

Report to Place Scrutiny

Regulator of Social Housing – Improvement Plan

Officer Contact: Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Report Author: Neil Consterdine

Email: Neil.consterdine@oldham.gov.uk

Wednesday, 7th October 2026

Reason for briefing

To provide background on the inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing, and an update on the current improvement plan process.

Recommendations

- To note and discuss the information presented at the meeting

Regulator of Social Housing – Improvement Plan

1 Background

- 1.1 The Council owns almost 2,100 homes within the Borough. These properties are not directly managed by the Council, with management functions delivered under four separate sets of contractual arrangements:
- PFI 2 – Oldham Retirement Housing Partnership (Housing 21). A 30-year contract covering 1429 homes for older people, including Extra Care accommodation
 - PFI 4 – Inspiral Partnership (Great Places and Wates) – 25 year contract for 615 general needs homes
 - Primrose Bank – a non-PFI arrangement covering 18 homes managed under an agreement with Great Places
 - Holly Bank – a non-PFI arrangement, covering the management of a 20 flat Adults scheme, with care provider by MioCare
- 1.2 While the Council does not directly manage these properties, its legal status as landlord for these homes means it is responsible for compliance with statutory obligations, including under the Social Housing Regulation Act (2023).
- 1.3 During 2025, the Council was subject to an inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing, to determine compliance with the new mandatory Consumer Standards introduced in April 2024. These standards comprise of:
- *Safety and Quality* – relating to the condition of the housing stock
 - *Transparency, Influence and Accountability* – relating to tenant involvement, engagement, and ability to influence service provision
 - *Neighbourhood and Community* – relating to issues such as anti-social behaviour, hate crime and domestic abuse
 - *Tenancy* – relating to how tenancies are issued and managed
- 1.4 The Council received a grade of C3, indicating that the Regulator had identified “serious failings” in delivery of the Consumer Standards outcomes, and a need for significant improvement. Key areas of the judgement were:
- A lack of evidence that information around the delivery of the consumer standard outcomes is reported to or considered by senior officers or Councillors.
 - A general theme relating to the lack of sufficient assurance and verification of outcomes reported by providers – specifically an over-reliance on negative assurance and exception reporting.
 - Particular failings relating to the Safety and Quality standard, including :
 - A lack of up to date stock condition information in relation to one of the PFI contracts

-
- Insufficient resource for the Council to independently assure itself of the robustness of information provided by providers around maintenance and repairs
 - Inconsistencies in reporting across the four contracts, including limited evidence of consistent collection and reporting of repairs for Primrose Bank and Holly Bank
 - Particular failings in relation to the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, including:
 - A lack of meaningful opportunities for tenants to scrutinise service delivery and performance information
 - A lack of assurance that the diverse needs of our tenants are understood, and that this information was used to inform decisions on service delivery
 - Inconsistent approaches across contracts meaning that there are potential inequalities in tenant engagement outcomes.
 - Some weaknesses in the approach around the Tenancy Standard and Neighbourhood and Community Standard, but these were viewed as lesser areas of concern.

2 **Current Position**

- 2.1 The Council subsequently entered into an improvement plan process with the Regulator, with the first formal meeting scheduled for 5th February, and monthly thereafter.
- 2.2 Following this engagement, a draft improvement plan was produced. This has gone through a number of iterations, to ensure that it is sufficiently robust, and has recently received approval from the Regulator. Engagement with the providers on the key elements of this plan has been positive, and a number of improvements are already under way.
- 2.3 Consultation has recently concluded on a service redesign, which will put additional staffing into the team, in order to ensure there is sufficient capacity to both deal with the day-to-day contract management of our properties, while also ensuring compliance with the Consumer Standards, and readiness for future inspections.
- 2.4 A new Consumer Standards Improvement Board is being stood up, with the first meeting scheduled for late October. This board will include tenant representation, and have responsibility for signing off each action as complete.

4 **Recommendations**

- 4.1 To note and discuss the information presented at the meeting