

My Ref: SG/SW  
Your Ref:

Sent via email

12<sup>th</sup> August 2024

Dear Rachael and James,

**Re: Self-Referral Tamworth – Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023**

Thank you for meeting with our team on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2024 to discuss Tamworth’s position in relation to meeting the Regulatory consumer standards. The contents of this letter and summary presentation have been fully shared with our Executive Leadership Team, including the Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet colleagues.

At this meeting our team informed you of our intention to self-refer under 2.6 of the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard with specific reference to the consumer standard(s) outcomes and requirements identified in the summary presentation attached (Appendix One).

Also, at this meeting, you clarified the self-referral process including approximate timescales. We understand that rather than a published regulatory breach, you now prefer to determine whether Tamworth is meeting the requirements and publish a consumer grading following an investigatory period. Our Improvement Plan, which remains under review, is contained within the attached information and has been informed by contact with peers previously inspected, your latest consumer report and published judgements. Our understanding of your internal protocols would suggest the timeline illustrated below, to which we have based our internal planning.



At the meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2024 you requested further information in relation to the wider Safety & Quality Consumer Standard - specifically damp and mould, stock decency levels as well as an outline Improvement Plan and a risk assessment including an initial assessment of the tenant impact. For ease of reference the detail in the summary presentation provides more context in relation to those specific areas requested (slide summary overleaf):

Slide 2	Areas not meeting the requirements
Slide 3	Tenant Voice & Putting Tenants at the Heart
Slide 4	Social Housing Regulatory Programme
Slide 5-8	Housing Asset Compliance Improvement Plan

Slide 9	Stock Condition & Decency
Slide 10	Damp & Mould
Slide 11	Health & safety Risk Assessment & Tenant Impact Assessment

As we discussed, Tamworth is self-referring not because of any incident, regulatory intervention or external influence, but because it has identified through its Social Housing Regulatory Programme that there are areas not meeting the standards. This is consistent with the Council's desire for transparency. Following an external self-assessment, ongoing peer support and ultimately an external review of its Health & Safety Asset Compliance, the Council has concluded that there is insufficient progress against the improvement planning areas. The decision to self-refer now arises from agreement of the finalised Health & Safety Asset review on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024. The Leadership Board, which includes the Executive Leadership Team and political leadership, subsequently met on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 and agreed to self-refer mobilising resources necessary to achieve rapid improvement progress.

Since this decision Tamworth has re-directed staffing resources. The current Assistant Director Neighbourhoods is now seconded to drive compliance right across the Social Housing Regulatory Plan, as well as assuming line management responsibility for the asset compliance team. In addition, the Head of Repairs has also been seconded to focus on housing asset compliance. Whilst the next few months are focused on rectifying the critical areas identified, the Council will also review root causes as part of its Improvement Plan.

### ***Progress to Date***

Despite what have been unprecedented community challenges, the Council has maintained its focus in responding to the risks arising from self-referral (Appendix One contains further detail) and within the last two weeks has:

- Reviewed every action outstanding in relation to Legionella and Fire Risk tasks – shifting the majority into progress
  - Completed a damp and mould self-assessment with a workshop planned with tenants to develop an action plan
  - Reviewed the Housing Asset Compliance Improvement Plan, agreeing with tenants' critical actions and SMART timescales from now until December 2024
  - Risk assessed and developed proposals to discuss with tenants supporting those specific households impacted
- 
- Agreed with the Housing Ombudsman an extension for submission of the completed Self-assessment for the Complaint Handling Code

### ***Tenants at our Heart***

Tamworth Borough Council  
Marmion House, Lichfield Street,

Tamworth is looking forward to its Tenant Conference on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024. This will see consultation launched on its draft tenant inclusivity and engagement plan. Council Housing Services,

Fax 01827 709590

stakeholders and partners will also exhibit at the conference to capture feedback on how the service can improve. The Regulator is welcome to observe this as it will start with a tenant led talking heads video aimed at evidencing the Council's commitment to co-creation of sustainable housing solutions going forward. Details are in the presentation (Appendix One).

### ***Social Housing Regulatory Programme***

In the attached presentation, the programme and project highlights are provided and the Council is currently preparing a Service Summary reflecting it's position statement across all consumer standards. It is envisaged this will be reported to Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and will be available for us to share as part of the ongoing dialogue.

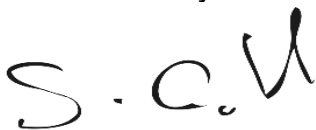
### ***Communication Strategy***

The Council intends to ensure transparency in relation to it's decision to self-refer and is developing a communications plan with tenants and other stakeholders.

We noted that you would prefer to jointly lead on any wider communications so have taken the opportunity to move an update on the Social Housing Regulatory Programme on the Council's Forward Plan from 29<sup>th</sup> August 2024 to **10<sup>th</sup> October 2024** so that this can be debated at **September's Homelessness & Housing Advisory Board**. Our Portfolio Holder is committed to meeting with you to inform the Cabinet report; I have therefore asked that a Teams meeting planner is offered for **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2024**, so we can update the Board and subsequently Cabinet. Of course, we can change this to accommodate all parties and we expect you will be in touch as required for further information in any event.

We look forward to working with you and together we will give tenants in Tamworth the assurance it needs on the quality of it's housing services.

Yours sincerely



**Stephen Gabriel**  
Chief Executive

Yours sincerely



**Councillor Ben Clarke**  
Portfolio Holder Homelessness, Housing & Planning

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