

## **Housing Landlord Position Statement 2026 – Vale**

### **Executive summary**

1. It's been another positive year for the council. New homes have continued to be acquired for use as temporary housing for qualifying groups. This, added to existing temporary accommodation, has increased the council's holdings.
2. A range of governance structures have been put in place to ensure that the homes the council provide are compliant with legislative standards, including an internal audit undertaken at the end of 2024. Of the recommendations from that audit, only one is outstanding as of 02 March 2026. As part of continuous improvement a follow-up audit was undertaken in Spring 2026, and any actions will be resolved by the relevant officer in an agreed timescale.
3. Wrap around support for all of those who use our accommodation is provided to help them stay safe and settled whilst they are using the housing but also getting ready to move on to more long-term accommodation.
4. From the 01 April 2025, the Development and Corporate Landlord (DCL) Service became directly responsible for managing the property compliance of our housing stock, with the support of the contract with Oxford Direct Services Ltd (ODS). This includes planned and reactive maintenance, housing void works, and maintaining an out of hours housing maintenance support service.

### **Purpose**

5. To ensure that the Cabinet member with responsibility for housing is provided with the relevant information on how council-provided housing is operated and managed.

### **Background**

6. In November 2022, the Cabinet approved a new Housing Delivery Strategy and associated Action Plan. This marked a significant milestone for the council, signalling its commitment to delivering affordable and suitable housing—both directly and indirectly— across the district. The strategy was refreshed in April 2026 to cover the work of the councils until, the end of 2028, and the related Action Plan for 2026/27 has also been agreed and published on the council's website.
7. The four key objectives in the Housing Delivery Strategy remain the same:
  - a. Providing homes to meet current and future local needs.
  - b. Delivering housing that is truly affordable.
  - c. Valuing and supporting council and community-led housing initiatives.
  - d. Planning for well-designed, net zero carbon housing.
8. The council has supported the first objective by developing its housing landlord function to purchase and lease housing stock that it is making available for those that are in most need and re-registered as a Local Authority Registered Provider (LARP) of housing in 2023.

9. The council has taken a number of national and local issues into account when developing its housing landlord function, and it's important to remind the council, and public of these: They are:

- Increased focus by central government on housing asylum seekers. It is possible that conflict in the Middle East may, in the fullness of time, have a further impact upon asylum schemes in this country.
- The introduction of the [Local Authority Housing Fund](#) (LAHF) has required councils to accelerate their role as direct landlords, further expanding responsibilities in this area.
- Following the tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak in December 2022 Awaabs Law came into force in October 2025. This legislation requires registered landlords to fix reported damp, mould and emergency repairs within strict timeframes.
- Rising fuel costs and broader financial pressures have further underscored the importance of affordable, energy-efficient homes.
- The introduction of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, and with it the need for the council to be compliant with the four Consumer Standards. An internal self-assessment is undertaken to check compliancy with the standards. They are the [Neighbourhood and Community Standard](#), [Safety and Quality Standard](#), [Tenancy Standard](#) and [Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard](#). The [Rent Standard](#) is the one economic standard applicable to local authorities.
- The [Housing Ombudsman](#) introduced the [Complaint Handling Code](#) and self-assessment, all social landlords must be compliant with this as of April 01 2024. The council has conducted a self-assessment, which has shown compliance with the Complaint Handling Code. This self-assessment forms part of the complaint's annual performance and improvement report that is submitted to the Housing Ombudsman. It is also required to be published on the councils website.

10. More information on the regulatory landscape the council needs to take account of when providing its housing is found in Appendix 1 of this document.

## **Governance**

11. The management and oversight of the council's housing provision involves a range of different roles, obligations and commitments as follows:

- Statutory obligations and legislation: These are placed upon the council by a wide range of housing, planning and building safety regulations.
- Council determined policies and strategies: This includes the Council Plan and Housing Delivery Strategy.
- The Cabinet Member for Property and Housing. This member occupies an elected role responsible for housing, homelessness and rough sleeping. Formal

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decisions are taken by them, by Cabinet or the Full Council as per the constitution. The individual Cabinet member for Housing meets monthly with senior officers to review performance and progress and is supported by this annual position statement.

- Senior Management Team (SMT): Led by the Chief Executive and supported by the Deputy Chief Executives, this group has a function to ensure that all policies and decisions are enacted legally, economically and for the good of the districts and communities served.

12. The Directorates that are directly involved in the safe, secure and compliant provision of council-provided housing are as follows:

- Housing & Environment
- Development and Corporate Landlord
- Corporate Services

13. They are supported by:

- Legal
- Finance
- Communications
- Communities
- Risk and insurance
- Procurement
- IT

14. To ensure compliance issues are monitored, officers from across the lead directorates meet as the Housing Compliance Group. This group, jointly chaired by the Directors of Housing & Environment and Development and Corporate Landlord, meets regularly to monitor the housing compliance action plan.

15. The Directors will report progress to the Cabinet member on a regular basis, and formally through this position statement and other formal decision reports.

16. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are essential for registered providers landlords to measure, evaluate, and improve their performance. They ensure accountability and transparency, help ensure regulatory compliance requirements and support effective management. The Annual Delivery Plan measures from this area are reported to councillors on a quarterly and an annual basis. In addition, the Housing Delivery team have also introduced a range of operational KPIs to monitor performance from April 2026

17. The council does not operate a housing revenue account (HRA) as it owns or provides housing for less than 200 properties All assets are controlled within the council's general fund, and cost centres are managed by the relevant Directorates, supported by Finance.
18. Rents are set and controlled on an annual basis in line with the rent setting policy, agreed in January 2025 and increased in April each year.

### **Review of housing provision**

19. Until recently the council has owned very few homes since its Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) of social housing stock from the council to SOHA, in 1997.
20. The internal audit of the housing landlord function, carried out in 2024 demonstrated that the service is compliant with The Decent Homes Standard, gas and electrical safety checks, legionella testing, Energy Performance Certification, the [Housing Health and Safety Rating System \(HHSRS\)](#) assessments as of the 25 January 2025 and continues to be so. A further audit of the housing service is currently being undertaken. Once complete, any actions will be resolved by the relevant officers.
21. Where the council is made aware (either by the occupier or through a visit by an officer, contractor or other stakeholder) that there is a problem in the property, such as damp and mould, action will be taken. Action on damp and mould will be compliant with Awaab's Law.
22. The existing temporary accommodation operating model has continued (with regards to rent management and housing management), assisting those who require temporary accommodation to settle into their new accommodation and helping those who require assistance to move on to other temporary or permanent accommodation. However, a review of the structure and roles within the Housing Landlord team was undertaken in early 2026 to ensure that the service is resilient and fit for purpose for the future.
23. This progress highlights the council's dedication to enhancing housing outcomes and its agility in adapting to evolving challenges, all while staying aligned with the Housing Delivery Strategy's long-term objectives.

**Housing service for 2026/27**

24. The current housing service is summarised below (with the exception of repairs and maintenance).

25. As of the 23 March 2026 council provides the following housing: 20 houses, 1 bungalow, 5 leasehold flats, 2 hostels with 16 rooms and 28 MOD leased properties  
The table below breaks down Vale of White Horse’s housing stock in more detail.

Vale of White Horse Stock

Type	Location	Council Tenure	Scheme Provided Under	Size (number of bedrooms)
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	Temporary Accommodation	3
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	Temporary Accommodation	3
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	Temporary Accommodation	3
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	LAHF 1	1
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	LAHF 1	2
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	LAHF 1	2
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	LAHF 1	2
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	LAHF 1	2
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	LAHF 1	2
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	LAHF 1	3
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	LAHF 1	4
Bungalow	Abingdon OX14	Owned	LAHF 1	2
Flat	Abingdon OX14	Leasehold flat	LAHF 1	2
Flat	Abingdon OX14	Leasehold flat	LAHF 1	2
Flat	Abingdon OX14	Leasehold flat	LAHF 1	2
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	LAHF 2	3
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	LAHF 2	3
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	LAHF 2	3

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House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	LAHF 2	3
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	LAHF 3	3
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	LAHF 3	3
House	Abingdon OX14	Owned	LAHF 3	4
House	Abingdon OX14	Leased from MOD	SFA	2
House	Abingdon OX14	Leased from MOD	SFA	2
House	Abingdon OX14	Leased from MOD	SFA	2
House	Abingdon OX14	Leased from MOD	SFA	3
House	Abingdon OX14	Leased from MOD	SFA	4
Residential Accommodation Block	Faringdon SN7	Owned	Temporary Accommodation	10
House	Grove Wantage OX12	Leased from MOD	SFA	3
Flat	Harwell OX11	Leasehold flat	LAHF 1	1
House	Harwell OX11	Owned	LAHF 3	3
Flat	Harwell OX11	Leasehold flat	Vale S106	1
House	Shippon OX13	Leased from MOD	SFA	2
House	Shippon OX13	Leased from MOD	SFA	2
House	Shippon OX13	Leased from MOD	SFA	3
House	Shippon OX13	Leased from MOD	SFA	3
House	Shippon OX13	Leased from MOD	SFA	3
House	Shippon OX13	Leased from MOD	SFA	3
House	Shippon OX13	Leased from MOD	SFA	3
House	Shippon OX13	Leased from MOD	SFA	3
House	Shrivenham SN6	Leased from MOD	SFA	3
House	Shrivenham SN6	Leased from MOD	SFA	3
House	Shrivenham SN6	Leased from MOD	SFA	3
House	Shrivenham	Leased from MOD	SFA	3

	SN6	MOD		
House	Shrivenham SN6	Leased from MOD	SFA	4
House	Shrivenham SN6	Leased from MOD	SFA	4
House	Shrivenham SN6	Leased from MOD	SFA	4
House	Shrivenham SN6	Leased from MOD	SFA	4
House	Shrivenham SN6	Leased from MOD	SFA	4
House	Shrivenham SN6	Leased from MOD	SFA	4
House	Wantage OX12	Owned	LAHF 1	5
Residential Accommodation Block	Wantage OX12	Owned	Temporary Accommodation	6
House	Watchfield SN6	Leased from MOD	SFA	2
House	Watchfield SN6	Leased from MOD	SFA	2
House	Watchfield SN6	Leased from MOD	SFA	4
House	Watchfield SN6	Leased from MOD	SFA	4
House	Watchfield SN6	Leased from MOD	SFA	4

26. All of the properties are currently being used as temporary accommodation, and therefore all have been issued with non-secure tenancies.

27. All of the properties are currently at a rent level as outlined within the council's rent-setting policy for council provided social housing.

28. The [LAHF round 3](#) of funding has now completed.

### Housing policies

29. During 2025/26 a large number of housing policies were reviewed and updated. These can be found on the [councils website](#). They provide much greater clarity for the council and accommodation users about the service provided and were communicated to those using the accommodation at the time via email. All new accommodation users are made aware of these policies at the point that they start using the accommodation as part of their move-in process. The team should be incredibly proud of the work that has gone into getting the new policies agreed. It deserves to be recognised.

### **Accommodation-user communication**

30. The Housing Landlord team use a variety of channels to communicate and listen to its accommodation users, these are by way of a newsletter, regular emails and updates on the website and regular home visits. The council are also required under the consumer standards to carry out annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures surveys. This will take place in April/May 2026.
31. The council is committed to consistently and clearly communicating with accommodation users. Property and Tenancy Officers regularly visit properties, allowing for frequent face-to-face communication. The council also continues to stay in contact with tenants remotely via phone and email.
32. Effective communication with accommodation users is essential. The opportunity presented by the upcoming TSM tenant perception survey will therefore be leveraged to directly ask tenants how they would like to be engaged, how they would like to be communicated with, and how they would like to report repairs. This will allow for a Tenant Engagement Strategy to be developed centred around how our accommodation users would prefer to be reached.
33. The council remains committed to accessible communications. Translation services are used to ensure that major communications can be understood by all tenants. Other forms of accessible communications (such as large text or easy read) are also available upon request.

### **Repairs and maintenance**

34. The council (jointly with South) have procured a repairs and maintenance contract which was awarded to Oxford Direct services (ODS) and commenced on 01 April 2025. The Development and Corporate Landlord (DCL) Directorate has the responsibility of managing the ODS contract, along with the relevant budgets. The work required is mainly determined by the needs of the Decent Homes Standard, and the council's lettable standard.
35. DCL officers, through its contractor as appropriate, will ensure that all areas of asset compliance will meet the expectations of those living in homes, and the relevant legislation.

### **Asset Compliance**

36. All homes the council owns must meet the Regulator's safety and quality standard. The aim of the standard, partially as a result of the tragedy of the fire at Grenfell tower in London in 2017, is to ensure that providers of social and affordable housing provide safe and decent homes to those living in them.
37. All homes let by the council must meet the [Decent Homes Standard](#). The council believes that this sets a relatively low standard as it has not been updated since 2006. The council also has an ambition for all council-owned homes to be EPC C by 2030, and all homes will be assessed for other emergency efficiency improvements that can be made as part of ongoing asset management.

38. Homes provided by the council must be compliant for:

- Asbestos management. The council has a duty to manage asbestos containing materials in their homes primarily in line with the [Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012](#) and other legislation.
- Gas safety. The council has a duty to primarily meet the requirements of [The Gas Safety \(Installation and Use\) Regulations 1998](#) and other legislation.
- Electrical systems. The council has a duty to manage electrical systems primarily through [Electrical safety standards in the private rented sector: guidance for landlords, tenants and local authorities](#) and other legislation.
- Legionella testing. It is the responsibility of registered providers to adhere to [Legionnaires' disease. The control of legionella bacteria in water systems - approved code of guidance](#)
- Fire risk assessments. The primary guidance for the management of fire risk in the councils homes is [The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#) and other legislation.

39. In addition, the Housing Health and Safety Rating system (HHSRS) is guidance provided to local authorities to help identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings. The Housing Landlord and Property Management teams have officers who have been trained in undertaking HHSRS assessments.

40. The council currently undertakes all compliance checks in its homes to meet statutory requirements and to meet the standards set out in the council's housing policies. At this current time there are two management systems in place for compliance of assets. Temporary accommodation compliance in council owned and operated stock is carried out by facilities colleagues and the Housing Landlord team.

41. Currently the council does not have a dedicated housing management IT system, with officers using Concerto for the property maintenance, Abris for rent collection, and series of spreadsheets to monitor the flow of customers. It has been recognised that this needs to be improved to minimise the risk of gaps, omissions and errors in data management. Work is going to identify and specify what the existing Abris system can offer.

42. A self-assessment against the [Neighbourhood and Community Standard](#), [Safety and Quality Standard](#), [Tenancy Standard](#) and [Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard](#) has been completed. This assessment identified tenant engagement as an important area for development as the council's housing stock expands. Work is being progressed to carry out the council's first annual Tenant Satisfaction Measure Tenant Perception survey. Additional questions will be included in the survey to determine how tenants would prefer to be engaged, laying the foundations for a Tenant Engagement Strategy to be developed.

## **Rental income and support for tenants**

43. The account management is overseen by the Housing Landlord Team and will be run via the councils Abris software system.
44. The Housing Landlord Team undertake regular tenancy visits these include at letting and at the end of the tenancy, HHRSS reviews and visits to blocks of flats where the council have a leasehold interest.
45. The council goes beyond simply providing social rented property or temporary accommodation. A wide range of support is offered by the housing and community safety teams to help tenants be settled in their accommodation and community, and in preparing to move on. This includes furnishing of properties. Specific funding to support Afghan and Ukrainian migrant groups is used to provide English language courses and support into education. The council is mindful of the Consumer Standards which have helped to develop the tenant support offer.

### **Allocation of housing**

46. The Housing Needs team allocate housing and assess need in line with the Housing Allocations Policy. They request temporary accommodation placements for homeless households in accordance with homelessness legislation. This includes on-the-day placements in an emergency. The temporary accommodation team source the most suitable accommodation available at the time.
47. The increase in temporary accommodation owned by the council has a positive impact for homeless households. The properties are self-contained, giving access to cooking facilities and providing a more stable environment than hotel placements. The properties are located in-district which lowers the likelihood of households having to move away from their support networks.
48. The purchase of temporary accommodation reduces the need for expensive and less suitable hotel accommodation.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

49. The council will not be in a position to directly provide enough housing to solve the housing crisis or provide housing for everyone who needs social housing on the housing waiting list. Such a move would require the council to be directly providing several thousand social homes, either purchased or built, at a capital cost in excess of £100 million.
50. However, the council can take steps to provide as much temporary accommodation as possible and, where suitable, convert this to general needs social housing.
51. The registering of the council as a social housing provider and the acquisition of new homes is a real positive for the councils, enabling it to make real progress in the delivery of quality temporary accommodation. The direct provision of housing by the council will deliver improved outcomes for the children and families living in these homes, with improved physical and mental health, educational outcomes and quality of life.
52. The council has contributed to the delivery of the government's Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and Ukraine Family

Scheme. This has improved the lives of many families. They have been fully supported by teams and colleagues across the council and other statutory agencies. Support has also come from 3<sup>rd</sup> sector voluntary agencies, highlighting the real community effort to support the children and families who have come to UK in recent months and years.

53. There is still more work to be done for to improve collection and management of data, management processes, policies and procedures and the way the council delivers housing services to its residents to meet the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing, the Housing Ombudsman and the council's Health and Safety duties.
54. 2026/27 will see implementation of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) survey, with the results of this informing service improvements. As part of the TSM survey the council are asking tenants how they would like to be engaged. These responses will help inform the development of the Tenant Engagement Strategy and action plan. Preparatory work has already been undertaken on this in consultation the Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) to help steer the approach to engaging with the tenants living in temporary accommodation.
55. In the absence of a dedicated housing management IT system, the council is progressing with improvements to the current Abrisas system to enable KPI data collection and monitoring. It will implement the outcomes of the 2026 internal audit, whilst it continues to improve on policies and processes and continue to acquire new homes and build on the existing portfolio of homes available for temporary accommodation.
56. Despite holding a relatively small number of properties the council must put in place similar structures to that of a landlord with many thousands of homes. This is a big challenge that the various teams across the council are determined to deliver.

## **Appendix 1 - Regulatory landscape**

### **Regulator of Social Housing**

57. With the council registering as a provider of social housing in August 2023 and the subsequent purchasing and leasing of home, the council has a responsibility to deliver its landlord functions in a way that meets the requirements of the <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing>
58. The regulator has four Consumer Standards with published expectations and outcomes for each standard.
59. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/neighbourhood-and-community-standard>, the expectation of the regulator for this standard is collaborative working with other landlords and agencies and have published policies for managing anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse effectively.
60. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safety-and-quality-standard>, the expectation of the regulator is that registered providers must have an accurate record at an individual property level of the condition of their homes, based on a physical assessment of all homes and keep this up to date. Registered providers must use data from across their records on stock condition to inform their provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for tenants including:
  61. Compliance with health and safety legal requirements
  62. Compliance with the Decent Homes Standard
  63. Delivery of repairs, maintenance, and planned improvements to homes, and
  64. Allocating homes that are designed or adapted to meet specific needs appropriately.
65. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tenancy-standard>, the outcomes expected by the regulator are.
  66. Allocations and lettings, registered providers must allocate and let their homes in a fair and transparent way that takes the needs of tenants and prospective tenants into account.
  67. Tenancy sustainment and evictions, registered providers must support tenants to maintain their tenancy or licence. Where a registered provider ends a tenancy or licence, they must offer affected tenants' advice and assistance.
  68. Registered providers shall offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock.
  69. Registered providers shall meet all applicable statutory and legal requirements in relation to the form and use of tenancy agreements or terms of occupation.
  70. Mutual exchange, registered providers must support relevant tenants living in eligible housing to mutually exchange their homes.

71. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/transparency-influence-and-accountability-including-tenant-satisfaction-measures>, registered providers must be 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. The council will be undertaking a full survey of our tenants that meet the requirements of the tenant satisfaction measures by August 25.
72. One economic standard, the Rent Standard, applies to local authorities and a Rent Setting Policy has been approved, and the rent will be approved each year:
73. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rent-standard-and-guidance>, the regulator states “Registered providers are required to comply with the Regulator of Social Housing’s Rent Standard. It sets the required outcomes for how registered providers set and increase rents for all their social housing stock in line with government policy as outlined in their [Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing](#).”
74. To ensure that registered providers use the correct annual percentage increase to set their rents, they should refer to the adjusted tables in the latest [Limit on Annual Rent Increased Guidance](#). This also provides the additional data needed to work out formula rent for a property when a tenant is granted a tenancy for such property for the first time.”

## **Housing Ombudsman**

75. The council is also registered with <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/> and have a duty to comply with the <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/complaint-handling-code/>
76. Recently, the Housing Ombudsman undertook a review of the councils complaints policy and provided a report detailing a series of recommendations. The complaints policy is currently being updated to reflect these recommendations and will be submitted to the Joint Audit and Governance Committee for approval in July.
77. The council undertakes an annual [Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment](#) against the code and completed its annual online submission to comply with the complaint handling code. This is due in July each year. A [Joint Audit and Governance Report](#) is taken the Committee as there is a requirement for members to have oversight on Housing Ombudsman complaints, this will be reported to the councils and at regular intervals to the housing portfolio holders.