

SUBJECT:	NEXT STEPS ACCOMMODATION PROJECT - HOMES ENGLAND COMPLIANCE AUDIT RESULTS
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report requests the Audit Committee to note the result of the Homes England Compliance Audit for the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) which took place during Q2 of 2021/22.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council is currently under contract with Homes England (HE) to deliver several schemes via grant funding.
- 2.2 The annual Compliance Audit programme provides assurance that the Council has met all of HE's requirements and funding conditions; and has properly exercised its responsibilities as set out in HE's Capital Funding Guide (CFG).
- 2.3 On 24 June 2021, HE advised the Council that a compliance audit scheme had been opened for a scheme/property delivered as part of NSAP.
- 2.4 As set out in the standardised terms by HE, the Council was required to appoint an independent auditor to undertake the compliance audit. On the 15th July 2021 the Audit Committee approved the audit to be completed by the Council's external auditor Mazars.
- 2.5 All requested paperwork was submitted via the Mazars online portal by the Housing Strategy and Investment Team within the required timescale for assessment. This was then submitted to HE to moderate the audit to ensure consistency.

3. Audit Results

- 3.1 On the 17 January 2022, Homes England issued the Audit report to confirm a successful Green rating. The report confirmed that the scheme met all requirements with zero breaches and also had no areas for improvement. Compliance Audit Report included for reference as per appendix 1.
- 3.2 HE Audit Compliance guidance states that the Audit Report and any recommendations are to be acknowledged by cabinet members / committee. After the committee has met, the following details have to be updated on HE compliance Audit System:
- Date that the committee met;

- To certify that the committee has given their acknowledgement to the report and any recommendations; and
- To certify that the committee has given their agreement to any action plan to address any breaches (if applicable).

4. Strategic Priorities

4.1 Let's deliver quality housing

Currently, the Council is under contract with HE to receive capital grant funding for De Wint Court, Rookery Lane and RSAP. Without this funding the Council would not be able to deliver these schemes.

5. Organisational Impacts

5.1 Finance

As stated above, the annual Compliance Audit programme provides assurance that the Council has met all of the HE's requirements and funding conditions and has properly exercised its responsibilities as set out in HE's CFG.

5.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

The Council's contract (known as a grant agreement) with HE requires grant funded schemes to be subject to annual Compliance Audit.

5.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

Equality and Diversity has been considered as part of developing this report and there are no implications.

6. Risk Implications

No risks applicable as the audit received a green rating with zero breaches and zero recommendations for improvement.

7. Recommendation

- ##### **7.1**
- For Audit Committee to acknowledge and note the successful Green rating for Audit compliance as per 3.2 of this report.

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? No

How many appendices does the report contain? 1

List of Background Papers: None

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