

North Somerset Council

Report to the Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Date of Meeting: 23 February 2023

Subject of Report: Housing Stock Condition Report 2023

Town or Parish: All

Officer/Member Presenting: Howard Evans

Key Decision: No

Reason: No expenditure or significant in terms of receiving the report.

Recommendations

1. The panel note the key findings from the stock condition report contained in the presentation received from the Building Research Establishment

1. Summary of Report

North Somerset commissioned the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to undertake a series of modelling exercises on their housing stock which required BRE to produce an integrated stock model which includes Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG), Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS), low-income benefits, Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO), enforcement and energy efficiency scheme data provided by North Somerset.

The BRE models also integrate Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) data. The use of this local data produces a more accurate energy models. A Housing Stock Condition Database (HSCD) is also provided which allows specific information to be extracted. The detailed housing stock information provided in the report will facilitate the delivery of North Somerset's housing strategy and enable a targeted intervention approach to improving housing.

The main aims of this work were to provide estimates of:

- The percentage of dwellings with the presence of each of the Housing Standards Variables for North Somerset overall and broken down by tenure and then mapped by Census Output Area (COA) (private sector stock only)
- Information relating to LAHS reporting for the private sector stock - category 1 hazards and information on estimated EPC ratings (based on SimpleSAP)
- Energy efficiency variables for the private sector stock (wall and loft insulation)
- Energy planning variables (SimpleCO2, energy and heat demand, energy and heat cost)
- Improvement scenarios
- Additional modelling analysis to determine the estimated potential costs required to improve SimpleSAP ratings to a Band C
- Specialist Analysis of the Private Rented Sector including HMOs and Selective Licensing

Some of the key findings of the report are as follows:

- The performance of the housing stock in North Somerset compared to the EHS England average is mixed with North Somerset performing slightly better for all hazards, disrepair, fuel poverty (both definitions), but worse for excess cold and low income households
- The private rented sector is generally worse than the social sector, but similar to the owner occupied sector
- 5.2% of dwellings in the private rented sector are estimated to have an EPC below band E. Under the legislation these properties would not be eligible to be rented out to new, renewal or existing tenancies. Subsequent analysis by North Somerset officers have found the majority are either no longer rented out, exemption registered or EPC not updated.

The stock condition report (BRE - 2023) suggests there has been a significant reduction in the number privately rented sector (PRS) homes with Category 1 hazards and disrepair since the last report in 2018. The report indicates the housing conditions in North Somerset across all sectors are better when compared nationally and regionally.

The information will facilitate the decision-making process for targeting resources to improve the condition of housing and to prevent ill health resulting from poor housing conditions. Furthermore, the results of this project provide North Somerset with information which will assist in housing policy and strategy development whether these are inspired locally, arise from obligations under the Housing Act 2004 or as responses to government initiatives such as DLUHC's Housing Strategy Policy and ECO.

The report recommendations are:

Programmes designed to tackle disrepair for example group repair schemes, regeneration or enforcement interventions could be considered with a focus on areas of greatest disrepair such as Weston-super-Mare Central ward with 5% disrepair and 13% containing category 1 hazards, or Weston-super-Mare Hillside ward with an estimated 4% of private sector homes in disrepair and 13% with category 1 hazards.

These findings could be combined with local intelligence to help identify additional areas for targeting assistance for physical improvements to private sector stock and the environment.

Furthermore, programmes aimed at increasing household income through job creation, benefit entitlement checks and other initiatives should also be considered, with a particular focus on areas containing high proportions of low income households like Weston-super-Mare Central (76%), Weston-super-Mare South Ward (82%) and Weston-super-Mare Winterstoke (60%).

2. Policy

The report will assist with future policy development to improve housing conditions.

3. Details

See summary above

4. Consultation

There has been consultation between North Somerset and BRE on the interpretation and clarification of the report findings. The full report will be published on the council website.

5. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Costs

N/A

Funding

N/A

6. Legal Powers and Implications

The Housing Act 2004 requires a local housing authority to keep housing conditions in their area under review and a stock condition survey plays an important part of fulfilling that requirement.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

The comprehensive information and data within the report, in particular the energy improvement scenarios will help target and shape improvements in the coming years.

8. Risk Management

There are no risks associated with the report.

9. Equality Implications

No Equality Impact Assessment at this stage.

10. Corporate Implications

None

10. Options Considered

None

Author:

Howard Evans, Private Sector Housing Service Leader

Appendices:

None

Background Papers:

None