

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 187

Subject: Council Housing Asset Management Plan

Date of meeting: Thursday, 14th May 2026

Report of: Cabinet Member for Housing

Lead Officer: Corporate Director Homes & Adult Social Care

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Ward(s) affected: All

Key Decision: Yes

Reason(s) Key: Is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions (wards).

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This report provides Cabinet with the Council Housing Asset Management Plan 2026 to 2027 for approval, publication and implementation. The Plan sets out the council's current approach and one year framework for managing and investing in council homes and estate assets through the Housing Revenue Account.
- 1.2 The Council Housing Asset Management Plan supports delivery of the Council Plan 2023 to 2027 outcomes Homes for Everyone and A responsive Council with Well Run Services. The Plan aligns to core priorities in the Housing Strategy 2024-29, including to: Improve housing quality, safety and sustainability; Deliver the homes our city needs; and Provide resident-focused housing services. It translates these priorities into practical investment choices and delivery controls for council homes and estates and supports the council's aim to be a Great Landlord and supports our regulatory improvement journey.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approve the Council Housing Asset Management Plan.

2.2 Note plans to develop our Council Housing Asset Management Strategy to fully reflect emerging stock condition data, resident engagement and our Housing (Safety & Quality) Improvement Programme 2026 to 2027.

3. Context and background information

3.1 The Council Housing Asset Management Plan sets out how the council knows what it owns, what condition it is in, what risks exist, and how it plans investment over time. It underpins safety, quality, value for money, and transparent decisions for residents and members. It also affects the day to day experience residents have of their homes, because better stock knowledge helps the council target planned and major works programmes and reduce repeat problems and responsive repairs.

3.2 It will be refreshed annually alongside the budget setting process. The Plan sets out what the council currently knows about our homes, how the council prioritises investment and how residents can influence choices and track progress. Over the period of the Plan (2026/27) the council is investing £54m to improve the quality of our council homes. In addition, the council is investing an estimated £2m over the next two years in our new stock condition survey programme covering all our homes, providing clearer and more accurate data. A full, multi-year, Council Housing Asset Management Strategy will be developed over the term of the Council Housing Asset Management Plan to reflect both up to date knowledge about our homes as we improve stock condition information and our plans for a step change in how the council develops a more resident-led approach. This is to ensure that the council fully engages with tenants and leaseholders in a structured way so that resident insight, influence and feedback consistently inform asset management strategy, investment planning and decisions.

3.3 This report is brought forward because asset management is a core test under the strengthened social housing regulatory regime. The council must be able to evidence stock knowledge, quantify risk and liabilities, and demonstrate how investment decisions are prioritised, monitored and adjusted over time. This Plan provides that framework, while remaining realistic about what further work is required as evidence and systems mature.

3.4 The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Consumer Standards require social landlords to be able to evidence a strategic approach to asset management, supported by accurate and up-to-date property-level stock condition data based on physical inspection, and to demonstrate how that evidence is used to manage safety, quality and investment risks and priorities, underpinned by clear governance, assurance and transparency. While not mandated, an Asset Management Strategy remains the clearest way to demonstrate compliance. Knowing our homes and estates is a core part of being a Great Landlord. The council's approach remains that compliance is the floor, not the ceiling. The Council Housing Asset Management Plan supports the council's continued improvement journey as we develop our Council Housing Asset Management Strategy and as part of our ongoing formal intensive

engagement with the RSH following the C3 Regulatory Judgement of 9 August 2024 in relation to the Safety & Quality Consumer Standard.

- 3.5 Decisions about investment and planned works are already being made, so the council needs a published plan now. The Plan will provide a clearer and more transparent basis for how decisions are made, what evidence and assumptions sit behind them, and how priorities are set and delivered. It will also help explain what is being funded now, what may need to change later, and why.
- 3.6 As set out in the Plan, in considering investment and programmes of work, the council will use a clear prioritisation ladder: safety and legal duties first, followed by buildings at risk of serious failure, then work that tackles the underlying causes of repeat problems, and finally wider improvements where the evidence supports them and affordability allows. The council is also transparent that stock knowledge is not yet at the standard required, and that the new survey programme is a key part of improving the evidence base. The council will not wait for perfect information before acting, particularly on safety. Year 1 of the Plan reflects current commitments, while later years provide a forward view rather than a fixed promise and may change as survey coverage improves, costs move and delivery plans become firmer.
- 3.7 Our Council Housing Asset Management Plan reflects the following core elements of our Housing (Safety & Quality) Improvement Programme (2026/27):
- *‘A great landlord knows the quality of the stock they own, what works have been undertaken and when, and can use the information held to plan for preventative maintenance and longer- term capital investment in planned and major works programmes’*
 - *‘We use stock condition data and up to date asset insight to set priorities that inform planned preventative maintenance programmes and reduce responsive repairs’.*
- 3.8 A full, multi-year, Council Housing Asset Management Strategy will be developed over the term of the Council Housing Asset Management Plan to reflect both up to date knowledge about our homes as we improve stock condition information and our plans for a step change in how the council develops a more resident-led approach. An Asset Management Strategy (AMS) provides strategic direction for how the council will plan and deliver planned and major works, meet relevant legislation and regulatory requirements, and ensure transparency and meaningful engagement with residents. It also provides assurance that the council is fulfilling its statutory duties and is compliant with relevant legislation and regulations.
- 3.9 In developing its Asset Management Strategy, the council must be able to demonstrate a clear, cross-housing approach to managing assets over the short, medium and long term, with clear links between stock condition data, investment decisions (including repairs, planned works, major works and compliance activity) and risk management and assurance. The Strategy

should also show alignment with legal health and safety duties and the Decent Homes Standard and set out clear governance and accountability arrangements for asset management decisions.

- 3.10 The council manages 12,761 homes (April 2026) including Seaside Homes and council owned temporary accommodation. Flats, including bedsits, and maisonettes represent 65 percent of the council's rented homes, building types that require more intensive compliance activity. This includes 46 high-rise blocks, of which eight are Large Panel System (LPS) buildings, which do not currently meet modern safety standards. The council has put in ongoing safety measures pending demolition and regeneration of Large Panel System blocks. The council retains freehold responsibility for more than 2,500 leasehold properties within blocks, increasing the proportion of homes where additional compliance duties apply.
- 3.11 The council has an ageing housing stock. Over two thirds of homes in our stock were constructed before 1970.. Over time, budget constraints have contributed to a historic underinvestment in our homes leaving the council with a significant number of ageing properties that do not meet current more stringent health and safety regulations or quality and sustainability standards.
- 3.12 This matters because shared systems and communal areas mean a single failure can affect more than one home. Older buildings can also need more work to keep them safe, dry and in good repair. Good access planning and reliable records are therefore essential.
- 3.13 The council also manages estate assets including 82 car parking sites with 1,895 spaces and 92 garage sites with 1,068 garages. In addition, the council has 162 commercial properties held in the Housing Revenue Account, including shops on estates.
- 3.14 The 2026/27 HRA budget proposes substantial investment of £54m in our existing housing stock to improve the quality of our council homes, including:
- £17.7m - to continue investment on health & safety and compliance work such as meeting building and fire safety regulations;
 - £16.5m – to invest in major projects that maintain the structural, external integrity and fabric of homes;
 - £9.5m - to invest in planned preventative works programmes, to ensure investment reduces cost pressures of responsive repairs and other reactive works;
 - £5.4m - to invest in sustainability measures. such as improvements to communal and domestic heating systems & Solar PV.
 - £5.2m – to invest in supporting people to live independently in their homes for longer through housing adaptations, environmental and communal area improvement work based on resident priorities, minor capital works and major empty property works.
- 3.15 Following the RSH regulatory judgement, -the council published a Root Cause Analysis identifying the causes of compliance failures as a platform for

organisational learning, culture change and shared ownership. It identified data quality as a root cause of past compliance failures. The Plan treats good data as a control. It supports fair prioritisation, consistent risk management and proof that work is complete and risk has reduced. Using the council's learning organisation framework and pursuing our ambition to be a Great Landlord, the Council Housing Asset Management Plan responds by strengthening stock knowledge, decision traceability, audit trail discipline and resident transparency.

- 3.16 The stock profile is clear. The condition baseline is still being strengthened. As of March 2026, 19.3 % of council homes have a stock condition survey recorded on the NEC housing system (. Cabinet agreed in December 2025 to procure and award a two year Stock Condition Survey Contract via a specialist contractor, with an estimated value of £2 million. The contractor will complete comprehensive, high quality surveys across all council homes within two years and provide milestone summary reports on key findings and investment requirements at agreed stages. Mobilisation is expected to begin in summer 2026, with estimated completion by spring 2028.
- 3.17 The intended outcome is a complete, reliable and independently auditable picture of the council's housing stock. This will inform planned and major programmes of work and support longer term Housing Revenue Account business planning. Until survey coverage is complete, the council will manage risk using the best available evidence. This includes keeping safety and legal duties first and using targeted inspections and follow up where risks persist or problems repeat. The direction of travel remains positive, while remaining realistic about what further work is required as evidence and systems mature.
- 3.18 At present, stock intelligence sits across systems with varying completeness and inconsistent definitions. This limits the council's ability to produce a single reliable view of stock condition, compliance liabilities and investment priorities. The Plan strengthens decision traceability so the council can show why work has been prioritised, what alternatives were considered, and how decisions, investment choices and trade-offs were managed. This supports transparent decision making for residents and members and strengthens the council's ability to evidence that controls are embedded into business as usual systems and are sustained and auditable.
- 3.19 The Plan includes a clear example of evidence led risk control through the approach to the eight Large Panel System blocks, including interim measures and the Cabinet decision route for regeneration.

Resident engagement & communication

- 3.20 The council's Root Cause Analysis found resident voice to be a key area for consideration, including with residents' concerns not always being heard early enough or used consistently to shape priorities and decisions. Residents' feedback is a key part of the evidence picture. The Plan summarises what residents have told the council about repairs, damp and mould, heating and hot water, estate conditions, hazards and communication. These themes are

used as tests for priorities, delivery standards and communication. They also help target surveys and planned works, so investment is focused where it will reduce repeat problems and harm.

- 3.21 Statutory resident consultation requirements will continue to apply; however, the council will also aim to provide earlier visibility where possible and clearer information for residents on scope, timing, costs and any changes. Residents' views can help shape the council's approach, including the development of the asset management strategy, the sequencing and grouping of works to reduce disruption, expectations on communication and access arrangements, and (where there is discretion) some design choices.
- 3.22 This year, residents will have a clearer route to influence non safety sequencing and design choices where there is discretion through quarterly resident budget sessions. The council aims to publish a short plain English Homing In update after each session that summarises what was delivered, what changed and why, and what happens next. The annual refresh will provide the year end position and explain material changes.
- 3.23 Following Cabinet approval, the council will publish the Plan and brief delivery leads and key stakeholders. The council will embed the prioritisation ladder and trade off discipline, mobilise the survey programme and strengthen survey quality checks, and align service delivery plans and reporting to the Plan's one year delivery focus and annual refresh cycle.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 This section sets out the options considered and explains why the recommended approach is the best fit for the council's current position, including the need to take decisions while stock condition evidence and resident voice are still being strengthened.
- 4.2 **Option 1 Continue without approving an adopted plan**
This option is not recommended. It would leave the council without a single, published framework that explains how priorities are set, how evidence is used, and how material trade-offs are recorded and reviewed. This would reduce transparency for residents and members and make it harder to demonstrate consistent decision making and assurance under enhanced consumer regulation requirements. It would also weaken the council's ability to show clear progress in embedding landlord controls into business-as-usual systems.
- 4.3 **Option 2 Delay publication until survey coverage is complete**
This option is not recommended. The council must take investment decisions now while the evidence baseline is still developing. Delaying publication would weaken grip and accountability during the survey period, when residents and members need clearer information about what is protected, what can change, and what is being done in the meantime to manage risk. The procurement and award route for the two year Stock Condition Survey Contract was agreed by Cabinet in December 2025. Waiting for full survey coverage before

adopting the Plan would not remove the need to make priorities and trade-offs during this period.

- 4.4 Option 3 Approve a one-year plan with annual refresh and a route to maturity
This option is recommended. It provides a clear, publishable framework now, while being honest about evidence maturity. It protects safety and legal duties first, sets consistent decision rules, and makes gaps and interim controls transparent. It provides a controlled annual refresh route aligned to the Housing Revenue Account budget cycle, so the Plan can be kept up to date as survey coverage increases and programme maturity and resident voice improves. Cabinet oversight remains central to maintaining transparency, accountability and confidence.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The Council Housing Asset Management Plan draws on what residents have already told the council through existing engagement activity. This includes themes from complaints, Housing Area Panels, STAR (survey of tenants and residents) results and other engagement routes referenced in the Plan.
- 5.2 The council recognises that engagement and feedback loops are still being strengthened. This year focuses on putting a consistent minimum feedback loop in place and building from that, rather than creating multiple parallel routes that are hard to sustain.
- 5.3 The Plan is clear about decision rights. Safety and legal duties are not optional. Where there is discretion, residents can influence sequencing and design choices for non-safety investment, and how the council communicates, plans access and reduces disruption.
- 5.4 Resident voice is not separate from asset management. It helps the council spot problems early, understand harm, and check whether actions are working in real life. This supports the council's improvement journey and the Root Cause Analysis focus on strengthening transparency, learning and shared ownership, and on moving away from reliance on informal knowledge.
- 5.5 For 2026 to 2027, the Plan proposes quarterly resident budget sessions including a focus on Asset Plan and stock condition survey linked to the Housing Revenue Account budget cycle. These sessions will be supplemented by discussions at Housing Area Panels and an continual 'always on' feedback route signposted through Homing In. To embed engagement into business as usual, the council aims to publish a short plain English Homing In update after each session. This will summarise what was discussed, what residents said, what will change as a result where there is discretion, and what happens next. The plan will be refreshed annually through the Housing Revenue Account budget cycle, including a clear summary of what changed and why.
- 5.6 The December 2025 Cabinet report on the Stock Condition Survey Contract also proposed resident involvement in the procurement process. This focused

on quality elements such as customer service, resident engagement and being a considerate contractor. This supports the Plan's wider approach to resident involvement and transparency, including clear expectations about how contractors will work in residents' homes and communal areas.

- 5.7 Residents will be able to track progress through the Homing In updates after each quarterly session and through the annual refresh of the Plan.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The Housing Asset Management plan aligns with the HRA capital budget approved in February 2026, to cover the investment required to repair, maintain and improve the housing stock.
- 6.2 The HRA revenue budget included investment of £2m for a stock condition survey of the entire housing stock, allocated across 2026/27 and 2027/28 (£1m each year) and the data from this will help inform future investment requirements and will need to be reflected into the 2027/28 budget setting cycle and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Comment by Finance Lead: Michael Bentley 16 April 2026

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The plan is crucial in ensuring the Council meets a range of regulatory standards. The Social Housing Regulation Act came into effect from 1 April 2024 and requires social landlords to comply with the standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). The management of the safety of council housing also falls under the scrutiny of the Building Safety Regulator, the HSE and East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.
- 7.2 On 9 August 2024 the Regulator of Social Housing issued a C3 regulatory judgment that there are serious failings in the Council as landlord delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards and significant improvement is needed specifically in relation to outcomes for the national Safety and Quality Standard. The Regulator expects the Council as landlord to continue to drive significant change and improvements to the condition of our stock.
- 7.3 Strategic approach to stock management will also assist in preventing and addressing repairs, which currently expose the Council to risk of compensation claims for repairs not conducted within statutory timescales. Awaab's Law came into force for the social rented sector from 27 October 2025 whereby social landlords must address emergency hazards and damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to tenants to fixed timeframes.

Lawyer consulted: Natasha Watson

Date 4 May 2026.

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 Approving the Council Housing Asset Management Plan reduces risk by providing a single framework for priorities and trade-offs, and by making clear how the council manages uncertainty while the evidence baseline is still being strengthened. It supports the council's improvement journey, including formal intensive engagement with the Regulator of Social Housing following the C3 Regulatory Judgement of 9 August 2024 and the enhanced consumer regulation requirements.
- 8.2 The main delivery risks relate to the pace of survey mobilisation and the ability to gain access, capacity constraints across client and contractor teams, procurement lead times and mobilisation windows, and cost movement that can reduce reach. These risks can result in slippage, re sequencing and greater reliance on interim controls if they are not managed. The Plan sets out escalation triggers and review points for material changes, so changes are controlled, time bound and visible to residents and members.
- 8.3 Assurance is how the council checks that risks are controlled, work is completed properly and records can be trusted. Assurance is being strengthened. The Plan describes assurance already in place through monthly compliance performance reporting and exception review, system updates that support an audit trail, and survey quality checks and follow up actions.
- 8.4 The stock condition survey contract will be overseen through the council's contract management arrangements, with performance reporting through the Housing Safety and Quality Assurance Board. Over the next 12 months, the council will make assurance more consistent across programmes so completion evidence, record quality and follow through can be demonstrated more reliably.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 The Council Housing Asset Management Plan prioritises work using a risk and harm based approach. This includes considering vulnerability and health impacts, particularly where issues could escalate or cause harm if not addressed.
- 9.2 The plan recognises that not all residents experience services in the same way. Some residents face barriers to reporting problems and taking part in engagement, including access needs, language barriers, digital exclusion, caring responsibilities and concerns about feeling safe to report. The approach in the Plan is designed to be proportionate and deliverable this year. It uses more than one route to take part and sets a minimum feedback loop so residents can see what was heard and what changed.
- 9.3 Equality impact assessment requirements linked to specific programmes and major works will continue to be managed through the council's established equalities processes. This includes using equality considerations to inform

communication, access planning and the management of disruption, as part of the council's wider improvement journey.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 The Council Housing Asset Management Plan supports longer term sustainability by protecting the life of buildings, reducing avoidable deterioration, and improving energy performance to meet regulatory compliance and also where works are viable and funded. This includes prevention work that reduces repeat failures and repeat repairs, which in turn reduces disruption and helps protect long term value.
- 10.2 The Plan supports the aim of warm, healthy homes through an evidence led approach to energy and carbon measures. It focuses on improvements that are practicable and affordable over time, and that can be maintained, with a clear balance between comfort, deliverability and disruption. Where renewable generation benefits residents, the plan supports building on delivery such as solar PV, and targeting future installations based on need and impact.
- 10.3 Sustainability choices will be kept aligned to the Housing Revenue Account affordability envelope and refreshed through the annual budget cycle as stock condition evidence improves and programme maturity develops.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 Approving the Council Housing Asset Management Plan 2026 to 2027 will provide a clear, publishable and auditable framework for managing and investing in council homes and estate assets through the Housing Revenue Account. It supports the council's improvement journey including formal intensive engagement with the Regulator of Social Housing following the C3 Regulatory Judgement of 9 August 2024 and the enhanced consumer regulation requirements introduced in April 2024.
- 11.2 The council recognises it is not yet where it needs to be. Evidence maturity is still improving and there is more work to do to embed consistent, auditable landlord controls. This plan puts that framework in place now. It protects safety and legal duties first, strengthens stock knowledge and decision traceability, and sets a controlled annual refresh route aligned to the Housing Revenue Account budget cycle.
- 11.3 The Plan also sets out a deliverable approach to resident involvement and transparency so residents and members can see what is being delivered, what has changed and why. Cabinet oversight remains central to maintaining transparency, accountability and confidence.

Supporting documentation

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Council Housing Asset Management Plan 2026 to 2027

