Housing Service
Asset Management Strategy 2018-2023

Properties
Repairs
Investment
Delivery
Efficiency

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<tr>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Housing</th>
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<td>Policy Owner</td>
<td>Head of Housing</td>
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</table>
# Table of Contents

**Housing Service** ........................................................................................................ 1  
**Asset Management Strategy 2018-2023** .................................................................. 1  

2  Introduction .................................................................................................................... 2  
2.1 Purpose of the Asset Management Strategy ............................................................... 2  
2.1 Relationship with the Corporate Plan ......................................................................... 2  
2.2 The Council’s strategic approach to asset management ............................................... 3  
2.2 Our Strategic Approach is to: ................................................................................... 3  
2.3 Scope .......................................................................................................................... 4  

3  The Council’s Housing Stock ......................................................................................... 5  
3.1 Stock Profile ............................................................................................................... 5  
3.1.1 Property types ........................................................................................................ 5  
3.1.2 Property Design ..................................................................................................... 7  
3.1.3 Valuation ................................................................................................................ 8  
3.2 Stock condition .......................................................................................................... 8  
3.2.1 Stock Condition surveys ....................................................................................... 8  
3.2.2 Stock condition information .................................................................................. 8  
3.2.3 Heating types ......................................................................................................... 9  
3.2.4 Sheltered Housing ................................................................................................. 9  
3.2.5 Anticipated changes to stock numbers and profile ................................................. 10  

4  Housing Demand .......................................................................................................... 10  
4.1 Demographics ............................................................................................................ 10  
4.1.1 Age profile of the Borough ................................................................................... 10  
4.1.2 Disability .............................................................................................................. 11  
4.2 Demand .................................................................................................................... 13  

5  Finance ......................................................................................................................... 13  
5.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy ............................................................................. 13  
5.2 Housing Revenue Account ....................................................................................... 14  
5.2.1 Rental Income ....................................................................................................... 14  
5.2.2 Right to Buy Sales ................................................................................................. 14
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Health and Safety Works</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>Asbestos</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>Legionella/Water Hygiene</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>Gas Installations</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Electrical Installations</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>Estate and Common Part Risk Assessment Inspections</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Procurement and contract management</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>Procurement</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>Contract Management</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Disposal of stock</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Performance Management &amp; Measurement</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>AMS Action Plan</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>Performance Management</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Review</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1  Pride Summary

Properties
The housing stock is the Council’s most valuable asset - we will manage it to be handed over to the Borough’s future residents in improved condition.

Repairs
We will provide an excellent responsive repairs service to protect our assets and satisfy our customers.

Investment
We will invest in the housing stock to minimise the repairs needed and keep future running costs low.

Delivery
We will ensure that the housing service’s Asset Management Strategy makes a positive contribution to the Corporate Plan.

Efficiency
We will obtain value for money though careful investment in our housing stock and from providing good value services.

“...Tradesman’s work ethic was brilliant, and he did a brilliant job.”
2 Introduction

Corby Borough Council’s HRA Asset Management Strategy sets out its approach to managing the housing related assets held in the Housing Revenue Account. It covers a range of activities that ensure the housing stock meets the needs and standards required, both now and in the future.

Asset Management is defined as the management of physical assets to meet service and financial objectives - the housing stock represents the Council’s most valuable asset and, set against the repair and maintenance costs, its largest liability. The Council needs to ensure that the properties it owns are:

1. in good condition;
2. well managed;
3. in the right location; and
4. meet tenant needs.

2.1 Purpose of the Asset Management Strategy

2.1 Relationship with the Corporate Plan

The Council’s Corporate Plan is built around five key themes which each have an impact and influence on delivering the vision and content of the Asset Management Strategy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1</th>
<th>Promoting Healthier, Safer and Stronger Communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating a healthier and safer environment to improve the quality of life across the Borough.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 2</th>
<th>Regeneration and Economic Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building quality new homes, improving the existing housing stock and attracting investment to deliver an increase in jobs and skills.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 3</th>
<th>Inspiring a Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leading the way in making a difference to residents of the Borough.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 4</th>
<th>Delivering Excellence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining P.R.I.D.E. in Corby in everything we deliver.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 5</th>
<th>Environment and Climate Change</th>
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<td>Making Corby cleaner and greener and leading the way in tackling Climate Change.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The HRA Asset Management Strategy has been drawn up to complement the Council’s Corporate Plan. Its purpose is to ensure the housing stock is closely managed in order to:

1. Help meet housing needs across the Borough;
2. Provide value for money;
3. Keep dwellings in a good condition in cost effective ways;
4. Exceed the Decent Homes Standard;
5. Bring properties up to date and in line with the Council’s Corby Quality Standard;
6. Ensure works comply with current and future regulations;
7. Provide a balance between responsive and cyclical repairs and capital investment;
8. Achieve high standards of energy efficiency; and

2.2 The Council’s strategic approach to asset Management

2.2 Our Strategic Approach is to:

1. Engage with tenants and Members in developing and implementing the Strategy;
2. Maximise assets and minimise liabilities;
3. Target capital resources at meeting the Corby Quality Standard;
4. Develop a capital programme that meets tenants’ aspirations and priorities, whilst also maintaining the Corby Quality Standard;
5. Continuously survey the housing stock on a rolling programme to improve the accuracy of stock data;
6. Seek value for money in all investment decisions and through all contract procurement processes;
7. Examine the most appropriate ways to dispose or acquire land/property in order to achieve more affordable housing for rent;

54% of tenants think the best part of the repairs service is that it is provided by the Council.
8. Continue to let void properties promptly thereby minimising rent loss and maximising housing availability; and

9. Continue to develop the responsive repairs service to provide the service customers require.

2.3 Scope

The HRA Asset Management Strategy fundamentally needs to balance assets and needs. In order to ensure that the housing stock meets the needs and standards required now and in the future, the Strategy contains the following elements:

1. A Planned Maintenance programme achieving economies by replacing components on an 'Anticipated Lifespan' basis i.e. before they would otherwise require extensive responsive repairs, anticipating changes in minimum acceptable standards and reducing future requirements for cyclical maintenance. This is defined within the Corby Quality Standard.

2. Cyclical maintenance to elements of a property including heating appliance servicing, electrical upgrades and external painting.

3. Continual programme of works to meet Health and Safety requirements e.g. Asbestos removal, fire safety works.

4. A responsive maintenance service to respond to unplanned failures in the properties and to prevent deterioration in their condition.

5. An efficient and effective voids repair service, helping to speed the repairs process and protect revenue.

6. A programme of environmental estate works aimed at maintaining the Council’s estates.

7. Stock condition surveys to assess its condition, use and required reinvestment over the next 30 years.

8. A new build programme to increase the supply of affordable housing and assist regeneration initiatives.

94% of tenants find it easy to report a repair.

“Impressed with the work and the tradesman was friendly and professional.”
3 The Council’s Housing Stock

The Council owns and manages a housing stock of over 4,700 homes, as well as managing some leasehold properties, all of which are located within the Corby Borough Council area. The properties are mainly located on estates within the town of Corby but there are also some properties in a number of nearby surrounding villages. The main concentrations of stock are in Beanfield, Danesholme, Hazel Leys, Kingswood, Lodge Park and Lloyds West. It also has benefitted from a programme of house building that has seen regeneration in most of these areas.

3.1 Stock Profile

3.1.1 Property types

The Council owns properties of a variety of construction types. The majority (79%) are of traditional construction whilst the remaining 21% are of various different non-traditional construction types.

The breakdown of the different construction types is provided on the following page.
**Timeline of Housing Stock**

Showing number of build types from a total of 4703 units alongside period built in.
3.1.2 Property Design

Houses account for over 57% of the stock; flats over a quarter (29.20%) and bungalows account for nearly 11%. Nearly 3% of the stock is bedsits/studios. A detailed breakdown is given below.

Property types and sizes

57.19% Houses
- 1 Bedroom: 1
- 2 Bedroom: 692
- 3 Bedroom: 1740
- 4 Bedroom: 223
- 5 Bedroom: 37

29.20% Flats
- 1 Bedroom: 656
- 2 Bedroom: 540
- 3 Bedroom: 190
- 4 Bedroom: 18

10.94% Bungalows
- 1 Bedroom: 309
- 2 Bedroom: 162
- 3 Bedroom: 43
- 4 Bedroom: 1

2.67% Bedsits/Studios
- 0 Bedrooms
3.1.3 Valuation

As at 31 March 2017, the Council’s housing stock has an existing use value of £200,626,020 for accountancy purposes. This valuation method reflects the Council’s obligation to provide social housing at rents that are set below market levels.

3.2 Stock condition

3.2.1 Stock Condition surveys

Surveys are carried out in-house on a rolling programme basis with approximately 1,000 properties surveyed annually. The data captured on a hand held portable device is uploaded to the housing asset management system. This is then actively used to help shape and inform the continued management, maintenance and refurbishment of the existing stock over the coming years.

3.2.2 Stock condition information

Properties are across a range of different build or construction types. The large majority (79%) are of traditional construction whilst the other 21% are of various different non-traditional construction types. The oldest dwellings we possess date back to 1865 whilst almost 45% of the stock was built between the periods of 1945 to 1964, with just over 40% of the stock built from 1965 to 2000. We also possess (including sheltered accommodation) four hundred and ten communal blocks associated with our accommodation of one, two and three bedroom flats.

All the housing stock is mains electricity supplied directly from the grid. Gas is also available from the main distribution network and in nearly all cases the option to include within the property is readily available to tenants.

“You should inspect repairs after they are completed.”

The Council’s oldest house was built in 1865.
The information captured through stock surveys can identify any Health and Safety property hazards (categorised under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)). If a Category 1 hazard is found it is urgently remedied. The Council currently does not have any Category 1 hazards and our aim is for this to be maintained. Other information obtained includes the life cycle of building components such as roofs, windows/doors, boilers, kitchen and bathrooms.

3.2.3 Heating types

With the exception of a handful, all properties have mains gas-fired boiler accompanied by a wet radiator heating system - these systems are annually serviced by our appointed contractor. The remaining properties are gas wall heaters only, or are electric or solid fuel powered heating.

3.2.4 Sheltered Housing

The Council has ten sheltered housing facilities. Of the ten, Ernest Wright House, Marlow Court and Oakley Court are part bed-sit accommodation and have a number of building components coming to the end of their life cycles. Additionally, Motherwell House is reaching the end of its mechanical, heating and electrical life cycle within this period. The Council will take a long term approach and consider remodelling and improving the accommodation. This will be done taking into account resident and Member views.
3.2.5 Anticipated changes to stock numbers and profile

The Council has a new build programme. The following information confirms the likely delivery of new properties over the course of this Strategy:

The Council estimates it will lose 50 properties to Right to Buy in each financial year.

4  Housing Demand

4.1  Demographics

According to the 2011 Census Corby Borough had a population of 61,300 - figures released in March 2010 shows that is has the fastest growing population in both Northamptonshire and the whole of England, with a growth of 6,000 in one year alone. Population figures for 2018 show that there has been another increase to 69,801. This is consistent with the Council's aspiration to double the population of Corby by 2030.

4.1.1 Age profile of the Borough

The age profile of the Borough’s population provides valuable data when planning our service provision. The 2011 census showed that the largest percentage of Corby’s population was under that age of 17, which accounted for 23% of the overall population. The second largest was the parental ages of 30-44 years of age (21%) followed closely by the 45-59 year olds (20.3%). This trend continues to show in the 2015 Mid-Term Statistics with small increases in these percentages. In 2015 residents aged 65 and above equate to about 14% of the population.
4.1.2 Disability

The most recent research on disability population was by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in 2011 (with uplift in 2015). The ONS research states that 18% of the population for Corby has some form of disability (this equates to 10,868 people), given the average household size at that time, which was 2.40, this means there is approximately 4,528 disabled households in Corby, which is c15.6% of the total households (29,005 @ November 2017) today. Of the total households, 21% live in social housing stock. The Council currently owns 4711 housing units of varying sizes. Of this total there are 1058 Council properties that are suitable or adapted to be suitable for households of varying sizes with varying disabilities; this is equal to 22.5% of CBC’s housing stock.

Disability suitable (or adapted to be suitable) property types

The following page shows a breakdown of size and type of CBC housing units that are suitable or adapted to be suitable:

“They were pleased with the installation of their wet room.”
There is a full range of property types within CBC’s stock to cater for a wide range of disability, with 3 bed family homes (suiting 4-6 people) being the most of all types showing 36.6% of all suitable or adapted to be suitable social housing stock.
4.2 Demand

A key element of Corby’s approach in assessing the longevity and quality of its own stock has been an acceptance that properties in a number of the urban estate areas had fallen into serious decline. Radical action was agreed to remove the most unattractive and problematic dwellings, and demolition began in 2005 on over 400 units that have been earmarked and removed within wider estate regeneration plans.

The level of demand for Council homes of any type is high. However, there is a particularly strong need and demand for the Council’s two bedroom stock, with well over half (62%) of all applicants requiring this size of accommodation. Demand for this property types outstrips supply, especially in Kingswood and Danesholme. This is currently only being addressed by our new build programme and negotiations with RSL providers and developers.

In general, waiting time can often be many years. However, if an applicant is awarded priority (for example if they have medical reasons for needing to move home) then they are likely to be housed much more quickly.

In November 2017 there were 248 applications from households who stated they had a need for adaptations, were wheelchair users, or had ground floor need. This is 21.3% of the waiting list of 1165 applicants. However, only 55 of 248 applicants are assessed as being in urgent or property need for rehousing urgently banded applicants. Given average turnover of stock, current the housing stock is adequate to meet that need.

5 Finance

5.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is designed to give a 5 year plan of where our finances are heading, and to optimise the financial resources allocated to the delivery of the Council’s “One Corby” strategy. It reflects the significant change in the general economic and financial context within which the Council operates, so that decisions can be made based on long term financial information.

The purpose of the strategy is to agree a set of principles and projections that underpin the annual budget process and ensure that the Council can achieve its ambitions for service delivery and performance within the resources available. It covers General Fund Revenue, the Housing Revenue Account and the Capital Programme.
The MTFS contains the following principles that are of particular relevance to the Asset Management Strategy:

- The Council will, within available resources, seek to maximise delivery of services and levels of performance and ensure that resources are targeted to meeting its objectives and priorities. It is recognised that delivering high quality services comes at a cost.
- The Council will seek to build up reserves wherever possible to cover unforeseen events.
- Services will be kept under constant review to ensure that they are delivered efficiently and effectively, and efficiency savings targets are being set.

5.2 Housing Revenue Account

A local authority with housing stock has to keep a Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This records all revenue income and expenditure in relation to the management of its stock and running expenses of services to its tenants and leaseholders. It is, in effect, the income and expenditure associated with being a landlord of the housing stock. The expenditure is financed from tenant’s rental, fees and charges and specific grants. It is a ring fenced account solely for this purpose.

The Government’s decision in 2015 to annually reduce housing rents by 1% for four consecutive years from 2016/17 places a significant pressure on the HRA and, in particular, the Capital Programme that the HRA funds.

The HRA is now only sustainable if the investment in the stock (the capital programme) is reduced by £700k pa until 2020. There will be a need to review the HRA capital programme towards the end of the 4 year period when the housing rent settlement is known.

5.2.1 Rental Income

As explained above, the projections for rental income assume a reduction of 1% per annum until 2020. In year 2020/21 and thereafter an increase of 2.5% is assumed. This will be required to maintain the financial viability of the HRA and the investment required in the stock.

5.2.2 Right to Buy Sales

Rental income will be lost through ongoing Right-to-Buy sales, assumed to be 50 per annum.
5.2.3 Voids Management (Empty Properties)

The action taken to reduce the level of voids has resulted in the average number of “turnover voids” being 30 properties. The projections assume that voids are maintained at this level.

5.3 Significant Risks to the HRA

The HRA has four significant risks:

a) The first is in relation to capital works that will be required to maintain and improve the stock. As outlined above, the annual budget for these works has been reduced due to the rent decrease from 2016/17. As a result, there is unlikely to be sufficient funds to meet the long term investment required in the stock without significantly increasing rents after this period.

b) The second related risk is that if rents do not increase after the rent reduction of 1%, further cuts will be required. Each 1% represents approximately £180k so if rents do not increase, this lost income will need to be found from revenue budgets. This would need to be done through reducing revenue contributions to the capital programme, if no further efficiency savings could be found.

c) The third is that the stock reduces from the take up of Right to Buy sales, following greater incentives that have been introduced from the Government. Each property generates approximately £4k of revenue income each year. A provision of 50 sales per annum is included within the HRA income projections.

d) The fourth is the impact of welfare reform, whereby a recipient of the housing element of Universal Credit will receive the benefit directly rather than the landlord. There is therefore a risk that rent collection rates will suffer as a result.
The Council recognises that the Decent Homes Standard is a ‘minimum standard’ and support the principle of ‘local offers’ set out in national housing standards that social landlords should agree a standard based on the views and aspirations of residents. For Corby, this ‘local offer’ is the Corby Quality Standard (CQS).

The principal aims of the Council’s Stock Investment Strategy are to:

1. Minimise spend on more expensive responsive repairs by having effective planned preventative maintenance programmes in place
2. Make sure maximum benefit is delivered through planned works by responding to the priorities identified through responsive maintenance work
3. Ensure programmes are driven by sound knowledge of the stock’s needs so they optimise value
4. Focus where possible on more efficient, estate-based programmes rather than on ‘component’ or ‘element’ replacement programmes across wide numbers of properties
5. Ensure that programmes are developed and refined in good time so that greater certainty can be provided for residents about works to their homes
6. Respond effectively to wider Council and national policy decisions while taking tenant views into account

The Council will deliver a programme of home improvements to ensure that tenants’ homes are decent and safe and meet the Corby Quality Standard. Following consultation in 2017 the AMS tenant priorities for the housing service have been identified and are set out in the graphic on the following page.
The Council will work with Corby Tenants Voice (CTV – the Council’s formal tenant representative body) to continue to develop these priorities. Additionally, the CTV will be heavily involved in the development of the CQS in terms of specific standards.
6.1 Corby Quality Standard

The Council will carry out improvements based on the condition and expected lifespan of the various components of each home. The CQS will aim to have no components that are older than these life spans. The Council will also ensure that homes are maintained and refurbished to a standard that keeps the occupants safe and warm, whilst also reducing home running costs.

The expected lifespan we will use are as follows:

From the condition surveys undertaken, the Council recognises that there is a backlog of outstanding work that is already older than the stated life spans and/or in poor condition. This will need to be undertaken to meet the CQS standard. How quickly the Council can deal with this backlog is dependent on the priority given to each element and the funding available each year. The assumptions in the proposed programme are that Kitchens will be dealt with within three years; Bathrooms within one year; Windows within one year; and Doors within two years. This programme, with associated capital expenditure, is set out in Appendix One.
The following sections will outline the general policy approach the Council will adopt to meet the CQS.

6.2 Kitchens and Bathrooms

It is proposed that Kitchens and Bathrooms are replaced within 30 and 40 years respectively. There is a back log to meet this aim which is programmed to be achieved in the first three years of the Strategy. It is a priority for tenants to have home improvements undertaken to provide modern facilities.

Tenants are given a number of choices with both kitchens and bathrooms, this includes:

1. A minimum of three kitchen unit styles and three worktop styles;
2. A minimum of three choices of wall tile colours and four floor coverings;
3. A choice of decorative finishes and colours for walls;
4. Each kitchen is individually designed according to the space available wherever possible meeting tenant’s wishes (e.g. location of their household appliances).

6.3 Boiler Replacements and Heating

It is proposed that central heating boilers and full heating systems are programmed to be renewed in 15 and 40 years respectively. To meet the CQS it is necessary to meet a back log. The programme aims to achieve this within six years.

6.3.1 Mains gas

Where mains gas is available a highly efficient condensing gas boiler and radiator system will be installed in all properties, where practicable.
Alternatives will be discussed and agreed with the tenant. Tenants wishing to retain a focal-point fire will be able to do so, if they wish to pay the materials costs of replacement. The Council will pay for the ongoing servicing costs.

6.3.2 Other works to be undertaken at the time of heating replacement

At the time of installing heating, each property will be checked to ensure that it has sufficient loft and cavity wall insulation.

6.3.3 In-year Failure

Where heating boilers or systems fail ahead of the programmed dates, if beyond repair these will be renewed and costed to the capita replacement budget.

6.4 Energy Conservation

It is the Council's aim to make homes as efficient as possible whilst still achieving value for money.

A sum of £100,000 has been included over the lifecycle of the Strategy to meet this aim. The Council's aim is to ensure that all properties:

1. Have cavity wall and loft insulation. A programme has been undertaken to improve the insulation of properties. As part of CQS, loft insulation will be increased to at least 250mm whilst the work to improve the heating is carried out. At the same time the property will be checked for cavity insulation and if not present, will be installed.
2. Where possible, solid brick built properties are considered for wall insulation, either externally or internally (subject to planning restrictions). A programme of insulation will begin with the properties where external insulation is possible.
3. At the time of installing new heating, measures to improve energy efficiency will also be explored. This includes loft and wall insulation.
6.5 General Building Works

There are works that can be identified either through other programmes or the responsive repairs service where it is prudent to take a planned approach for a larger number of properties. This includes:

1. Chimney repair and removal;
2. Footpath replacement;
3. Fencing replacement;
4. Gutter replacement; and
5. Brickwork, repair and re-pointing.

Where work is identified either through the responsive repairs service, capital contracts or estate inspections and the nature or quantity of the work would be more cost effective or better managed if included into a planned programme, the Council will take a planned approach. Work for inclusion in this contract is approved either through the Council’s Asset Management Group or the approval of the annual Capital Programme.

6.6 Windows and Doors

The CQS will aim to ensure that both windows and external doors are replaced within 30 and 40 years respectively. All windows will be glazed with Double Glazed Units and the majority of the Council’s properties by this time will be fitted with Upvc frames; the backlog of window works will be caught up with by the end of 2019/20.

External doors and frames are to be replaced with a composite doorset consisting of a uPVC frame and a factory manufactured door set of resin bonded onto a timber frame. This enables the doors to meet either Secured By Design or PAS 011 security standards. All older wooden doors that are due for replacement will be renewed based on the “oldest first” principle; this backlog will be met by the end of 2018/19.

“Customer thanked the team that fitted her new double glazed units.”

“Compliment for the work carried out to repair windows; employee very helpful and accommodating.”
6.7 Estate Works

Following on from Decent Homes programme which focussed simply on the condition of properties, in relation to the CQS, it is important that the Council consider providing a decent environment for tenants in the form of estate improvements. This must be balanced against clear tenant preference for available funds to be spent on homes first, and the overall limited budget.

6.7.1 Surveying

Estates will be surveyed against a number of criteria. This will include lighting, fencing, issues of Anti Social Behaviour, car parking and general condition of common areas. This will allow a programme of works based on ranking estates as most in need of action.

6.7.2 Programmed works

A programme of improvements will be established following the completion of the survey and £164,000 has been included in total for this work. The works will focus on footpaths and boundaries as the two key areas of tenant concern.

6.8 Structural Repairs to non-traditional

The structural integrity of the non-traditional stock can be maintained for an assured life of at least 30 years if repairs and maintenance measures are implemented to maintain the effective weather tightness of the external claddings. Work is required to the following types of non-traditional property: Airey; BISF; Brick crosswall; Easiform; No-fines; Solid Wall; Swiftplan; Unity and Wates.

The work required is mainly to maintain and replace the existing external wall insulation systems. A total of £1.8 million has been allowed as part of the 5 year capital programme from 2017/18. It is proposed that a further survey be undertaken after the first 15 years of the plan to monitor any further deterioration.
6.9 Aids and Adaptations

It is the Council’s aim to deliver a responsive aids and adaptations service which meets the needs of customers and provides good value for money. We recognise our social responsibility to provide adaptations and facilities for people with a disability and our responsibility to comply with the requirements of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and the Equality Act 2010 ‘Duty to make Reasonable Adjustments’.

6.9.1 Properties

Priorities to achieve this are set out in the CQS:

a. Consider all recommendations for adaptations received from Social Care (Occupational Therapist) and, where appropriate, fund them;
b. Complete ‘critical’ adaptations within three months and ‘urgent’ cases within six months;
c. Fast track requests for minor aids; and
d. Monitor customer satisfaction and learn from experience.

The demand for this type of work is reflected in an ongoing annual budget provision of £300,000.

6.9.2 Type of work

The type of work undertaken ranges from small items such as handrails, to more major adaptations and, in a few cases, extensions to the existing property. There is a team of staff dedicated to this work that has developed systems to:

a. ensure cases are effectively prioritised;
b. work is carried out in a timely fashion, subject to Social Services assessments;
c. ensure tenants are satisfied with the work.

The Council aims to ensure that vacant properties, which have disabled adaptations, are re-let to a new tenant who requires such adaptations. This minimises the need for further expenditure on such works for the new tenant.

6.10 Garages

The objective is to make the best use of garage sites and maximise income from garage rents. Most garages currently sit as an asset managed by CB Property Service, although day-to-day management is the responsibility of the Housing Service.
The current approach to garage provision has been confirmed by the Garage Management Policy (adopted January 2018) and can be summarised as follows:

a. carry out a financial and usage assessment of each site;

b. allocate funding for repairs to the sites which are likely to yield the most income or community benefit; and

c. identify sites which could be suitable for redevelopment.

Although car ownership has risen since the garages were built, demand has fallen. In some areas there is high demand evidenced by a waiting list but in other areas use has fallen away completely.

The strategic approach is to maintain and improve garages in high demand and constant use. If regenerated, these sites have a good potential for additional income. At the other end of the scale, disused garage areas with little prospect of further use will be identified for potential redevelopment or demolition.

Any garages owned within the HRA will be subject to basic levels of repair and investment, sufficient to meet health and safety requirements and to prevent structural deterioration.

6.11 Estate Planning and Regeneration

It is recognised that apart from the maintenance programmes which keep the properties in a wind and weather tight condition, planning for estates that addresses their long-term sustainability is necessary.

Estates identified in this way where, for example, the properties are in poor condition in terms of dampness or layout, the estate is poorly planned with shared accesses and little space to the front of the properties, or properties are in low demand, will be approached in a co-ordinated manner to consider feasibility. Local Member and tenant involvement will be absolutely key to this and the Council is also committed to broader resident consultation, recognising the multi-tenure nature of its estates.

6.12 Newly Arising Needs

It is recognised within the CQS that with any programme based on age of components, that there will be an occasion where elements of the property could fail the Decent Homes Standard based on condition alone. To allow for this, it is considered good practice to factor in a contingency within the Business Plan. The
Council will allow a sum of £50,000. The need for this will be monitored on an annual basis.

It is also accepted that a number of tenants will not wish to have the programmed work undertaken to their homes. This can be for a variety of reasons, such as ill health or vulnerability. When this occurs the Council will provide support from Landlord Services. If the work is still refused, the Council will move it back to the following year and bring forward a corresponding number of properties from that year to replace the numbers lost.

6.13 Risk Management

An important part of Asset Management is to identify and understand the risks that can influence or change strategy in the short, medium and long term. The risks have and will be identified and managed by the use of the Corporate Risk Management System.

6.14 Sheltered Housing

The Council’s older person’s housing must continue to meet the needs and aspirations of older people – to remain ‘fit for purpose’. Where schemes are identified as having potential issues these will be examined considering issues such as their type, location and demand in order to draw conclusions as to their ongoing sustainability.

The aim is that all of the older person’s housing stock should be modernised and, if appropriate, re-structured as necessary to improve it over time and to ensure it is ‘fit for purpose’ to meet local needs. This process will need to be carried out in tandem with any support service reviews to ensure that the Council continues to provide attractive, appropriate housing that meets both the needs and aspirations of older people.

“Compliment for painters, decorators, and electricians.”
6.15 Damp and Mould

The Council recognises that damp and mould in its properties, although sometimes a result of 'lifestyle', is also caused by a combination of:

a) poor property layout;
b) poor insulation; and/or
c) lack of effective means of ventilation.

The Council will adopt a thorough approach, including an exhaustive inspection whenever damp or mould is reported and will undertake whatever works are needed, e.g. upgrading fans. Properties where damp has been reported will be carefully inspected when void, with remedial work carried out before re-let: as a minimum, provided with mechanical extraction in the kitchen and bathroom, and trickle ventilation will be checked that it has not become blocked.

The Council will use specialist contractors to provide an independent view of damp issues on a case-by-case basis. Tenants are expected to co-operate fully with Council Officers attempting to remedy reports of damp and mould, including using fans where fitted and not blocking ventilation where provided.

Over the life of the strategy, £200,000 is allocated for these works.

7  Responsive Repairs

7.1  Responsive Repairs

A ‘responsive repair’ is a repair carried out as a result of wear and tear, accidental or deliberate damage or the weather. Requests for responsive repairs are usually tenant driven and undertaken as a single job, normally of a low value, which make them difficult to programme.

“Install extractor fan and ventilator above cooker in kitchen.”

“Recent repair following mains water burst was very professional.”
7.2 Objectives

The objective of the repairs service is to provide a customer-focussed responsive repairs service, which achieves high levels of performance, customer satisfaction and good value for money.

The priorities to achieve this objective are:

a. Making appointments for all repairs
b. Getting the job done right first time as quickly as possible
c. Using tenant views to shape the service
d. Carrying out as many repairs in a pre-planned way as possible

Repairs that are not the Council's responsibility or which arise through the unreasonable actions of a third party are re-charged. The Council will also seek to recover its costs, including call out fees, where repairs are falsely reported as emergencies.

The responsive repairs service is used as an important measure of how effective the housing service is by the majority of customers. A number of standard policies for repairs items will be developed and agreed with Corby Tenants Voice and an overview of repairs performance will be given to tenants every year in the Annual Report for tenants.

8 Voids

8.1 Objective

The objective of the void process is to make void properties available for letting as quickly as possible, minimising rent loss and maximising the housing available, whilst striving to meet customers’ expectations.

Priorities are to:

1. provide a safe and secure home;
2. improve re-let timescales;
3. provide a re-let standard that meets customers’ expectations;
4. capture excellent data on the property and its major components; and
5. maximise the use of IT.

The Council will continue to aim to minimise the time a property is unoccupied by carrying out preliminary inspections wherever possible. The Council will also identify properties where fast tracking is possible and set a challenging re-let time. The overall aim is to be within the national top quartile for void performance.

8.2 Void Standard

The full re-let standard is covered by the CQS. In summary, the current re-let standard is that the Council will:
1. Carry out a gas safety check where gas is installed and leave a copy of the certificate at the property.
2. Carry out a safety check of the electrical installation.
3. Undertake a water hygiene test and provide a certificate.
4. Remove any rubbish from the property and garden.
5. Clean the property.
6. Re-decorate parts, or all of the property if it is required.
7. Carry out all of the urgent repairs and try and complete all other repairs whilst the property is empty.
8. Keep the incoming tenant informed of the date the property will be ready.

To assist with re-let times the Council may:
1. Offer an incentive to tenants to leave their home in lettable condition
2. Non-urgent repairs to be completed once the new tenant has moved in. If this is the case, tenants will be informed of the timescale for their completion.
3. Leave work to the garden if this means the property can be let to a new tenant faster. The gardening work will be completed once the property is occupied.
4. Fully consult with the incoming tenant in relation to any major works needed at the new property, for example, a new kitchen.

A recharge order is raised for removal of goods and clearance of gardens to recoup expenditure and repairs where the tenancy agreement has been breached.
9 Cyclical Maintenance

Cyclical maintenance is the regular maintenance of elements of a property including mechanical and electrical plant. Cyclical servicing is planned at regular defined intervals, for example annual boiler servicing, based on statutory requirements or best practice.

Current cyclical maintenance programmes are as follows:

1. Annual Gas Boiler Servicing
2. Maintenance of fire extinguishers, fire alarms and alarm systems in Sheltered Housing Schemes (CB Property manage the contracts for this work).
3. External redecoration including joinery pre-paint repairs every five years
4. Gutter clearing to sites with overhanging trees annually.
5. Fixed wiring tests of electrical installations are planned every five years, but will be done at intervals no greater than ten years (more frequently for temporary accommodation).
6. Smoke Alarm (five) and Carbon Monoxide Detector servicing (annual)
7. Lift Maintenance to sheltered schemes (undertaken by CB Property).
8. Garage blocks painting
9. Internal areas communal flats – decoration & flooring (ad hoc)
10. Sheltered schemes – decoration

Renewal of gas appliances, electrical installations, guttering, fascias and soffits, fencing or other elemental replacements may be identified during cyclical maintenance work. This may be added to a programme or carried out as part of the cyclical work.

“Waiting to get my guttering fixed for 1 and a half years.”

10 Health and Safety Works

The Council’s aim is to ensure that dwellings meet health and safety requirements so that tenants are living in a safe and secure environment.

This will be achieved by identifying and managing risks including:

1. Housing Health and Safety Rating Defects
2. Asbestos
3. Legionella/Water Hygiene
4. Gas Installations
5. Electrical  
6. Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide Detectors  
7. Fire  
8. Estate Risk Assessment Inspections  

10.1 Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)  

The HHSRS replaced the Fitness Standard element of the Decent Homes Standard. The HHSRS assesses the 29 main health and safety risks inherent in a property. If a property fails the HHSRS, it automatically fails the Decent Homes Standard and the Corby Quality Standard.  

HHSRS failures are classified as Priority One works and will be addressed at the earliest opportunity.  

All Council Officers involved in surveying properties will be trained to identify potential HHSRS failures. Key surveying personnel will receive full training in HHSRS assessments. This will enable us to build up an accurate figure of how many homes may be considered non-decent as a result of failure through HHSRS.  

To achieve the HHSRS aims the Council will:  
1. train staff and contractors to identify failures during their normal day-to-day activities;  
2. record any failures on the asset management IT system  
3. carry out these works as a high priority by including in planned works; and  
4. continually review the programme of HHSRS work undertaken to ensure the Council maintains compliance with the CQS and Decent Homes Standard.  

10.2 Asbestos  

The Council has an Asbestos Management Policy for all council homes, which sets out how the Council identifies and manages asbestos. The Council conducts surveys and sampling and manage asbestos containing materials in accordance with the Council’s Asbestos Policy and Management Plan and the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.  

Management surveys are undertaken to all properties, including sheltered schemes and shared entrances to flats. This information is held in an Asbestos Register together with an Asbestos Management Plan.  

All high risk asbestos containing materials are programmed for removal as they are identified. Medium and Low risk asbestos containing materials are left in-situ and are only removed if the risk should change, e.g. should they become damaged for instance or they require removal to enable repair or alteration work to be carried out.
Contractors are made aware where Asbestos materials are located before undertaking repairs or refurbishment work. If Refurbishment and Demolition Surveys are required, these are undertaken prior to work commencing.

10.3 Legionella/Water Hygiene

The Council will adopt a formal water hygiene policy through the life cycle of this Asset Management Strategy.

Risk assessments have been completed and are reviewed on a periodic basis regarding the risk of Legionella to our sheltered housing sites and other sites with common stored water as required the HSE Approved Code of Practice L8. The Council will carry out risk mitigation work by flushing hot and cold water systems to void properties just before they are occupied.

10.4 Gas Installations

We have a Policy that ensures the safety of Tenants in homes that contain a gas supply and associated appliances. It is a requirement under the Gas Regulations that Landlords issue a Landlords Gas safety Certificate within 12 months to each property. There is a target to ensure that 100% of certificates are renewed within this timescale.

The servicing of Gas Appliances is audited on the Council's behalf by a third party company. At present a 3% sample is checked to ensure compliance with legislation. This can be increased or specific operatives targeted dependent on the findings of the audit.

The policy contains a robust process to take action against tenants who do not allow access to service appliances and check gas safety.

10.5 Electrical Installations

Electrical safety inspections of the fixed wiring installations are undertaken at periods of between five and ten years based on condition. The next inspection date is detailed on each certificate issued.

At the time the inspections are carried out the essential electrical responsive type remedial work is undertaken in-conjunction with the inspection.
10.6 Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Although there is no statutory requirement in existing dwellings to provide either smoke or Carbon Monoxide Detectors it is considered good practice to do so. The Council provides smoke detectors to all properties. In addition, Carbon Monoxide Detectors are provided to all properties with gas heating.

Just over half the Council’s housing stock has hard wired smoke alarms (the rest are battery). The Council has allowed for the full replacement of both CO and smoke detectors on a rolling programme of ten years for smoke and six years for Carbon Monoxide Detectors.

10.7 Fire

In accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 the Council has undertaken fire risk assessments of communal areas to flats and sheltered schemes.

The Fire Risk assessments are reviewed on an annual basis and recorded on the Council’s Asset Management database. Any remedial work required to mitigate the risks identified is undertaken and management processes put in place. Council officers carry out regular checks of the common parts of flats and Caretakers carry out checks on Sheltered Schemes as well as planned fire evacuation exercises. These activities are recorded.

The Council has no high rise (six stories or higher) blocks and has never used the Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) implicated in the spread of fire at the Grenfell Tower tragedy. All current and past cladding used on the Council’s dwellings meet all British and European standards and no concerns have been expressed about its use.

10.8 Estate and Common Part Risk Assessment Inspections

Council Officers are regularly out on our estates, as well as formally undertaking inspections of the estate areas, garage sites and common parts of our assets. Alongside formal assessments to the Health and Safety of Tenants, residents and visitors to our estates, Officers are expected and required to identify risks and ensure appropriate action is taken.
Where high risks are identified, mitigating works are undertaken either through Planned or Responsive repairs. This will include appraisal of the following options:

1. Repair, replacement or improvement of boundaries, including urgent repairs where they are found to be unstable
2. Repair, replacement or improvement of paving or tarmac paths, both to make safe and to improve environmental conditions
3. Repairs, refurbishments and improvements to communal areas, both external and internal (e.g. refuse areas and stairwells to blocks of flats)
4. The development of long term sustainable solutions to problematic garage blocks/sites, ranging from minor environmental improvements to repairs to potential demolition/redevelopment.

11 Procurement and contract management

11.1 Procurement

The Council will work within the established procurement arrangements in letting its repair, maintenance and improvement works contracts. In doing so it will recognise there is no single solution that can be applied in all cases and that different procurement approaches are needed to fit the circumstances of the type of works being procured. Effective procurement processes are crucial in helping to deliver the main objectives of the Housing Asset Management Strategy and tenant consultation will be fully utilised to assist.

11.2 Contract Management

A robust scheme of contract management will be developed, implemented and maintained to support the requirements written into contracts and agreements. These contract management arrangements will include monitoring performance indicators and addressing issues as they may arise, at an early stage, before poor performance becomes accepted practice by either the contractor or the Council.
12 Disposal of stock

The Council will consider on a case-by-case basis the potential merits of voluntarily disposing of properties which are no longer cost-effective to manage, or provide an opportunity to release significant investment. It will use the proceeds to provide funds either for re-investment in the remaining housing stock or for the acquisition of replacement properties.

Properties which may fall into the category for potential disposal would include those in:

1. Schemes/estates in which properties are particularly difficult to let;
2. Properties that have potential high market value;
3. Properties requiring significant capital expenditure to meet the HHSRS; the DHS; or the CQS;
4. Blocks of flats containing a majority of leasehold properties where considerable irrecoverable management costs are being incurred.

13 Performance Management & Measurement

13.1 AMS Action Plan

The range of actions required in order to deliver the AMS will be developed into an Action Plan that will be regularly reviewed and updated. Progress will be reported on through the Council’s Asset Management Group.

13.2 Performance Management

Performance management will be designed to illustrate how the Council’s management of the housing assets is improving over time through a number of key indicators. These indicators will be designed to provide quantifiable measurements for the critical success factors linked to the priorities set out in the Strategy.
In developing the key indicators, and in line with best practice, we will ensure they are SMART:

- **Specific** – target a specific area for improvement
- **Measurable** – quantify or at least suggest an indicator of progress
- **Assignable** – specify who will do it
- **Realistic** – state what results can realistically be achieved, given available resources
- **Time-related** – specify when the result(s) can be achieved.

The Council will actively work with Corby Tenants Voice to scrutinise, monitor progress against targets and work in partnership with the Repairs and Maintenance Team to drive forward performance improvements.

### 14 Information Technology

The Asset Management Strategy is underpinned by appropriate IT systems informing all relevant decisions on repairs, maintenance and planned investment. Robust and integrated systems will be put in place through the Council’s Integrated Housing Management System for holding stock condition information, surveys, completions information, DHS and CQS scoring etc. The Council’s integrated approach will allow key housing management data/information to be linked with asset management data to ensure that relevant information on investment and the Council’s assets is shared across the organisation.

The operational benefits of the integrated approach are that:

1. Staff across the Council are able to see details of investment completed and planned to enable informed housing management decisions e.g. on allocations or void repair works
2. Properties where tenants have ‘omitted’ or refused improvement works will be held in the system for re-organising as required at the next change of tenancy
3. Information on warranties, guarantees, asbestos surveys etc. is available to all users for informed management of front line repairs and CDM compliance, together with enforcement of warranties
4. Servicing programmes can be managed more proactively, taking into account all replacements completed under planned programmes, feeding back recommendations from servicing engineers on condition and likely replacement requirements for the future
15 Review

This Strategy will be reviewed every five years, unless legislative or regulatory changes require an earlier review. If Council staff become aware that there are problems with effective operation of the strategy or the associated procedures, they should report this to the Owner. This feedback will be incorporated into the review process.