

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Audit and Governance Committee – 12 December 2022

Landlord Health and Safety Property Compliance Update Report

This matter is the responsibility of the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Cllr Francesca Smith

Report Author: Ian Candlish, Assistant Director Housing Property

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report provides an updated position for the main landlord health and safety property compliance disciplines. Despite ongoing challenges with resourcing issues for both in-house staff and contractors, we nevertheless continue to maintain 100% compliance in the majority of workstreams and improved performance overall.

1.2 The information within this report summarises the current compliance of Somerset West and Taunton Council in relation to the following key areas:

- Asbestos management
- Electrical safety
- Fire safety
- Gas safety
- Passenger lift and stairlift management
- Water safety
- Non-Gas heating safety
- Radon safety
- Street lighting
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Each compliance area is monitored separately as defined by properties contained within either the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) or General Fund (GF) accounts. HRA Blocks refer to all communal area(s) within the block (including any meeting halls), HRA Commercial refers to non-residential properties (e.g. shops or offices), HRA Dwellings refers to the individual property (e.g. house, bungalow, flat, etc.) and GF Property refers to the entire building.

1.3 The report identifies:

- Somerset West and Taunton Council's current compliance status (as of 18th November 2022).
- Comparative performance from the previous report submitted on 13th June 2022 wherever possible. This is shown in brackets on each dataset on the relevant table.
- Achievements and successes since the last report.
- Issues adversely affecting compliance and action being taken.

- Regulations / legislation which affects the way Somerset West and Taunton Council manages its property safety compliance.

1.4 Risk ratings and timescales:

- Somerset West and Taunton Council will review and where suitable use the ratings and timescales suggested by its approved contractors when receiving an inspection report.
- Where no timescales are given by the contractor, Somerset West and Taunton Council timescales as set out in its relevant policies will be adopted.
- Hazards deemed as urgent or as emergency works will be actioned as soon as reasonably practicable. This may include restricting access to areas immediately until the hazard can be removed.
- Somerset West and Taunton Council may at times review hazards and change their priority if the original priority does not reflect the current use of the building or if there have been additional measures put in place that reduces the overall risk.

1.5 The information presented within this report has been compiled from data supplied by the Housing and Communities teams, the Facilities team and external contractors.

1.6 A summary of key activities and successes since the last report include:

- Implementation of new iAuditor software to assist with compliance data collection enabling improvements in the following areas: Emergency lighting visual inspections, fire door inspection, fire safety housekeeping 'sterile communal area' checks (flat block inspections), water risk assessments in dwellings and fire risk assessments.
- Additional procurement activity to deliver compliance programmes, including air source heat pump (ASHP) servicing, and extension of our stair-lift contract.
- A review of Non-Gas heating servicing schedules and validation surveys undertaken to ensure accurate data held on properties with open fires, solid fuel, air source heat pumps and oil heating systems.
- Mobilisation of new radon monitoring contract.
- Completion of a street lighting safety assessment survey programme.
- Completion of all water risk remedial actions raised from Water Risk Assessments.
- Completed up-to-date Fire Risk Assessments for all properties, including those not previously required under the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005, as amended by the subsequent change in legislation under the Fire Safety Act 2021.
- Maintaining 100% compliance for annual gas safety checks.
- Maintaining 100% compliance for annual asbestos re-inspections (excluding dwellings).
- Maintaining 100% compliance for fire detection and emergency lighting inspections.
- Maintaining 100% compliance for passenger lift inspections.
- Commenced development of a Building and Resident Health and Safety Strategy, as required by the Building Safety Act. This legislation has wide-ranging implications and as such is intended to be implemented by Central Government over a transitional timetable extending into 2024. This is also the case for many of the reforms and changes intended to be introduced by

the Social Housing Regulation Bill 2022. We will keep the committee informed of these requirements and our response to them as they are introduced within the relevant legislation.

- Installation of alarms as required under the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022.

- 1.7 Whilst the works outlined in this report are undertaken to ensure safety, several of them have a consequential effect of mitigating negative impacts on the environment and climate change. For example, regular servicing of gas boilers to maximise their efficiency, and fire safety measures to reduce the likelihood of fires occurring (such as fire safety housekeeping) both minimise the release of harmful emissions.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 The contents of the report and progress being made in relation to landlord property safety compliance be noted.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 Somerset West and Taunton Council has an obligation to comply with landlord statutory health and safety responsibilities. The required arrangements for managing these responsibilities are in place and activities are carried out in accordance with the relevant regulations, approved codes of practice and associated HSE guidance. These provide the default position of the organisation whether internal procedures, policies and practices exist.

4 Background and Full Details of the Report

4.1 Asbestos Management

- 4.1.1 Asbestos management activities continue for all property types, both for new management surveys and re-inspections. However, progress on undertaking new management surveys to HRA dwellings is behind programme due to both specialist consultancy resource availability, and access issues from tenants not wishing a survey to be undertaken in their home. We are continuing to work closely with our asbestos consultancy to prioritise this work, as well as increasing our in-house resources (both from the housing tenancy and housing property compliance team) to resolve 'no access' issues.

- 4.1.2 Somerset West and Taunton Council has a legal duty to manage asbestos containing materials within areas deemed as non-domestic, as outlined in Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (CAR2012). It should be noted that any domestic property where works are to be undertaken is deemed as a workplace under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and therefore will require asbestos information to be supplied as part of the pre-construction information. This is a requirement of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015).

- 4.1.3 Somerset West and Taunton Council holds an Asbestos Register containing relevant asbestos information to keep its staff, contractors and visitors safe during normal

activities. This information is held within a cloud-based server and as a hard copy (commercial properties only) in the building compliance folder.

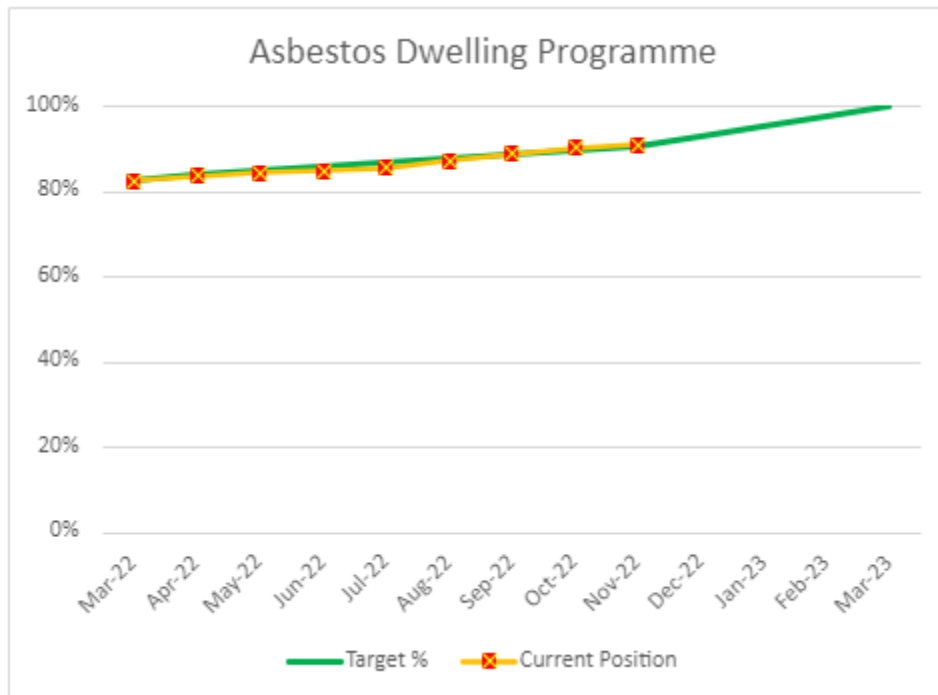
4.1.4 Somerset West and Taunton Council holds asbestos information on both its housing stock and GF Property. However, following a review of the data held, it has been decided that only surveys undertaken after August 2018 (which follow a more robust methodology) will be used to manage asbestos containing materials and supplied to contractors as pre-construction information. This will ensure that a detailed asbestos register of SWT's stock portfolio is maintained, and surveys are suitable for works being carried out. Asbestos surveys to communal areas where required by Regulation 4 of CAR2012 have been undertaken, and a programme of updated domestic surveys to validate those currently held by the Council is underway. The approved Asbestos Procedures document allows for safe management of asbestos pending completion of these surveys, i.e. prior to undertaking construction work when asbestos-containing materials are most likely to be disturbed a 'refurbishment and demolition survey' is undertaken, and all void properties have an asbestos management survey undertaken prior to re-letting.

4.1.5 The following table shows the current position for asbestos surveys undertaken post-August 2018. Where properties are found to contain asbestos (except for dwellings) they will be subject to future re-inspection.

Property Account Type	Number of Properties	Number Surveyed	Future Re-inspection	Re-inspection surveyed	Percentage Surveyed
HRA - Blocks	524	524	402	402	100% (100%)
HRA – Meeting Halls	18	18	8	8	100% (100%)
HRA – Guest Rooms	10	10	6	6	100% (100%)
HRA – Dwellings	5519	5016	N/A	N/A	91.05% (84.45%)
HRA - Commercial	2	2	1	1	100% (100%)
GF – All Properties	49	49	20	20	100% (100%)

Note: The HRA dwelling programme for asbestos surveys undertaken post-August 2018 has achieved 91.05% completion, although if all surveys are considered this would rise to an overall percentage surveyed figure of 95%.

4.1.6 The following graph shows the current position for the HRA Dwellings asbestos management survey programme:



Note: As detailed in 4.1.1 above, the programme of asbestos management surveys for HRA Dwellings is behind programme, with 494 surveys still required out of 5519, and has been extended due to complete March 2023. In addition to this programme however, it should be noted that the ongoing need for 'refurbishment and demolition surveys' to capital investment programmes, together with surveys to void properties, continues to be undertaken.

4.2 Electrical Safety

4.2.1 Electrical safety checks continue for all property types. However, progress on undertaking testing, including any consequent remedial works, to some property types is behind programme due to a lack of staff resource capacity by both our external contractors and our in-house electrical team, as well as an ongoing high level of remedials being found during testing. Recruitment of appropriately qualified and experienced electricians remains an issue generally within the sector and we continue to undertake an active recruitment exercise for our own in-house electrical team. In addition, a new contract has recently been mobilised which will provide certainty of work to the contractor for a longer period and thus facilitate their recruitment and retention of qualified electricians to deliver for the council on this important compliance work area.

4.2.2 Somerset West and Taunton Council have a duty to periodically inspect and test electrical installations within its stock. All void properties have an electrical inspection undertaken prior to re-letting.

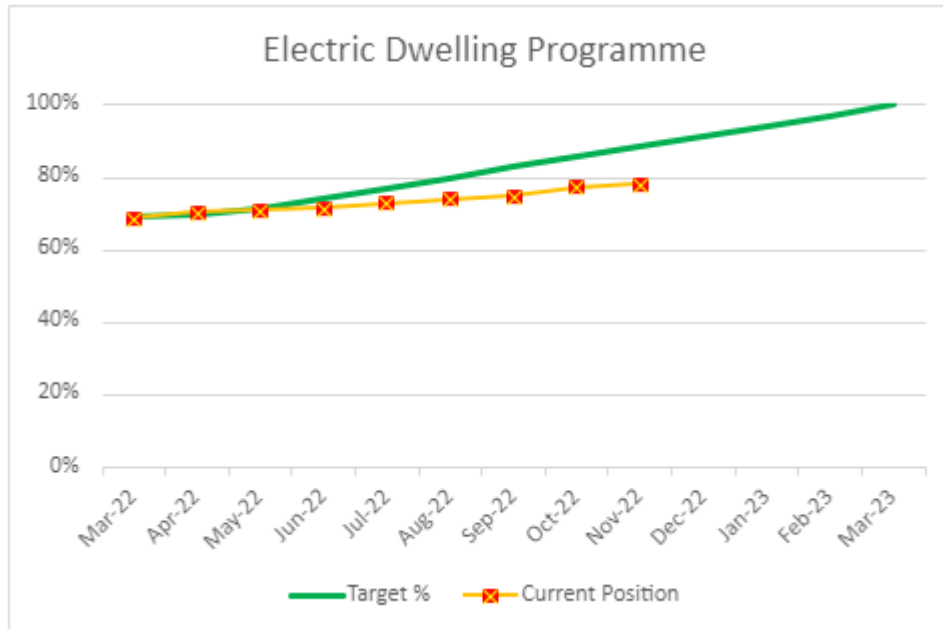
- 4.2.3 Somerset West and Taunton Council have an Electrical Safety Policy and associated procedures in place.
- 4.2.4 Somerset West and Taunton Council have adopted the following periodic inspections:
- Domestic Properties – 5 yearly cycles
 - Common Parts of domestic buildings – 5 yearly cycles
 - Commercial buildings owned and operated by SWT – As recommended from the most recent previous test certificate
- 4.2.5 Inspections are actively monitored by the Housing Property Compliance team to ensure that the periodic inspection regime is suitable from the amount and type of remedial works that are identified following inspection.
- 4.2.6 All electrical inspections are undertaken by both our in-house electrical team and external contractors.
- 4.2.7 All Code 1 hazards ('Danger present - Risk of injury') which are identified during the inspection are rectified on site, and if they cannot be rectified the areas are made safe until works can be completed. Code 2 hazards ('Potentially dangerous') are programmed to be undertaken urgently. Any Code 3 hazards ('Improvement recommended') are reviewed and, if required, are included in future planned programmes.
- 4.2.8 The following table shows the current position for electrical inspections:

Property Account Type	Number of Properties	Number Inspected	Percentage Compliant
HRA - Blocks	338	338	100% (100%)
HRA – Meeting Halls	18	18	100% (100%)
HRA – Guest Rooms	10	10	100% (100%)
HRA - Dwellings	5677	4434	78.10% (71.43%)
HRA - Commercial	3	3	100% (100%)
GF - Properties	56	54	96.49% (96.49%)

Note: The HRA Dwellings completed figure in the table above excludes those properties where a satisfactory EICR has been undertaken, but we are awaiting receipt of the certificate to complete the quality assurance process – if these are included the overall percentage compliant would rise to 81.73%.

For GF Properties we have two properties outstanding, although all works have been completed, we are awaiting certificates.

4.2.9 The following graph shows the current position for the HRA dwellings programme for electrical inspections:



4.2.10 Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) is a statutory requirement under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1988, and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 to ensure electrical safety of portable electrical appliances.

The following table shows the current position for electrical portable appliance testing:

Property Account Type	Number of Properties	Number Inspected	Percentage Compliant
HRA - Blocks	0	0	N/A
HRA – Meeting Halls	18	13	72.22% (100%)
HRA – Guest Rooms	9	6	66.67% (100%)
HRA - Commercial	3	3	100% (100%)
GF - Properties	12	12	100% (100%)

Note: Due to high number of staff vacancies and current sickness levels within the in-house electrical team, five meeting halls and three guest rooms PAT appointments have had to be rescheduled. These are programmed for completion during December 2022.

4.3 Fire Safety

- 4.3.1 We have maintained achievement of 100% up-to-date Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) for all property types, and a further reduction in associated remedial actions.
- 4.3.2 The Chief Executive is Somerset West and Taunton Council's responsible person – as defined in Article 3 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO2005). Article 9 of the RRFSO2005 requires that the responsible person must make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to which relevant persons are exposed for the purpose of identifying the measures they need to take. To satisfy this requirement, Somerset West and Taunton Council undertake fire risk assessments to all properties deemed as non-domestic, including the communal areas of domestic buildings.
- 4.3.3 The duty to ensure that Article 9 of the RRFSO2005 is met is the responsibility of the Assistant Director Housing Property.
- 4.3.4 Somerset West and Taunton Council have a Fire Safety Policy and associated Procedures to ensure it manages this compliance activity in its property portfolio safely and in line with relevant legislation.
- 4.3.5 Current legislation states that Fire Risk Assessments should be reviewed regularly or when circumstances change relating to the property and / or its occupants.
- 4.3.6 Somerset West and Taunton Council have adopted the following timescales for fire risk assessment based on a risk rating:
- Communal areas to domestic blocks (excluding sheltered blocks) – Biennial with a review annually
 - Communal areas to sheltered blocks - Annually
 - Commercial Properties – Annually
 - Any high-risk properties identified via FRA's – Annually
- 4.3.7 All HRA blocks are 'low rise' (the majority of which are two storey), are mainly of traditional construction, and do not have any aluminium composite material (ACM) type cladding.

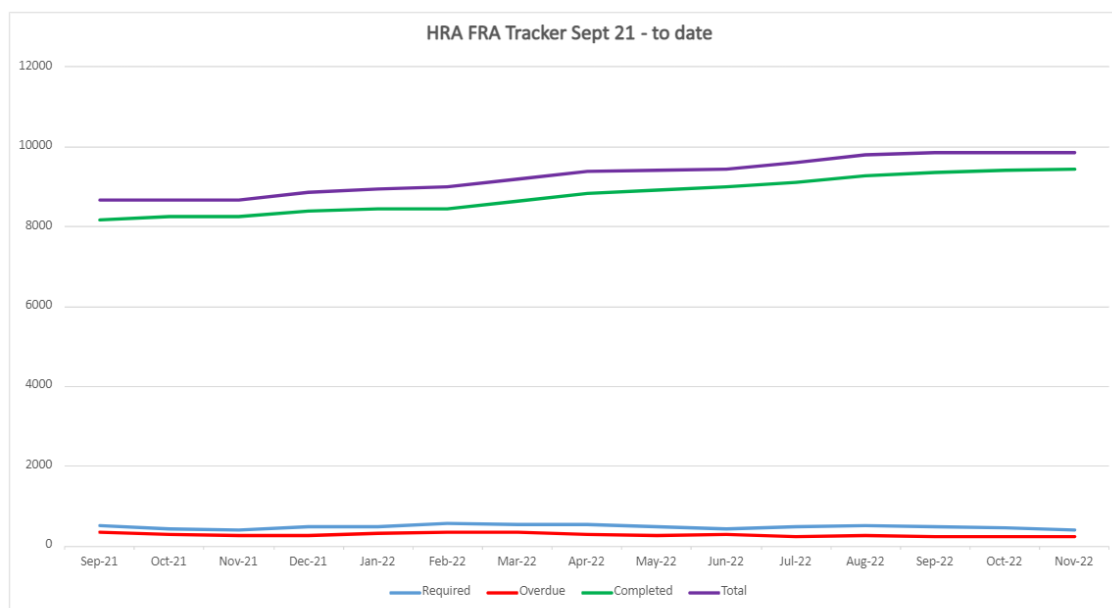
The following table shows the current position for fire risk assessments:

Property Account Type	Number of Properties	Number Inspected	Percentage Compliant
HRA - Blocks	517	517	100% (100%)
HRA – Meeting Halls	18	18	100% (100%)
HRA – Guest Rooms	10	10	100% (100%)
HRA - Commercial	3	3	100% (100%)
GF - Properties	30	30	100% (100%)

Note: Property numbers on blocks have increased significantly since the last report, this is due to legislative changes brought by the Fire Safety Act 2021 to include shared-roof properties for consideration if applicable to the Fire Safety Order 2005. All assessments have been completed and included within the above tables. Following these assessments, the number of properties will reduce to only those blocks with communal areas which are subject to future fire risk assessments.

4.3.8 All remedial actions raised from FRA's are validated and required works managed by the Housing Property teams (Compliance, Maintenance and Capital Programme) and the Housing teams (Sheltered and Tenancy). Works are either undertaken as repairs, management actions or added to capital programmes.

The following graph and table show the current position for FRA remedial actions:



Date	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22
Required	510	421	412	484	489	562	551	535	476	444	493	524	489	451	403
Overdue	334	280	264	259	333	341	342	282	272	280	244	251	241	243	228
Completed	8161	8250	8266	8378	8446	8448	8632	8842	8927	8990	9106	9265	9361	9401	9449
Total	8671	8671	8678	8862	8935	9010	9183	9377	9406	9434	9599	9789	9852	9852	9852
New Actions	94	0	7	184	73	75	173	194	29	28	165	190	63		

Note: Both outstanding and overdue actions have reduced following completed remedial works, safety checks and subsequent smoke alarm upgrades, and work incorporated into capital works programmes.

For context, it is also worth noting that over the last 24 months 9449 FRA remedial actions have been addressed and we maintain a strong focus on continuing to deliver both the programme of FRAs and the recommended remedial actions.

The following table shows the current position for FRA remedial actions:

Remedial Action Type	Number of Outstanding Actions	Number of Overdue Actions
Bin Store	0	0
Communal Fire Doors	0	0
Compartmentalisation	214	174
Compliance Management	50	4
Detection and Alarm	13	9
Electrical Improvement	9	1
Emergency lighting	3	0
Fire Signage	1	1
Flat Entrance Fire Doors	0	0
Flat Store Fire Doors	0	0
Flooring	0	0
Housekeeping	0	0
Means of Escape	0	0
Miscellaneous Actions	0	0
Records, Testing and Maintenance	13	4
Tenancy Management	100	35
Arson Risk	0	0
Total	403	228

Notes:

The number of outstanding actions changes as the recommended remedial actions from the latest FRA's are received, as these will supersede previous FRA's. As works are undertaken to resolve existing remedial actions, and potentially additional recommended remedial actions are added from new FRA's (e.g. due to changes in legislation or best practice), then this becomes, in effect, a moving target. For reference, an additional 446 actions were raised on updated FRA's during the period since the last report to the committee.

Compartmentalisation remedial actions are being progressed via two contracts, i.e. one relating specifically to fire door installations and associated fire stopping works, and an additional recently procured contract to address fire stopping requirements not associated with the fire door programme. Tenancy management actions continue to be progressed by carrying out person centred risk assessments and personal emergency evacuation plans.

4.3.9 The following table shows the current position for fire detection and emergency lighting inspections:

Property Account Type	Inspection Type	Number of Properties	Number Inspected	Percentage Compliant
GF – Properties	Fire Alarm: weekly test	19	16	88.89% (100%)
	Fire Alarm: 6 monthly service and test	19	19	100% (100%)
	Emergency Lighting: monthly service and test	28	26	92.86% (100%)
	Emergency Lighting: annual service and test	28	28	100% (100%)
HRA - Blocks	Fire Alarm: weekly test	8	8	100% (100%)
	Fire Alarm: 6 monthly service and test	8	8	100% (100%)
	Emergency Lighting: monthly service and test	117	117	100% (100%)
	Emergency Lighting: annual service and test	117	117	100% (100%)
HRA – Meeting Halls	Fire Alarm: weekly test	11	11	100% (100%)
	Fire Alarm: 6 monthly service and test	11	11	100% (100%)
	Emergency Lighting: monthly service and test	13	13	100% (100%)
	Emergency Lighting: annual service and test	13	13	100% (100%)
HRA - Guest Rooms	Fire Alarm: weekly test	0	0	N/A
	Fire Alarm: 6 monthly service and test	0	0	N/A
	Emergency Lighting: monthly service and test	1	1	100% (100%)
	Emergency Lighting: annual service and test	1	1	100% (100%)
HRA - Commercial	Fire Alarm: weekly test	1	1	100% (100%)
	Fire Alarm: 6 monthly service and test	1	1	100% (100%)
	Emergency Lighting: monthly service and test	2	2	100% (100%)
	Emergency Lighting: annual service and test	2	2	100% (100%)

Note: GF properties fire alarm weekly test and monthly emergency light inspections have been completed, however we await the contractor service reports prior to updating compliance records.

4.4 Gas Safety

- 4.4.1 Gas safety checks and servicing to 'domestic' type boilers are undertaken by the in-house Gas team and works to commercial boilers are carried out by external contractors.
- 4.4.2 Somerset West and Taunton Council has a duty under Regulation 36 of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1988 to carry out annual safety checks on gas appliances / flues and implement an on-going maintenance regime to ensure the safe operation of gas appliances and associated pipework where gas is present.
- 4.4.3 Somerset West and Taunton Council have a Gas Policy and associated Procedures to ensure that they meet their statutory requirements.
- 4.4.4 Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR) certificates are provided to tenants following gas safety checks.
- 4.4.5 Somerset West and Taunton Council also undertake responsive repairs on gas appliances and systems owned by the Council, either following annual checks or breakdowns, together with a programme of planned replacements.
- 4.4.6 The following table shows the current position for gas safety:

Property Account Type	Number of Properties with Gas	Number Inspected	Percentage Compliant
HRA – Dwellings	4450	4450	100% (100%)
HRA – Blocks	3	3	100% (100%)
HRA – Meeting Halls	13	13	100% (100%)
HRA - Guest Rooms	0	0	N/A
HRA – Commercial	2	2	100% (100%)
GF – Properties	20	19	95% (100%)

Note: GF Properties have one location where the gas apparatus has been isolated, and our contractors are undertaking the annual service.

4.5 Passenger Lifts and Stairlifts

- 4.5.1 We continue to undertake service and inspections of stairlifts, passenger lifts and through-floor lifts.
- 4.5.3 Regulation 9 of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER), requires Somerset West and Taunton Council to ensure all lifting equipment that is provided for use in work activities are inspected by a competent person at regular intervals.
- 4.5.4 Somerset West and Taunton Council have a Lift Policy and associated Procedures to ensure that they meet their statutory requirements.
- 4.5.5 Somerset West and Taunton Council have currently adopted the following intervals for service and inspection:
- Stairlifts – Annual service and inspection
 - Passenger lifts and through-floor lifts – 6 Monthly service and inspection
- 4.5.6 The following table shows the current position for passenger lifts and stairlifts service and inspection:

Property Account Type	Inspection Type	Number of Properties	Number Inspected	Percentage Compliant
HRA - Dwellings	Stairlifts: Annual service and inspection	62	61	98.39% (100%)
HRA - Dwellings	Through-floor lifts: 6 monthly service and inspection	3	3	100% (100%)
HRA - Blocks	Stairlifts: Annual service and inspection	7	7	100% (100%)
HRA - Blocks	Passenger lifts: 6 monthly service and inspection	3	3	100% (100%)
GF - Properties	Passenger lifts: 6 monthly service and inspection	4	4	100% (100%)

Note: For HRA – Dwellings we currently have one property where the resident is in hospital, and we are unable to access the property to complete the annual service. This work will be undertaken as soon as access is obtained.

4.6 Water Safety

- 4.6.1 Water safety continues to be a key priority, with maintenance of 100% up-to-date Water Risk Assessments (WRAs) for GF properties and HRA meeting halls, guest rooms and commercial properties. All remedial actions have been completed.

- 4.6.2 Following 'go-live' of the new Open Housing and Open Asset IT system, we are now developing an updated stock condition survey template process for WRAs to HRA dwellings. In the interim, we have implemented new iAuditor software and trained our in-house teams to undertake HRA dwelling WRAs, and subsequently any identified remedial actions will be carried out.
- 4.6.3 The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 and the HSE Approved Code of Practice (L8) The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems identifies Somerset West and Taunton Council's requirement to minimise the potential of legionella growth within its stock, including communal areas.
- 4.6.4 Somerset West and Taunton Council have a Water Safety Policy and associated Procedures to ensure that they meet their statutory requirements.
- 4.6.5 Somerset West and Taunton Council have adopted the following inspection regime:
- Risk assessments – interval period for re-inspection based upon recommendation in accordance with the HSE ACoP and Guidance L8
 - Tank inspections (Communal stored water only) – Annual
 - Domestic property inspections within a block where there is communal stored water – 100% inspection over 5 years (minimum of 20% per year)
 - Void Properties – Inspected at the time of being vacant (including undertaking any remedial works and flushing prior to re-letting)
 - Domestic Properties (no communal stored water) – programme in development
- 4.6.6 Remedial actions, identified for correction from water risk assessments undertaken, are carried out by external contractors and our in-house property maintenance team. We have had 651 water risk remedial actions raised over this calendar year and all have been completed.
- 4.6.7 The following tables shows the current position for water safety:

Water Risk Assessments

Property Account Type	Properties Requiring a Water Risk Assessment	Properties with a Water Risk Assessment	Percentage Compliant
GF - Properties	54	54	100% (100%)
HRA – Meeting Halls	18	18	100% (100%)
HRA – Guest Rooms	10	10	100% (100%)
HRA – Commercial	3	3	100% (100%)

Monthly Temperature Checks

Property Account Type	Properties with Stored Communal Water	Properties with a monthly temperature check	Percentage Compliant
GF - Properties	40	40	100% (100%)
HRA – Meeting Halls	18	18	100% (100%)

HRA - Blocks	5	5	100% (100%)
HRA – Guest Rooms	10	10	100% (100%)
HRA – Commercial	3	3	100% (100%)

4.7 Non-Gas Heating Safety

- 4.7.1 A number of the HRA Dwelling properties are heated by various Non-Gas heating systems and these also require regular safety checks, servicing and repairs.
- 4.7.2 Somerset West and Taunton Council have a Non-Gas Policy and associated Procedures to ensure that they meet their statutory requirements.
- 4.7.3 Somerset West and Taunton Council also undertake responsive repairs on Non-Gas appliances and systems owned by the Council, either following annual checks or breakdowns, together with a programme of planned replacements.
- 4.7.4 The following table shows the current position for Non-Gas safety:

Fuel Type	Number of Properties	Number Inspected	Number Requiring Validation	Compliance %
Open Fires	33	24	8	72.73%
ASHP	688	452	28	65.70%
Oil	5	5	0	100.00%
Solid Fuel	36	27	8	75.00%

Notes:

Both open fires and solid fuel properties each have one overdue service due to 'no-access'. We are liaising with the tenants to arrange for these services to be undertaken urgently. In addition, we have 8 properties in each of these fuel types where historic data indicates that these systems were installed. Validation of this data is being undertaken to ascertain whether this equipment remains and, if so, it will be added to the programme of safety checks and servicing.

Air Source Heat Pumps continue to be serviced by our outgoing contractor. We are awaiting approval from Somerset County Council to enable Somerset West and Taunton Council to enter into a contract with a newly procured contractor. In the meantime, we are liaising with the current contractor and the tenants to arrange for outstanding services to be undertaken urgently. The 28 properties noted as requiring validation are newly commissioned installations where we are awaiting a commission installation report (although these have been added to the future servicing schedule).

4.8 Radon Safety

- 4.8.1 Radon gas comes from uranium and is a colourless, odourless, radioactive gas occurring everywhere in rocks and soils. The radon level in the air we breathe outside is very low but can be higher inside buildings, warm air rising can draw radon from the ground underneath a building into indoor spaces, with the highest levels usually found in basements. The radioactive elements formed by the decay of radon can be inhaled and enter our lungs. Inside the lungs, these elements continue to decay and emit radiation, most importantly alpha particles. These are absorbed by the nearby lung tissues and cause localised damage. This damage can lead to lung cancer.
- 4.8.2 The amount of radon is measured in becquerels per cubic metre of air (Bq m⁻³). The average level in UK homes is 20 Bq m⁻³. For levels below 100 Bq m⁻³, your individual risk remains relatively low and not a cause for concern. However, the risk increases as the radon level increases. The Radon Action Level is the recommended limit for the activity concentration of radon in UK homes. The Radon Action Level is 200 Bq m⁻³, expressed as the annual average radon gas concentration in the home. Radon Affected Areas are those parts of the country with a 1% probability or more of present or future homes being above the Action Level. Radon UK publishes a map of the UK – this shows that parts of Somerset West and Taunton are within higher risk areas.
- 4.8.3 Somerset West and Taunton Council have a statutory duty as outlined in Ionising Radiation Regulations 2017 and other relevant technical guidance to manage the control of Radon gas within its asset portfolio.
- 4.8.4 Somerset West and Taunton Council have a Radon Safety Policy and associated Procedures to ensure that they meet their statutory requirements and ensure best practice is always maintained.
- 4.8.5 To allow Somerset West and Taunton Council to suitably manage radon gas within its property portfolio, an appropriate inspection programme needs to be followed. Following a desk top exercise to identify properties higher than one percent as shown on the Radon UK map, radon monitoring has commenced with a pilot programme of 520 properties where detection devices have been placed within the property for a period of 90 days. The devices will be collected at the end of the period and sent to an independent laboratory for analysis. We have identified 1590 SWT tenanted properties within a radon affected area and will extend the initial pilot programme to all properties identified. Following analysis, we will develop a programme of works to undertake suitable and sufficient control measures and/or remedial work, appropriate to the levels of radon detected within the type of property and its occupancy.

4.9 Street Lighting

- 4.9.1 A number of HRA Dwellings are sited on land owned by Somerset West and Taunton Council which have streetlights as part of the amenity provided. The condition of these streetlights needs to be periodically inspected to ensure public safety.
- 4.9.2 Somerset West and Taunton Council have appointed a specialist contractor to undertake a condition survey of all of the streetlights in its ownership. This survey includes a visual condition assessment inspection, electrical safety test, numbering (as per Somerset County Council methodology), and type identification. This survey has now been completed and the data is being analysed.
- 4.9.3 Following analysis of the data, a remedial programme will be developed and implemented to undertake any necessary replacements or repairs.

4.9.4 Post-vesting day, Somerset Council will have responsibility for these streetlights as part of their overall streetlight asset base and the data will be uploaded into their computer management system (i.e. the existing Somerset County Council system).

4.10 Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms

4.10.1 The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022 came into force on 1 October 2022. From that date, all relevant landlords must:

- i. Ensure at least one smoke alarm is equipped on each storey of their homes where there is a room used as living accommodation.
- ii. Ensure a carbon monoxide alarm is equipped in any room used as living accommodation which contains a fixed combustion appliance (excluding gas cookers).
- iii. Ensure smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms are repaired or replaced once informed and found that they are faulty.

4.10.2 In preparation for the amendment, Somerset West and Taunton Council have installed detectors during the year leading up to the change through the gas, open fire, solid fuel, and oil-fired servicing programmes to ensure we are compliant.

5 Links to Corporate Strategy

No direct links.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

Landlord health and safety property compliance funding costs are incorporated into the annual budget approved by Full Council. The required funding is in place for the 2022/23 financial year.

7 Legal Implications

As noted in Section 3 of this report, Somerset West and Taunton Council has an obligation to comply with landlord statutory health and safety responsibilities. All of the specific legislative requirements are outlined under the relevant activity areas in Section 4 of this report.

8 Asset Management Implications

The property stock portfolio owned by Somerset West and Taunton Council is a substantial asset. This report outlines how property health and safety compliance for this asset base is being managed.