023.

All information regarding Community Equality Impact Assessments can be found here:  
<https://intranet.thurrock.gov.uk/services/diversity-and-equality/ceia/>

## 7.4 Risks

A risk register for this procurement exercise has been compiled and been regularly reviewed and updated. Officers from Corporate Risk and Insurance Team are sighted on this.

## 7.5 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children

NA

## 8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

## 9. Appendices to the report

Tender Briefing Note: Delivery Model Evolution – January 2024  
Housing Compliance Performance Dashboards

**Report Author:**

Ewelina Sorbjan - Assistant Director of Housing and Development, Adults, Housing & Health.

Mohammed Saheed Ullah – Housing Repairs and Planned Maintenance Manager, Assets Repairs & Compliance.

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# Thurrock Council

## Tender Briefing Note: Delivery Model Evolution

Date Issued: 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024

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## 1 Tender Briefing Note

### 1.1 Purpose of this Note

1.1.1 This Tender Briefing Note outlines a number of updates which have been made to the tender documents in order to provide further clarity in some areas, and respond to feedback from the market. It also provides additional information about the anticipated requirements and spend of the Contract to help Participants better understand the opportunity.

1.1.2 In the event of any discrepancy between the tender documents and this briefing note, this briefing note shall take precedence.

1.1.3 Defined terms in this briefing note have the same definitions given to them in the tender documents.

#### About the Opportunity

1.1.4 This Contract is an Alliancing arrangement that is intended to embody the spirit of a true partnership for the delivery of asset management and maintenance of Thurrock's housing stock.

1.1.5 Thurrock is committed to establishing a long-term successful partnership to enable it, and the Provider, to deliver on a set of shared objectives, and manage each risk in collaboration.

1.1.6 Whilst the Model will continue to evolve through dialogue during the tender process, Thurrock has reviewed the risk and reward profile of the Contract and will make a number of updates to the tender documents to be issued at ISOS stage. These changes are summarised within this Tender Briefing Note.

#### Briefing Summary

1.1.7 In relation to financial opportunity and risk, it is Thurrock's intention to work with a single strategic partner to maintain its housing stock within an existing budget affordability envelope. In relation to revenue funded works, Thurrock recognises that it may need to deliver less work, at least in the short term. What it is not intending to do is inappropriately outsource risk to the Provider.

1.1.8 Thurrock has designed a delivery model that unlocks efficiency savings through a single provider model across all services. Thurrock needs the Provider to work with it to deliver the works and services within its available budgets.

1.1.9 The Provider will need to be efficient in cost management to therefore minimise the risk of overspend, which would otherwise result in the Provider and Thurrock having to reappropriate funds or at worst case stop some works.

1.1.10 This is a low-risk financial model for the Provider. Therefore, Thurrock need assurance that the Provider is sufficiently incentivised to do a good job and be committed to managing risks in relation to compliance, efficiency and overspend.

#### SQ Period Extension

1.1.11 To afford sufficient time for all prospective Applicants to assess these changes ahead of the SQ submission deadline, the SQ submission deadline has been extended to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024.

### Applicants' Briefing

- 1.1.12 Thurrock will hold a further Applicants' briefing to help demonstrate Thurrock's historic spend, levels of investment, stock condition and compliance levels with the intention of providing further information to ensure Applicants are informed about the level of risk under the current delivery model and how Thurrock will work with the Provider to mitigate those risks.
- 1.1.13 The Applicants' briefing will be held at Thurrock's Civic Office (New Rd, Grays, RM17 6SL) on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January between 10:00 and 12:30.
- 1.1.14 To ensure all Participants are treated fairly, any questions which are asked on this briefing date will be transcribed and the questions and answers published on the Portal.

### Competitive Dialogue Process

- 1.1.15 Thurrock would like to remind Applicants of the nature of the competitive dialogue procedure which has been selected for this procurement.
- 1.1.16 Documents which have been issued at SQ stage, and will be issued at ISOS stage, are draft only, with the opportunity for bidders to engage in dialogue with Thurrock on any areas which may need refinement or amendment prior to final issue.
- 1.1.17 Thurrock understands that the Model as proposed is innovative and therefore is open to discussion with Bidders including feedback throughout the procurement process to ensure the best solution is found.

### Note

- 1.1.18 All figures provided within this Tender Briefing Note exclude VAT.

## **1.2 Stock Condition and Funding for Investment**

- 1.2.1 Since 2013 Thurrock have invested a minimum of £11m per annum to undertake capital investments works, such as decent homes work across their housing portfolio. This investment to date has resulted in Thurrock having a current non-decent rate of less than 5%.
- 1.2.2 In addition to the core capital expenditure noted above, Thurrock have undertaken a number of other significant one-off projects to address the asset investment needs of the portfolio. Key projects include:
  - a) External tower block refurbishment to six blocks
  - b) Non-traditional housing refurbishment
  - c) Installation of ground source heat pumps to 273 homes within three tower blocks.
- 1.2.3 These sit alongside multiple other projects across various workstreams, resulting in a total capital asset investment over the previous five-year period of circa £122m.
- 1.2.4 The figure provided within the Tender pack for capital works (£13.5m per annum) represents the normal level of investment required to continually maintain the condition of the assets, and is an increase on the £11m (for comparable works) available previously.

- 1.2.5 As part of the Tender pack, some information has already been provided to demonstrate the condition of Thurrock's stock (Asset Data). This is based upon works completed and stock condition surveys which have been carried out recently as described in the Term Brief – Asset Management Planning, Investment and Compliance.
- 1.2.6 During the future stages of the Tender process there will be opportunities for Bidders to request further information to enable them to carry out their due diligence. It is expected that this will:
- a) Allow Thurrock to demonstrate alignment between historic maintenance costs, current condition and future investment requirements
  - b) Provide Bidders with the necessary levels of assurance to support their proposals
  - c) Allow Thurrock to work with Bidders to:
    - i) Understand the risk of budget overspends
    - ii) Understand the ability for efficiency savings to offset that risk
    - iii) Identify opportunities to reduce the amount of work delivered to mitigate residual risks.

### 1.3 Data and Performance

- 1.3.1 Thurrock have significant data available in relation to delivery of the services which will be included in the Term Programme. It is the intention that this data will allow Applicants to formulate an understanding of current performance levels in relation to key areas such as:
- a) Repairs
  - b) Voids
  - c) Compliance
  - d) Damp and mould
  - e) Disrepair.
- 1.3.2 Included at Appendix 1 are a number of images relating to Thurrock's performance dashboards in these areas (and others). It is Thurrock's intention to present these dashboards in further detail at the Applicants' briefing.

### 1.4 Price Model

- 1.4.1 It is vital that Thurrock does not overspend its available budgets, and it is therefore putting its whole budgets, without discounting for risk, with the Provider for the asset management and maintenance of the stock. Thurrock wish to create a risk profile that the Provider can effectively scope, measure and mitigate, based on the Provider's own offer and management capabilities.
- 1.4.2 Any budget overspend related risks will be discussed during dialogue, including the Model as set out in this document, for the purpose of refining its design and terms ahead of Final Tenders. It is important to Thurrock that Bidders contribute to this process to evolve the Model to be effective and appropriate; ultimately providing for an Alliancing arrangement that is successful in achieving the objectives and mitigating risk.

### Capital Works

- 1.4.3 To complement the process already set out in the Term Brief – Asset Management Planning, Investment and Compliance, each year, the Provider will determine an appropriate capital programme for delivery in that year. It is the intention that the Provider uses their knowledge of the stock, most likely gathered through reactive works, and the existing stock condition data to establish the programme. The Thurrock team (in addition to those who have TUPE transferred to the Provider) will support the Provider in this process sharing their in-depth knowledge of the stock beyond that which can be held in data alone.
- 1.4.4 It is intended that the programme is designed to best utilise the available capital budget to both improve decency, and help reduce reactive revenue spend in future years. Thurrock understand that the available capital budget available will be directly correlated with the work deliverable, and have no intention of requiring the Provider to programme more works than are feasible.
- 1.4.5 Throughout the year, should additional works be required, the Provider will have the ability to review the programme, and if necessary propose reductions in other works to reappropriate funds ensuring they are available for the most pressing capital requirements. Where needed Thurrock will provide advice on, and sign-off of, the most appropriate reduction and reallocation.
- 1.4.6 On a monthly basis, the Provider will be reimbursed based on the cost of the works completed in the month plus the tendered central overhead and profit as set out in section 5.3 of the Pricing Instructions.

### Revenue Works

- 1.4.7 Thurrock appreciates the level of risk it is asking the Provider to manage in relation to revenue works and has therefore reviewed the approach and wishes to provide further clarity on how it will assist the Provider in managing this risk.
- 1.4.8 The current year (FY23/24) forecast revenue expenditure for works is circa £13.2m. The FY25/26 anticipated revenue works budget is £11.5m (before inflation is applied) as set out in the budget provided with the Tender pack. Through this Tender process Thurrock wish to understand from bidders the opportunity to generate efficiencies, how it can best achieve the savings required, and what work it can and may need to reduce.
- 1.4.9 The design of the outsourcing model, i.e. combining all services into a single Strategic Delivery Partner, is intended to help to generate the opportunity for cost savings. The following are examples of some of the areas where savings are anticipated:
- a) Reducing the number of contracts held by Thurrock from over 30 existing contractors to a single Provider resulting in reduced overhead and administration
  - b) Reduction in decision-making time as the majority of elements are in the remit of the Provider
  - c) The ability of the Provider to control and manage both the revenue and capital budgets under a single Contract enabling co-ordinated delivery between reactive and planned works, utilising the capital budget to deliver the “right” works to reduce ongoing reactive demand
  - d) The enhanced commercial skills of the Provider to ensure efficient categorisation of works spend between the revenue and capital budget
  - e) Better identification, by the Provider, of resident responsibility repairs, and stronger implementation of rules in relation to Thurrock’s repairing responsibilities

- f) Alignment of the specification between repairs, voids and component replacement allowing the Provider to reduce the number of unique materials used and drive towards standardisation across the stock.

1.4.10 To incentivise efficiencies, the price model includes a shared savings mechanism that the Provider would financially benefit from, with Thurrock's apportionment of this being used to increase the available revenue budget for future years.

1.4.11 At ISOS stage, Bidders will be required to submit a Pricing Schedule which will not be scored. The aim of this is to provide Thurrock with an understanding of the funding gap between the service as currently described, and the available revenue budget. The Pricing Schedules received at ISOS stage will be used to inform the dialogue sessions to refine the Delivery Model and scope of service to deliver Thurrock's commercial needs.

1.4.12 It is intended that the final documents issued under the tender, which will ultimately become the Contract documentation, will reflect a level of service which is achievable for the available budget.

#### In-Year Revenue Spend Risk

1.4.13 On a monthly basis, revenue spend review meetings will be held between the Provider and Thurrock to ensure that any potential overspends are highlighted at the earliest opportunity so that they can be mitigated. This may be due to factors such as:

- a) Increased repair volumes
- b) Changes in legislation
- c) Previously unknown defective materials
- d) Other circumstances or demands beyond the control of the Provider.

1.4.14 Should there be a risk of overspend, which is outside of the Provider's control, the Provider and Thurrock will work together to agree any required measures to return spend to an acceptable level. This may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a) Reducing the scope of the service
- b) Reducing the void lettable standard
- c) Reducing or stopping non-essential works.

1.4.15 The Provider is to present to Thurrock recommendations on the most appropriate way of reducing spend. It shall then be for Thurrock to select the best approach, taking ultimate responsibility for the decision on which works to curtail. Thurrock is clear that, should they fail to take action in relation to the Provider's recommendations, additional funds will need to be found.

1.4.16 The Provider shall not be penalised for poor performance where this has been affected by a reduction in the service in order to reduce spend.

1.4.17 It is the intent of Thurrock to ensure the cost of revenue works does not exceed the available budget for reasons beyond the Provider's control, and where challenging circumstances result in a need for difficult decisions to be made, the Provider will have the full support of the Thurrock team.

### **Staff Costs**

- 1.4.18 As shown in the budget as issued with the Tender pack, there is a separate budgetary allocation of £1.6m (not including inflation) available in relation to staff who may TUPE from Thurrock to the Provider. This mirrors the existing cost of those posts and on the basis the functions to be delivered by the Provider remain consistent with the functions as currently described in the Term Brief, including this document, this will become additional budget available to the Provider.
- 1.4.19 In future years, this figure will be incorporated into the revenue budget, and if the Provider is able to make savings through overhead efficiency, any funds would be available for use against revenue works.

### **Revenue Profit at Risk**

- 1.4.20 It is vital that compliance in relation to gas, fire, asbestos, water, lifts and electrical systems is achieved and maintained throughout the life of the Contract. Thurrock continually report a high level of compliance and it is critical that this is maintained by the Provider.
- 1.4.21 Based on this, the Tender documents, as currently drafted, put 100% of the Provider's revenue profit at risk in relation to achieving compliance. This will no longer be the case.
- 1.4.22 Incentivisation is intended to be discussed during dialogue, and an appropriate approach developed in conjunction with Bidders. This may be:
- a) The level of profit at risk forming part of the Provider's offer to be evaluated as part of the final submission
  - b) A lower proportion of profit linking to compliance performance
  - c) A proportion of profit linking to efficiency in Model delivery.
- 1.4.23 What must remain is a level of assurance to Thurrock that the Provider is sufficiently incentivised to deliver on a critical objective to maintain compliance, and deliver within its available budget envelope.

## **1.5 Exit**

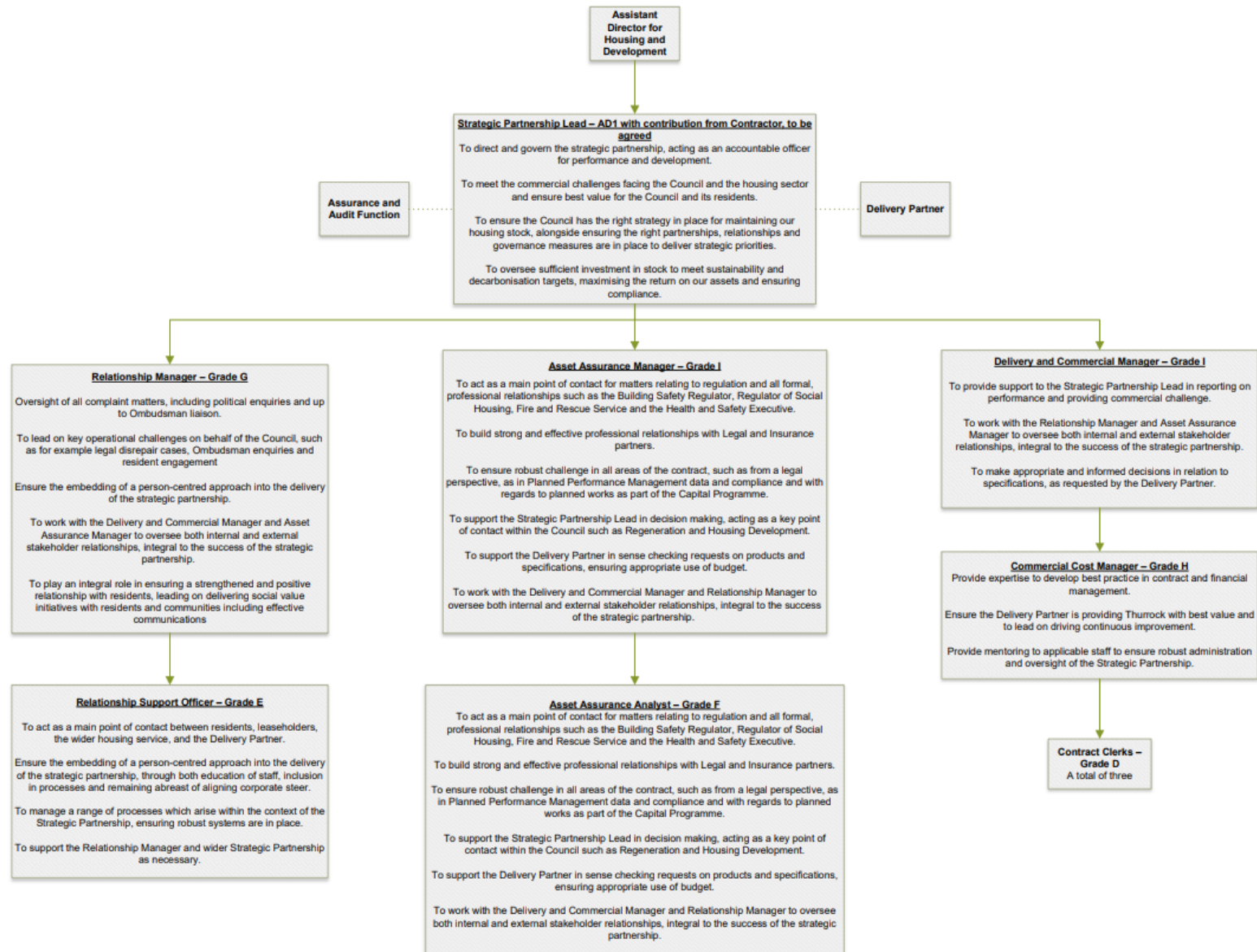
- 1.5.1 Thurrock recognise that this Contract incorporates a level of control and responsibility for asset management services that is not regularly outsourced in the housing market. Circumstances may evolve that may be less predictable, and the Provider will want to be clear on their ability to exit on notice.
- 1.5.2 The no fault termination provision on 12 months' notice will be amended to be available at any point in the Contract Term.

## **1.6 Client Team**

- 1.6.1 Thurrock recognise that a sufficiently sized and experienced Client team will be required in order to work with the Provider to control service standards, costs and risks, working together to ensure a good service is delivered and preventing budgets from being overspent. Thurrock is committed to the Provider being able to engage with and rely on an effective and adequately resourced Client team.



1.6.2 Included below is a structure chart which sets out Thurrock’s anticipated structure, for the management of the Contract, engagement with the Provider and the delivery of Thurrock’s ongoing responsibilities generally. High-level role descriptions have been included to give further clarity to Applicants on the functions to be undertaken by Thurrock and where assistance and collaboration will be available in relation to the management of risk, and the Contract more generally.



1.6.3 The table below sets out the pay scales in relation to the roles above in order to further demonstrate the anticipated skill and experience level of each individual:

Grade	Pay Low £	Pay High £
AD1	78,500	91,000

I	71,193	82,275
H	59,925	69,165
G	50,511	58,266
F	42,917	49,133
E	36,524	41,792
D	31,199	35,579

- 1.6.4 Thurrock will work with Bidders during dialogue to further refine the design of the Client team to deliver on these requirements and meet the objectives.

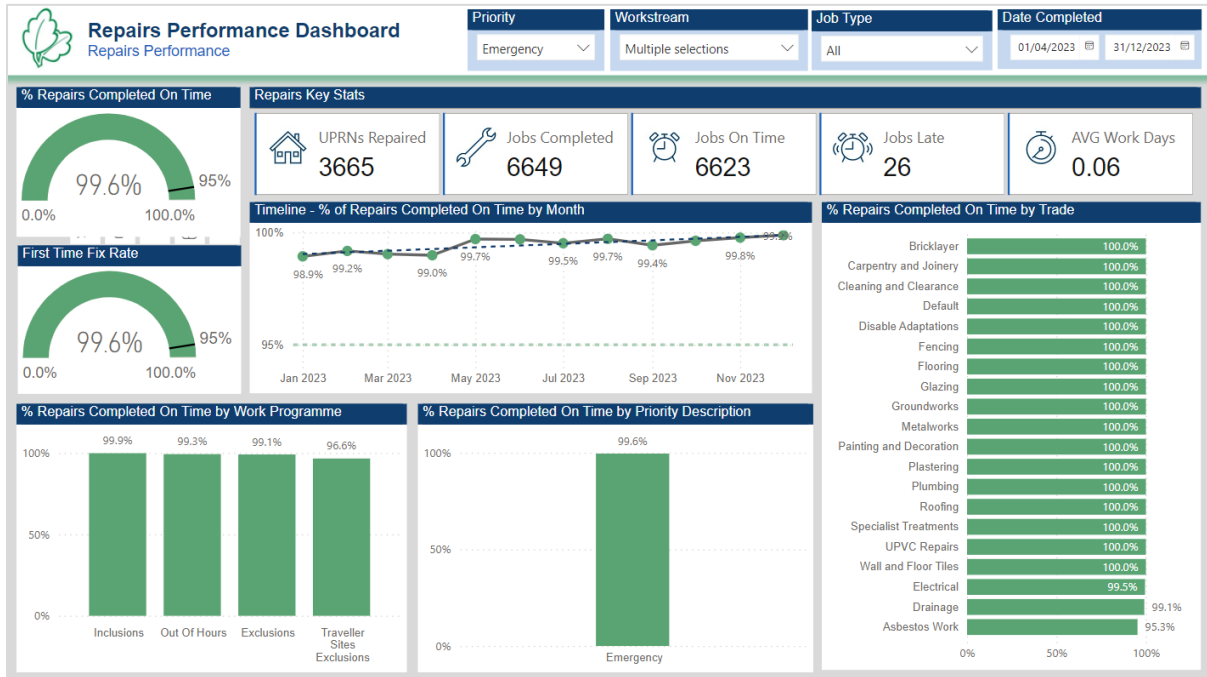
## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Thurrock BI

Included as a separate document

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# Emergency



# Non-emergency

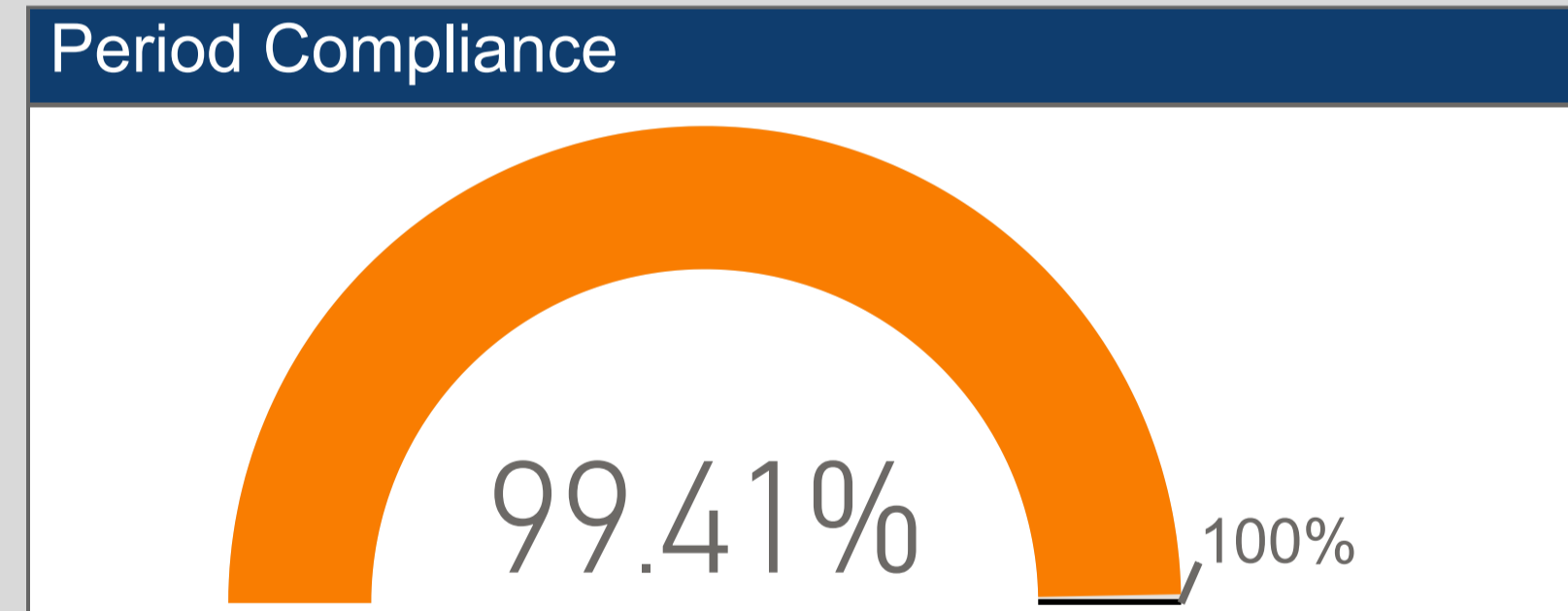
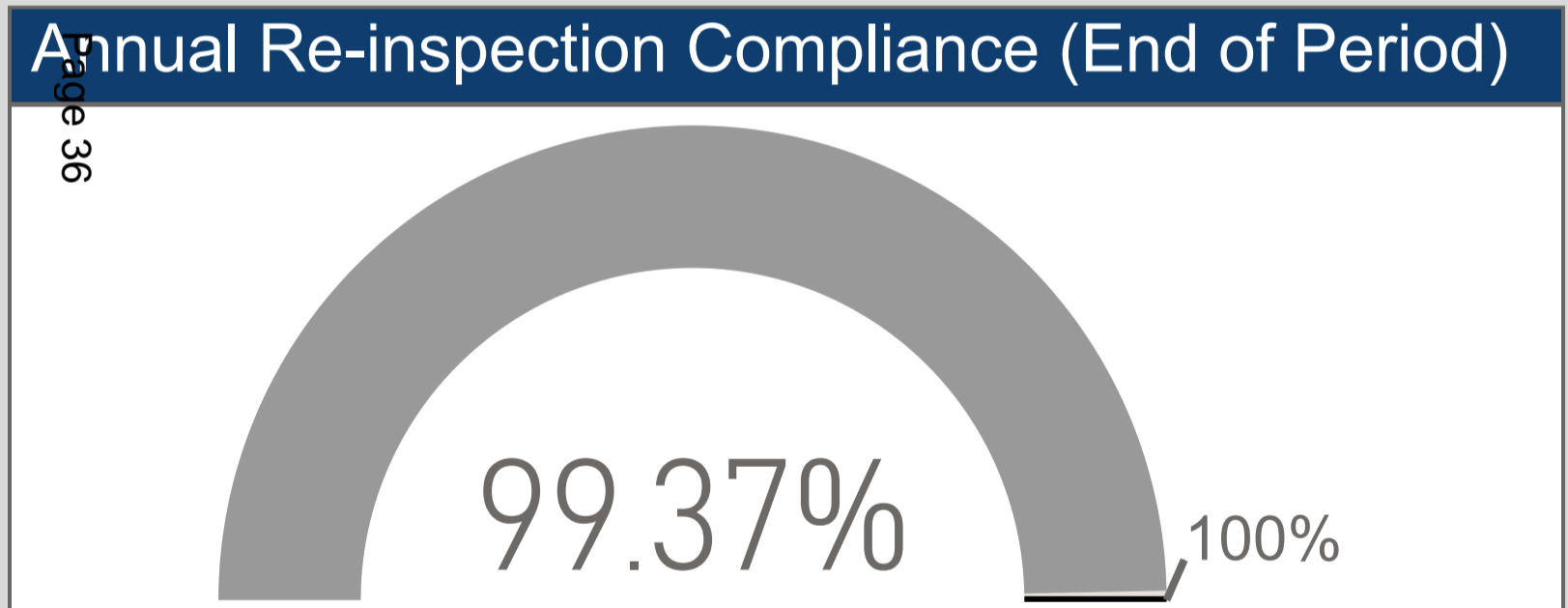


All of Thurrock Council’s planned annual asbestos surveys and sampling are carried out by the appointed contractor Riverside. The Contractor undertakes a cyclical programme (annual) of survey and re-inspection/testing (if deemed required) in accordance with the Housing Asset Register. This principally includes:

- 33 Sheltered Housing Sites
- 16 High-Rise Blocks
- 601 Low-Rise Blocks

There are 449 Housing Sites borough wide where asbestos management surveys or re-inspections are required. All other sites have no identified asbestos.

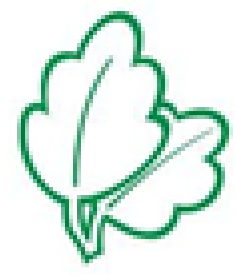
RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required



**Commentary**

21 Kynoch Court access restricted booked for 9th October for survey, other tow remaining sites are being process by riversides lab SS

Quarter	Annual Re-inspection Target	Annual Overall Re-inspections Completed	Quarter Re-Inspection Target	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q1 23-24	457	430	170	143
Q2 23-24	473	470	170	169



# Water Hygiene Monitoring

Compliance

## Reported Quarterly

Quarter

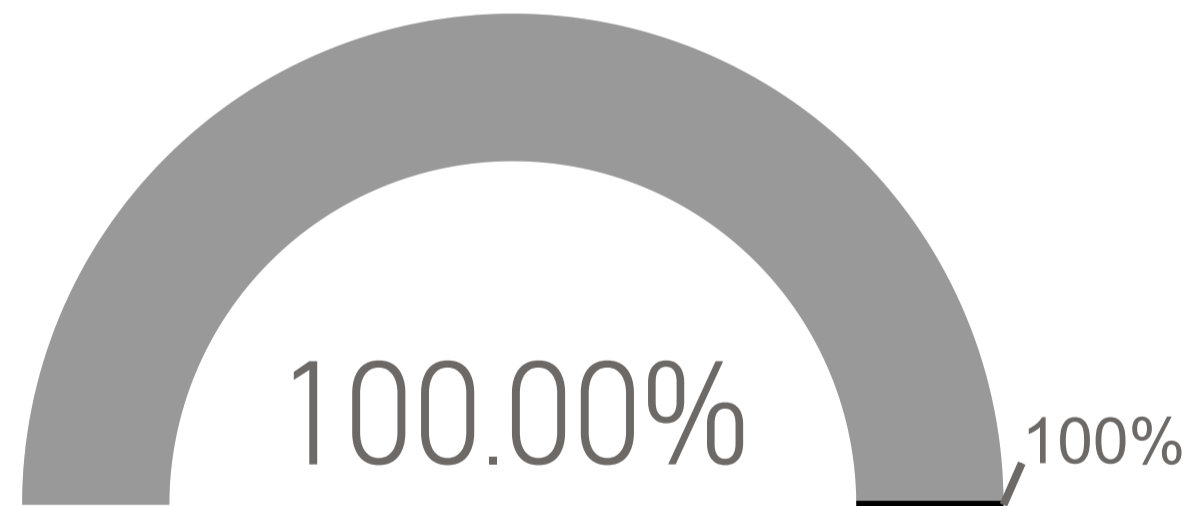
Q2 23-24

This cyclical technical programme establishes a single service provider to perform Water hygiene/Legionella Risk Assessments, Risk Assessment Reviews, Water Hygiene Monitoring services & associated Remedial Works within the housing stock.

There are currently 412 sites on quarterly monitoring, where contractor inspected hot and cold water system including communal tank, water testing and temperature monitoring as per contract specifications.

RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required

### Annual Overall Compliance (End of Period)



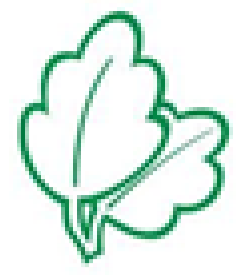
### Period Compliance



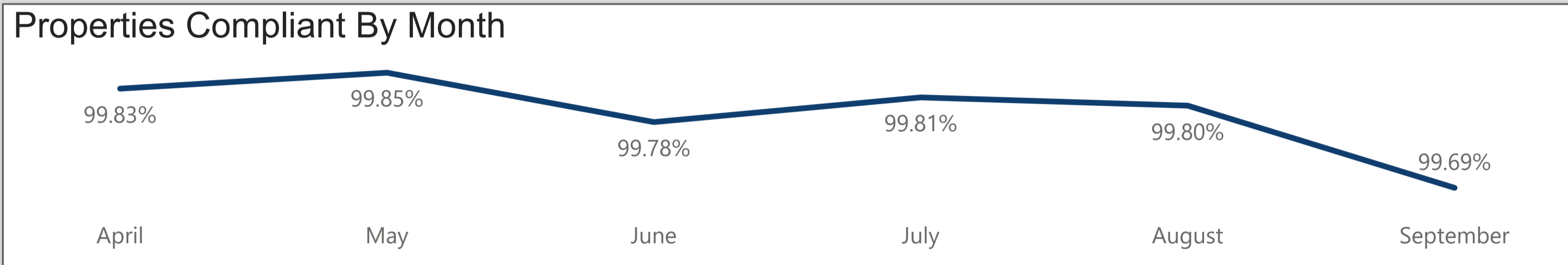
### Commentary

The borough-wide Integrated Water Services responsible for water hygiene and legionella monitoring has successfully completed monitoring all sites in Q2 of the year (July, Aug, Sep 2023). As a landlord, we are delighted to report that we have achieved 100% compliance with water hygiene monitoring, meeting all the required standards and ensuring the safety of our water systems.

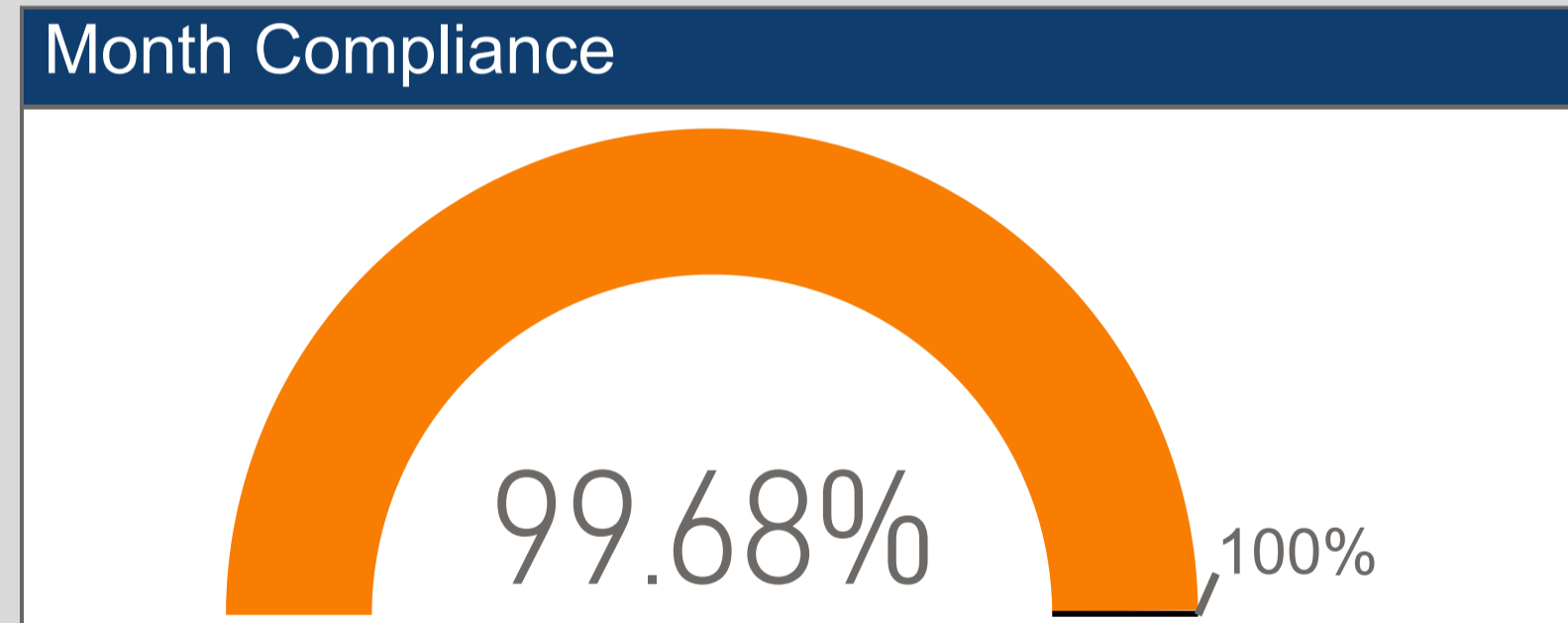
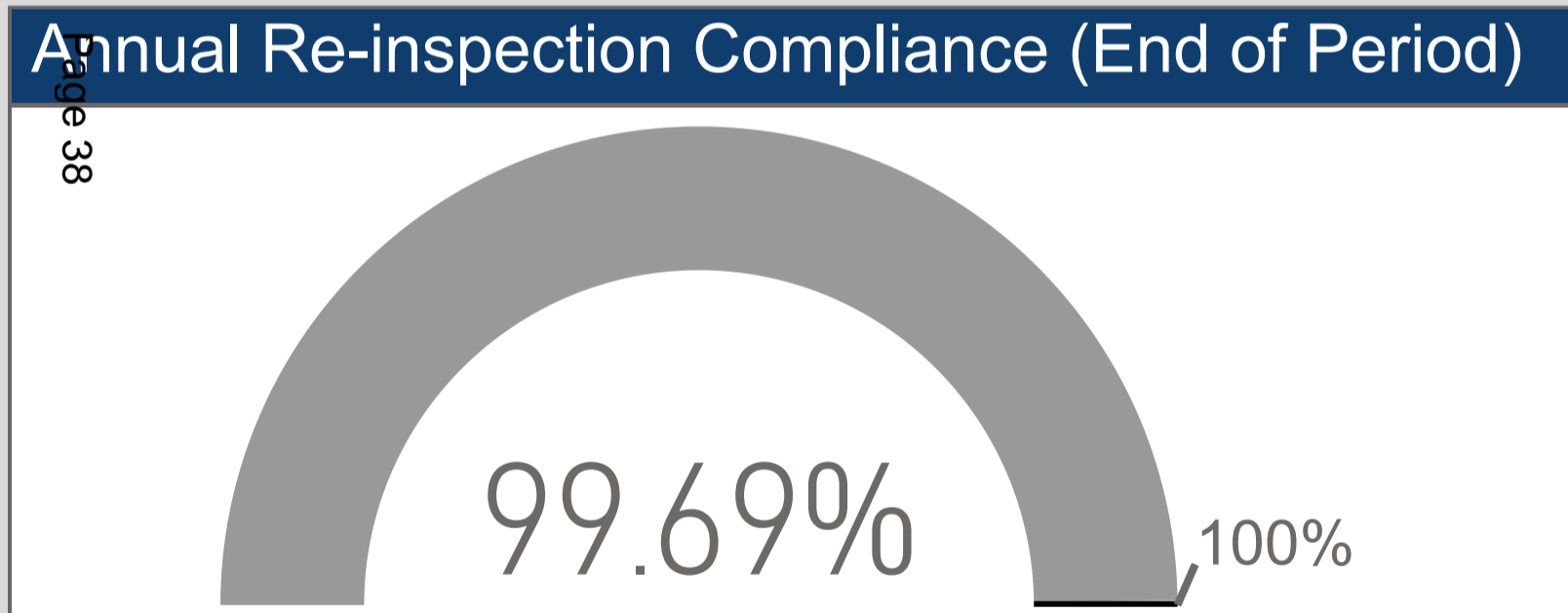
Quarter	Total Due This Period	Actuals Completed This Period	Annual Non-Compliance
Q1 23-24	424	424	0
Q2 23-24	415	415	0



Under the Gas Safety (Use and Installation) Regulations 1998, this programme establishes a single Gas Safe registered contractor to carry out regulatory gas appliance safety checks in Housing properties.



RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required

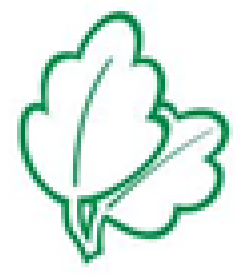


### Commentary

99.68% Compliant

Month	Quarter	Annual Re-inspection Target	Annual Overall Re-inspections Completed	Month Re-Inspection Target	Month Re-Inspections Completed
April	Q1 23-24	8624	8609	735	734
May	Q1 23-24	8588	8575	765	764
June	Q1 23-24	8585	8566	754	752
July	Q2 23-24	8585	8569	640	639
August	Q2 23-24	8585	8568	718	717

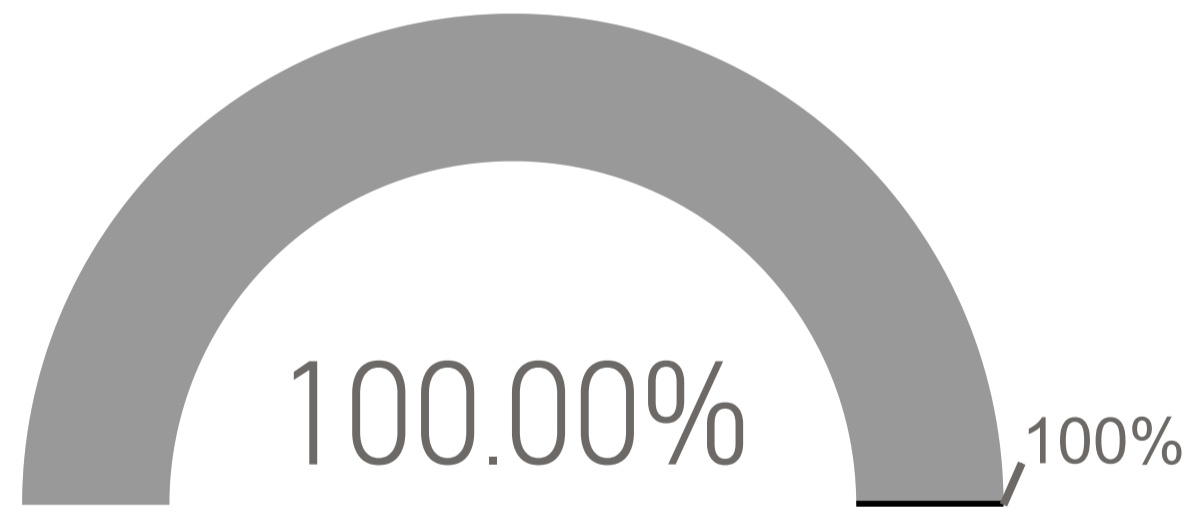




Under the Gas Safety (Use and Installation) Regulations 1998, this programme establishes a single Gas Safe registered contractor to carry out regulatory gas appliance safety checks in Housing properties.

RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required

### Annual Re-inspection Compliance (End of Period)



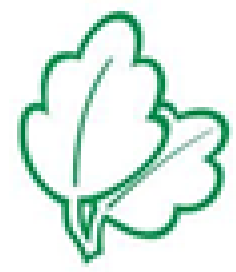
### Period Compliance



### Commentary

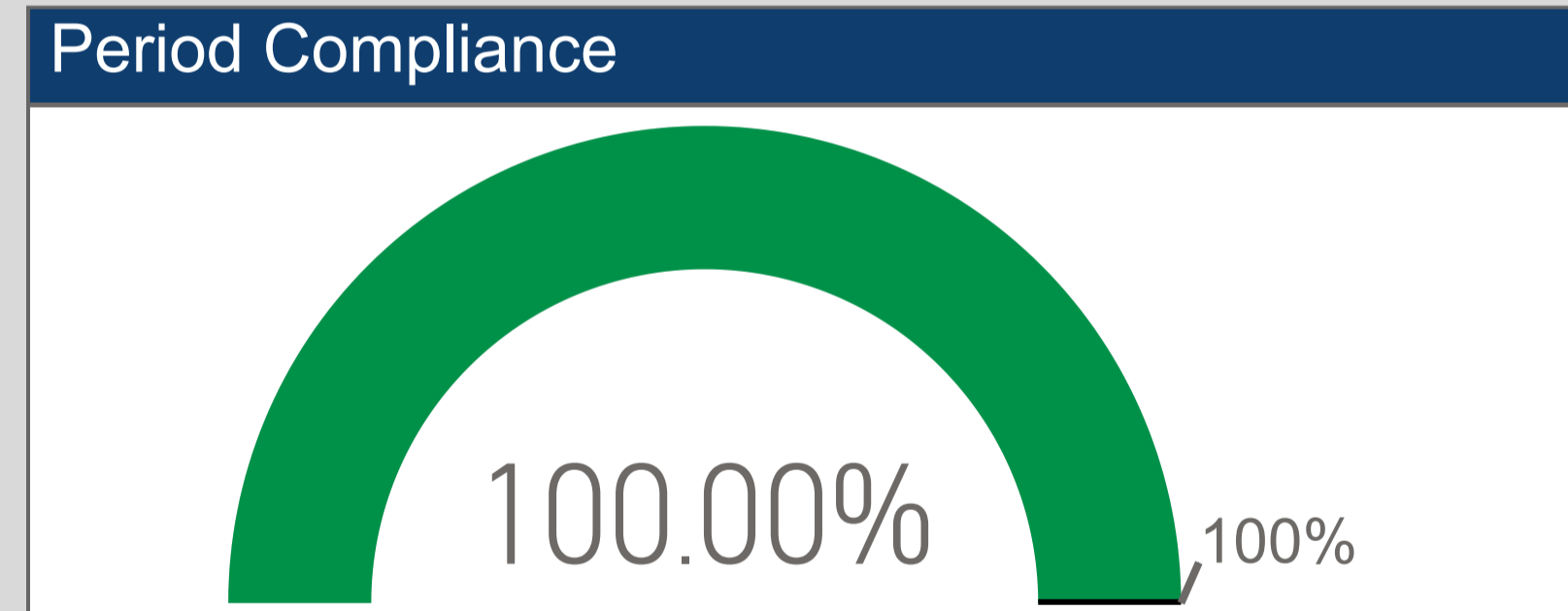
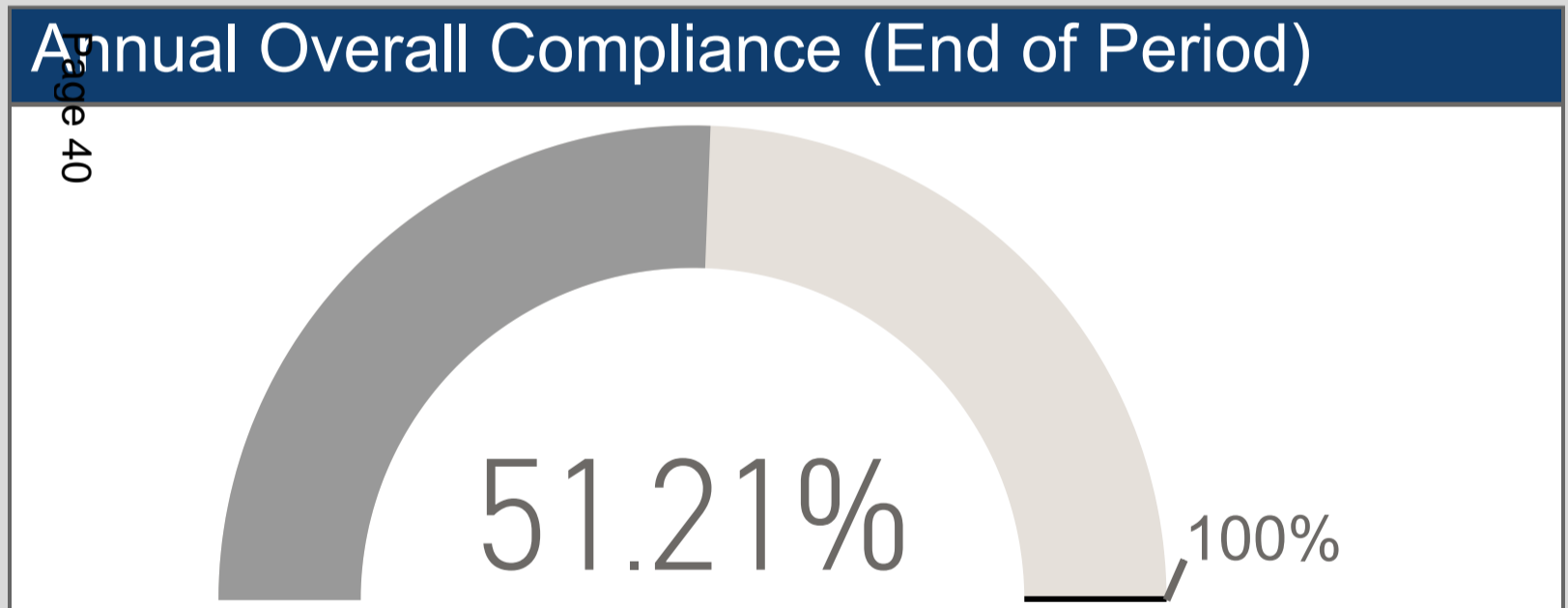
All servicing completed - 100% We take pride in achieving 100% compliance with our commercial gas servicing, ensuring the safety and well-being of our tenants and properties.

Quarter	Annual Re-inspection Target	Annual Overall Re-inspections Completed	Quarter Re-Inspection Target	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q1 23-24	70	70	26	28
Q2 23-24	70	70	15	15



The equipment was serviced on quarterly basis by competent person in accordance with the contract specification. There are total of 67 Housing sites, which includes high/low rise blocks and sheltered complexes on this cyclical maintenance contract.

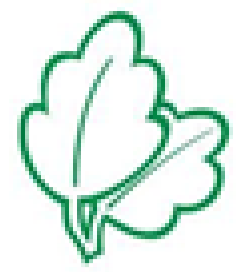
RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required



#### Commentary

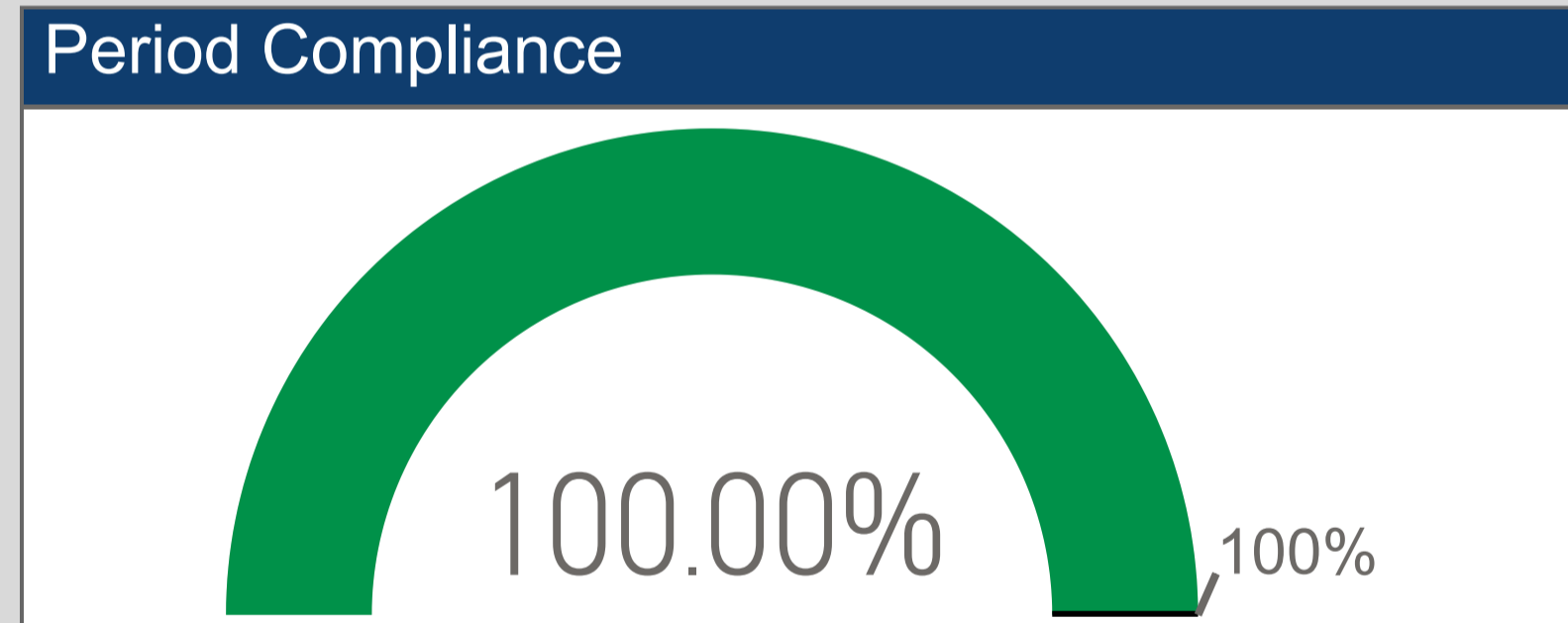
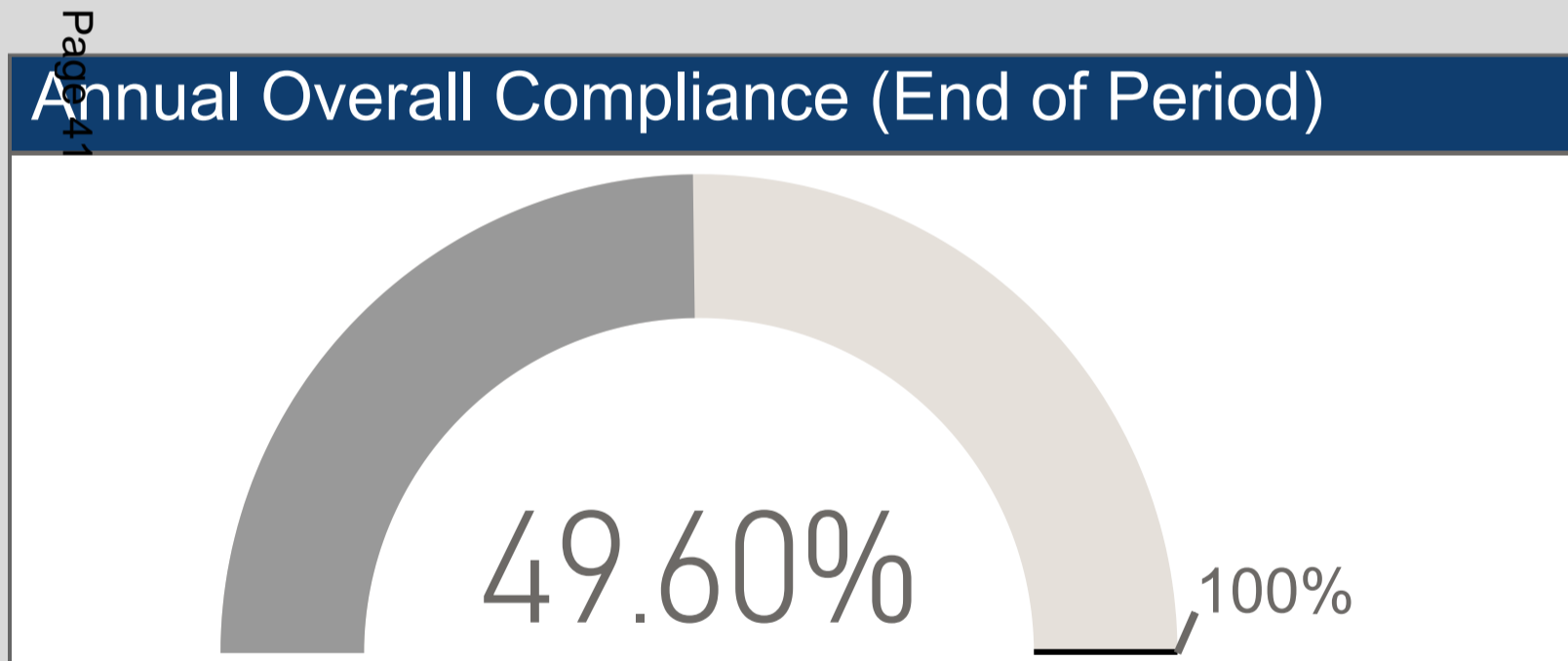
In Q2 of the year (July, Aug, September 2023), RGE Services, responsible for fire alarm system, AOV system, and Refuge call system, has effectively completed servicing all sites across the borough. As a landlord, we are thrilled to declare that we have achieved 100% compliance with the fire alarm system, AOV system, and Refuge call system, meeting all the rigorous standards of BS5839. The safety and security of our properties and occupants remain our utmost priority.

Quarter	Annual Target	Actuals Completed This Period	Total Due This Period	Annual Non-Compliance
Q1 23-24	248	62	62	0
Q2 23-24		65	65	0



The equipment was serviced on quarterly basis by competent person in accordance with the contract specification. There are total of 68 Housing sites, which includes high/low rise blocks and sheltered complexes on this cyclical maintenance contract.

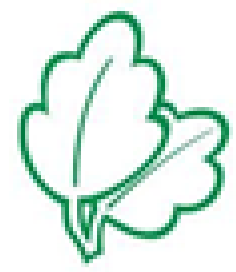
RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required



**Commentary**

In the second quarter of 2023 (July, Aug, September), RGE Services, responsible for maintaining the emergency lighting system, efficiently serviced all sites across the borough. As a landlord, we are pleased to share that we have attained a 100% compliance rate with the emergency lighting system, meeting all the stringent standards set in place. Our dedication to ensuring the safety and security of our buildings and occupants remains unwavering and continues to be our top priority.

Quarter	Annual Target	Total Due This Period	Actuals Completed This Period	Annual Non-Compliance
Q1 23-24	248	62	62	0
Q2 23-24		61	61	0



# Fire Protection Equipment

Compliance

## Reported Bi-Annually

Quarter

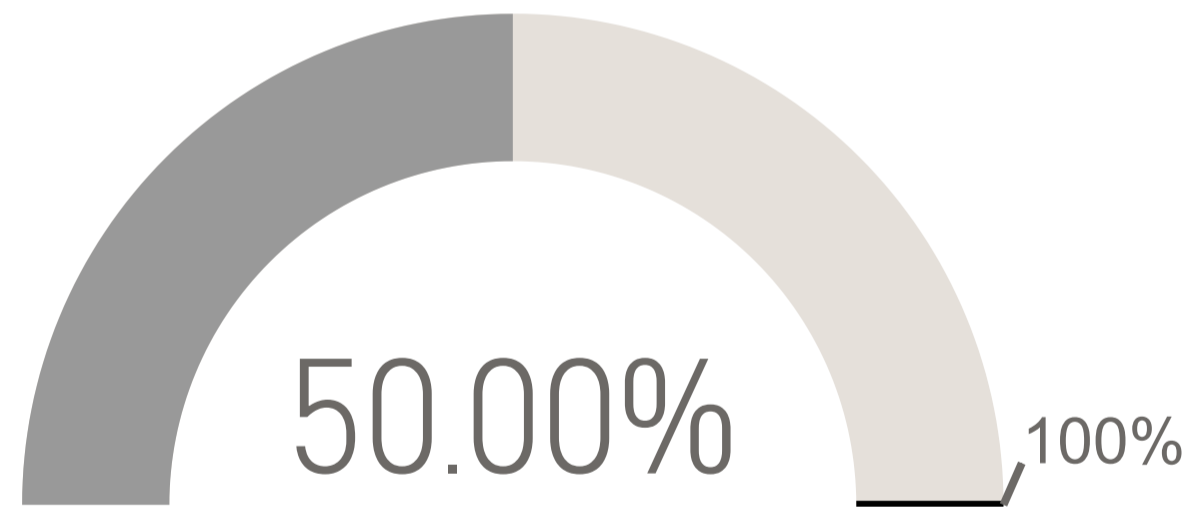
Q1 23-24

In accordance with BS 9990: 2015 – Code of Practice for non-automatic fire fighting systems in buildings, this ensures dry risers undergo an annual static pressure test and inspection and a six monthly visual inspection. During the annual static pressure test the riser is subjected to 12 bar pressure and held for 15 minutes.

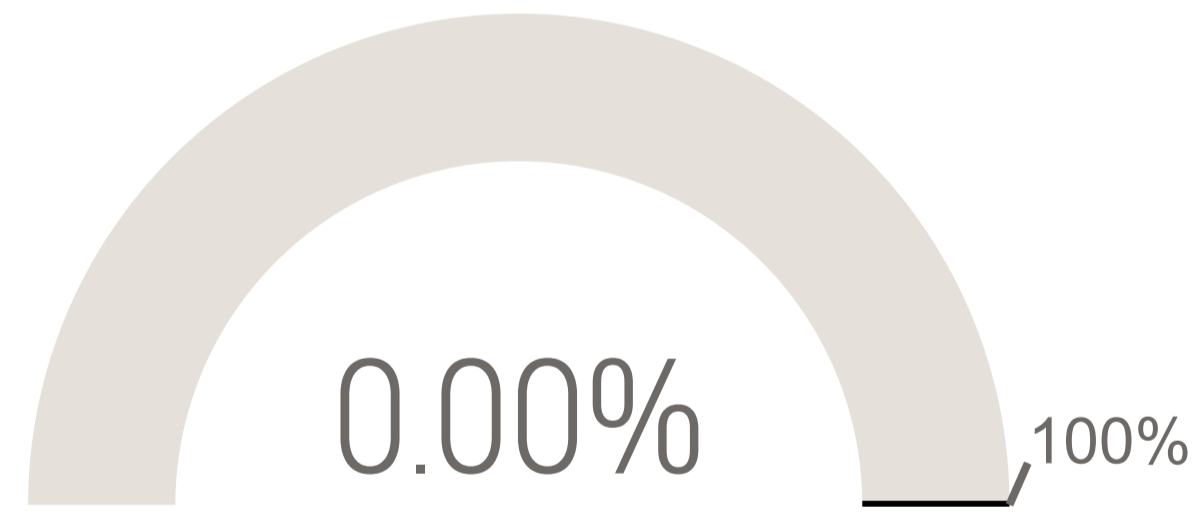
RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required

### Annual Re-inspection Compliance (End of Period)

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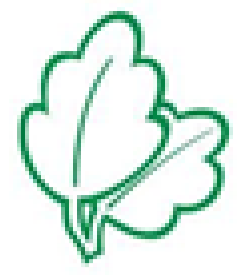
### Period Compliance



### Commentary

During the first quarter of 2023 (April, May, June), RGE Services, responsible for maintaining the Dry riser system, successfully confirmed that all Wet pressure tests passed and efficiently serviced all sites across the borough. As a landlord, we are delighted to report that we have achieved a 100% compliance rate with the fire protection system, which includes the Dry riser, meeting all the stringent standards specified in the BS standards. Our unwavering dedication to ensuring the safety and security of our buildings and occupants remains steadfast and continues to be our topmost priority.

Quarter	Annual Re-inspection Target	Annual Overall Re-inspections Completed	Quarter Re-Inspection Target	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q1 23-24	56	28	28	0



# Communal Electrical Testing High Rises

Compliance

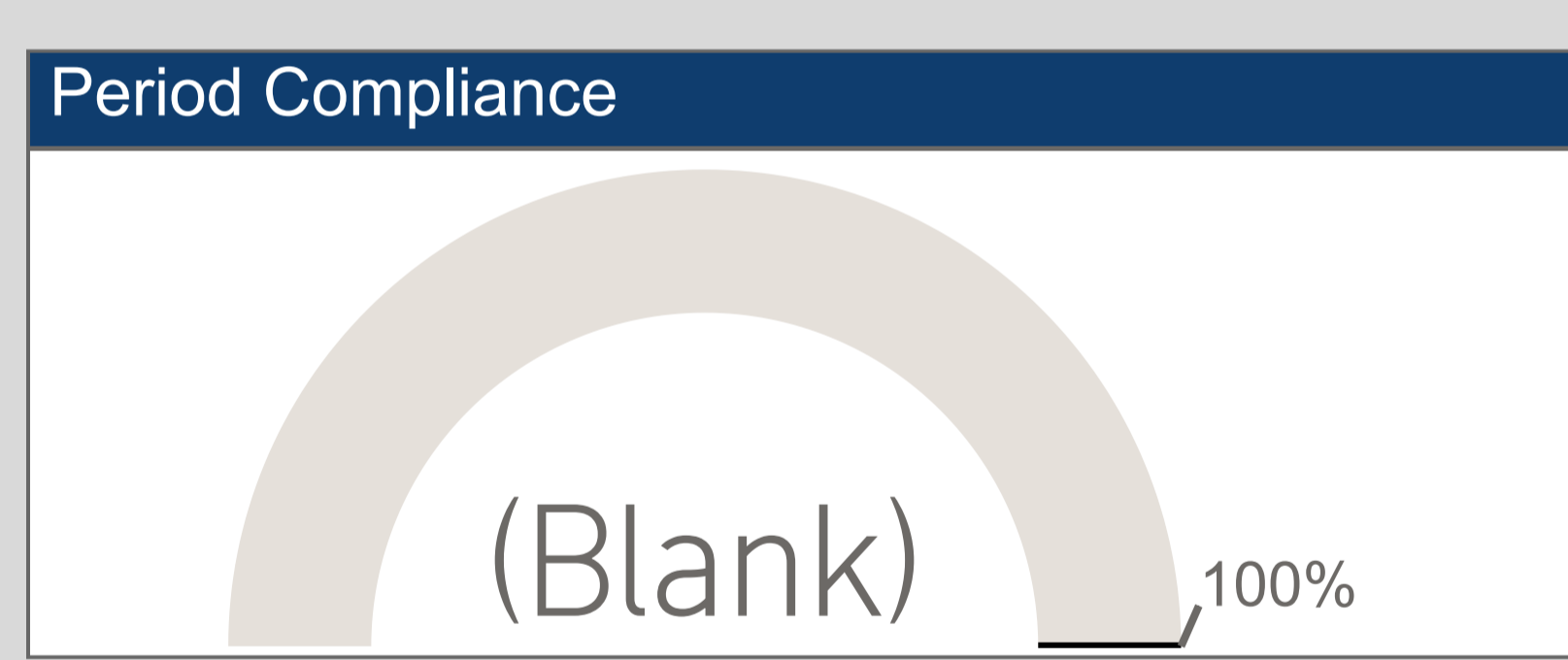
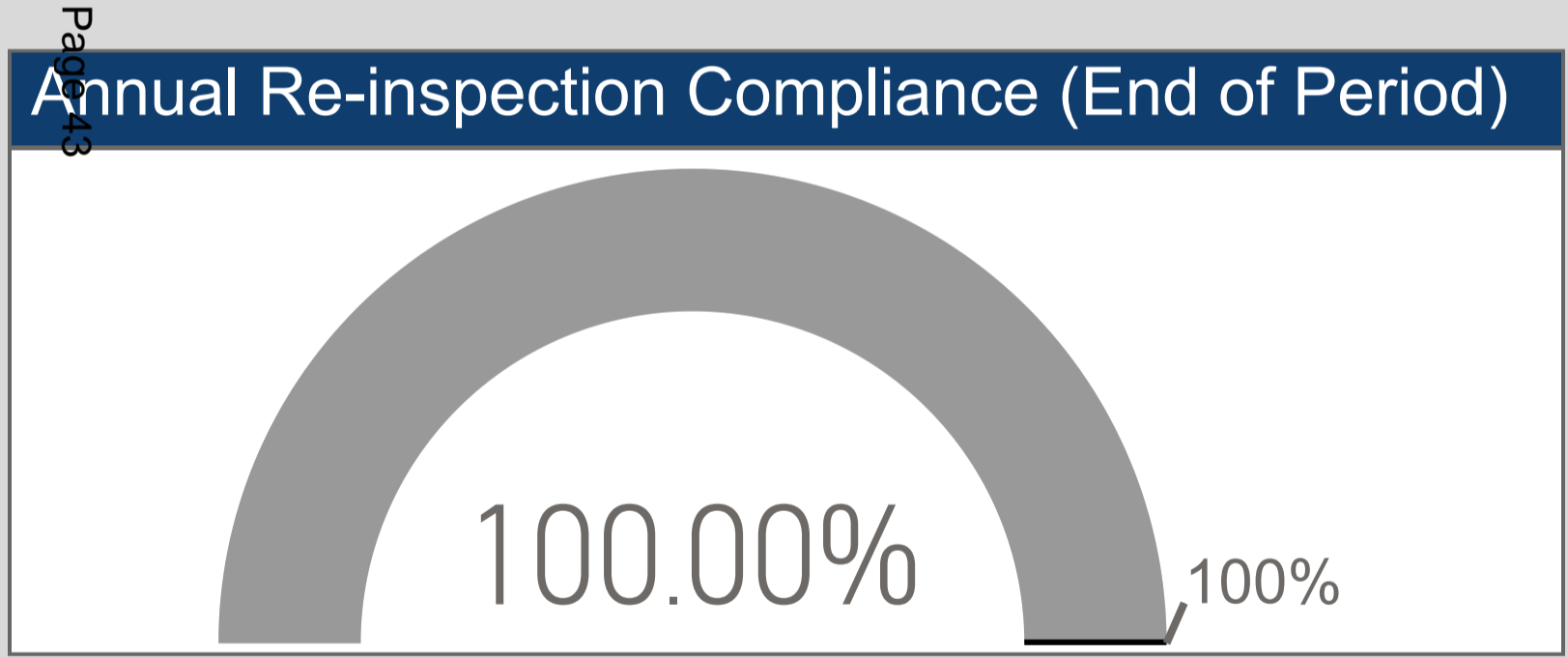
## Reported Quarterly

Quarter

Q2 23-24

This cyclical programme delivers electrical service testing within individual properties and communal blocks and ensures that fixed electrical installations and portable appliances within the Thurrock Council housing portfolio are safe and are maintained to an operational level at all times.

RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required

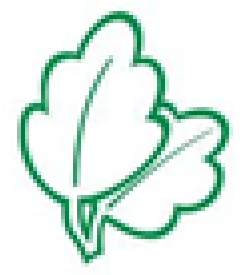


**Commentary**

We are pleased to announce that all Communal Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICRs) for our high-rise buildings are fully compliant. The next scheduled testing for the first site will take place in 2025. As a landlord, we take pride in achieving a 100% compliance rate with our communal EICR testing for high-rise buildings. The safety and well-being of our residents remain our top priority, and we will continue to uphold the highest standards of electrical safety in our properties.

Quarter	Total High rise Block (6 Plus storey) and concierge office on Programme	Sheltered Blocks where EICR completed in last 5 years	Quarter Re-Inspection Target	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q1 23-24	18	18	0	0
Q2 23-24			0	0

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# Communal Electrical Testing Sheltered

Compliance

## Reported Quarterly

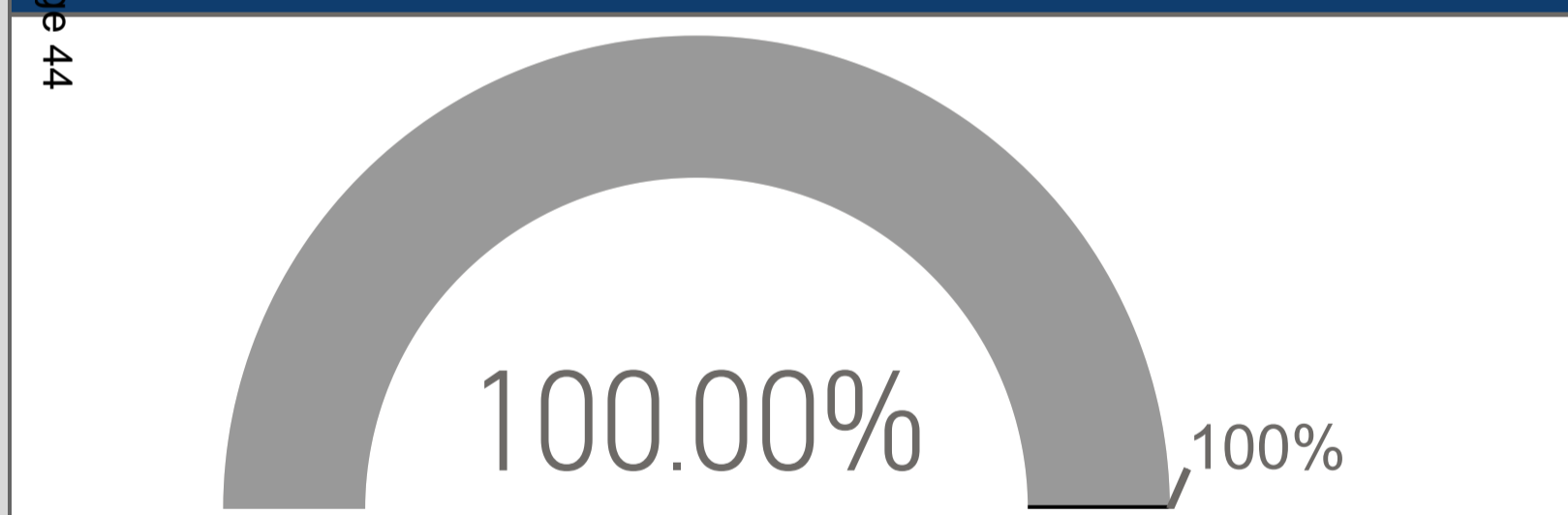
Quarter

Q2 23-24

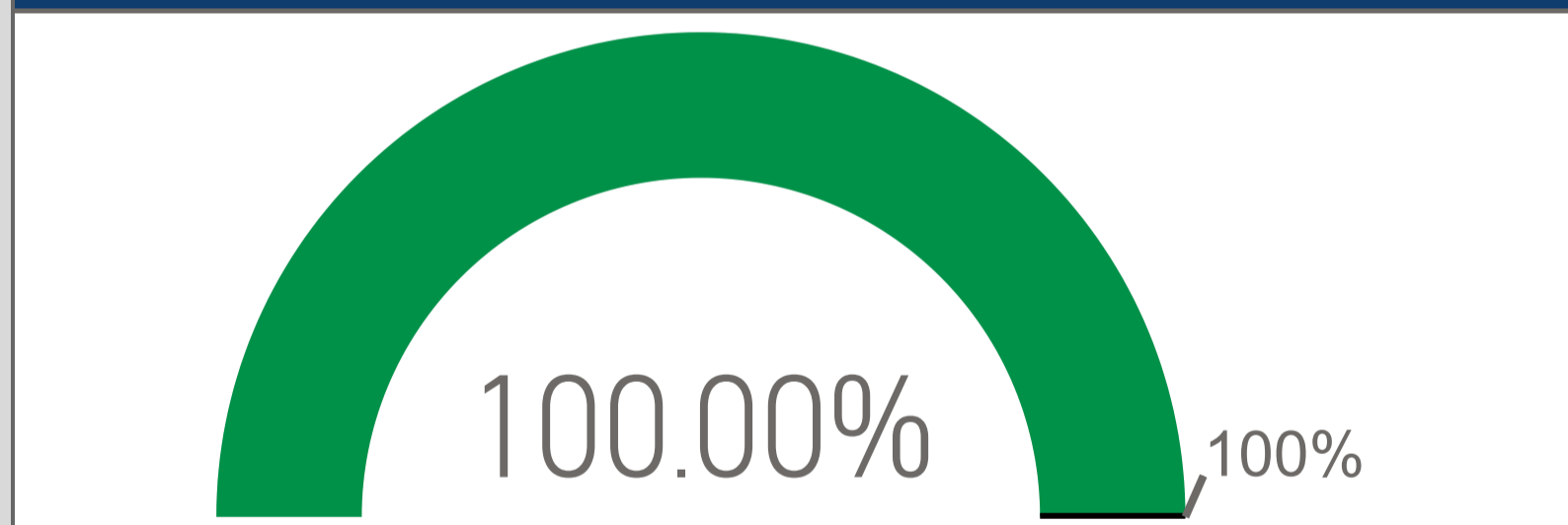
This cyclical programme delivers electrical service testing within individual properties and communal blocks and ensures that fixed electrical installations and portable appliances within the Thurrock Council housing portfolio are safe and are maintained to an operational level at all times.

RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required

Annual Re-inspection Compliance (End of Period)



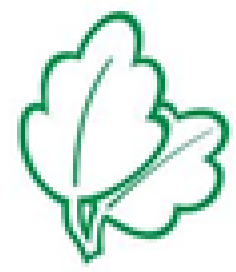
Period Compliance



Commentary

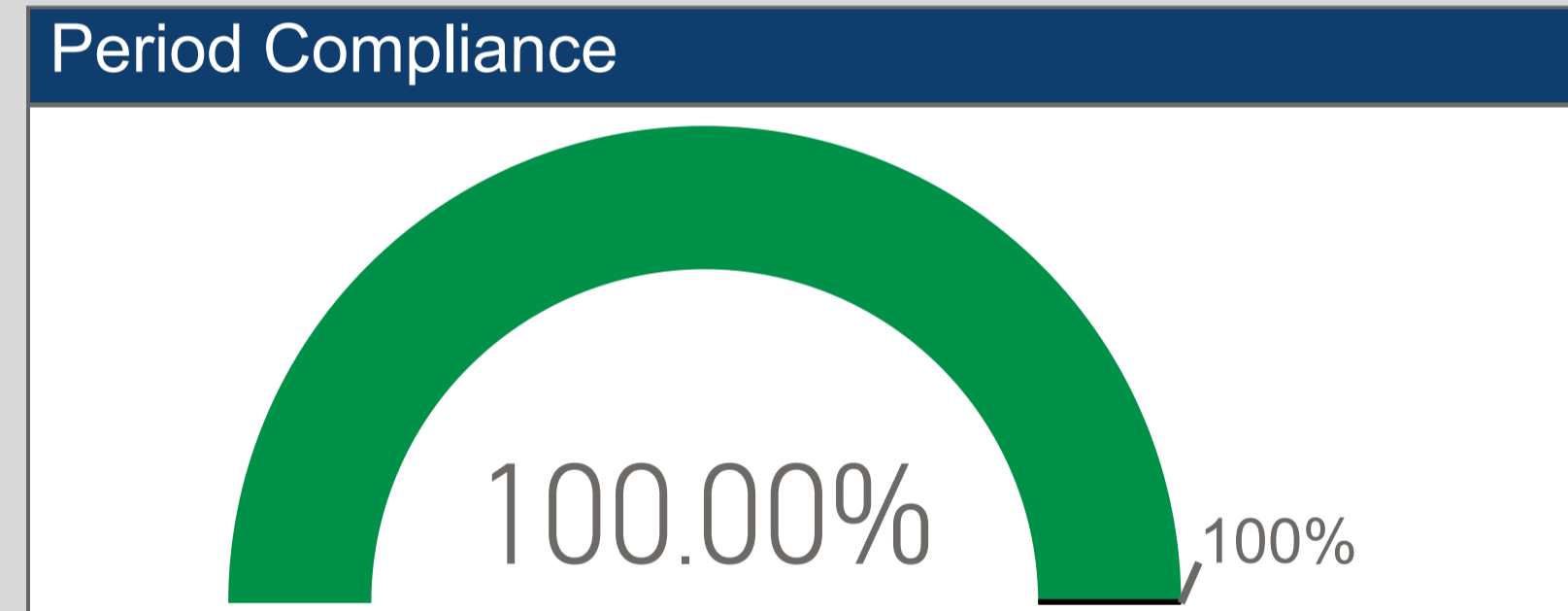
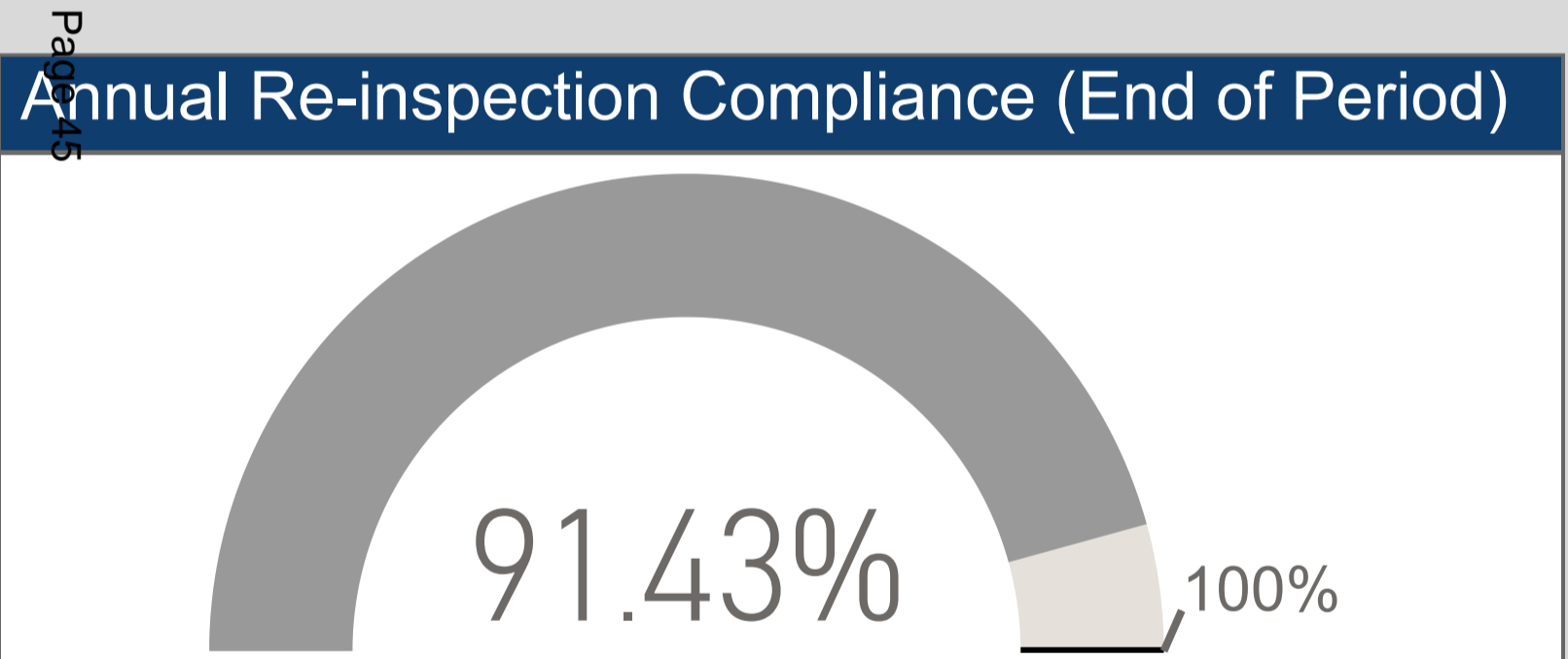
I am pleased to announce we are 100% compliance across communal electrical testing for the sheltered housing sites and begin to expire in 2025

Quarter	Total Sheltered Blocks	Annual Re-inspection Target	Quarter Re-Inspection Target	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q1 23-24	249	4	4	2
Q2 23-24	250	1	1	1



This cyclical programme delivers electrical service testing within individual properties and communal blocks and ensures that fixed electrical installations and portable appliances within the Thurrock Council housing portfolio are safe and are maintained to an operational level at all times.

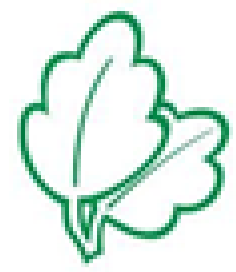
RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required



**Commentary**

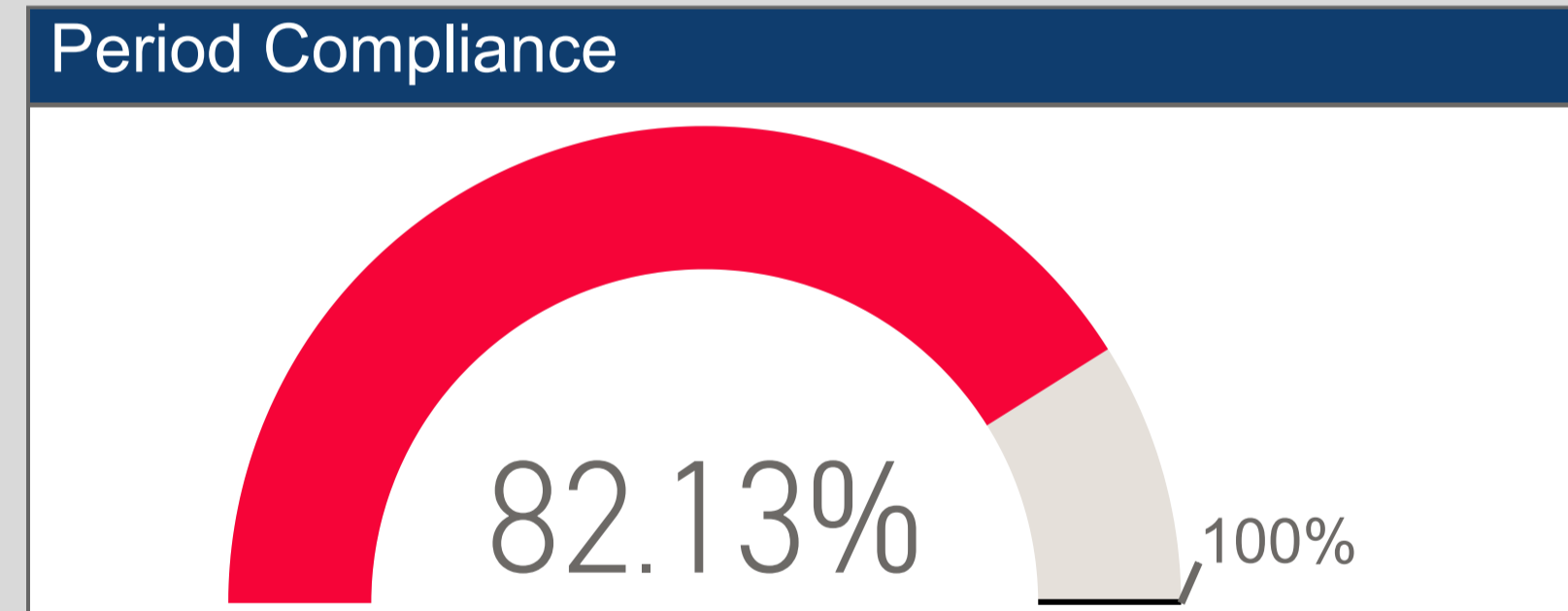
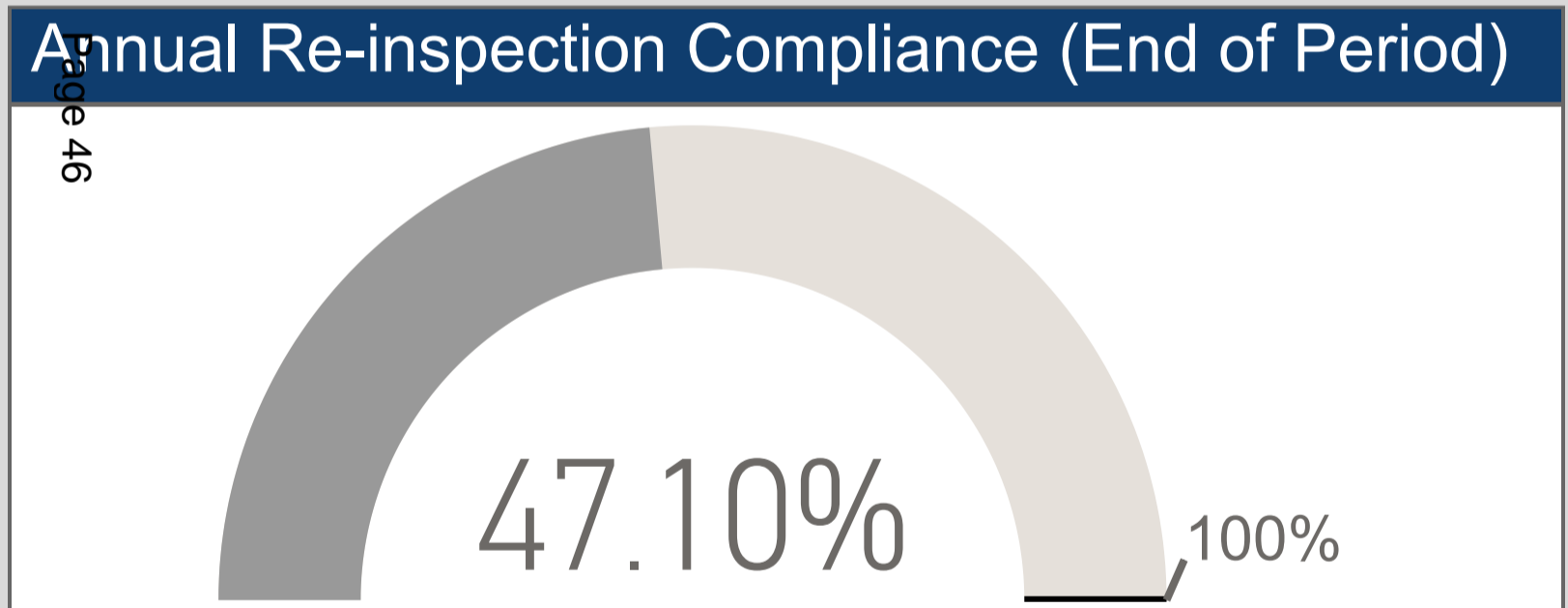
I am pleased to announce we are 100% compliance across communal electrical testing for the sheltered housing sites and begin to expire in 2024

Quarter	Low Rise Blocks where EICR completed in last 5 years	Annual Re-inspection Target	Quarter Re-Inspection Target	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q1 23-24	530	61	61	55
Q2 23-24	536	9	9	9



This cyclical programme delivers electrical service testing within individual properties and communal blocks and ensures that fixed electrical installations and portable appliances within the Thurrock Council housing portfolio are safe and are maintained to an operational level at all times.

RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required

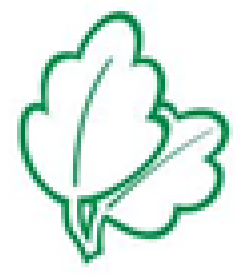


**Commentary**

1540/2691 properties completed to date off this years programs. equates to 57% - 10/10/23 - this is inclusive of passbacks issued.  
At the end of Q2 - 729 non-Compliant

Quarter	Individual Properties where EICR completed in last 5 years	Annual Re-inspection Target	Quarter Re-Inspection Target	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q1 23-24	9081	3000	750	797
Q2 23-24	9203		750	616

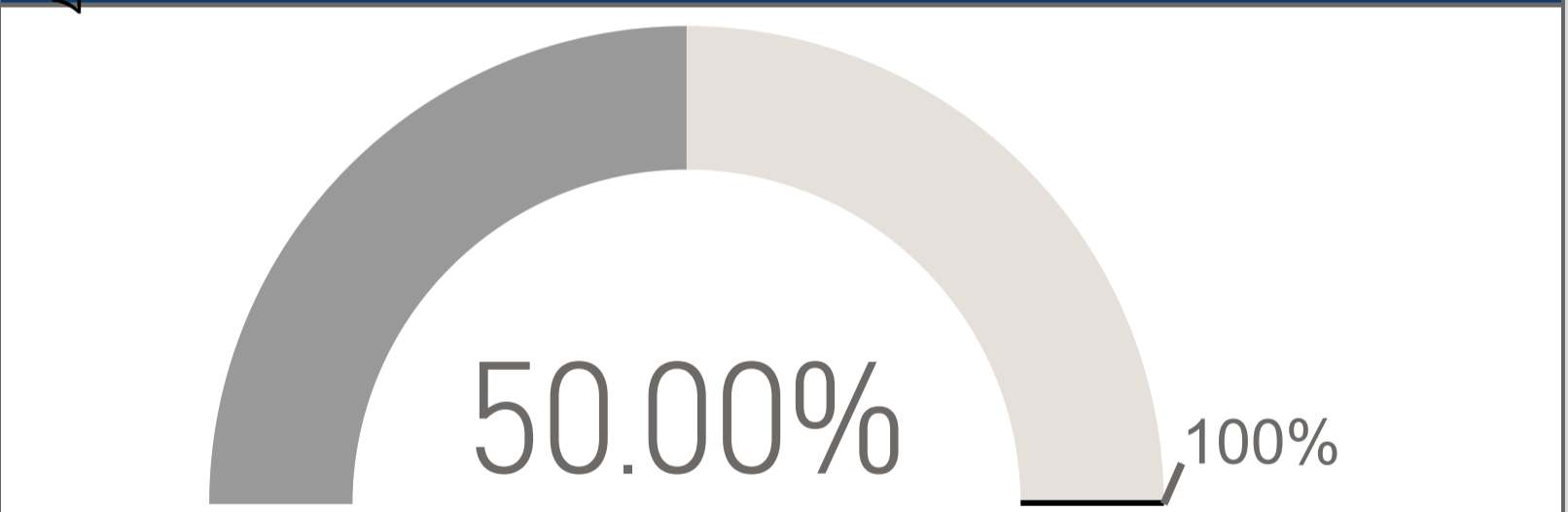




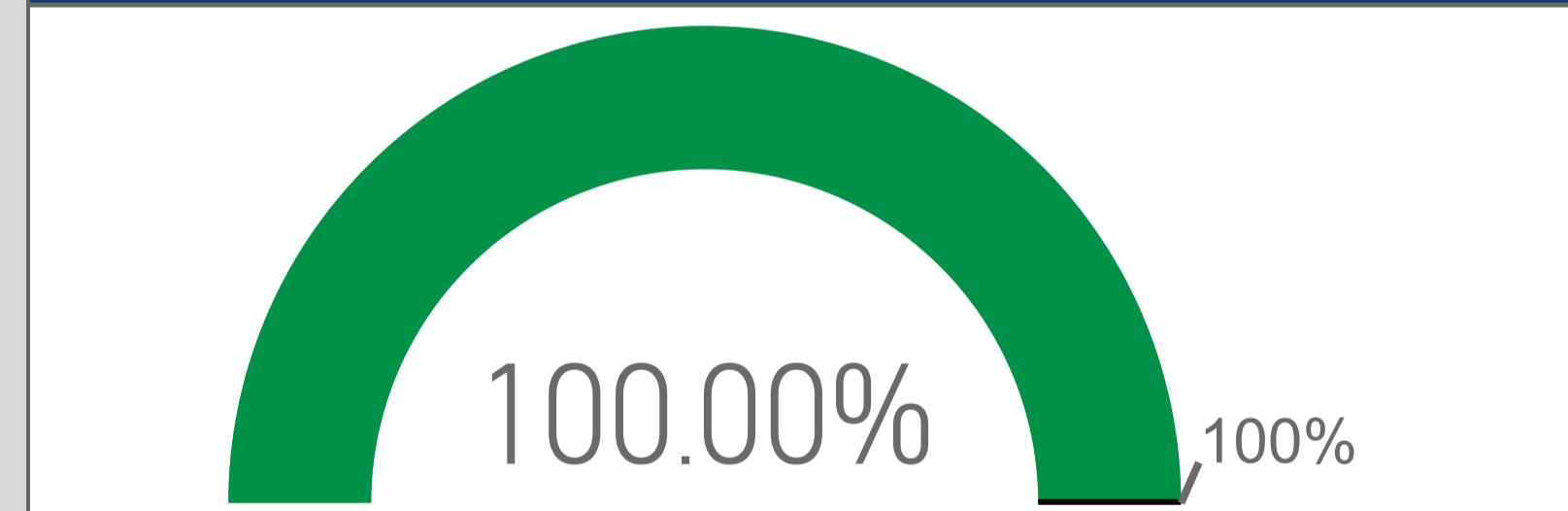
Passenger lifts service and maintenance carried out on monthly basis to ensure satisfactory operation of the lift; these are mainly located in high/low rise blocks and a few sheltered complexes.

RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required

**Annual Re-inspection Compliance (End of Period)**



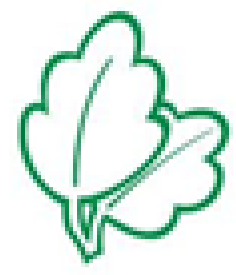
**Period Compliance**



**Commentary**

All passenger lifts have been serviced within the required timeframe

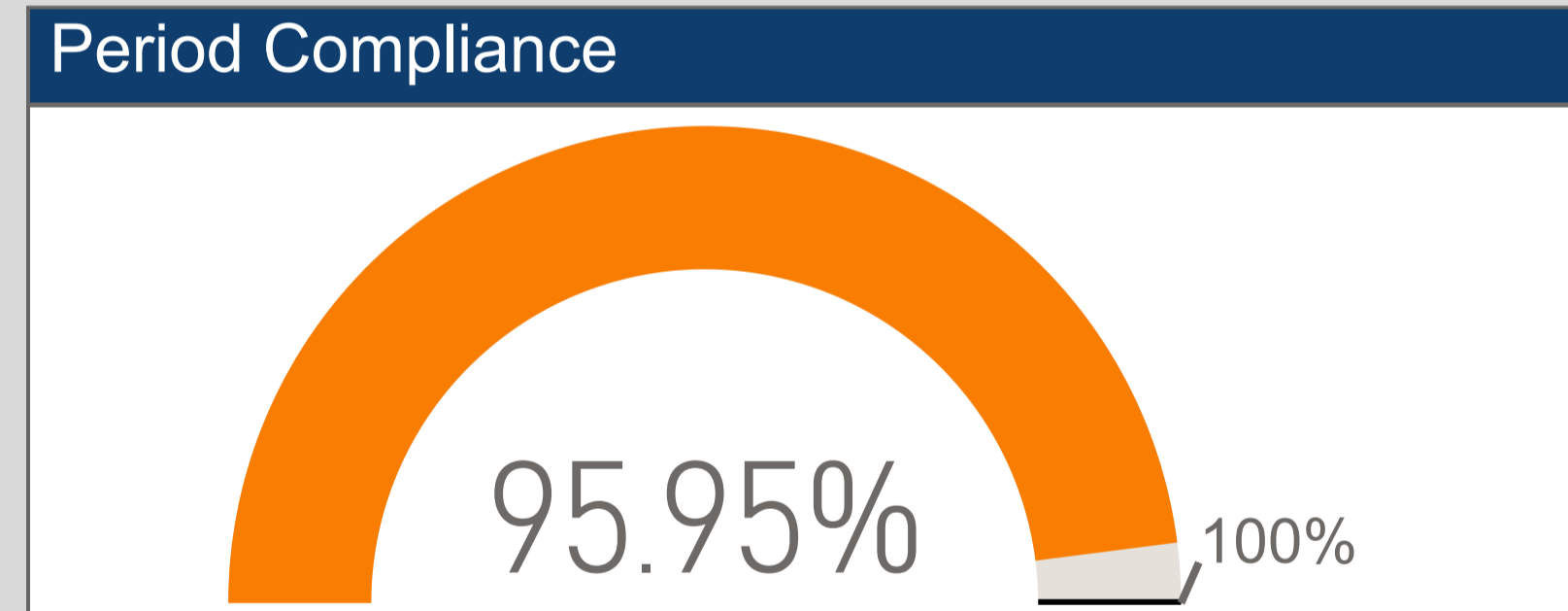
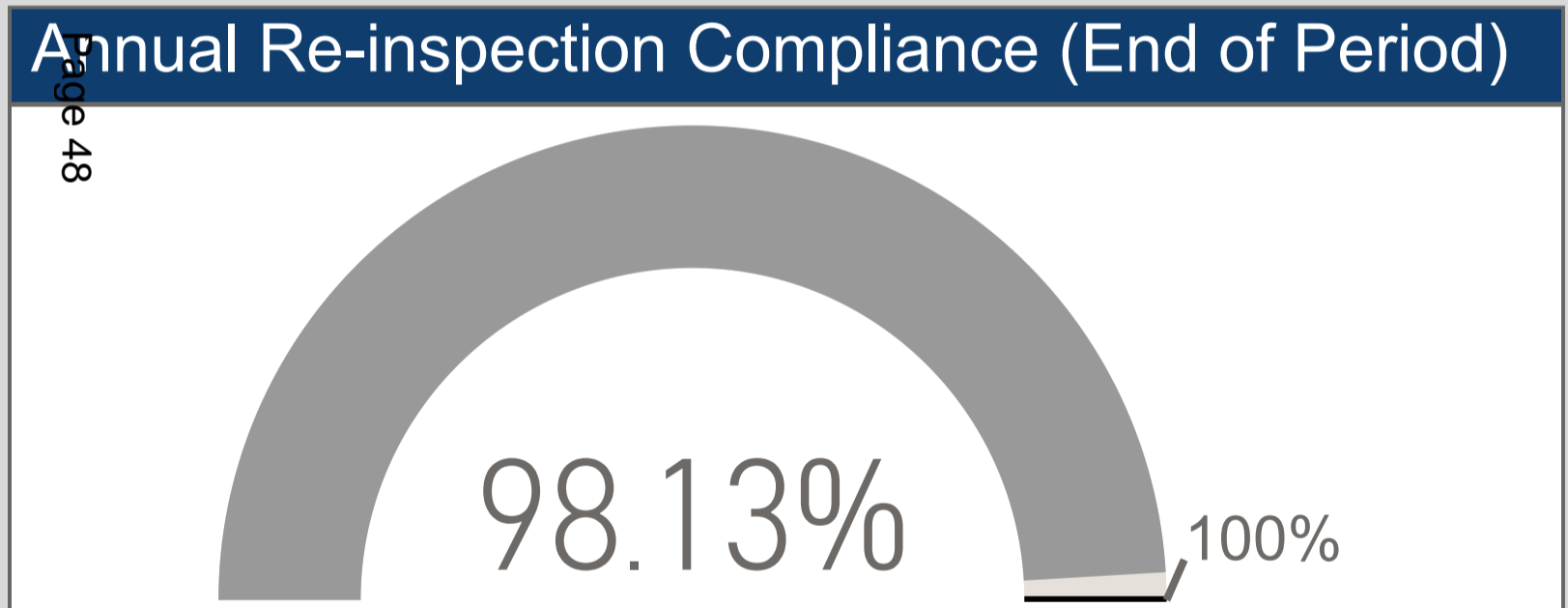
Quarter	Annual Re-inspection Target	Annual Overall Re-inspections Completed	Quarter Re-Inspection Target	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q1 23-24	684	171	171	171
Q2 23-24		342	171	171



This cyclical maintenance contract delivers Disabled Adaptations Services for the Supply, Installation, Servicing and Breakdown Repairs of lifts (stairs, step, and through floor) and Ceiling Track Hoists.

Maintenance of lifts (stairs, step and through floor) are carried out on an annual basis and ceiling track hoists service is bi-annual, made up of one visual check and a load test.

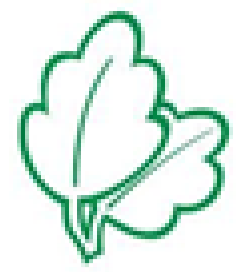
RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required



#### Commentary

Overall compliance 95% 343 Daiglen drive no access as residents is undergoing kimotherapy, 21 GateHope drive resident curretyly has Covic service booked for 10/10/23

Quarter	Annual Re-inspection Target	Annual Overall Re-inspections Completed	Quarter Re-Inspection Target	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q1 23-24	308	305	66	63
Q2 23-24	320	314	148	142



# Door Entry (Auto)

Compliance

## Reported Quarterly

Quarter

Q2 23-24

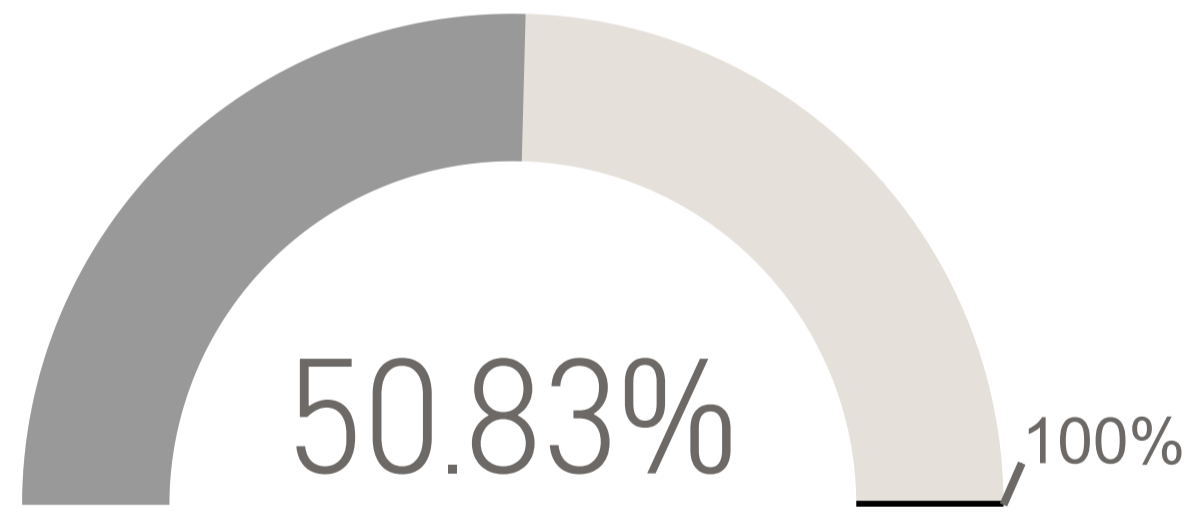
This cyclical maintenance contract delivers inspection and maintenance and repairs to an array of various secure entrance systems and associated equipment; such as automatic door closers, vehicle and pedestrian gates; in council owned multi – occupancy housing sites.

Maintenance, Inspection & testing are scheduled and completed on a regular basis, either six monthly, or quarterly, the following scheduling provides guidance as to the frequency of maintenance, inspection and testing;

- Six Monthly inspections consist of sites where door entry and access control systems are installed and all doors and gates that form part of the installation are of a manual type; i.e. they need to be pushed or pulled open by an individual.
- Quarterly inspections consist of sites where door entry and access control systems are installed and all doors and gates that form part of the installation are operated automatically; either electrically or pneumatically

RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required

### Annual Re-inspection Compliance (End of Period)



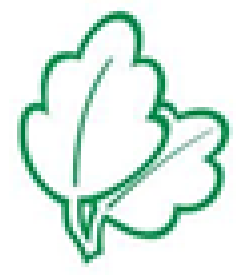
### Period Compliance



### Commentary

During the second quarter of the year (July, Aug, September 2023), Oakray Ltd, responsible for door entry systems, efficiently completed servicing all sites across the borough. As a landlord, we are thrilled to announce that we have attained a 100% compliance rate with our door entry systems, ensuring they meet all the necessary standards and contribute to the safety of our residents. Their security and well-being remain our top priority, and we will continue to uphold the highest standards for their benefit.

Quarter	Annual Re-inspection Target	Annual Overall Re-inspections Completed	Quarter Re-Inspection Target	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q1 23-24	724	181	181	181
Q2 23-24		363	187	187



# Door Entry (Secure)

Compliance

## Reported Bi-Annually

Quarter

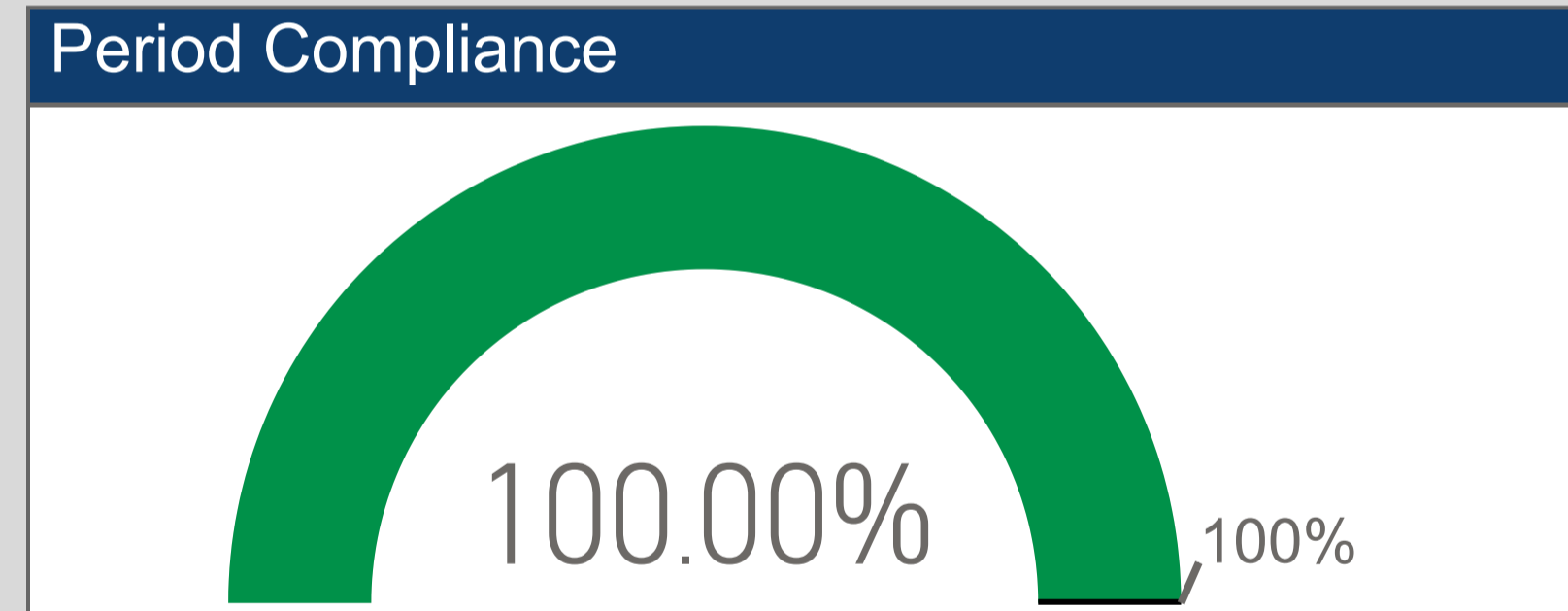
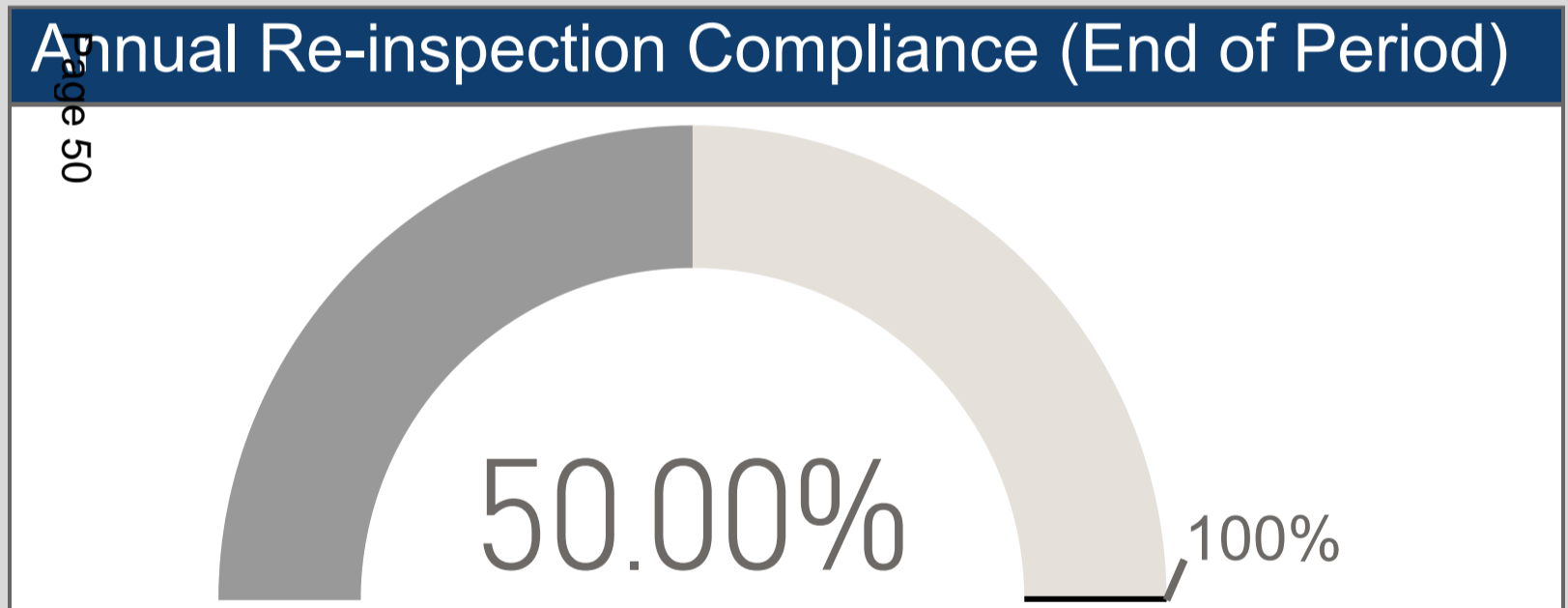
Q1 23-24

This cyclical maintenance contract delivers inspection and maintenance and repairs to an array of various secure entrance systems and associated equipment; such as automatic door closers, vehicle and pedestrian gates; in council owned multi – occupancy housing sites.

Maintenance, Inspection & testing are scheduled and completed on a regular basis, either six monthly, or quarterly, the following scheduling provides guidance as to the frequency of maintenance, inspection and testing;

- Six Monthly inspections consist of sites where door entry and access control systems are installed and all doors and gates that form part of the installation are of a manual type; i.e. they need to be pushed or pulled open by an individual.
- Quarterly inspections consist of sites where door entry and access control systems are installed and all doors and gates that form part of the installation are operated automatically; either electrically or pneumatically

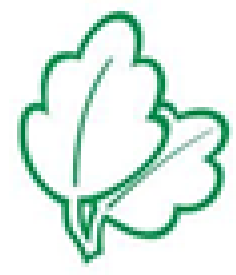
RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required



### Commentary

During the first quarter of the year (April, May, June 2023), Oakray Ltd, responsible for door entry systems, efficiently completed servicing all sites across the borough. As a landlord, we are thrilled to announce that we have attained a 100% compliance rate with our door entry systems, ensuring they meet all the necessary standards and contribute to the safety of our residents. Their security and well-being remain our top priority, and we will continue to uphold the highest standards for their benefit.

Quarter	Bi-annual Re-Inspection Target	Annual Re-inspection Target	Annual Overall Re-inspections Completed	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q1 23-24	531	1062	531	531



# Boosted Water Pumps

Compliance

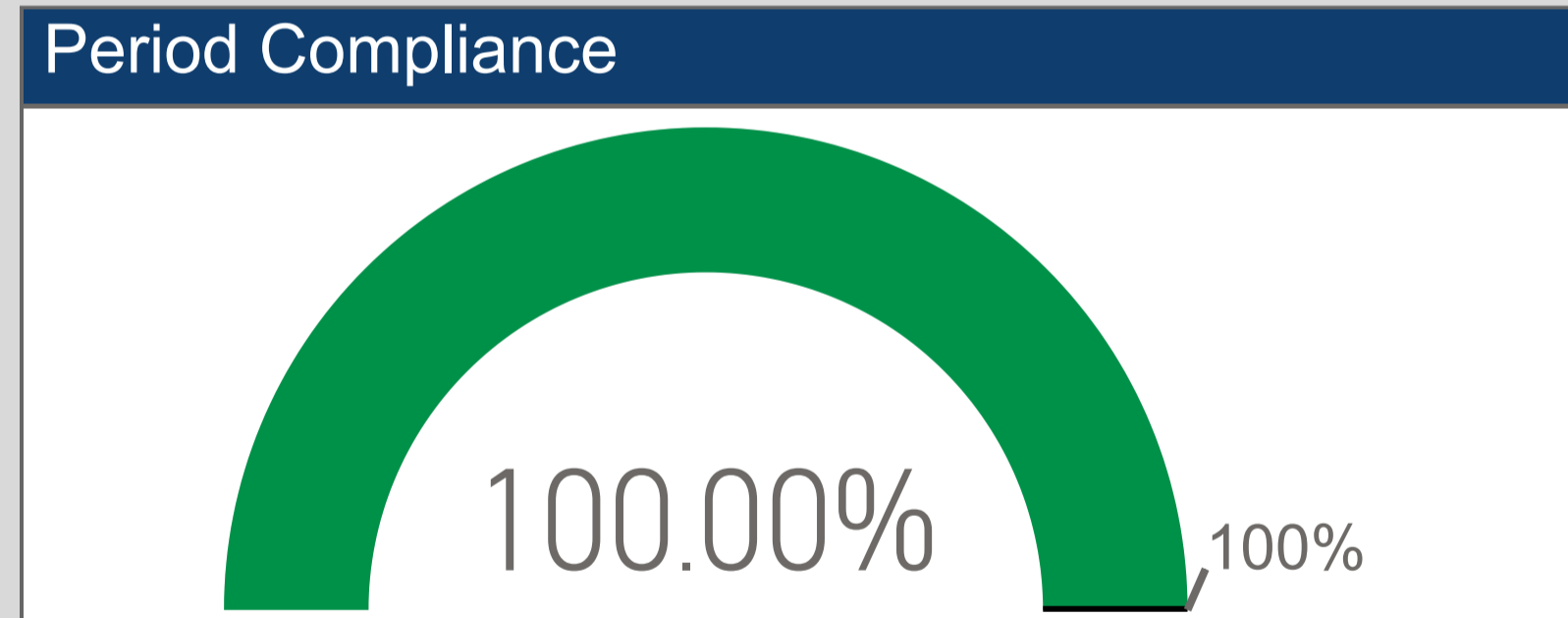
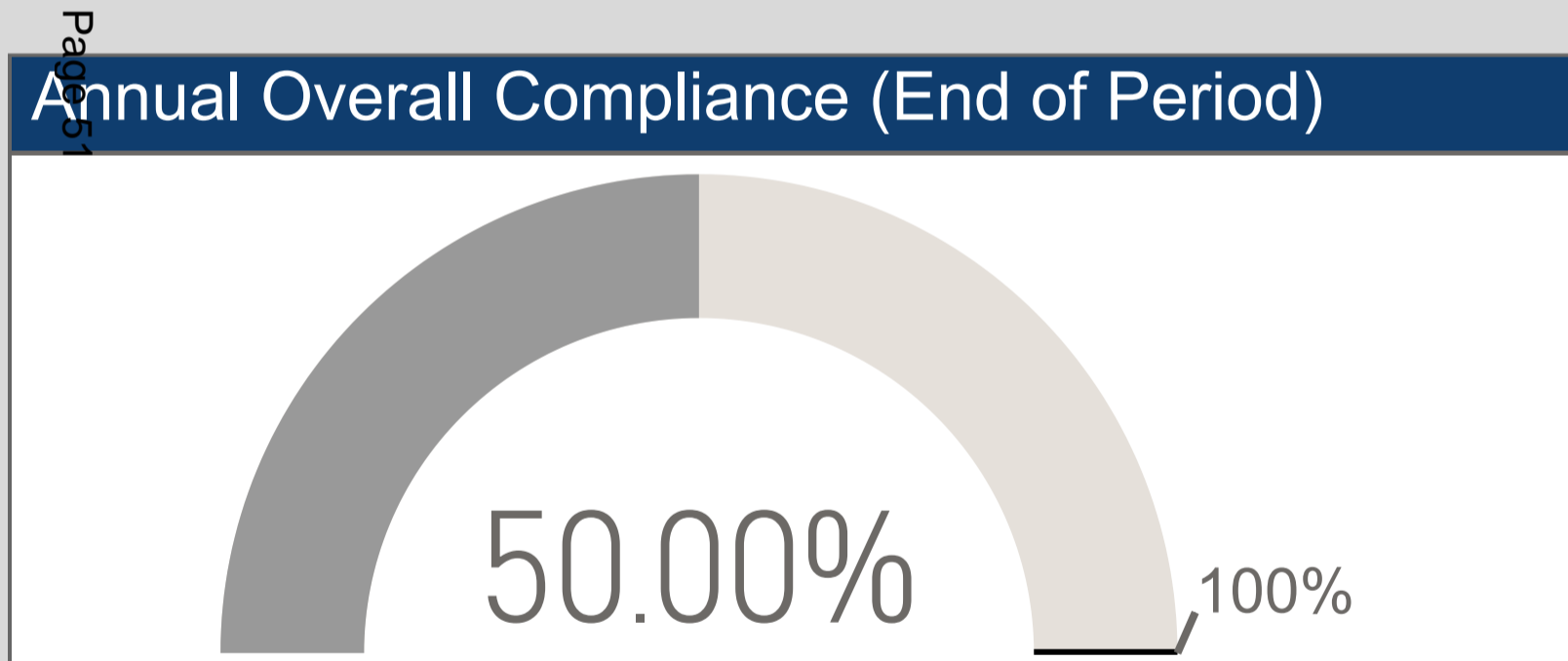
## Reported Bi-Annually

Quarter

Q2 23-24

This cyclical maintenance contract requires achieving safe, reliable and fully functional equipment for the provision of water, ventilation and heating for service users across the borough. Boosted water pump frequency of service visits is bi-annual, and high-rise blocks extractor/ventilation fans frequency of service visits is on quarterly service.

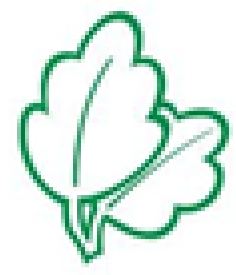
RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required



### Commentary

In the first quarter of the year (April, May, June 2023), REGEN Services, entrusted with maintaining building boosted water pump systems, successfully completed efficient servicing of all sites across the borough. As a landlord, we are delighted to announce that we have achieved a 100% compliance rate with our servicing program. This ensures that our water pump systems meet all the required standards, contributing to the safe and reliable water supply to the buildings. The safety and well-being of our residents remain at the forefront of our priorities, and we will continue to uphold the highest standards to provide them with a secure living environment.

Quarter	Bi-annual Re-Inspection Target	Annual Re-inspection Target	Annual Overall Re-inspections Completed	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q2 23-24	17	34	17	17



# HRBs - Ventilation Fans

Compliance

## Reported Quarterly

Quarter

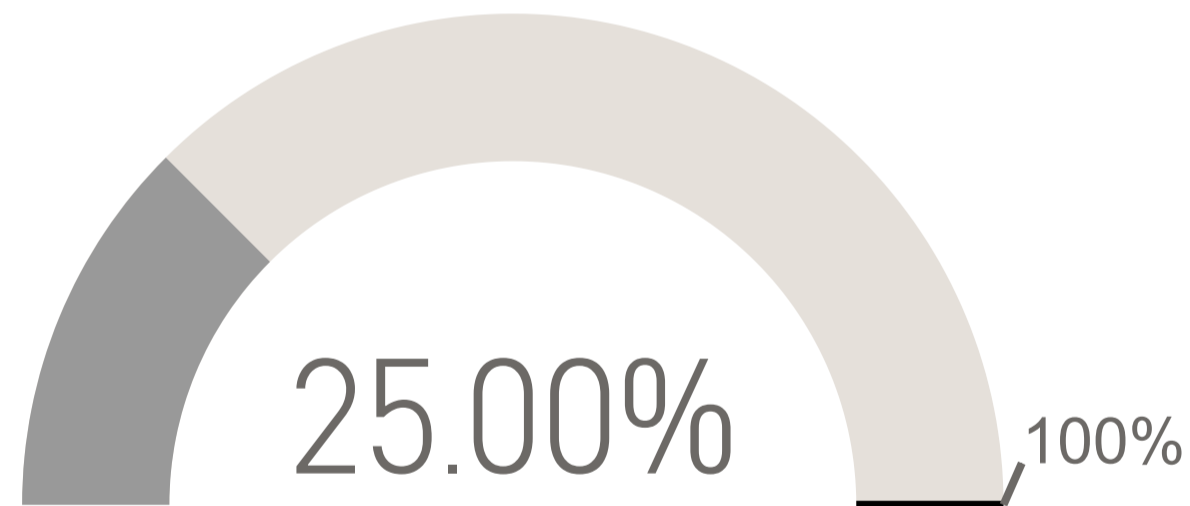
Q2 23-24

This cyclical maintenance contract requires achieving safe, reliable and fully functional equipment for the provision of water, ventilation and heating for service users across the borough. Boosted water pump frequency of service visits is bi-annual, and high-rise blocks extractor/ventilation fans frequency of service visits is on quarterly service.

RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required

### Annual Re-inspection Compliance (End of Period)

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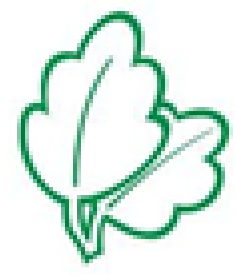
### Period Compliance



### Commentary

(Blank)

Quarter	Annual Re-inspection Target	Annual Overall Re-inspections Completed	Quarter Re-Inspection Target	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q1 23-24	12	3	3	3



# HRBs - Bin Chutes Systems

Compliance

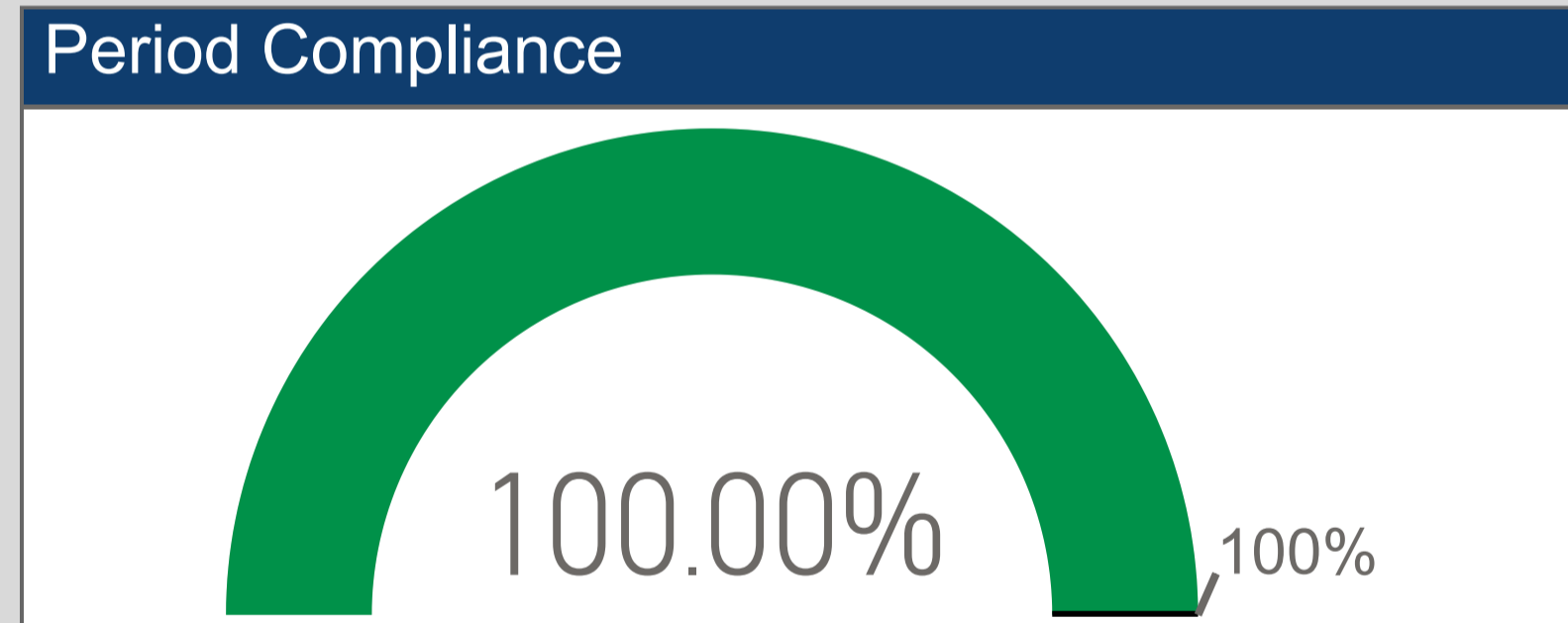
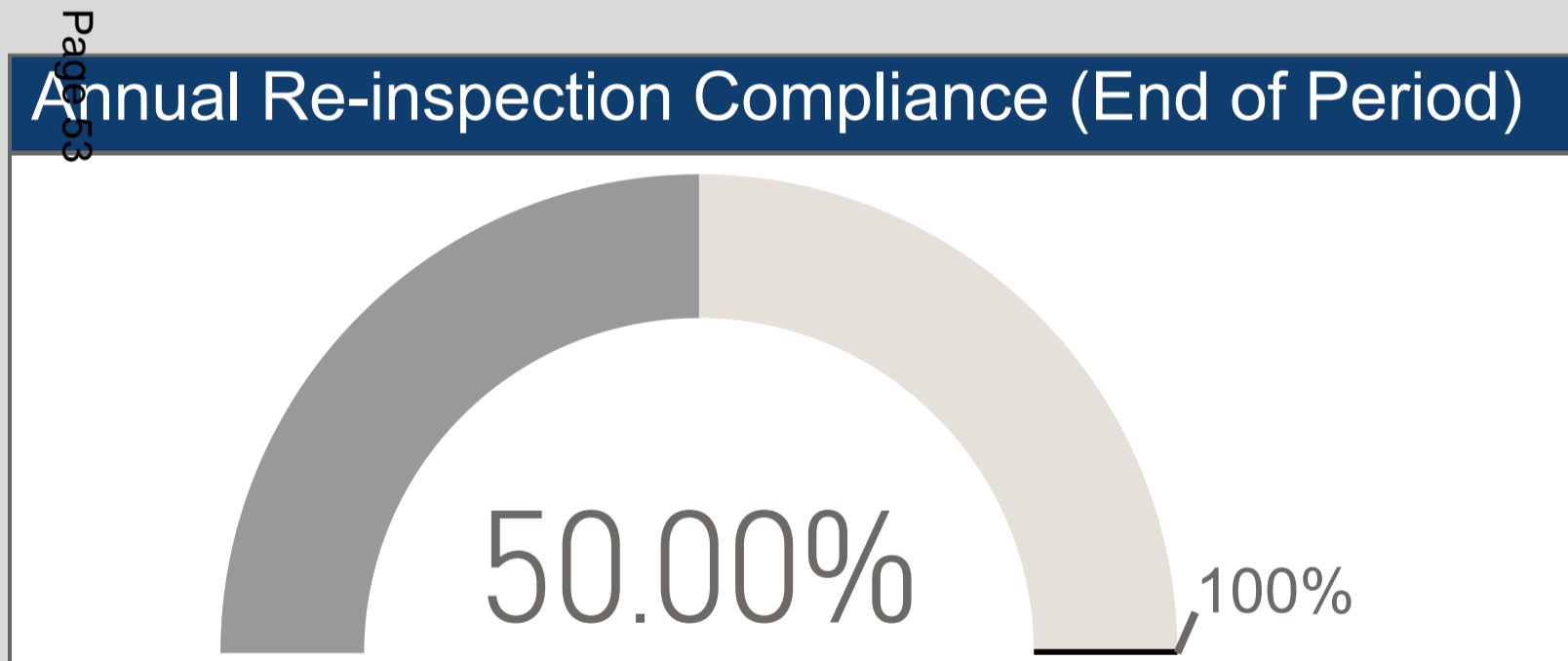
## Reported Bi-Annually

Quarter

Q1 23-24

This cyclical maintenance contract delivers the inspection, testing, maintenance including breakdown repairs of Communal Bin/Refuse Chute Systems fitted with automatic fire closer plates at the base of chute mainly in High/low rise blocks. The equipment to be serviced on bi-annual frequency in High Rise & Low Rise Blocks Bin/Refuse Chute System.

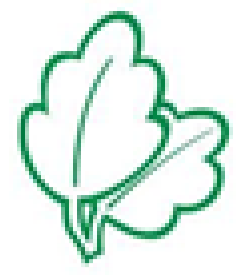
RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required



### Commentary

In the first quarter of the year (April, May, June 2023), Hardall Services, entrusted with maintaining bin chute systems for high-rise buildings, successfully completed efficient servicing of all sites across the borough. As a landlord, we are delighted to announce that we have achieved a 100% compliance rate with our servicing program. The safety and well-being of our residents remain our utmost priorities, and we are dedicated to upholding the highest standards to provide them with a secure living environment.

Quarter	Bi-annual Re-Inspection Target	Annual Re-inspection Target	Annual Overall Re-inspections Completed	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q1 23-24	15	30	15	15



This cyclical maintenance contract delivers the inspection, testing, maintenance of lightning protection systems on housing stock require to professionally test at least once a year to ensure it is capable of conducting a potential lightning strike to a safe earthing point.

RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required

**Annual Re-inspection Compliance (End of Period)**

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**Period Compliance**

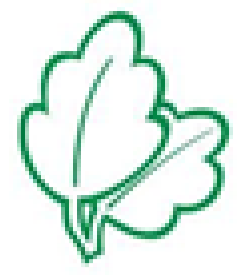


**Commentary**

100% compliant next due November 23

Quarter	Annual Re-inspection Target	Annual Overall Re-inspections Completed	Quarter Re-Inspection Target	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q1 23-24	29	29	1	1
Q2 23-24	29	29	0	0

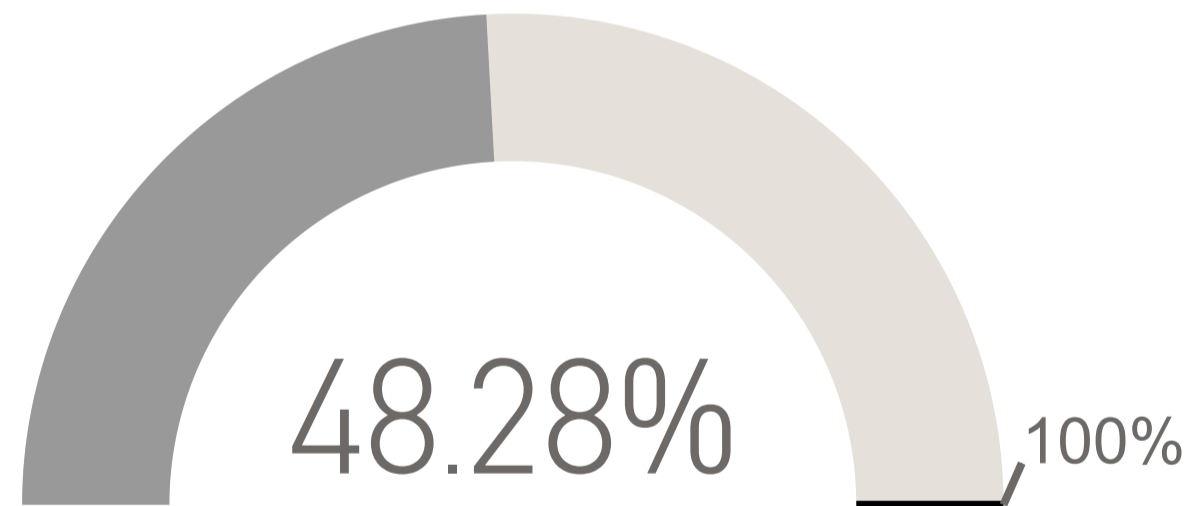




This cyclical maintenance contract delivers the inspection, testing, maintenance of all parts of the air conditioning system, these system frequency of service visits is bi-annual. These systems are located on multiple sites mainly offices and concierges.

RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required

**Annual Re-inspection Compliance (End of Period)**



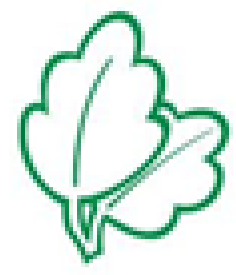
**Period Compliance**



**Commentary**

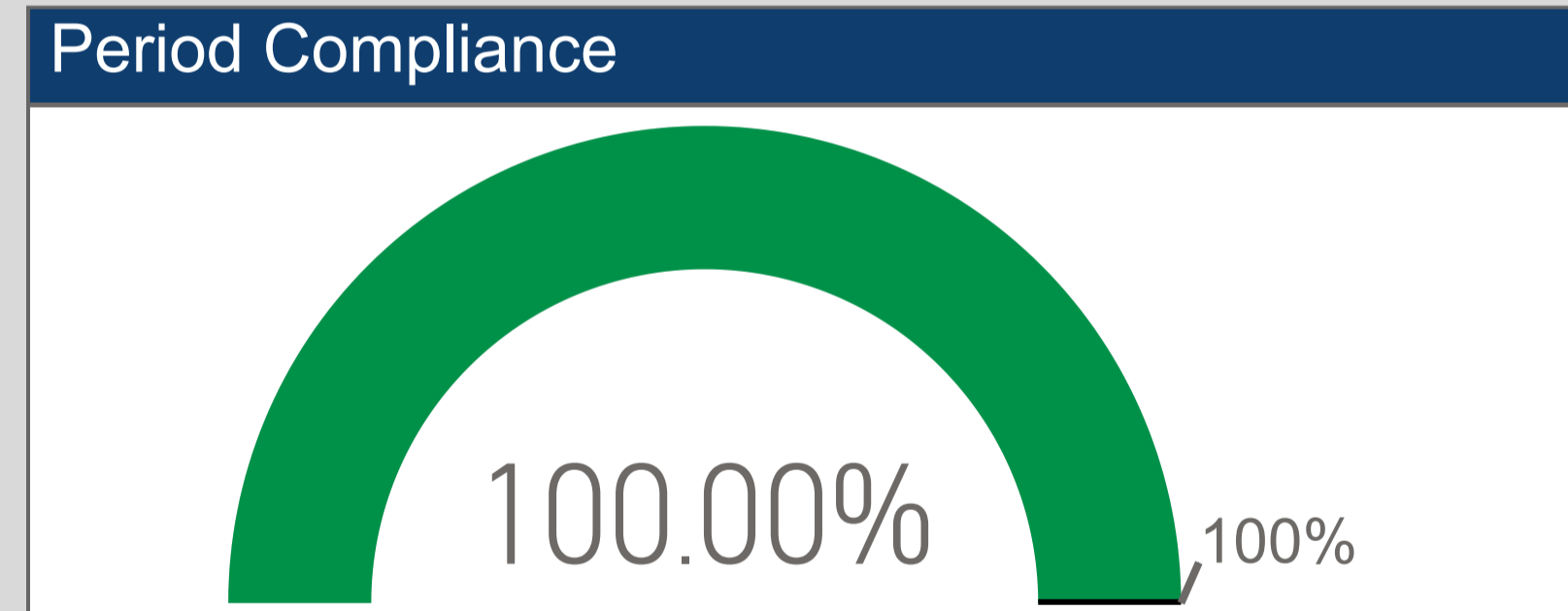
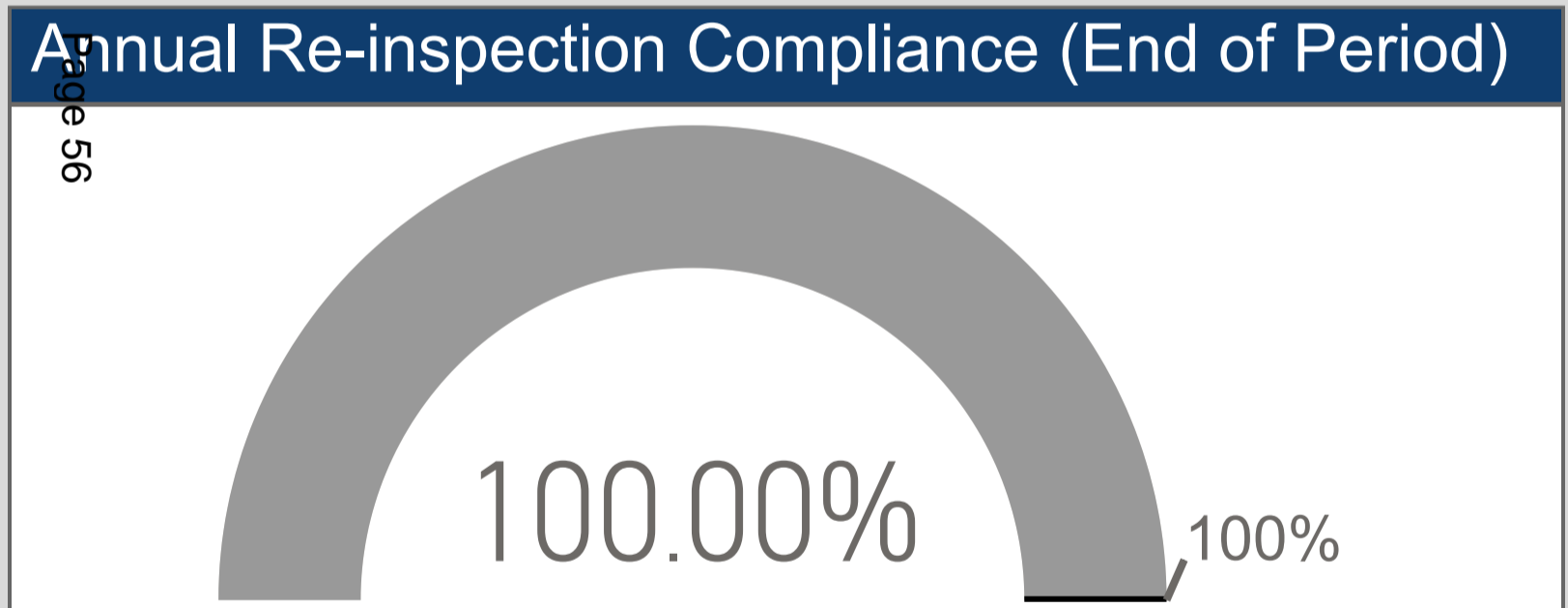
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Quarter	Bi-annual Re-Inspection Target	Annual Re-inspection Target	Annual Overall Re-inspections Completed	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q2 23-24		15	7	



This programme delivers the inspection, testing and maintenance to Man safe systems. These systems are required to be inspected and tested at least every 12 months. Man safe systems comprising stainless steel wire rope, posts and fixings provide users with an approved, tested and inspected method of safe access/work. All new-built block of flats (currently 4 sites) have these systems.

RAG Status	Range	Overall Percentage of Compliance
Green	100%	Compliant
Amber	90-100%	Compliant with few site/reports missing but programme on track
Red	<90%	Not compliant follow on action required



### Commentary

During the first quarter of the year (April, May, June 2023), Highwire Services, responsible for maintaining mansafe systems for buildings, efficiently completed servicing all sites across the borough. As a landlord, we are delighted to announce that we have achieved a 100% compliance rate with our servicing program. The safety and well-being of our residents remain our topmost priority, and we are fully committed to upholding the highest standards to provide them with a secure living environment.

Quarter	Annual Re-inspection Target	Annual Overall Re-inspections Completed	Quarter Re-Inspection Target	Quarter Re-Inspections Completed
Q1 23-24	6	6	6	6
Q2 23-24			0	0
Q3 23-24			0	0
Q4 23-24			0	0



# Gas Compliance Performance Dashboard

Overview

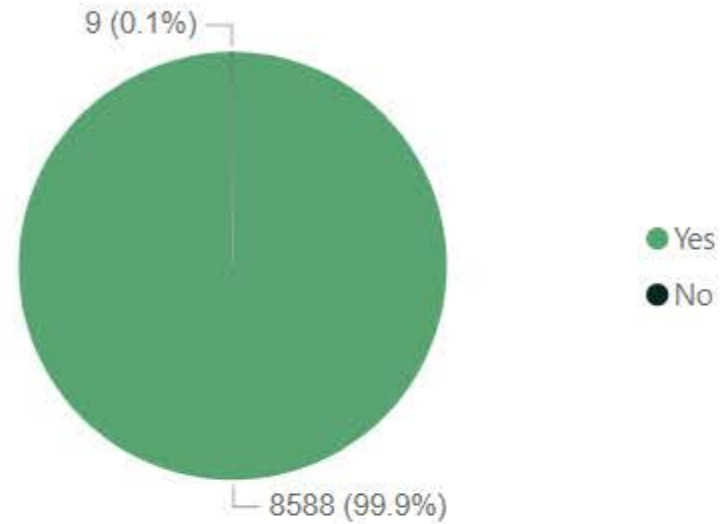
Select Type

Multiple selections

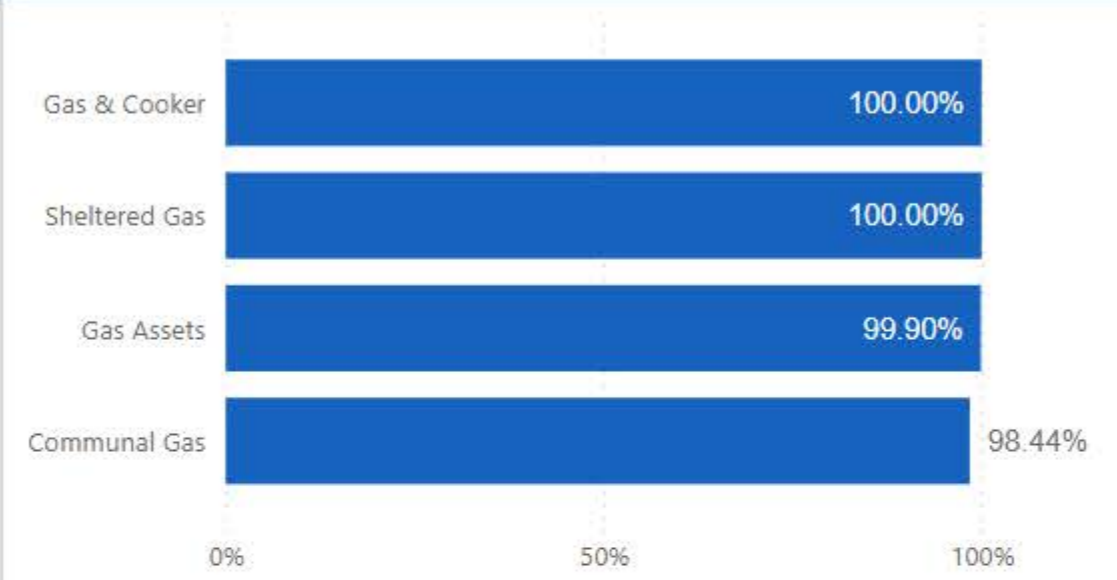
## % Compliance



## Properties by Compliance



## % Compliance by Asset Type



## Key Stats

Reporting Month  
**December 2023**

Number of Properties  
**8597**

Properties Compliant  
**8588**

Properties Non-Compliant  
**9**

## Non-Compliant Assets

UPRN	Address	Type	Compliant	Service Due Date
0046212	212 SEABROOKE RISE	Gas Assets	No	14 December 2023
0143089	89 JESMOND ROAD	Gas Assets	No	20 December 2023
0452030	30 SHAKESPEARE AVENUE	Gas Assets	No	08 November 2023
0459043	43 QUEBEC ROAD	Gas Assets	No	30 November 2023
0904094	94 LIME CLOSE	Gas Assets	No	23 December 2023
100090749210	53 TAMAR DRIVE	Gas Assets	No	19 November 2022
100091591973	BOILER ROOM 4 - COMMUNAL AREA	Communal Gas	No	21 September 2023
10095906438	10 JACQULINE COURT	Gas Assets	No	25 October 2023
10095906440	12 JACQULINE COURT	Gas Assets	No	25 October 2023



# Repairs Performance Dashboard

## Demand

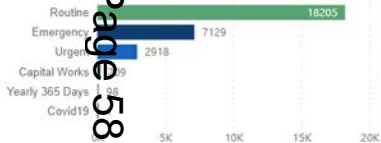
Priority	Workstream	Job Type	Date Issued	
All	All	All	01/04/2023	16/01/2024

### Repairs Key Stats

Repairs Issued  
**28561**

Number of Properties/Admin Units  
**7675**

### Repairs Issued by Work Programme



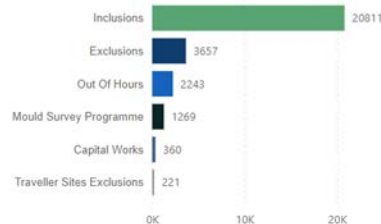
### Repairs Issued by Trade

Trade	Repairs Issued
Painting and Decoration	171
Bricklayer	171
Disable Adaptations	130
Metalworks	81
Scaffolding	65
Cleaning and Clearance	44
Legal Repairs	17

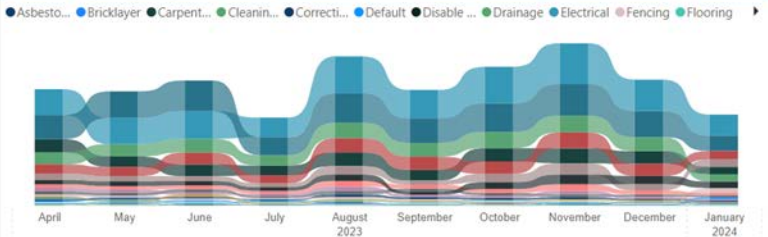
### Number of Repairs Issued Timeline



### Repairs Issued by Work Programme



### Number of Repairs by Year, Month and Trade



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# Damp and Mould Repairs Demand Dashboard

Overview

Date Issued

01/04/2023

16/01/2024

## Key Stats



Works Orders

1269



Properties Affected

1112



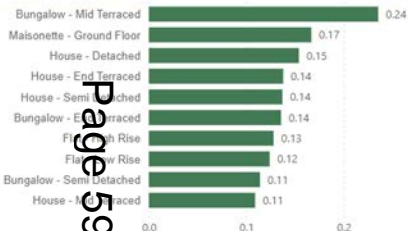
% Stock Affected

11.22%

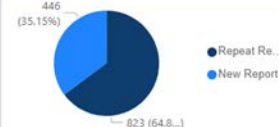
## Works Orders Issued Timeline



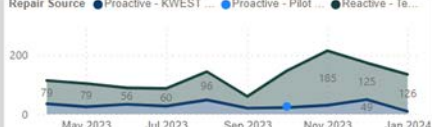
## Works Orders Issued Per Property by Type



## Works Orders by Report Type

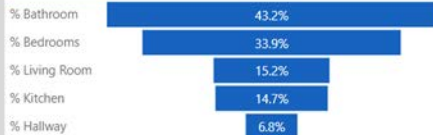


## Works Orders Issued by Repair Source Timeline



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## Works Orders Issued by Room(s) Affected



Street	Number of Works Orders	Number of Properties Affected	Number of Properties (Stock)	% New Reports	% Repeat Reports	% of Stock With MSP Repairs
BROXBURN DRIVE	47	39	236	31.9%	68.1%	16.53%
SEABROOKE RISE	29	26	262	37.9%	62.1%	9.92%
LEICESTER ROAD	27	25	136	25.9%	74.1%	18.38%
NEW ROAD	27	24	156	40.7%	59.3%	15.38%
GODMAN ROAD	22	18	307	36.4%	63.6%	5.86%
ARGENT STREET	16	16	178	50.0%	50.0%	8.99%
PEARTREE CLOSE	17	14	66	47.1%	52.9%	21.21%
WHITMORE AVENUE	13	12	89	23.1%	76.9%	13.48%
CORRAN WAY	11	11	43	18.2%	81.8%	25.58%
HATHAWAY ROAD	11	11	91	45.5%	54.5%	12.09%
CRANELL GREEN	11	10	51	9.1%	90.9%	19.61%

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<b>7 February 2024</b>	<b>ITEM: 12</b> <b>Decision: 110692</b>
<b>Cabinet</b>	
<b>Commissioning Report – Domiciliary Care</b>	
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Key
<b>Report of:</b> Cllr. George Coxshall – Portfolio Holder for Health, Adult’s Health, Community and Public Protection	
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Les Billingham - Assistant Director of Adult Social Care and Community Development	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Ian Wake - Executive Director Adults, Housing and Health	
<b>This report is</b> Public	
<b>Version:</b> Final	

## Executive Summary

The Council has a statutory duty under the Care Act (2014) to provide care and support to people whose needs meet the eligibility criteria detailed in this legislation.

Domiciliary care is commonly referred to as home care and the terms are used interchangeably. Domiciliary care services are regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and cover a wide range of activities, including (but not limited to) the provision of personal care such as assistance with washing/bathing, getting dressed, going to the toilet as well as support with nutrition and hydration. These services are delivered in the person’s home and seek to support people to remain in the community.

Domiciliary care can also extend to reablement services (help to regain or retain skills and confidence) for people leaving hospital or seeking care and support for the first time. Reablement services seek to delay or reduce the need for ongoing care and support.

Current contracting arrangements for domiciliary care come to an end on 31 March 2025. This report seeks the agreement of Cabinet on the proposed recommendation that the procurement of these services commences in February 2024 for a contract start date of 01 April 2025.

## **Commissioner Comment:**

Commissioner has been consulted on the content of this report and agreed the recommendations made.

### **1. Recommendation(s)**

**1.1 To approve the tender of domiciliary care services to meet our statutory requirements under the Care Act (2014). This includes both the core domiciliary care service, reablement and the Out of Hours service.**

**1.2 Delegate the award of the contract to the Executive Director for Adults, Housing and Health in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health, Adult's Health, Community and Public Protection**

### **2. Introduction and Background**

2.1 We have a statutory responsibility to meet eligible need (Care Act 2014). Although other types of community-based support such as supported living, extra care and shared lives schemes are also regulated under CQC's domiciliary care regime, these services are not included in this tender as they are commissioned separately. This tender only relates to the provision of domiciliary care in people's own homes (regardless of tenure).

2.2 Current contract arrangements for domiciliary care finish on 31 March 2025. The tender is scheduled to start in February 2024 and the proposed procurement timetable is attached as Appendix 1.

2.3 As domiciliary care provision is based on assessed need, the amount of care commissioned is variable. However, in the first quarter of 2023 approximately 8900 hours of domiciliary care was provided per week for 690 people (an average of 1.8 hours per person per day). 900 hours per week is delivered by internal services (Caring for Thurrock) and the remainder is externally commissioned.

2.4 Currently 89% of directly provided or commissioned domiciliary care services in Thurrock are rated by CQC to be of 'good' quality. This is in line with CQC's 2022 reported national average of 87% of domiciliary care services being rated as 'good' or above.

2.5 Thurrock currently pays £20.58 per hour for externally commissioned domiciliary care.

2.6 Our spend on externally commissioned home care per year is approximately £8.6million.

2.7 In addition to externally commissioned domiciliary care services, Thurrock retains in-house provision (Caring for Thurrock). As well as providing both domiciliary care (both traditional and wellbeing models) and reablement, Caring for Thurrock acts as the 'Provider of Last Resort' (PoLR).

2.8 A PoLR is in place should there be a provider failure, insufficient capacity in the market as a whole or geographical area, a client for whom all other care options have been exhausted or in a support or management role for providers who require additional assistance. A PoLR is essential to managing and controlling risk levels in externally provided care.



- 2.9 The Care Act places a responsibility on local authorities to ensure continuity of care for vulnerable adults should there be a service disruption such as those detailed above. Caring for Thurrock's current hours and location of care delivery has largely been shaped by a previous failure of a provider who supplied services to people utilising direct payments or their own funds to buy care. As such, internal services have grown larger than intended. Thurrock must ensure that the correct balance is achieved between what it commissions externally and what level of provision we retain in-house to manage the risk of any potential provider failure.
- 2.10 Although reablement is currently provided by both internal and external providers, the specialist support and advice of therapy and nursing staff given to external agencies to enable people to regain skills sits within the Thurrock Council run joint health and social care reablement team. The council will continue to test and review our approach to the delivery of reablement, but as we try to minimise the amount of duplication of services/people going into clients, it is likely that reablement will remain an activity of all providers going forward. However, the specialist advice and support function provided by nursing and therapy staff would remain in-house.
- 2.11 Thurrock's in-house domiciliary care and reablement services also support with hospital discharge. External providers who supported an individual prior to admission also enable discharge by 'restarting' their package of care. In addition to this, Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust also run a 'bridging' service from Basildon Hospital to enable people who are medically optimised to experience a timely discharge whilst long term care provisions are arranged.
- 2.12 The bridging service is funded through the Better Care Fund - BCF (a pooled budget and integrated spending plan between the health and social care system to aid integration). The Council contributes £0.216m per annum towards this service for approximately 200 hours per week. Health partners then meet the cost of any provision that exceeds this number of hours (i.e. they meet the cost at periods of higher demand).
- 2.13 Improving the transfer of care between the hospital and the community is a priority for the government and health and social care systems. In line with guidance, a Transfer of Care Hub (TOCH) is currently in development. A TOCH is the local health and social care systems co-ordinating centre. It is based around an Alliance (an Alliance is a strategic partnership between health, care, housing and third sector services that is responsible for the transformation of the system and developing and overseeing the deployment of the BCF in a geographical area i.e. Thurrock Integrated Care Alliance - TICA) and seeks to prevent demand for hospital services. How the TOCH develops will guide whether we need to reshape the market and how we currently operate to deliver a 'home first' approach.
- 2.14 Any changes to our existing hospital discharge pathways will be tested with the successful providers once they are fully embedded.
- 2.15 In addition to the statutory responsibility to meet eligible need and ensure continuity of care, the local authority also has a duty under the Care Act (2014) to 'shape' the market. This includes ensuring that services can meet current and future needs of people who use them and their unpaid carers.
- 2.16 Thurrock has seen a significant increase in the amount of domiciliary care commissioned, and it is very likely with demographic growth that this will continue.

- 2.17 In 2013 Thurrock commissioned 5100 hours of care per week. Today Thurrock commissions 8,900. This is partially due to the commitment to support people to remain in their own homes/communities. For example, even though Thurrock has experienced a significant increase in the number of older people with support needs over the last decade, the amount of residential based care within the Borough has not increased. Instead, resources have been redirected wherever possible away from residential care to a community setting.
- 2.18 Thurrock's 2021 Census data suggests that residents aged 65 years old or more have increased by almost 4000 people in the last ten years and it is estimated that one in four/five residents in Thurrock will be 65 years old or more within the next ten years. Census 2021 predicts an increase of 16,000 people aged 65 or older living in Thurrock by 2031.

Based on available data<sup>1</sup>, the impact of these demographic changes on demand and contract value have been modelled. This is attached as a separate table in Appendix 5.

- 2.19 In addition to demographic pressures, the change in hospital discharge criterion during the pandemic from people being medically 'fit' to 'optimised' has created an increase in both the complexity of those requiring services and the level of care that needs to be delivered to support people effectively and safely i.e. people are coming out of hospital earlier and with more complex care needs/larger packages.

This change in criterion to medically optimised has affected all areas of provision. However, the largest impact is on the delivery of domiciliary care and accounts for a significant amount of the growth in care hours commissioned since March 2020. For example, between April 2020 to March 2022 an additional 2,700 hours per week of home care was commissioned.

- 2.20 Although the Council has continued to secure safe and good quality care to meet current need, doing so has been a significant challenge. With the demographic changes detailed in 2.18, the demand for this service is likely to grow over the life of the new contract. However, the domiciliary care market is fragile and faces many challenges. As such, Thurrock intends to shape the market to enable it at first to stabilise before ensuring it is sustainable long term.
- 2.21 Feedback shows that consistency of staff and timely visits are commonly the most important elements of a service to the client. However, retention of staff remains a fundamental challenge in Thurrock. Care work is often viewed as low status and attracts low pay. This coupled with the extremely competitive labour market in Thurrock (both in care and the wider economy) makes it difficult to achieve continuity of care for clients - this will only ever be achieved with a valued and retained workforce.
- 2.22 Skills for Care estimates that nearly half (46%) of Thurrock's adult social care workforce are on a '0' hour contract compared to a regional average of 24% i.e. we have double the number. Thurrock also has an older workforce - with nearly one third (30%) of people working in the local adult social care sector expected to retire within the next 10 years.
- 2.23 In addition to workforce, the Kings Fund has also identified rurality as a problem when securing supply of domiciliary care. This is due to the travel time and cost involved in a low number of visits over a large geographical area. Thurrock has similarly experienced difficulty

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<sup>1</sup> We are still awaiting census 2021 population estimate data. As such, the modelling was based on ONS Population projections – local authorities: SNPP Z1 data release March 2020.

in securing care in its villages (Orsett, Horndon and Bulphan) and in areas where demand is low, and travel can be affected e.g. East Tilbury (past the railway crossing).

- 2.24 If Thurrock is to secure care over the next ten years, some things need to be done differently. For example, addressing how unattractive a career in care is, moving away from the role being low status, low pay and with low job security. There is also a need to commission differently. Short term contracts focusing on time and task activities do not assist with the challenges faced both now or in the future, nor do they assist in helping Thurrock to meet its aspirations.
- 2.25 To address this, in Thurrock we have adopted a Human Learning System (HLS) approach as a framework for delivering the change required. HLS is about *“building relationships with real people – the people we’re trying to help……and responding to the complex reality of people’s lives - their strengths and needs”*<sup>2</sup>.
- 2.26 Utilising an HLS approach, the council will move away from fixed ideas on how we support people and will instead accept that the model of care will continuously adapt and change over time in response to need. The council will ‘experiment’ in partnership with providers and those that use services to shape support and care to better meet outcomes.
- 2.27 The council accepts that not all experiments will be successful. However, it will use the learning and if something doesn’t work or stops meeting need, change it. In essence, the council will commission for learning. As such, the specification has been designed to evolve and change in response to learning. An example of how learning may change what is delivered is the Wellbeing Teams (please see 2.30 and 2.31)
- 2.28 Better Care Together Thurrock – The Case for Further Change, Thurrock’s integrated care strategy, details the (HLS) approach being used to transform, integrate and improve care. Chapter 8 details how the approach is being used to transform care delivered in the home.
- 2.29 Engagement work with residents has demonstrated that those in receipt of homecare want a service that is flexible, treats them as a whole person, is based on long-term relationships and is joined up, minimising the number of people coming into their home.
- 2.30 How Thurrock currently commissions, organises and provides care does not support service user aspirations. In response to this, Thurrock has developed Wellbeing Teams to test delivering home care differently. These teams are based on the Dutch Buurtzorg model which are small neighbourhood-based teams who are able to respond to the needs of the whole person and can link with other professionals to provide a joined-up response. Because they work on a neighbourhood level, they can have a detailed knowledge of the community assets and networks available to them and connect service users to these.
- 2.31 The Buurtzorg model was proven to be efficient and to deliver much better outcomes for people. However, it was based around health interventions (community nursing) and not social care. As such, Thurrock has been piloting Wellbeing Teams based on the same principles as Buurtzorg but applying them to people in receipt of social care. This pilot and its evaluation are ongoing and will be used to support the future development of the model of care provided in the Borough.
- 2.32 Although initial results are positive, the pilot is currently too small to be able to draw wider conclusions. It is currently unclear whether this approach inspired by the Buurtzorg model will have the same positive outcomes as experienced in the Netherlands when limited to social

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<sup>2</sup> <https://realworld.report/>

care needs. As such, when more robust evidence becomes available, in line with a HLS approach, Thurrock will adapt its external model to take account of that learning (see section 3. Options).

- 2.33 As part of this pilot, work has been taking place to explore blended roles for Wellbeing Workers. This means upskilling existing staff to be able to undertake certain health tasks (e.g. diabetes management) to improve continuity of care and reduce duplication. It is hoped that this will also improve the status of care workers, resulting in higher retention. This is at an early stage, but again the results of this work will support the development of the external model.
- 2.34 In addition to Thurrock's core domiciliary care service, the Authority also commissions an Out of Hours (OOH) service which operates between 11pm and 7am. Prior to this service being put in place over a decade ago, there was no option for people with this level of need to remain in their own home. This service has enabled people to remain independent for longer, avoiding residential care and hospital admissions.
- 2.35 The service consists of three 'runs' which incorporates planned activity and an emergency component (i.e. able to respond to issues that arise such as a fall or continence issue – this part of the service is usually accessed via a 'lifeline' pendant alarm). Planned care activities are largely concerned with continence and skin integrity including repositioning/turning for those who are cared for in bed.
- 2.36 Due to the complexity of service users, the need to respond to emergencies and to keep staff safe during unsociable hours, each 'run' is staffed by two workers. The cost of each 'run' is currently £97,368 per annum. One of the three 'runs' is funded by Continuing Healthcare (CHC) partners i.e. the NHS. The OOH service is in addition to the 8,000 externally commissioned core domiciliary care hours detailed in 2.3. This will be a separate contract opportunity in the tender and will operate on a Thurrock wide basis. Unlike the core offer, there is insufficient demand in some localities to operate this service on a place/locality basis. The two 'runs' commissioned by the council are built into existing budgetary commitments.

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

There are three main options. The preferred option is 2.

- 3.1 **Option 1 – Re-commission on the same basis as has been done historically i.e. time and task, priced per hour over a short contract period.**
- 3.1.1 Although it could be viewed as a low-risk option to go out to tender on the same basis as before, by doing so the council would not address the significant risk it faces in attracting a sufficient workforce to secure enough high-quality care to meet projected demand.
- 3.1.2 Due to the nature of the support required, people who use these services have an intimate relationship with the person supporting them and as such they want consistency in their care worker.
- 3.1.3 Current commissioning activity does not address long term recruitment and retention issues. As already explained, Thurrock has experienced difficulty in securing supply and is expecting both significant demographic growth and for 30% of its workforce to retire over the next 10

years. Recommissioning on the same basis – short term contracts, time and task etc will not address these issues.

- 3.1.4 As part of the Integrated Care Strategy (The Case for Further Change), Thurrock has organised its health and social care systems into localities to enable greater integration and to take advantage of community resources and natural networks of support that exist in each area. Continuing to commission in a traditional way does not support locality working. What is proposed will see care delivered on the same geographical 'footprint' as primary and social care, moving the relationship away from commissioner/provider to one of a partner who works jointly and equally alongside health and social care services.
- 3.1.5 This 'zoning' of care delivery cuts down on travel between visits and reduces the frequency of visits starting late.
- 3.1.6 As stated in 2.18, demographic pressures have been modelled alongside assumed levels of inflation – please see Appendix 5. These pressures result in an inflated cost, for the 10-year life of the contract of £114m.
- 3.2 **Option 2 – Preferred Option – Work with providers as partners to test, learn and shape services over the life of the contract.**
- 3.2.1 This option provides the opportunity to move towards a sustainable model, co-produced with service users and providers.
- 3.2.2 The recommendation is that the tender is at first for a traditional home care service albeit with some alterations to the current model. During the life of the contract, Thurrock's Adult Social Care Commissioning Team will experiment with providers, testing new models of delivery. Based on this learning, users views and the outcome of financial modelling/cost benefit analysis the service will be adapted over time.
- 3.2.3 Appendix 2 shows the locality boundaries and current delivery of care.
- 3.2.4 To allow providers to really embed in each locality, understanding the assets and networks unique to each area, care in this contract will be arranged around the existing Social Care Locality Team/Primary Care Network footprints. One provider will be sought for each of the four localities. The expectation is that potential providers must have the capability and capacity to meet all arising need for domiciliary care within their locality.
- 3.2.5 To mitigate the risk of any future quality or contract failure in the external market, potential providers cannot bid for more than one area (although they can also bid for the Out of Hours contract in addition to one locality contract). Should the designated provider for the locality be unable to meet demand, the package of care will be offered to the providers operating in other localities. Should we still be unable to secure care, need will be met by the use of spot provision. Ultimately, we retain Caring for Thurrock as a PoLR.
- 3.2.6 However, prior to contract commencement the council will work with one village (Bulphan) and one difficult to access area (East Tilbury beyond the railway crossing) to grow an alternative response. Thurrock has experience in developing community-based solutions and has grown a vibrant and diverse Micro Enterprise market (a Micro Enterprise is small social business providing support in a bespoke way – most commonly as a sole trader). Since 2015 Thurrock

has supported the development of over 100 micro providers to operate in the area to support people.

- 3.2.7 As part of this model, to enable all partners to build strong relationships and to give greater assurance, allowing providers in turn to give more security and to invest in those they employ, it is proposed that the contract is for a period of 10 years. However, to minimise risk there will be a break clause at 5 years in addition to the usual termination clauses. A significant change in the relationship with providers or a reduction in the reliance on '0' hour employment contracts will not be achieved by continuing to issue short term contract agreements. Recurrent tenders are time consuming, costly and do not foster joint working between providers but instead puts them in competition with each other. As Thurrock declares the rate for care, this frequent procurement activity adds little benefit or value for money for either the Authority or the user of commissioned services.
- 3.2.8 Based on the current hourly rate and demand levels for home care a 10-year contract would be approximately £89 million. The table in Appendix 5 models the estimated cost of the contract on a year-by-year basis incorporating both demographic and inflationary growth.
- 3.2.9 Legal and procurement advice has been obtained on the ability to change the model during the life of the contract without attracting challenge. Based on this advice, Adult Social Care Commissioners will set out within the specification the areas of service delivery that could alter over time e.g. introducing the principles of the wellbeing model externally, blended roles, reablement and hospital discharge etc. This allows for incremental change to occur over the life of the contract.
- 3.2.10 As providers move to the role of partner, the commissioning approach will also adapt to reflect this. The possibility of moving the commissioning of services from an hourly basis to allocating a set amount of core hours per area will be explored – allowing the provider to operate as a trusted assessor, staffing with some security and having inherent flexibility to adapt and deliver care to people whose needs may fluctuate/change over time e.g. reductions as people re-able/recover, increases in response to an episode of illness.
- 3.2.11 An implementation timetable of this option is attached as Appendix 4. As service developments will be shaped by learning, this is subject to change. However, the timeframes show when the learning outcomes should be available and how and when we will work alongside the successful providers. As stated in 3.3.4, the current provider market is currently not at the point that it could deliver our aspirations and services in a different way. The tender will be used to test and secure future partners who understand what the Alliance plans to achieve and have the capability to adapt over time.
- 3.2.12 As can be seen from Appendix 4, the implementation of domiciliary care contracts is complex. As such, it is recommended that delegated authority to award the contract is given to the Executive Director of Adults, Housing and Health, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health, Adult's Health, Community and Public Protection. This will allow a sufficient window of time between contract award and contract commencement, during which the necessary handover and onboarding activity can take place to ensure a smooth and effective transition of care to the new service model and possibly new providers (depending on outcome of the tender). Risk in the delivery of care is at its highest during a period of change, as such delegated authority will allow a longer handover period, which in turn will mitigate some risk.

### **3.3 Option 3 – Go out to the market with a new but untested model of care.**

- 3.3.1 Although the existing model of care is flawed and early results from the Wellbeing Team experiment are positive, going to the market with a largely untested model poses significant risk for the local authority.
- 3.3.2 The wellbeing model appears to deliver better outcomes for individuals and the system as a whole (i.e. less g.p. and hospital visits) but due to the additional costs involved with delivering this model (although again there is some evidence that these additional costs are recouped elsewhere in the system), the benefits need to be replicated with a much wider cohort of people before the reshaping of all externally commissioned services should be considered.
- 3.3.3 There is also uncertainty about what the delivery of wellbeing principles in externally commissioned home care would look like and this will need to be robustly tested in partnership with providers.
- 3.3.4 In addition, there is a significant risk that the market would not be able to respond to this new way of working without support. As such, this option is not seen as viable.

The preferred Option 2 allows the Council to make the incremental change required.

#### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 It is a statutory requirement to meet eligible care and support needs.
- 4.2 It is a statutory requirement to shape the market to meet current and future demand.
- 4.3 The preferred option (option 2) minimises risk, seeks immediate improvements but secures long term flexibility to shape services in response to learning/user feedback.

#### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1 As part of Adult Social Care's quality improvement work and its commitment to co-production by ensuring people who use domiciliary care can also shape the services they receive; a survey was sent to all existing users seeking their views of the current service and its impact on their life. As part of this, people who use home care were asked to come forward to be part of an independently run focus group so that more in-depth discussions could be conducted.
- 5.2 During September and October 2023, Thurrock's User Led Organisation (ULO) ran focus groups with those people who have volunteered to participate.
- 5.3 In addition, Public Health colleagues continue to assess the impact of the wellbeing model on service user outcomes.
- 5.4 Also, to make use of existing contacts with domiciliary care service users, between August and October 2023 Contract Officers as part of their quality monitoring visits asked anybody in receipt of home care 3 additional questions.
- 5.5 A provider engagement event for existing and potential providers was held on 27 November 2023. This event allows the Council to have early discussions with providers about the HLS approach and the proposed model of care including the expectation that the successful

partners will adapt and shape their service over the life of the contract based on evidence from learning and user engagement.

5.6 This report was presented at the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 January 2024.

## **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

6.1 The domiciliary care contract impacts on the following Council Priority;

*People – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay.*

Specifically, the delivery of 'high quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time'.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Michael Jones**  
**Head of Corporate Finance**

**15 January 2024**

An assessment of the annual costs, for the duration of the contract, are detailed in **Appendix 5**. This has been used as the basis to demonstrate an indicative value, which incorporates predicted demographic and inflationary impacts.

This is based on indices and assumptions consistent with the Councils medium term financial strategy.

Actual annual fee uplifts to providers are subject to consultation, and external market and economic factors which could alter that value of the annual contract totals.

The annual estimated expenditure of £8.6m, used as the starting point for external homecare services is consistent with the 2023/24 base budget.

Budget provision of £0.216m, to finance the Councils contribution to the Bridging service (para 2.212) is included in the base budget. This is in addition to the £8.6m for external homecare services.

### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Kevin Molloy**  
**Team Leader Contract Team**

**15 January 2024**



Following issue by the Council of a s114 notice, the Council must ensure that its resources are not used for non-essential spending. The contract at issue here is essential and the provision of it a statutory duty under the Care Act. In procuring the services outlined, the Council must observe the obligations upon it outlined in national legislation and in its internal procurement rules. Officers should ensure Legal Services are kept informed as they progress through the procurement.

### 7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**  
**Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer**  
**15 January 2024**

All information regarding Community Equality Impact Assessments can be found here:  
<https://intranet.thurrock.gov.uk/services/diversity-and-equality/ceia/>

Due to the nature of the services under discussion in the report, older people will be disproportionately impacted by any change/activity in this area.

However, the approach detailed in the report seeks to address the key risks to the long-term sustainability of domiciliary care and details how we as a council (working in partnership with providers and people who use this service) will mitigate these risks.

As such, the development of the domiciliary care service model and the application of the HLS approach in commissioning, should have a positive impact on older people (and all service users) in that it should secure sufficient services to meet needs both now and in the future. It is also hoped that it will improve workforce retention and improve service users' outcomes.

There have been no adverse outcomes identified, however as the service evolves ongoing evaluations of the impact of these changes will be undertaken through the completion of a Community Equality Impact Assessment (CEIA).

### 7.4 Risks

Adult Social Care Demand, Stability and Market Failure is a corporate risk. Although this risk is wider than just domiciliary care, a driver behind this tender and the development of a new domiciliary care model is to help mitigate this identified risk. The instability of the care market, increased demand and potential failure to meet need due to workforce recruitment and retention issues have been addressed by our preferred option – 2 (please see section 3.2).

### 7.5 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children

None

### 8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- **Better Care Together Thurrock – The Case for Further Change,**  
<https://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/documents/s34501/Appendix%20B%20->

[%20Better%20Care%20Together%20Thurrock%20-%20Further%20Case%20for%20Change%20-%20Full%20Version.pdf](#)

- **Market Sustainability Plan 2023**, <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/adult-care-strategies-and-plans/adult-social-care-local-account>
- **Skills for Care - Thurrock Summary**, <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Adult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data/Workforce-intelligence/documents/Local-authority-area-summary-reports/Eastern/2022/Thurrock-Summary.pdf>

## 9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Procurement Timeline
- Appendix 2 – Heat Maps of care delivery with locality boundaries identified.
- Appendix 3 – Community Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix 4 – Option 2 (Preferred Option) Implementation Timetable
- Appendix 5 – Predicted Inflationary and Demand Pressures on contract value.

### Report Author:

Sarah Turner

Commissioning Manager

Adult Social Care

## Appendix 1 – Procurement Timetable

Activity	Start Date	End Date
Market Engagement Event	Nov 23	-
Cabinet approval to tender	07 Feb 24	-
Selection Stage (SQ)	19 Feb 24	22 Mar 24
SQ Evaluation	25 Mar 24	19 Apr 24
Tender Stage (ITT)	22 Apr 24	07 Jun 24
Evaluation of written tenders	10 Jun 24	28 Jun 24
Tender Interviews	01 Jul 24	19 Jul 24
Service User Visits	22 Jul 24	16 Aug 24
Notification of Outcome	19 Aug 24	-
Standstill	20 Aug 24	29 Aug 24
Award	30 Aug 24	-
Handover/TUPE	02 Sep 24	31 Mar 25
Contract Start	01 Apr 25	-

Appendix 2 – Localities and current care delivery – please see separate PDF.

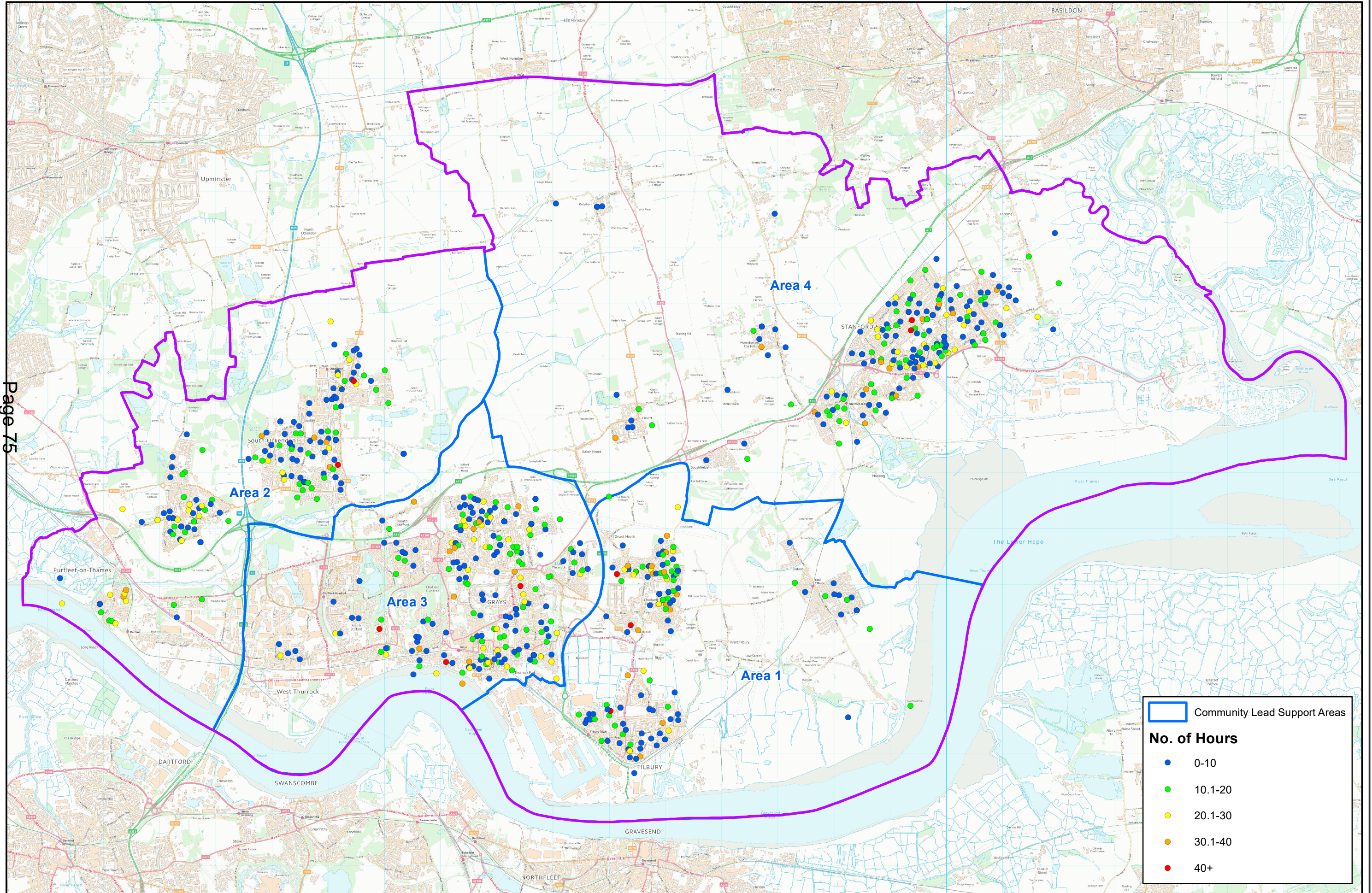
Appendix 3 – Community Equality Impact Assessment – please see separate report.

Appendix 4 – Preferred Option Implementation Timetable – please see separate report.

Appendix 5 – Predicted Inflationary and Demand Pressures on contract value.

**Appendix 5 – Predicted Inflationary and Demand Pressures on contract value.**





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# Thurrock Council

## Community Equality Impact Assessment

### Service area and lead officer

<b>Name of service</b>	Adult Social Care
<b>CEIA Lead Officer</b>	Sarah Turner
<b>CEIA Lead Officer job title</b>	Commissioning Manager
<b>CEIA Lead Officer email address</b>	SATurner@thurrock.gov.uk

### Subject of this assessment

<b>What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?</b>
Commissioning of domiciliary care (aka home care) services.
<b>Borough-wide or location-specific?</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Borough-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Location-specific – please state locations below.
Click or tap here to enter text.
<b>Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development or review needed?</b>

**This is a large-scale procurement affecting the most vulnerable people in our community. As such a review is required to ensure we do not adversely affect service users or their unpaid carers.**

**Little change will occur to the service at contract commencement. Instead, the service will evolve in line with a Human Learning Systems (HLS) approach. As such, there will be multiple iterations of this document over the life of the contract as we decide to test and implement modifications to the existing service design in response to learning.**

**We are moving the service to operate on a locality basis as 'place' is the organising principle for health and social care in Thurrock. It is hoped that by moving the service onto the same locality footprint as G.P.s, district nursing and social work teams that service users will experience a more integrated and joined up approach to support, reducing duplication and the number of people coming into their home.**

**Should an 'experiment' (pilot) prove to be successful we hope to enhance the role of care workers. This in turn should lead to greater remuneration and status of these workers, hopefully addressing the recruitment and retention challenges facing us (care as a career is unattractive, often viewed as low status and low pay with little progression) as one third of our workforce is due to retire in the next 10 years, yet we attract few young entrants to the sector.**

**We have proposed a 10 year contract, to move away from the endless short term cycle of tenders which have historically added little value whilst being time consuming and costly. Thurrock has an over reliance on '0' hour employment contracts within the adult care sector compared to national and regional averages and it is expected that by offering greater security of contracts, providers can in turn offer more security in their employment.**

## **1. Engagement, consultation and supporting information**

- 1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to engage or consult (where applicable) the whole community or specific groups affected by this development or review? **This is a vital step.**

**Steps you have taken, or plan to take, to engage or consult**



We have carried out a baseline survey with all users of the service and have commissioned Thurrock Coalition (our User Led Organisation) to undertake focus groups on our behalf. We have also utilised the contract officers existing contact with service users as part of their quality monitoring activity to ensure we understand what is working well and what areas we need to improve i.e. what is important to people who use the service both now and in the future.

- 1.2. What data or intelligence sources have you used to inform your assessment of the impact? How have these helped you understand who will be affected by the development or review?

#### **Sources of data or intelligence, and how they have been used**

We have undertaken a review of the protected characteristics of the people who use the service and compared this to survey respondents and the census data.

## **2. Community and workforce impact**

- 2.1. What impacts will this development or review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents?

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
<b>Local communities in general</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>We are moving to an area based (locality) delivery of care to ensure greater joined up working between health and social care. This should reduce duplication, reduce travel and increase timeliness of calls and consistency of carers.</p> <p>We have not identified any negative impacts in this approach.</p>	<p>It is hoped that users of the service will experience an improved service – especially in the two areas that they have identified as important to them, namely timeliness of visits/calls and consistency of carers.</p>
<b>Age</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>85% of users of domiciliary care users are older people – with the majority being aged 80+. Any change in service will impact on this group of people more than anyone else. The initial change to place based working should have no adverse impact on older people and support the service improvements identified by users as being of importance e.g. timeliness of calls and consistency of carers.</p> <p>Other impacts will be assessed as the service is shaped.</p>	<p>No negative impacts have been identified. We are introducing electronic monitoring so that we can monitor timelines of calls/consistency of staff. Should we see improvements in these areas of delivery, we will have higher satisfaction amongst users.</p>

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
<b>Disability</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The majority of users will have some form of disability and require help and assistance with aspects of daily living e.g. washing, dressing etc. As such, improvements in services should lead to greater satisfaction with their support.	No negative impacts have been identified. Improved service quality and satisfaction should lead to improved outcomes for people with a disability. We will be testing over time how to connect people who use this service with the community they live in thereby reducing the high levels of self-reported loneliness.
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither positive or negative impacts identified. We do not have enough data to draw any meaningful conclusions.	Neither positive or negative impacts identified
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither positive or negative impacts identified. We do not have enough data to draw any meaningful conclusions.	Neither positive or negative impacts identified
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither positive or negative impacts identified due to the age of most service users (80+).	Neither positive or negative impacts identified

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
<b>Race</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Race was considered as part of evaluation of users of the service. User profile matched census data for these age groups and there was no evidence that access to services was a concern. There was also no evidence that race impacted on satisfaction levels in the survey results. However, please note that the user group was too small to draw any more meaningful conclusions.	Please see explanation.
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither positive or negative impacts identified. Please note that it is a requirement of providers registrations to not discriminate against people for their religion or beliefs so this is checked by CQC in addition to our own contract monitoring.	Neither positive or negative impacts identified.
<b>Sex</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	As women live longer than men, we have more women who use domiciliary care. As such any change in service delivery would impact women more. However, no adverse impact has been identified.	Neither positive or negative impacts identified.

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither positive or negative impacts identified. We do not have enough data at this time. However, we are aware that nationally (although still awaiting local analysis) that people from the LGBTQ+ community are more likely to be an unpaid carer than the general population. As such, this is considered in that section.	Please see implications.
<b>Location-specific impact, if any</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The service will operate on a locality basis. This should ensure greater integration with other social care, health and voluntary sector services reducing duplication and confusion for service users. It should also reduce travel and improve timeliness of visits and carer consistency.	Apart from the reduction in duplication and improvement in timeliness of visits/carer consistency, it is expected that by working on a locality basis that the successful provider can draw on local assets and natural circles of support within the community. We have issues with reported loneliness amongst home care service users and we see place based working as an opportunity to increase service users connections to the community they live in.

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
<b>Workforce</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Recruitment occurs within this sector on a hyper local basis. By operating on a place basis recruitment should be positively impacted.</p> <p>In addition, we are proposing a 10 year contract to give providers more stability. We expect this stability to result in a reduction in the use of '0' hour contracts. We will also explore the possibility of paying differently during the life of the contract to again support this.</p>	<p>We know we are heading for a significant issue in the recruitment and retention of care workers. We have an over reliance on '0' hour workers and are expecting one third of our workforce to retire within the next 10 years. Due to the low status and pay of workers we are not attracting younger recruits.</p> <p>As such, we have highlighted recruitment and retention as our main priority in our Market Sustainability Plan. This has helped shape procurement decisions – most obviously the move away from insecure short-term contracts which foster the use of '0' hour contracts in the sector.</p> <p>An increase in more secure employment contracts will be evidence of an improved approach. A more secure workforce will support greater consistency of carers – which is a priority for service users.</p>

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
<b>Health and wellbeing of residents</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The purpose of the service is to support the health and wellbeing of residents who meet the eligibility criteria of the Care Act 2014. We are trying to take forward greater integration to support improved outcomes for service users.	We are currently piloting a wellbeing teams approach internally – initial evidence suggests that this change to how we deliver care results in far less hospital admissions and g.p. visits. When we pilot this wider, should these outcomes be replicated, we will be able to maximise this positive aspect throughout Thurrocks communities.

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
<b>Socio-economic outcomes</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>More people work in social care than the NHS and it accounts for about 5% of the economy. Therefore, this tender can have a significant impact on the local economy and employment.</p> <p>We will be requiring providers to invest in the local area and seeking social value commitments through this process. Due to the hyper local recruitment of care workers we are aware that by changing the way we commission we could positively impact on both of the socio-economic outcomes identified.</p> <p>If the proposed 10 year contract period is agreed, then we expect more people to be offered greater security of employment.</p>	<p>We are attempting to maximise the investment of successful providers into the local area and will be seeking social value commitments. The contract is worth an estimated £114million over the 10 year period.</p>
<b>Veterans and serving members of the armed forces</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither positive or negative impacts have been identified.	Neither positive or negative impacts have been identified.



Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Unpaid carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We are making the support of unpaid carers a priority within the specification including.	We will be seeking social value commitments that support unpaid carers. It is an expectation of the specification that the successful providers will support unpaid carers to access information, advice and support and to signpost them to local resources that can help eliminate loneliness and stress of their caring role.

### 3. Monitoring and review

- 3.1. How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? These actions should be developed using the information gathered in sections 1 and 2 and included in your service area's business plans.

Action	By when	By who
We have committed to review the CEIA as part of our 'experiment' (pilot) process over the course of the contract. This will be an ever-evolving CEIA and not a one of process.	Various – as part of the HLS approach we will review the CEIA at the start and finish of each experiment before making any modifications to the operating model. Co-production is a core element of the HLS approach.	Commissioning Team – Adult Social Care
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### 4. Next steps

- 4.1. The information gathered must be used to inform reports presented to Cabinet or overview and scrutiny committees. This will give members a necessary understanding of the impact their decisions will have on different groups and the whole community.

Summarise the implications and customer impact below. This summary should be added to the committee reports template in the Diversity and Equality Implications section for review and sign-off at the consultation stage of the report preparation cycle.

**Summary of implications and customer impact**

For this tender we are undertaking an HLS approach to the service. As such, the specification will evolve and change in line with learning. Initially there are no changes to the service (except for operating on a locality rather than borough wide footprint) and no adverse impact has been identified. However, we have committed within the HOSC and Cabinet report to update the CEIA as each change is proposed to the model. As such, this will be an evolving CEIA with multiple versions by the end of the contract period (10 years).

**5. Sign off**

5.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. This should not be the CEIA Lead Officer. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

- the accuracy of the information
- making sure actions are undertaken

Name	Role	Date
Ceri Armstrong	Head of ASC Transformation and Commissioning	12/12/23
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Summary/Outline of Key Activities and Dates

Theme 1 - Provider Development / Market Readiness			
No.	Action	Timeline	Lead
1.	<b>Initial engagement with current providers</b> – individual meetings held at the beginning of the process (with providers over a certain size) to understand the current challenges they face and to seek their expertise in shaping the model. Opportunity also used to have early discussions about Thurrock’s aspirations/HLS/Wellbeing Teams etc.	June 2023	Commissioning
2.	<b>Additional engagement with current providers</b> – Second conversation with above providers to discuss the potential model whilst it is being shaped. Opportunity for providers to highlight any concerns with the proposed model at this early stage. Meeting also used to identify what support partners would need at the beginning of the contract (should they be successful in the tender) to meet our aspirations/plans regarding change in service model.	October 2023	Commissioning
3.	<b>Support potential providers to understand Thurrock strategic direction</b> – Prior to tender commencement, a Provider Engagement Event to be held with current and potential providers to enable them to understand HLS, Thurrock’s integrated health and social care strategy (Better Care Together - The Case for Further Change, specifically chapter 8) and the details of the contract opportunity e.g. length of contract, handover, model etc.	November 2023	Commissioning and Procurement Teams
4.	<b>Rural outliners and difficult to access areas</b> - work undertaken in Bulphan and in East Tilbury (pass the crossing) to develop a community/micro response to need in these areas.	When post is recruited to.	Micro Enterprise Officer (when vacant post is recruited to)
5.	<b>Shape specification and tender process</b> – ensure the specification has built in flexibility that enables the service to adapt to learning over the life of the contract. Ensure tender process seeks adaptable providers who can evidence innovation and working in partnership (with users of services and health, care, housing and third sector partners).	By March 2023	Commissioning
<b><i>Please note: Based on legal advice, Commissioning is unable to have further conversations with current or potential providers regarding the tender or the development of the model of care/support after the Provider Engagement Event in November. This ‘ethical wall’ ensures a fair and transparent tender process.</i></b>			
Theme 2 – Learning and its application (Interdependency between ‘experiments’ and the model of care and support)			
1.	<b>Wellbeing Pilot Evaluation –</b>	September 2024 onwards	Public Health (evaluation results).

	The wellbeing evaluation will report once the procurement of domiciliary care service is underway. As such, the results will feed into and shape the model from contract award onwards.		Commissioning (interpreting the learning for the external market)
2.	<b>ToCH/Hospital discharge and avoidance pathway –</b> Model will be developed, tested and then established during 2023/24. The specification will either capture how the ToCH operates and the role that successful providers will undertake or be flexible enough to allow changes to occur. If it is the latter, any alterations to published existing practices will be embedded with providers between contract award and contract commencement.	September 2024 to March 2025	Contracting and Commissioning
3.	<b>Blended Roles –</b> A large amount of progress has already been made in this area and recruitment is agreed for a specialist nurse role who will oversee the training and assessment of competences in health-related tasks being undertaken by adult social care staff i.e. the Wellbeing Team. Once in place, we will be able to see how blended roles progresses (e.g. the number of different tasks/conditions they can support) and then assess both the likely demand that could be delegated to adult social care and the extent of crossover between health and adult social care service users (to stop duplication of effort/visits).  The current pilot is centred around health and social care working together as partners. As statutory partners we already have a strong platform for integration and risk sharing that this project has built upon. If the above ‘experiment’ proves successful, both the risk to health of delegating tasks wider to non-statutory partners and the accountability framework will need to be explored before progressing.	End of March 2025 - there should be a robust evaluation of the success and cost/benefit of this model. Its wider application can then be considered.	Commissioning (adapting the learning to the external market)
<b>Theme 3 – Post award implementation and Human Learning Systems (HLS) ‘experiments’</b>			
1.	<b>Award to contract commencement –</b> Work with the successful providers to ensure their submitted mobilisation plan is on track. Ensure TUPE takes place (if applicable). Revise risk and contingency plans based on outcome of tender (number of new and existing providers increases or decreases risk, outgoing providers willingness to TUPE, staff retention rates of outgoing providers, new providers recruitment and onboarding etc).	September 2024 to March 2025	Contracting and Commissioning Teams.

2.	<p><b>Contract commencement - 0 to 6 months/12 months</b> – The timeframe is variable as it is dependent on the number of contracts awarded to existing and new providers. For example, if all four contract opportunities were awarded to new providers, this period could be 12 months. Equally, if they were awarded to existing providers this period would be minimal. Delivery of care is complex, and a significant amount of resource is always required at contract commencement to ensure the safe delivery of services to vulnerable people and to embed good working relationships and Thurrock practices.</p>	Between April 2025 and March 2026 (timeframes variable as dependent on profile of successful providers)	Contracting Team with support from the Commissioning Team.
3.	<p><b>Test model in different localities/with different partners</b> – As part of the tender, potential partners will be asked to submit plans regarding how they would develop the service. We will use this submission in conjunction with the learning from Theme 2 and service user engagement to test the future model of care in different localities.</p>	Year 1 to 2 of the contract (see above – dependent on contract commencement).	Commissioning
4.	<p><b>Finalise Model</b> – Based on learning, finalise a model that works at either a Thurrock wide or locality level (i.e. the model may need to look different in Corringham compared to Grays depending on the strengths and assets in that community).</p> <p>This model to continue to adapt and respond to learning.</p>	Year 2 to 3 (dependent on contract commencement)	Commissioning

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<b>7 February 2024</b>	<b>ITEM: 13</b> <b>Decision: 110693</b>
<b>Cabinet</b>	
<b>Domestic Abuse Services Reprocurement</b>	
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Key
<b>Report of:</b> Councillor Barry Johnson, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and Housing	
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Janet Simon – Assistant Director Childrens Social Care and Early Help Ewelina Sorbjan – Assistant Director Housing Management	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Sheila Murphy – Executive Director of Childrens Services Ian Wake – Executive Director of Adults, Housing and Health	
<b>This report is</b> Public with an exempt appendix. Appendix 1 - Stage 1 Procurement Form is not to be published by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it contains exempt information as set out in category 3, as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).	
<b>Date of notice given of confidential or exempt report:</b> 30 January 2024	

## Executive Summary

This report sets out the proposed future procurement of domestic abuse services for both victims and perpetrators in Thurrock from January 2025.

All forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) can affect anyone, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2022 highlights that an estimated 6.9% of women (1.7 million) and 3.0% of men (699,000) experienced domestic abuse in the last year. In the same year, data supplied from police forces nationally detailed that victims were female in 74.1% of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police, and in the case of domestic abuse-related sexual offences, the proportion of victims that were female was higher at 93.5%.

Recent years have seen implementation of new laws and policy to support the VAWG agenda. In November 2022, the UK became the 37th state to ratify the Istanbul Convention. In July 2021, government published the revised national plan to address VAWG, titled, ‘Tackling Violence against Women and Girls’ Strategy. This strategy includes a combination of prevention, intervention, and support measures aimed at reducing the incidences and impact of violence against women and girls. The strategy seeks to raise awareness and increase the understanding of the issues faced by people

experiencing these crimes. The strategy reflects the strengthening of laws (Domestic Abuse Act 2021) and policies to protect women and girls from violence. It acknowledges the long-term support that survivors need to help them rebuild their lives. This strategy separated out domestic abuse due to the requirement of statutory guidance to support the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. As a result of these legislative changes, the National Statement of Expectations and other supportive documents were also updated.

Government refreshed the Male Victims Position Statement, reiterating their commitment to ensure that male victims of crimes, which whilst disproportionately affecting women and girls, are also supported. Whilst acknowledging the disproportionately gendered nature of VAWG, government VAWG communication campaigns are inclusive of male victims to raise awareness, challenge harmful societal myths about masculinity, and encourage male victims and survivors to report abuse. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 stipulates that a child who sees, hears, or experiences the effects of domestic abuse, and is related to the person being abused or the person perpetrating the abuse, is also regarded as a victim in law.

National and local strategies recognise that men and boys are also affected by these crimes and Thurrock's support services for all VAWG crimes are available to any survivor regardless of gender identity or expression.

Funding for services supporting victims and perpetrators is currently split across Childrens Services and the Adults, Housing and Health Directorates, with some funding via the Department For Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC), known as 'New Burdens' funding. This report is therefore being presented as a joint paper with implications for both directorates.

Following extensive mapping, service gap analysis and service user and stakeholder engagement work with Essex County Council, Southend City Council and the Essex Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioners Office, it is proposed to enter into joint procurement arrangements for services that work with victims (adults and children and young people) and perpetrators of domestic abuse across the Southend, Essex, and Thurrock (SET) area.

The identified benefits of these arrangements will be:

- Improvements in the pathways that service users navigate to access services
- A consistent approach to the offer of services across the area
- An improved service user experience
- Better co-ordination of services where service users are often transient through being forced to move area to flee their perpetrator
- Efficiency savings through pooling of budgets and reduction in overlapping commissioned services by different partners
- Realisation of savings will allow further investment in preventative services, particularly scaling up interventions with perpetrators of domestic abuse.

### **Commissioner Comment:**

Reviewed with no comments.



## **1. Recommendation(s)**

**1.1 That Cabinet agree the pooling of budgets with Essex County Council, Southend City Council, and the Essex Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioners Office to jointly procure domestic abuse victim and perpetrator services as follows:**

**1.1.1 Childrens Services (General Fund) - £73,100.00 p.a. for a total contract period of 7 years – total value £511,700.**

**1.1.2 Adults, Housing, and Health (Housing General Fund) - £29,750 p.a. for a total contract period of 7 years – total value £208,250.**

**1.1.3 Adults, Housing, and Health (Grant funding to Housing via the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities ‘New Burdens Fund’) - £221,990 p.a. for a total contract period of 7 years – total value £1,553,930.**

**1.2 That the power to award the contract be delegated to the Executive Director of Childrens Services and the Executive Director of Adults, Housing, and Health, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Childrens Services and Housing.**

**1.3 That the power to agree decisions on the allocation of funds from the ‘Safe Accommodation New Burdens’ funding to any joint procurement arrangements and expenditure committed internally, be delegated to the Executive Director of Adults, Housing, and Health, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Childrens Services and Housing.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

**2.1 Local priorities and strategies, a number of statutory guidance directives, a national statement of expectations, and a draft bill proceeding through Parliament, in respect of domestic abuse service responses provide the background and responsibilities that should be delivered by Local Authorities and partners. These include:**

### **Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026 – Levelling the playing field in Thurrock**

- The Health and Wellbeing Strategy includes a goal to improve the response to supporting victims/survivors of abuse to improve health and wellbeing. This is guided by the Thurrock Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Action Plan, which includes a survivor-led strengths based pathway of support available to all genders, based on findings from engagement with local victims/survivors.

## **Thurrock Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2023-2026**

This recently refreshed strategy sets out the work that takes place with victims/survivors of both domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse. Specifically, for domestic abuse the following priorities are identified:

- Communities better understanding what VAWG crimes are and the support that is available
- Increasing awareness across educational establishments and all professionals
- Improving multi-agency working
- Support victims of VAWG with appropriate services
- Appropriate intervention for those displaying abusive behaviours
- Ensuring survivor 'voices' are heard and play a part in service development.

Thurrock Council, Essex County Council and Southend City Council will continue to publish their own local strategies developed around local needs.

## **Home Office Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance 2021 (Safe Accommodation) and Statutory Guidance 2022 (all elements of domestic abuse)**

This statutory guidance sets out the following responsibilities:

- Agencies (including Local Authorities) have responsibility to work together effectively to provide support and protection to victims of domestic abuse through strategic planning, co-commissioning, and creating joined-up services (2022 guidance)
- Multi-agency working should be embedded into approaches to responding to domestic abuse and should offer a range of interventions and support, from early intervention to support for high-risk cases (2022 guidance)
- Agencies should consider creative options to address the behaviour of the perpetrator, including Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes (2022 guidance)
- Local Authorities have a duty to provide safe accommodation, including refuges, dispersed accommodation and 'sanctuary' security adapted private homes and to deliver effective support within these (2021 guidance).

## **Home Office National Statement of Expectations 2022**

This guidance sets out the key principles that are expected of commissioning bodies:

- Local areas should commission effective services to ensure their whole system response to violence against women and girls (VAWG) is as collaborative, robust, and effective as it can be so that all victims and survivors, including children as victims in their own right, can get the help they need. Local areas should have sufficient local specialist VAWG service provision, including provision designed specifically to support victims from ethnic minority backgrounds, deaf and disabled victims, victims with learning disabilities, male victims, LGBTQIA+ victims, migrant victims, children and young people and older victims.

## **Serious Violence Duty**

- The statutory guidance for the Serious Violence Duty published in December 2022 states where domestic abuse or sexual offences are determined to be serious violence in a local area, in accordance with the Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, specified authorities should take action to prevent and reduce such offending. Local areas' strategy should include how they will exercise their functions to tackle domestic abuse and sexual offences.

## **Draft Victims and Prisoners Bill**

- This draft legislation will further enshrine in law a duty on Agencies (including Local Authorities) to collaborate when exercising their commissioning and provision of victim support services.
- 2.2 Domestic abuse can take many forms including physical, coercive, psychological, sexual, financial, harassment and stalking (including online). Under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 children became victims in their own right.
  - 2.3 The Council has historically provided domestic abuse services to both survivors (victims) and perpetrators (see Table 1).
  - 2.4 The borough sits at the upper end of the second quartile for prevalence of domestic abuse incidents reported to the Police with a rate of 28.0 per 1,000 (England average = 31.2). Anecdotally there is a high prevalence of domestic abuse that is not reported to the Police.
  - 2.5 The effects of domestic abuse can be seen primarily across two of the Council's directorates, Childrens Services, specifically Social Care, and Adults, Housing & Health (specifically Housing). There are significant cost and resource implications in the management of cases within both directorates, with 1592 (17.4% of total) contacts made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) over the previous year and 679 contacts to the Housing Safeguarding Team, where domestic abuse was the primary contact reason. The social care recording system is complex and only allows one category of need to be recorded following a referral. In practice there are usually multiple needs, however the main presenting issue is the one recorded. The number of cases that present locally to childrens social care with domestic abuse as a contributory factor is closer to 40% and increases further as case status escalates to child protection, and backed up by national prevalence data which presents a similar picture.
  - 2.6 The current commissioned services are funded through both Childrens Services and the Adults, Housing, and Health directorates with two providers, Changing Pathways (victim services) and the Change Project (perpetrator services). Community support for victims is primarily delivered through an in-house Housing Safeguarding Team. Additionally, a bespoke service (Brighter Futures) that works over eight weeks with victims is commissioned with Changing Pathways.
  - 2.7 The system is a complex one requiring significant resource to manage these contracts, all with separate reporting functions back to the Council.

Table 1 – Service provision

Service	Provider	Current value of contract and funding	Expiry date
8 week structured support programme ( <b>Brighter Futures</b> ) – specifically open to Social Care / Prevention and Support Service (PASS) cases	Changing Pathways	£86,000 p.a.  Childrens Services (General Fund)	31/12/2024
<b>Community Support for victims/survivors – Housing Safeguarding Team</b>	In-house	1 x Band D post - £32,722  2 x Band E post - £77,444 (1 x post funded through the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities - New Burdens Safe Accommodation Grant Funding)  These officers focus specifically on domestic abuse and are part of a wider team managing other need areas including anti-social behaviour	Ongoing permanent staff contracts
<b>Refuge provision (female)</b>	Changing Pathways	£155,000 p.a.  Adults, Housing, and Health (General Fund)	31/12/2024
<b>Additional support functions within refuge:</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Therapeutic support</li> <li>• Financial inclusion</li> <li>• Complex case support</li> <li>• Childrens support</li> <li>• Tutoring for children</li> <li>• Flexible Fund</li> <li>• Training for refuge staff</li> </ul>	Changing Pathways	£123,166 p.a.  Adults, Housing, and Health (funded through the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities - New Burdens Safe Accommodation Grant Funding)	31/03/2025

<p><b>Perpetrator Change Programme</b> – (including a Partner Link Worker)</p>	<p>The Change Project</p>	<p>£18,000 p.a.</p> <p>Adults, Housing, and Health (funded through the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities New Burdens Safe Accommodation Grant Funding)</p> <p>The £18,000 p.a. is a minority contribution funded by the Council – the remainder is funded through the Essex Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioners Office</p>	<p>31/03/2025</p>
<p><b>Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA)</b> and access to the 'COMPASS' single point of access across Southend, Essex, and Thurrock</p>	<p>Changing Pathways</p>	<p>£17,000 p.a. funded from Public Realm (General Fund)</p> <p>This service is already part of a pooled budget with Southend, Essex and Thurrock Councils and the Essex Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioners Office - with Thurrock Council providing a minority contribution</p>	<p>31/03/2025</p>

### **Victim support services**

2.8 Victim support services are delivered through a number of channels by the in-house **Housing Safeguarding Team** and **Changing Pathways**, a local charitable status organisation.

### **Brighter Futures – bespoke programme available to Childrens Social Care**

2.8.1 The 'Brighter Futures' service, commissioned with Changing Pathways, delivers a bespoke one-to-one eight week structured programme of support to victims covering safety planning, awareness raising and education of all forms of domestic abuse, practical support around housing, legal, finance, employment and training, resilience building and emotional recovery.

2.8.2 During 2022/23 there were 145 service users who completed at least three quarters of the eight week Brighter Futures programme. 97% of service users were female and 3% male. This service is currently restricted to Childrens Social Care/Prevention and Support Service (PASS) referrals and cannot be self-referred to. Reporting from the service is often used by Social Care to inform court processes and risk assessment.

- 2.8.3 In addition to the eight week programme a universal drop-in service operates offering one off advice and guidance in respect of safety planning and practical support. This element of the service makes up the minority of the contract value and often supports service users who have previously been through the eight week programme and require 'top-up' support. It compliments and does not replace the main route into community based support which is through the Housing Safeguarding Team.
- 2.8.4 During 2022/23 there were 188 service users who accessed this drop-in support. 97% of service users were female and 3% male. 21% of these sessions were face to face and 79% virtual.

## **Refuge and associated support in safe accommodation**

- 2.9 The refuge provision in Thurrock provides safe accommodation to 15 female victims and their children who are fleeing domestic abuse and need a secure home for periods which can range between three months up to a year, dependent on needs. In addition, there are three dispersed accommodation houses which are used when a resident is ready to start to move on or where refuge accommodation may be inappropriate due to the age and numbers of children, as examples.
- 2.9.1 Service users can be, but are not always residents of Thurrock, since the way in which this type of provision works is on a reciprocal basis i.e., Thurrock residents could be residing in a refuge in any area of the country and vice versa, so long as it is a safe area where the perpetrator would be unlikely to track the victim. The top areas where service users accessing the Thurrock refuge were originally resident are Thurrock (11%), Southend-on-Sea (13%), Basildon (10%), Barking & Dagenham (8%), making up two-fifths of all victims staying in Thurrock. Many survivors from outside the borough go on to settle in Thurrock.
- 2.9.2 Over the three year period 2018-2021 there were 120 residents in refuge who had a total of 175 children. The average age was 35 however the ages ranged from 21 to 71.
- 2.9.3 Commencing in the financial year 2021/22 the Council was awarded £366,530 in funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities under the New Burdens Safe Accommodation Grant. This was to recognise the statutory duties placed upon Local Authorities under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to provide enhanced support in safe accommodation which includes refuges, safe move-on accommodation as well as service users living in their own home who are benefiting from enhanced security measures installed under the 'Sanctuary' target hardening scheme.
- 2.9.4 The funding was increased to £367,545 for 2022/23, £374,897 for 2023/24 and will be £381,970 for 2024/25. There is a proposal by the Government to incorporate this fund into the Local Authority Revenue Support Grant from 2025/26, however this is not yet confirmed. The statutory duties that are linked to the funding will not change due to this.
- 2.9.5 A proportion of this funding (£123,166) is being allocated to the current commissioned provider of domestic abuse (victim) services, Changing Pathways, to fund support that was identified following a needs assessment in 2021. Based on this assessment a number of areas of priority need were funded including therapeutic support incorporating trauma focussed counselling for both adults and children, financial inclusion (access to employment, education,

benefits, money management, tenancy sustainment), complex needs support (supporting and advocating to access services in the areas of alcohol and substance misuse, mental health, general health, housing, legal services and the Police), tutoring for children within the refuge, emotional support for children in refuge, enhanced training for staff in the refuge, and a flexible fund to support vulnerable service users who are leaving safe accommodation.

2.9.6 The remainder of the funding awarded through the New Burdens fund has been allocated as follows for 2023/24:

- £18,000 – support for partners of perpetrators attending a change management programme (where the partner is in a ‘Sanctuary’ adapted house or in refuge – known as the Partner Link Worker)
- £120,000 – offset against the existing refuge contract value – representing the support element of the cost of operating the refuge (and not the building costs) as is permitted within the eligibility criteria of the grant
- £20,000 – supporting a childrens group run by Social Care for those who are ether currently living in or have recently experienced a household where domestic abuse has been witnessed
- £10,364 - Flexible Fund – to support victims of sexual domestic violence who are in or have accessed safe accommodation recently
- £47,029 – supporting salary costs of the post that oversees the Domestic Abuse Duties placed upon the Council including management of the grant, needs analysis and reporting back to Government
- £34,600 – supporting the salary costs of a complex case officer within the Housing Safeguarding Team (in-house) working with refuge service users to secure their future housing needs.

2.9.7 Where this funding is pooled with partners this will provide further opportunity to achieve value for money. The Council will still continue to be able to ensure this funding is flexible and can adapt to emerging local needs.

### **Housing Safeguarding Team (in-house)**

2.10 The in-house Housing Safeguarding Team offer support, advice and guidance to victims/survivors of domestic abuse in the community. Some of the service users who access this service will have housing needs, however these needs do not need to be present to be able to access the service. The team support not only residents where there is domestic abuse, but any resident where there is a safeguarding issue, from anti-social behaviour, mental health issues to hoarding amongst some examples. Three officers specifically support domestic abuse as part of the wider team.

2.10.1 The functions of this team will not be included in any joint commissioning arrangements. The team will continue in its current form and work alongside the commissioned services, as is currently the case. The team was established around the ‘whole housing approach’ which is a good practice framework to address the housing and safety needs of victims/survivors in a local area. The needs that have been identified in a joint needs analysis across the area will be embedded into the approaches of the team in order for them to respond to these effectively.

- 2.10.2 The team perform a specialist function that works closely with other areas of the Housing Service and has a focus on maintaining secure and safe tenancy and community based support, advocacy, safety planning and prevention advice. The team provide a service to all residents, regardless of any housing need, and work directly with private landlords and registered providers of social housing to provide additional security to survivor's accommodation as part of the 'Sanctuary' target hardening scheme which improves security within the home to prevent access by the victim's perpetrator.
- 2.10.3 The Housing Safeguarding Team will continue to be the default route for community based support in Thurrock, continuing the 'whole housing approach' that is well established. There is however a need to continue to provide a more intensive programme, as is currently delivered by the eight-week Brighter Futures Service. This model is needed to ensure that decisions about children within the social care system are informed by a programme that is of sufficient length and intensity to be able to assess the continued level of risk. This is required to make effective decisions particularly around child protection and care proceedings. The format of this programme will be reviewed as part of this project and will work in line with the some of the principles identified in the analysis that has been carried out across the region.

### **Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA)**

- 2.11 The Independent Domestic Violence Advisor role based within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is trained to work with victims of domestic abuse at high risk of serious harm. IDVAs provide high-risk victims of domestic abuse with a tailored and person centred safety and support plan so that victims and their families are protected from abusive behaviour. This includes, but is not limited to, immediate risk assessment, safety planning, advocacy, emotional support, and empowerment.

### **Links to Domestic Sexual Violence**

- 2.12 The Domestic Abuse Act states that sexual violence can be part of domestic abuse in intimate partner relationships and can occur regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. Sexual violence in a relationship is often not an isolated incident and often occurs alongside other types of abusive behaviour including physical and emotional abuse and is often marginalised. Services are commissioned locally with a specialist sexual violence and abuse provider and as part of the new model we will continue to ensure that there are close links between both services within the central point of contact and enhance and develop these where needed.

### **Perpetrator Change Management**

#### **The Change Project**

- 2.13 A perpetrator change programme (The Change Project) is commissioned by the Essex Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioners Office (PFCC) and funded via a grant from the Home Office and match funded from the PFCC, with minority contributions from Essex County Council and Thurrock Council. The Council contribute to this as detailed in table 1. The service is open to all perpetrators who accept the need to change their behaviours and can self-refer or be referred by a professional. Programmes can be one-to-one, or group based and can be short interventions or accredited programmes that last for six months. All risk levels from standard to high can be accepted for support with both male and female perpetrators able to access the



service. A Partner Link Worker supports partners of those engaged in an intervention to ensure their continued safety whilst the perpetrator is accessing the programme. In addition to the core programme the funding also extends to preventative work in schools with young people who are displaying abusive patterns of behaviour and also to young people who are deemed susceptible to becoming a victim in an abusive relationship. Funding is currently being released by the Home Office in two year grant settlements and is expected to continue but cannot be guaranteed.

### **Domestic Abuse Specialist Interventions Manager (in-house)**

- 2.14 In addition to the above services the Council has a dedicated Domestic Abuse Specialist Interventions Manager based within Childrens Social Care. The role supports the risk assessment process by conducting these in respect of perpetrators and also increasing the skillset of social workers to undertake these assessments independently. In the year September 2021 to August 2022 there were 85 appointments completed for risk assessments or case discussions that consisted of meeting with the high-risk perpetrator of abuse alongside the social worker. In some cases, the role supports direct change management one-to-one work with perpetrators for cases with an open social care case where this is not being managed by The Change Project. Between these dates there were 14 individuals completing intensive one-to-one direct work. As of April 2023, the Change Project now work high risk cases as well as standard and medium risk, as was the case prior, and reducing the amount of one-to-one direct work that this postholder had completed prior to this change.
- 2.15 The above role is also responsible for chairing the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which manages and shares information on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of the police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 As detailed above the number of services, access points and complex funding streams make the commissioning landscape problematic and in need of redesign.

#### **Option 1 (preferred option) – pool budgets and jointly procure services with partners**

- 3.2 It is proposed to enter into joint procurement arrangements with partners detailed in 3.3 in respect of:
- 3.2.1 Safe accommodation services (including refuge) and support for victims of domestic abuse.
  - 3.2.2 Victim support services for parents/carers of children known to Childrens Social Care (excludes general community domestic abuse provision that is delivered in-house through Thurrock Housing).
  - 3.2.3 Victim services for children and young people impacted by parental domestic abuse or young perpetrators/victims themselves.
  - 3.2.4 Services that work with adult perpetrators of domestic abuse.

- 3.3 In Summer 2022 Thurrock Council, Essex County Council, Southend City Council and the Essex Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioners Office agreed to commence a project to understand the pathways and services across the region.
- 3.4 A mapping exercise has now commenced to assess the access routes into services, where these may overlap and where there are gaps in provision.
- 3.5 Service user and stakeholder engagement has played a key role in the project to date and will continue whilst work is ongoing.
- 3.6 A report was commissioned by Essex County Council through an independent research expert to understand the above areas. The final report was published in February 2023 (see Background Papers).
- 3.7 The initial findings from the report are detailed below:
- Commissioned contracts across different commissioning bodies would benefit from alignment and pooling of budgets.
  - A whole system approach is needed to address the fragmented nature of existing services.
  - The market needs development to drive through the shift change in the way in which services should be delivered, particularly moving some investment into perpetrator services.
  - There is significant opportunity to jointly commission services to simplify the current system for service users and achieve efficiency savings.
  - Tailored pathways of support need to be strengthened for underrepresented groups including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, deaf and disabled victims, victims with learning disabilities, male victims, LGBTQIA+ victims, migrant victims, children and young people and older victims.
  - There is a lack of refuge spaces in general and particularly where victims requiring a space and who have teenage boys (typically aged 14+), where this may not be appropriate for co-living with other adult female residents.
  - There needs to be a better understanding and involvement of 'by and for' services for minority groups to ensure service users know how to access support and are able to do so.
  - There is a lack of behavioural change programmes for perpetrators.
  - Long term recovery focussed support is needed for complex cases.
  - There needs to be a closer focus on children as victims, as they are now defined in law under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
  - Victims who are subject to coercive and controlling behaviour, rather than violence, do not always see themselves as victims and do not always access support.
  - Service user voice is currently an element to our approach but should be further strengthened to ensure service users are engaged in every stage of the commissioning cycle.
- 3.8. System redesign will bring significant benefits for service users through a uniform approach to accessing services which have the same offer regardless of where service users live across the region. There are however challenges in that community provision is delivered differently in Thurrock, through an in-house Housing Safeguarding Team working to the 'whole housing approach' with Southend and Essex having a commissioned offer.

- 3.9. A public health approach will be taken through increasing investment to tackle the root causes of domestic abuse, take a whole family approach, intervene early from young people in schools, and engage all partners to create a system wide change.
- 3.10. This will bring benefits to all service users but particularly to those who are transient across borders having been forced into that situation due to the risk from their perpetrator.
- 3.11. Whilst still in the developmental stage the initial model will focus on five key principles: **a single point of access** for victims/survivors, children and preparators with signposting to the most appropriate services, **a whole family approach** including the perpetrator where risk assessed as safe to do so, **engaging minoritised groups**, **providing longer term support where appropriate**, **breaking the cycle through investment in prevention and early intervention with perpetrators**.
- 3.12. These guiding principles will be applied both across any jointly procured services but also within the in-house Housing Safeguarding Team.
- 3.13. Savings will be realised through joint procurement and the benefits this brings. This being based on factoring in a reduction in commissioned values from the commencement of the contract in early 2025. The pooling of budgets and a joint procurement exercise will realise the benefits of sharing of staff and management costs across the current commissioned service providers throughout the region. Inflationary increases will not be awarded in addition to the pooled budgets detailed in 1.1 and will be built into the tender price that providers declare for the entire contract term. Providers will need to cost each year of the contract, accounting for inflation, within the given budget envelope. Despite this reduction in budget being made available there will be no negative impact on the capacity that services will be able to deliver, since the joint procurement efficiency savings realisation will cover the reduction in value and furthermore allow increased joint investment in services for both victims and perpetrators. Through the joint procurement arrangements and the continued use of Home Office and Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities funding the Council will be able to deliver increased capacity in service provision.
- 3.14. Collaboration between all parties who are currently engaged in this project will meet our responsibilities under the Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance 2022 requirements.
- 3.15. In order to ensure victims resident in Thurrock have access to services that meet local needs, the service design will be based on local needs analysis as well as the wider analysis that has been conducted by the independent research expert.
- 3.16. The Council will have an equal partner status as part of a formal collaborative commissioning agreement that all parties will sign up and adhere to
- 3.17. The Commissioning Team will have close involvement throughout the commissioning cycle from procurement through to contract management on an ongoing basis.
- 3.18. A full competitive open tender process is proposed with some initial pass/fail questions eliminating those providers who do not hold the requisite qualification to deliver these services. The market would not be sufficiently large enough to publish a restricted tender two-stage process. Whilst services are being re-shaped based on the needs analysis, the proposed

solutions are well understood and not any more highly complex than other projects. For this reason, after consideration, competitive dialogue is deemed not to benefit this procurement. The scoring mechanism is yet to be worked through and will be agreed between the Council, Essex County Council and Southend City Council. It will focus on the ability of providers to work in much more cohesive ways bringing together a whole family approach working with victims and perpetrators, where safe to, in order to jointly assess risk and manage cases in a more joined up manner. There will also be a clear focus on shifting to a more preventative model with tenderers being judged on how they will achieve this and the measure of success being significantly reduced need to access high cost services when situations have reached crisis point raising the risk to victims to a higher level.

- 3.19. Contracts with a term of 5 years plus 2 would provide security to providers to enable them to recruit and retain staff for long term contract delivery. The geographical area that this contract will cover already has challenges in recruitment and retention of staff due to the 'pull' factor of London salaried posts. As part of the strategy, it is intended to commission a central point of access for victims, perpetrators, and young people. This will require multi-disciplinary posts which will be challenging to upskill staff into and with this it is critical that those staff are developed and retained. The strategy requires a change in the approach the workforce will take and would represent a significant investment of resource which we would like to mature over the agreed contract term. Additionally, the joint commissioning of refuge provision across Southend, Essex and Thurrock involves a complex set of multiple land and building leases to manage as part of the tender and ongoing contract. A shorter contract period may deter some providers from bidding given the particular complexities of managing the land and buildings involved in this tender. All contracts will have break clauses which could be instigated if necessary.
- 3.20. All of the services that support victims aim to keep service users safe from harm, including their children and to prevent further physical and emotional harms from occurring, which in turn creates a resource saving to a number of agencies.
- 3.21. On average the Brighter Future service is able to evidence from contract monitoring an average between 7 and 15 social care case de-escalations from child protection to child in need or case closures each year. It is important to note that the commissioned provider can only evidence and record this during the brief eight week period that the service is in place for. There are likely to be other cases that go on to de-escalate or close at a later date, where the service will have had an impact on the reduction in risk that social care identified.
- 3.22. The cost of social work time intervention is detailed below:
- Child In Need Plan – Initial costs £1,624 / annual costs £1,825
  - Child Protection Plan – Initial costs £2,328 / annual costs £6,570
  - Looked After Child – Initial costs - £6,044 - £6,569 / annual costs £8,000.
- 3.23. The service will usually not be working with victims who have children in care and therefore cost reductions cannot be quantified. However, the risk of cases escalating to looked after child status do bring much more significant costs, both in social work time and the average cost of a placement being between £35,000 and £69,000 p.a. (being the cost range for around three-quarters of our looked after children). This evidence of cost avoidance is only one element within the services that will be procured.

- 3.24. There are other costs to the Council with 17.4% (1592) of all contacts to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub relating to risk around domestic abuse in the last year. In addition, there were 679 contacts to the Housing Safeguarding Team in the last year. Every contact has a staff resource cost implication.
- 3.25. There are wider costs to the public purse which relate back specifically to the Council including: mental health, housing and lost economic output. These will have a direct budgetary impact on adult social care, housing and additional benefits paid through Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit. As an example, only 6% of service users in safe accommodation were recorded as employed during the three year period between 2018 and 2021, noting that this is often as a result of the circumstances victims find themselves in and having to flee an area to escape their perpetrator.
- 3.26. Independent research both locally and by Women's Aid is able to demonstrate that for every £1 of investment in services there is a return of £9. The estimated socio-economic cost to Thurrock is £3.1m to Childrens Services (including education) and £1.8m to Housing.
- 3.27. The potential for savings detailed above are in addition to the savings detailed which will be realised following the pooling of budgets and joint procurement regionally.
- 3.28. Delegated authority is requested to award contract to the winning tenderer at the conclusion of the competitive process.
- 3.29. Further delegation is requested to permit the Executive Director for Adults, Housing, and Health to allocate funds from the New Burdens Safe Accommodation Grant. This will be in respect of spend from this grant being used as pooled budget in joint procurement arrangements and also for any spend that is used internally. This internal spend is currently in respect of the salary costs to fulfil the domestic abuse duties placed upon the Council and as required under the terms of the grant, the salary costs of a Housing Safeguarding Officer post, and the operation of a childrens support group for those children who have witnessed domestic abuse. Changes to these allocations and functions may occur in future years in response to a new needs assessment and any recommendations that come from this.

## **Option 2 – continue with existing commissioning arrangements**

- 3.30. The existing commissioning arrangements fail to address the issues of complex pathways into services and do not provide the same opportunities as joint procurement do to realise savings going forward.
- 3.31. Due to the low value of contracts that are funded solely by the Council there has historically been insufficient interest in tenders. This results in a lack of competition and potential to attract innovative service delivery through a well developed market.
- 3.32. Recommissioning of existing contracts would continue to see services that may not be able to address demand issues locally, in the same way that pooling of budgets will achieve.
- 3.33. It should be acknowledged that at this stage of the project with Southend City Council, Essex County Council, and the Police Commissioners Office that as discussions progress the Thurrock model of community provision for victims may not fully align with our partners approach. This is due to Thurrock having an in-house community support model through the

Housing Safeguarding Team, whereas Southend and Essex have a fully commissioned service. Should a model not be able to be agreed Thurrock would need to continue to commission the current Brighter Futures service (to be reviewed and revised) alone, and only jointly procure safe accommodation and perpetrator provision with Southend, Essex, and the Police Commissioners Office. It is however the intention to pool budgets as far as possible even if Thurrock are the only Local Authority partner to have this type of specialist service that Childrens Social Care have access to. To do so will ensure efficiencies of joint commissioning are maximised.

- 3.34. Option 2 is not the preferred option, noting 3.33 above in respect of community provision.
- 3.35. The preferred option (1) is to continue to explore the joint procurement arrangements with the partners detailed within this report.

#### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 The option of continuing to commission solely for Thurrock and not join regional arrangements would see the continuation of fragmented commissioning, and complex access pathways and different responses for service users who may be transient across the region. The efficiencies of a multi-agency commissioning approach would also be unable to be realised locally with existing funding without a loss in service capacity. Service redesign has up until now been explored and implemented where possible whilst avoiding any loss in quality standards, however this has not been able to realise the financial benefits of a joint procurement exercise.
- 4.2 The proposal to enter into regional commissioning arrangements will bring increased service capacity at a reduced cost to the Council through the efficiencies that are achieved within a small unitary authority when commissioning on a larger footprint. The savings to budget have been based on analysis of other similar projects across the country and the savings that have been achieved, factoring in the need to increase capacity locally, particularly in further investment in working with perpetrators to break the cycle of abuse. The current contract spend is fully budgeted with no variance to budget. See Financial Implications 7.1. The commissioning of these services in the way that is proposed will contribute to the directions that the Council is working to under the section 114 notice and within the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP). It meets best value through the 'demand management' element of the IRP.
- 4.3 The consequences of not delivering support services for victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse would deviate from statutory guidance, draft legislation and the national statement of expectations as detailed in 2.1. It would leave victims without specialist support in safety planning, emotional recovery, and practical support, which would be unlikely to be addressed through local generic services. It would also see the continued cycle of abuse not being able to be broken without further investment in perpetrator services. There would be a budgetary impact on both the Housing Team with increased needs to rehouse victims and accessing the Housing Safeguarding Team. Further resource implications would be seen with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and Social Care Teams within Childrens Services. There may be a potential increase in children subject to Child In Need, Child Protection Plans and Looked After Children, without victims having the knowledge and empowerment to keep themselves and their children safe.

- 4.4 It is recommended that the power to award the contract is delegated to the Executive Director of Childrens Services and the Executive Director of Adults, Housing, and Health, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Childrens Services and Housing. The number of services and multiple commissioning arrangements across the Council and partners make this project particularly complex to mobilise. In addition, there are lease arrangements with the refuge and multiple staff TUPE implications. By permitting delegated authority to award contract this will allow a sufficient window of time between contract award and contract commencement, during which the necessary contract handover actions can take place to ensure a smooth and effective transition to the new service. There will be a robust procurement exercise which will ensure suitable providers will be selected through a full open market tender and evaluation process. By expediting the award and mobilisation process the Council will be able to start to benefit from the savings detailed in this report sooner.
- 4.5 It is further recommended that the power to allocate funding from the 'Safe Accommodation New Burdens' Grant both for jointly commissioned services and expenditure that is allocated internally be delegated to the Executive Director of Adults, Housing and Health, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Childrens Services and Housing. Decisions on how funds are allocated are reviewed regularly where they are matched to evolving needs. There is a need to undertake these decisions expediently to ensure that these needs are met with appropriate service responses.

## **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1. Through the regional Project Group that has been established across all partners there has been extensive service user input to date.
- 5.2. Between July and October 2022 over 300 people were engaged in the needs analysis process from victims/survivors, perpetrators, and stakeholders through a mixture of online surveys, in depth interviews and focus groups. There is now a cohort of those involved in the initial groups who wish to participate in the ongoing 'lived experience' group. These service users will guide us through the commissioning and procurement process and be further involved in ongoing contract monitoring.
- 5.3. The market strategy has to date been focussed on ensuring that providers are brought along the journey that we have been on to critically review existing services and start to move towards a more joined up model of delivery. There will be changes within the proposed model going forward that will look different to existing ways of working. It has therefore been a cornerstone of our approach to ensure providers have been central to our review and reshaping of services, through involvement in stakeholder events and the opportunity to feedback in between these at every stage of the process. To date 1000+ comments have been fed back to us through the engagement work we have undertaken. This will have the effect of ensuring the market is prepared for changes in working and will already be thinking about the tender process in 2024 and how they will meet this challenge.

## **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

- 6.1. This report is aligned with the Council's 'People' priority. The new service provision will improve the consistency and accessibility of services for both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse, simplifying and aligning the current pathways that exist with legacy commissioning arrangements. The proposed changes will strengthen the provider market

through consistent and medium term commitments to funding. Service users will gain empowerment to keep themselves and their children safe and resilient, reducing their touchpoints in social care, housing, and health services.

## 7. Implications

### 7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**  
**Strategic Lead Corporate Finance**

**10 October 2023**

As set out in the report, effective provision of services that both support victims and challenge perpetrators is critical to achieve cost avoidance across several areas of the Council. The efficiencies that a joint procurement exercise with partners will realise will lead to direct cost savings whilst ensuring services are not reduced in any way. This procurement activity must be considered in the context of the Council's current financial position and S114 notice. As identified in the options set out within the report the risk of not having these services could expose the Council to significantly higher spend through a lack of preventative measures.

The contract, commencing in 2025/26, will have the following direct financial implications:

Brighter Futures (Childrens Services. 2023/24 Budget allocation £86,000 Core Funding.  
Recommendation 1.1.1

**Proposed cost 2025/26 £73,100**

Refuge (Housing General Fund). 2023/24 Budget allocation £35,000 Core Funding.  
Recommendation 1.1.2

**Proposed cost 2025/26 £29,750**

Refuge (Housing General Fund). 2023/24 Budget allocation £120,000 Grant Funding.  
Recommendation 1.1.3

**Proposed cost 2025/26 £102,000**

Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation (Housing General Fund). 2023/24 budget allocation £141,165 Grant Funding. Recommendation 1.1.3

**Proposed cost 2025/26 £119,990**

The contract represents an annual saving of £18,150 to the Council on its core funding.

In addition, there is also a reduction in the annual grant contribution of £39,175 per annum. This funding will remain available to the Council to provide services in line with the grant conditions.



## 7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Kevin Molloy**  
**Team Leader Contracts Team**

**10 October 2023**

Following issue by the Council of a s114 notice, the Council must ensure that its resources are not used for non-essential spending. The contracts at issue here are essential and the provision of them a statutory duty under the legislation. In procuring the services outlined, the Council must observe the obligations upon it outlined in national legislation and in its internal procurement rules. Officers should ensure Legal Services are kept informed as they progress through the procurement.

## 7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**  
**Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer**

**4<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

A Community Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the refresh of the Thurrock Domestic Abuse & Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2023 – 2026. This noted positive outcomes in every key area, further developed by the overarching local strategy and the service responses proposed in this report.

The procurement of these services will need to ensure they are compliant with equalities legislation.

## 7.4 Risks

7.4.1 Corporate Risk No 8 (Childrens Social Care, Service Standards and Inspection Outcome) and No 9 (Childrens Social Care, Safeguarding and protecting Children & Young People) identify risks of not managing demand with Childrens Social Care and failure to protect vulnerable Children and Young People. This could result in harm to Children and Young People and additional social care costs that are incurred through more cost intensive interventions. The services detailed in this report seek to prevent and change abusive behaviours that could result in the harm assessed within these two corporate risks.

7.4.2 Corporate Risk No 3 (Housing Needs and Homelessness) identify risks to increasing homelessness applications resulting in additional costs to the Council and adding to pressures on Council housing stock. The services detailed in this report seek to ensure that the cycle of abusive behaviours is broken resulting in less victims having to flee their home and seek alternative safe accommodation.

7.4.3 The funding landscape for these services is complex, made up of core Council funding and grant funding from the Home Office and the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities. Government funding decisions are sometimes made late when new rounds of grants are being made available or renewed. The partners within this project are currently

exploring procurement options to potentially stagger the tender based on known secure funding. Whilst there is currently no indication that this is the case, any reductions in Government grant funding may result in the future service design having to be adjusted in scope to work within the budget envelope. Any change to the incumbent Government and their priorities may add complicating factors to this.

**7.5 Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children

7.5.1. Protecting victims of domestic abuse through effective safety planning and awareness raising, as well as working with perpetrators to effect behavioural change will both have a positive impact on the number of crimes that are committed within Thurrock and the wider area. One in five crimes in Essex are domestic abuse related, higher than the national, regional and comparator Police force data.

7.5.2. 33 of the current 105 children who are on Child Protection Plans are categorised as the primary reason being emotional abuse. Whilst this also covers other areas it will include those children who are witness to domestic abuse at home. Children are now defined in legislation as victims in their own right if they witness abuse at home.

**8. Background papers used in preparing the report**

- Southend, Essex, and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board – Discovery and Design Project - Executive Summary.

**9. Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 - Stage 1 Procurement Form – approval to proceed to tender (exempt)

**Report Author:**

Mark Livermore

Commissioning Manager

Commissioning Team (Childrens)

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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