Classification: Open	Decision Type:

Report to:	Housing Advisory Board	**Date:** 18 November 2026
Subject:	Regulator for Social Housing Regulatory Judgement and Next Steps	
Report of	Sian Grant, Director of Housing	

Summary

1. The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the outcome of the recent housing regulatory inspection of Bury Housing Services carried out by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) over summer 2026, and to provide an update on the next steps.

2. The Council was advised by the Regulator on 22nd October 2026 that it had received a C3 rating. The regulator published the judgement on 11th November. It was the Regulator's judgement that there are serious failings in how Bury Council is delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards and significant improvement is needed.

3. The Regulator noted the positive trajectory of the housing service since the council took management of the housing stock back in house. They also noted that plans were already underway to continue to improve performance in the identified areas. The judgement provides external assurance that the roadmap is going in the right direction.

Recommendation(s)

4. It is recommended that Housing Advisory Board:

   a. Note the outcome of the regulator of social housing inspection for Bury Housing Services

   b. Note the next steps in developing the improvement plan

   c. Discuss the reporting template attached at appendix 2

Background

4. Following the Grenfell fire tragedy, the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 brought in new powers for the RSH to carry out regular landlord inspections and the power to issue unlimited fines.

5. In addition, the Act brought in reform of the following four Consumer Standards that aim to ensure that tenants have a safe, secure and well-

maintained homes, with clear communication and good service from the landlord:

- Safety and Quality Standard
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
- Tenancy Standard
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard

6. In 2023 the Council made the decision to bring the management of its housing stock back into the council following concerns about how its ALMO (Six Town Housing) was manging the stock due to a self-referral to the RSH about fire safety compliance. The transfer of the management of the properties back to Bury Council was completed in February 2024 and a full permanent leadership team was in place by November 2025.

7. The council made the decision to bring the management of the housing stock back in house when it became clear that performance on key compliance issues was not accurate and it could be no longer be assured of the validity of the data. There was also a lack of triangulation with feedback from what tenants were telling us and that there were a number of issues with data quality across a range of services areas. We also found that a number of service areas were not meeting requirements of the consumer standards or best practice. This included key service areas such as;
    - Fire safety, electrical safety and gas safety
    - Anti-social behaviour management
    - Complaints handling
    - Repairs and maintenance
    - Caretaking and cleaning

8. Since Feb 2024 the service has been working hard to put in place the fundamentals to ensure we can build and deliver an excellent housing service. This has included improving data quality in key areas, improving performance reporting to show a true picture of performance, strengthening key teams and service areas and bringing in external support to provide assurance and guide improvement in key areas.

Regulatory inspection

9. In May 2026, the Council received notification that it was being inspected by the RSH and following the submission of a significant amount of evidence to support the inspection and demonstrate the improvement made since bringing the stock back in house, the inspection took place from 20th – 22nd July 2026.

10. Following an inspection, landlords are given one of four ratings:

    - C1 – overall the landlord is delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards. The landlord has demonstrated that it identifies when issues occur and puts plans in place to remedy and minimise reoccurrence.

- C2 – no failings but some weaknesses in the landlord delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards and improvement is needed.
- C3 – there are serious failings in the landlord delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards and significant improvement is needed.
- C4 – there are very serious failings in the landlord delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards. The landlord must make fundamental changes to that improved outcomes are delivered.

Bury Council Judgement

11. The Council was advised by the Regulator on 22nd October 2026 that it had received a C3 rating. This grading was published on 11th November 2026. It was the Regulator's judgement that there are serious failings in how we are delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards and significant improvement is needed.

12. Specifically, the Regulator found serious failings in the Safety and Quality Standard and the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard. They also found weaknesses requiring improvement in the delivery of some of the outcomes of the Neighbour and Community Standard. The published judgement can be found here.

13. The Regulator also provided more detailed verbal feedback at the feedback meeting on 22nd October, which is not included in the regulatory judgement. As part of this feedback they stated we had made significant progress in improving the service since it had been brought back in house and that they could see that significant and fundamental changes had been put in place. They had been assured that we have a full understanding of where we are and what the issues are, and that we have improvement plans in place to address the issues. At the time of the inspection these plans were at an early stage and were not yet embedded enough to show outcomes.

14. They also identified that data quality is a cross-cutting theme in the judgement and that our data quality was not sufficiently robust to provide assurance. There was a specific ask that we look at improving how we audit our data and assure senior leaders and councillors of its accuracy. They also noted that we are in the process of upgrading our housing management system and this was a key part of improving our data quality and data governance.

15. Overall, they stated that the inspection is a point in time and they could see a positive trajectory of improvement which provides assurance that we will meet the requirements of the higher grades in time.

Safety and Quality standard – serious failings

16. The Safety and Quality Standard requires landlords to identify and meet all legal requirements that relate to the health and safety of tenants in their homes and communal areas and ensure that all required actions arising from legally required health and safety assessments are carried out within appropriate timescales. It also requires landlords to have an accurate, up to

date and evidenced understanding of the condition of their homes and communal areas. This knowledge must reliably inform the provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for tenants, and landlords must ensure that tenants' homes meet the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard. It requires landlords to have a timely, effective and efficient repairs service and provide access to disabled adaptations.

17. The outcomes of the regulatory judgement for each of the areas within the Safety and Quality standard are provided below:

- Stock quality and decency – some weaknesses
- Health and safety – serious failings
- Repairs and maintenance – some weaknesses
- Damp and mould – serious failings
- Adaptations – serious failings

18. The judgement identified following areas of the Safety and Quality Standard as requiring improvement:

- There was insufficient assurance on the accuracy of the health and safety compliance information.
- We were unable to evidence that all required actions arising from legally required Health and Safety assessments have been carried out in homes managed by Springs TMC.
- There was a lack of clarity on the length of time fire remedial actions have been open.
- We need to improve reporting against legally required timescales to investigate, identify and repair hazards including damp and mould (including Spring TMC).
- There are weaknesses in our approach to using stock condition data to reliably inform its planning and provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes.
- We need to strengthen assurance that tenants homes meet the Decent Home Standard.
- We need to continue to deliver improved outcomes in relation to repairs and maintenance especially timeliness.
- We need to continue to improve outcomes in relation to aids and adaptations (especially timeliness).

Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard – serious failings

19. The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard sets out the outcomes landlords must deliver about being open with tenants and treating them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account.

20. The outcomes of the regulatory judgement for each of the areas within the Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard are provided below;

- Diverse needs – some weaknesses
- Engagement with tenants – serious failings
- Service and performance information (including TSMs) – serious failings
- Complaint handling – some weaknesses
- Fairness and respect – some weaknesses

21. The judgement identified the following areas of the Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard are requiring improvement:

    - There is no evidence of meaningful opportunities for tenants to influence and scrutinise strategies, policies and services.
    - There is a need to improve trust between tenants and Bury Council.
    - There are serious failings in how Bury Council provides accessible information about the landlord services and its performance in delivery to its tenants.
    - There is a need to improve non-digital access to service information for those tenants who do not engage digitally.
    - Performance information is not shared in an accessible way to able tenants to hold us to account.
    - We are not meeting the technical and survey requirements of the tenant satisfaction measures.
    - There are some gaps in our understanding of our tenants and in the information we hold on tenants.
    - We could not consistently evidence that we are using tenant information to evidence communication with and provision of information is appropriate for tenants needs and to ensure that services are accessible to tenants.
    - We need to further embed actions from complaints review to improve accessibility of the complaints process and consistency in complaint handling.

Neighbourhood and Community standard – some weaknesses

22. The Neighbourhood and Community Standard requires landlords to work in partnership to promote positive outcomes for tenants.

23. The outcomes of the regulatory Neighbourhood and Community standard are provided below:

    - Safety of shared spaces – not actively assessed but no issues found
    - Local co-operation – meeting expected outcomes
    - Anti-social behaviour and hate incidents – some weaknesses
    - Domestic Abuse -– not actively assessed but no issues found

24. The judgement identified the following area of weaknesses in the Neighbourhood and Community standard:

- We had not yet sufficiently embedded ongoing improvements to address longstanding issues in our approach to ASB case handling, including inconsistent application of policies and procedures, and evidence that tenants affected by anti-social behaviour and hate incidents had not always been adequately supported to demonstrate consistently improved outcomes for tenants.

Tenancy standard – meeting expected outcomes

25. The judgement found that we are meeting the expected standards of the Tenancy Standard. It found we offer tenancies and terms of occupation that meet all applicable statutory and legal requirements and are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their homes.

26. The judgement found this area could be improved through strengthening our assurance that relevant tenancy management policies are accessible to tenants.

Communication plan

27. The regulatory judgement was published on 11th November 2026 at 9.30am. A number of communication activities took place following the immediate publication of the judgement including briefing all housing staff and councillors. We also informed tenants via a letter send via CX and ensured that the judgement went live on our website. This week we have also sent a letter by post to all tenants along with some questions and answers.

28. A report will go to cabinet on 2nd December to update on the outcomes of the inspection and the next steps.

Regulatory Judgement Improvement Plan

29. As we have been graded as a C3 we will have intensive engagement with the RSH going forward in the form of monthly meetings. At the meetings they will seek assurance that we are making sufficient and timely progress to improve. This will include monitoring our plans for improvement and ensuring there are improved outcomes for tenants.

30. Bury Housing Services already has a substantial action plan in place to improve services. We will review this action plan to ensure it covers all the feedback and areas for improvement from the regulatory judgement and more detailed verbal feedback provided by the regulator.

31. Over the next few weeks we will work to develop a draft regulatory improvement plan for discussion and approval by the regulator. A template for the improvement plan is attached at appendix two for discussion.

32. We will also share and discuss the regulatory judgement with involved tenants at a meeting on 23rd November. This will include the start of a wider

discussion on how we improve engagement with tenants and how we can better enable tenants to be involved in decision making and scrutiny. We also plan to discuss the findings with service managers at our quarterly service managers meeting on 25th November. The views gather in these sessions will inform the improvement plan. The regulatory judgement and draft improvement plan will be presented to Cabinet on 2nd December.

33. It is anticipated that a first meeting with the regulator will take place in December 2026, where we will discuss their expectations of the improvement plan. Once the improvement plan has been agreed with the regulator we will present the final improvement plan to HAB, staff and tenants.

Links with the Housing and Corporate Priorities:
Please summarise how this links to Let's Do It Strategy and Let's Do Housing.

The regulatory judgement and associated improvement plan support us on our journey to achieve our housing vision of;

- Satisfied Tenants
- Quality Homes
- United Communities

It provides a sense check that we are heading in the right direction and that we have moved significant improvement since the management of the housing stock was brough back in house. We will use the regulatory judgement to continue to improve housing services for tenants.

Tenant voice

The RSH interviewed tenants and observed a tenants meeting as part of its on site inspection. The RSH also took into account wider tenant feedback including tenant satisfaction measures, transactional surveys and complaints and compliments received by the service.

As part of taking forward the improvement plan the results will be shared with all tenants including publishing the judgement, the next steps and, once agreed, the improvement plan on our website. We will also share the results with a group of involved tenants and seek views on how we take forward the improvement required. Specific work will be commented with tenants to determine the how they want to be involved and engaged in the service going forward.

Equality Impact and Considerations:
None as a result of this report

Environmental Impact and Considerations:
None as a result of this report

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:
Link to Housing Strategic risk register = make sure you use risks that are on the housing strategic risk register

Risk / opportunity	**Mitigation**
Failure to meet the consumer standards	Housing Services improvement plan Monthly meetings with the RSH Improved internal audit to provide assurance on data New housing management system to improve data quality and governance

Procurement Implications:
None as a result of this report

Legal/ Regulatory Implications:
All registered providers are expected to deliver housing services to tenants that meet the requirements and outcomes of the consumer standards. As a result of the C3 grading Bury will be subject to intensive engagement with the RSH, including monthly meetings to ensure we are making sufficient and timely progress to improve. This engagement will be monthly.

Financial Implications:
None as a result of this report

Appendices:
Please list any appended documents (please save these as clearly labelled separate documents in the Teams folder).

Appendix one –Regulatory Judgement
Appendix two – Draft improvement plan template example

Background papers:
Please list any background documents to this report and include a hyperlink where possible.

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning
RSH	Regulator of Social Housing
DHS	Decent Homes Standard
ALMO	Arms Length Management Organisation