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Health Impacts arising from Poor Housing Conditions

Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an overview of two recent reports undertaken by the Council that relate the very poor conditions that exist within the worst of Derby's private rented sector homes and secondly the impact that poor quality private sector housing has on the health of Derby's residents.
- 1.2 To provide a basis to enable members of the Health and Wellbeing Board to consider how health, social care and housing systems may combine to better address issues of health inequality brought on by poor quality private sector housing in Derby.

Recommendations

- 2.1 That the findings of this report, together with the presentation to be delivered at the 19 January 2023 meeting, are noted.
- 2.2 That the Board consider how health, social care and housing may be better aligned and commissioned to deliver improved preventative and responsive services.

Reasons

- 3.1 To ensure that Members of the Board are aware of the findings of two reports:
 - i) The Condition of Private Rented Sector Homes in Derby 2021.
 - ii) Derby City Private Sector Housing - Housing and Health Impact Assessment 2022
- 3.2 The development of more cohesive health, social care and housing services can play a significant role in addressing health inequalities for the most vulnerable residents, as well as potentially delivering financial efficiencies in relation to health care and other related public sector costs.

Supporting information

- 4.1 **The Condition of Private Rented Sector Homes.** The private rental sector (PRS) continues to expand in Derby and now accounts for nearly a quarter (24.8%) of the total housing stock in the city, rising from 16.8% in 2011. This ratio is considerably larger than England, where 19-20% of the housing market is privately rented.

- 4.2 The council relies on the English Housing Survey (EHS), an annual survey consisting of a physical inspection of a random sample of addresses, to give a picture of housing quality in the city. However, as it is a national survey, only a small number of homes across Derby are sampled, of which even fewer are PRS homes. Anecdotal evidence from professionals visiting or inspecting private PRS homes in the City suggested that housing conditions were significantly worse than indicated by the English Housing Survey.
- 4.4 To investigate this issue further, the Council in 2019, successfully bid for and was awarded funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), now the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), to carry out a survey to provide a deeper analysis of Derby's PRS housing.
- 4.5 The survey findings are detailed in the report written by the Council's Public Health Team entitled 'The Condition of Private Rented Sector Homes in Derby 2021'. The report also includes results from a desktop modelling exercise carried out in 2019 which used the EHS as a basis on which to model the condition of the PRS in Derby to address the problem of under-representation in the national survey. As a result, the general condition of all of Derby's PRS can be considered in the report, not just those in the sample area from the survey. Some of the reports key findings are summarised below:-
- a) Based on the survey, it is estimated that 44% of properties in Normanton have a HHSRS Category 1 hazard (the most serious hazard which poses a significant risk to residents Health and Safety).
 - b) At least 2,870 PRS homes (10.4%) of all Derby's privately rented homes would have a serious damp or mould problem.
 - c) More than a third of the pre-1918 terraced rental homes surveyed in central Derby had an HHSRS Category 1 hazard for falls associated with stairs and steps.
 - d) The survey results indicate some 900 privately rented homes have a Category 1 electrical hazard, these are particularly located in the central Derby wards.
 - e) Estimates show that rates of Category 1 fire hazards within some wards are likely to be at least 4-6 times higher than the national average.
 - f) Around 8.6% of privately rented homes in central Derby suffer from Category 1 excess cold hazards.
 - g) At least 8,500 homes within Derby's PRS (30.9%) would currently fail the Decent Homes Standard.
- 4.6 **Housing and Health Impact Assessment (HIA) – all private sector homes.** The HIA identifies the number of homes with Category 1 hazards using modelling based on the results of the EHS. However, as indicated in paragraph 4.2 above, the EHS is a national survey, only a small number of Derby's private sector homes are sampled. Given this and the findings of the private rented sector stock condition survey referred to above, it is likely, therefore, that the results of this report significantly under-estimate the scale of HHSRS hazards in the city's private sector properties.

- 4.7 The HIA shows a clear correlation between ill health and poor-quality private sector housing. In particular, the following results stand out:-
- 1) The rate of mortality from respiratory disease for all ages in Derby is slightly above that of England (104.8 per 100,000 compared to 100 per 100,000). However, in areas where raised levels of cold homes combine with high deprivation, there is a significant increase in deaths from respiratory disease. For example, Arboretum has 174.6, Abbey 153.4 and Normanton 136.9 deaths per 100,000 people.
 - 2) The wards of Derwent, Arboretum, Normanton, Sinfen, Alvaston and Boulton have the highest rates of emergency hospital admissions for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). These wards also have the greatest proportion of private sector homes with an HHSRS Category 1 hazard for excess cold.
 - 3) It is widely accepted that living in a home with damp and mould can trigger asthma and asthma like symptoms. Overall, 7% of Derby's residents suffer from asthma, slightly higher than the national figure. Areas in Derby with a higher proportion of homes with damp and mould issues have a greater number of children with diagnosed respiratory conditions. For example, Normanton has the greatest proportion of homes with a Category 1 hazard for damp and mould (2.5%) and 5 times the number of children under the care of the paediatric respiratory team when compared to the Derby average.
 - 4) As expected, there is a clear correlation between cold homes and fuel poverty. In Derby 17,089 (15.6%) households are fuel poor, a significantly greater number than that of England (13.4%) and a situation which will deteriorate further if energy costs rise. Several wards have at least one in five households identified as fuel poor, namely Normanton (25.6%), Arboretum (23.4%), Sinfen (22.8%), Derwent (21.1%) and Mackworth (20.3%). These wards also have the greatest proportion of homes with an HHSRS Category 1 hazard for damp and mould.
 - 5) In Derby, there are approximately 6,800 private sector homes with Category 1 hazards for falls, with the greatest proportion located in Normanton (12.2%), Sinfen (11.2%), Chaddesden (11.1%) and Mackworth (9.9%). Around 1,070 homes with the most serious fall hazards are likely to be occupied by someone over 65.

The Cost of Poor Housing

- 4.8 The HIA, using a nationally recognised Building Research Establishment model considers the cost to the NHS over 12 months due to harm caused by each hazard and the cost to remedy these hazards. The following are examples from the report:-

Costs to the NHS of unaddressed HHSRS category 1 hazards in Derby

Hazard	Number of HHSRS category 1 hazards	Cost to repair HHSRS category 1 hazards	Cost to NHS before work	Saving to NHS	Payback Period in years
Damp and mould growth	651	£4,808,627	£367,683	£366,991	13.1
Excess cold	2,889	£13,214,286	£4,457,739	£4,251,077	3.1
Falling on level surfaces etc	1,610	£1,255,800	£1,191,065	£1,139,410	1.1
Falling on stairs etc	6,835	£5,857,292	£2,913,134	£2,732,386	2.1
Falling between levels	2,159	£2,001,828	£505,292	£504,429	4
Crowding and space	255	£4,105,500	£344,816	£344,312	11.9
Entry by intruders	82	£87,166	£43,720	£42,756	2
Domestic hygiene, Pests and Refuse	24	£46,104	£4,068	£4,068	11.3
Food safety	8	£19,688	£3,304	£3,304	6
Personal hygiene, Sanitation and drainage	26	£30,004	£16,658	£16,657	1.8
Electrical hazards	130	£306,425	£94,877	£94,741	3.2
Fire	910	£3,305,356	£331,245	£329,492	10
Flames, hot surfaces etc	325	£791,700	£60,450	£58,663	13.5
Collision and entrapment	25	£17,300	£32,543	£32,414	0.5
		£35,845,062	£10,366,59	£9,920,699	

**Total number of hazards is greater than the number of homes with at least 1 HHSRS category 1 hazard as some houses contain more than 1 HHSRS category 1 hazard*

- 4.9 The above table makes the case that Public Sector investment to tackle certain hazards such as falls on level services and falling on stairs, addressing electrical hazards and personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage would all pay back comparatively quickly in terms of savings made by the NHS.
- 4.10 The HIA highlights the link that substandard private sector housing, namely owner-occupied and privately rented homes, has with poor health and premature deaths in Derby. It demonstrates that, without intervention, vulnerable occupants are being exposed to serious risks to their health and safety, resulting in avoidable illness, early mortality and an unnecessary cost burden on the NHS.
- 4.11 This report, together with the presentation that will be given at meeting, invites board members to consider how professionals from Health, Social Care and Housing can better align and potentially jointly commission services, to address those issues that extent across all 3 sectors.

Other Options

- 6.1 **Do Nothing.** Not adopting a proactive approach is inadvisable as Local Authorities have a legal duty to address poor housing conditions in their area. The HIA presents evidence of significant health inequalities in Derby due to poor standard private sector housing. There is a clear need for intervention and partnership working between housing, health and social care teams to address the problem.

Legal implications

- 7.1 By virtue of section 5 of the Housing Act 2004, where a council identifies Category 1 hazards in properties within its administrative area, it is under a statutory duty to take action. There is no discretion provided to not take action. Action may involve one or more measures from amongst a range of options that include serving an improvement notice, making a prohibition notice, serving a hazard awareness notice, taking emergency improvement action, making an emergency prohibition, making a demolition order or declaring the area, within which the affected property is located, a clearance area. A number of these measures may trigger rights to compensation. The choice of option taken must be objectively justifiable.

Climate implications

- 8.1 In May 2019 the council declared a climate emergency in Derby and included the need for energy efficient homes as a priority theme in its Climate Change Action Plan 2022. The introduction of initiatives designed to address the cold and damp related causes of ill health, will also increase the thermal efficiency of hard to heat and poorly insulated private sector homes, thereby reducing demand for heating related energy and CO2 emissions.
- 8.2 The UK is already affected by rising temperatures. The most recent decade (2008-2017) has been on average 0.8°C warmer than the 1961-1990 average. All ten of the warmest years in the UK have occurred since 1990 with the nine warmest occurring since 2002. The Net Zero Strategy is a UK government strategy that sets out plans to decarbonise all sectors of the UK economy. Through energy efficient homes, it will help deliver cost effective carbon savings to carbon budgets and progress towards the UK's target for net zero by 2050.

Financial and value for money issues

- 9.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Equality implications

- 10.1 Due to the size of the private housing sector, there will be a substantial number of occupants from protected groups who are affected by poor quality housing. For example, in 2019-20, 18% of private rented households had a Household Reference Person (HRP) with an ethnic minority background compared to 10% of owner-occupiers. Two-thirds of private renters (66.5%) in Normanton are from an ethnic minority and over half (57.2%) rent a property in Arboretum. A large number of owner-occupiers in the central wards are also older, vulnerable people on a low

income. In addition, 11% of people with a long-term health problem or disability live in Derby's privately rented homes.

Socio-economic implications

- 11.1 Residents in lower economic status are overly represented in poorer quality/less energy efficient homes and are therefore at increased risk of being affected by the issues outlined in this report. Therefore, action to improve the quality of housing will have a significant impact on reducing socio-economic inequalities.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal	Olu Idowu, Head of Legal	11/01/2023
Finance	Amanda Fletcher, Head of Finance	11/01/2023
Other(s)	Alison Wynn, Deputy Director of Corporate Public Health	09/01/2023
	Clare Mehrbani, Director of Housing Services, Derby Homes	09/01/2023
Background papers:	Derby City Private Sector Housing, Housing and Health Impact Assessment 2022. The Condition of Private Rented Sector Homes in Derby 2021.	
List of appendices:	None	