Meeting:	**Cabinet**	**Date:**	**6 March 2024**
Subject:	**Private Sector Stock Condition Survey**		
Report Of:	**Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy**		
Wards Affected:	**All**		
Key Decision:	**Yes**	**Budget/Policy Framework:**	**No**
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Appendices:	**1. Comparison of key datasets from the 2023 and 2011 Stock Condition Surveys** **2. Gloucester Private Sector Stock Condition Survey Report 2023** **3. Gloucester Private Sector Stock Condition Survey Report 2011** **4. Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide a summary of the Private Sector Stock Condition survey that was undertaken for the Council in 2023 and discuss the options available to the Council to address the key conclusions set out in the survey report.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

(1) The contents of the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey are noted.

(2) The overarching conclusion set out in the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey report that the condition of housing stock across Gloucester is generally good compared with the national picture, is noted.

(3) Despite the positive feedback on housing conditions, there remain pockets of poor housing across the city that impact on the health and well-being of residents across all tenures.

(4) The improvement of housing standards since the previous Private Sector Stock Condition Survey in 2011 is noted.

(5) The following recommendations to address the key conclusions set out in the survey report are agreed:

a) The council will continue to target resources to maintain and improve housing standards and environmental issues in Barton and Tredworth.

b) Officers continue to work to bring empty homes back into use with a focus on empty dwellings in Kingsholm and Wotton, and Barton and Tredworth.

c) The Planning Committee will determine whether there is a business case for an Article 4 Direction to be introduced to manage the conversion of existing dwellings to small HMOs in one or more areas of the city

d) The council continues to support the Warm and Well Partnership to deliver energy efficiency advice and improvements to residents across Gloucester.

e) Officers explore opportunities to partner with an ethical low-cost loan organisation to deliver home repair and improvement loans (including Sharia compliant finance) to residents.

(6) The high level of support and co-operation of households that agreed to participate in the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey is acknowledged.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 Housing is a key determinant of health, and poor housing contributes to poor health.

3.2 The Council is obliged to review the housing conditions within the private sector housing stock in the city on a regular basis to inform its priorities in intervening to maintain and improve housing conditions.

3.3 The last private sector stock condition was undertaken in 2011 (Appendix 3) and housing conditions have improved significantly since then in line with the national picture with rates of non-decent homes reducing by 67% in Gloucester. Appendix 1 provides a comparison of the key datasets from the 2011 and 2023 Private Sector Stock Condition Surveys.

3.4 The Gloucester private sector stock condition survey was undertaken as part of a countywide programme of surveys that was procured jointly with Stroud District Council leading the procurement exercise. The surveys were funded using pooled health funding.

3.5 The survey involved surveying a statistically robust sample of 1,000 of the total 58,196 properties across the city with the data extrapolated to provide an accurate assessment of all homes across the city.

3.6 All surveys undertaken were chosen randomly from a full address list provided to the survey consultant and were completed anonymously. The council has no detail in respect of any of the inspections.

3.7 During the survey work only 73 households refused to participate in the survey which represents an exceptionally high participation rate from Gloucester residents.

3.8 To provide a greater level of detail in Barton and Tredworth, Kingsholm and Wotton, and Westgate wards, a greater number of surveys were undertaken in these wards to enable data to be extrapolated in these areas in addition to the remainder of the city.

3.9 The survey assessed homes for the 29 hazards detailed within the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) which is the accepted methodology for assessing housing conditions. Any hazards identified are assessed as either Category 1 or Category 2 hazards, with Category 1 hazards presenting the greater risk of harm to occupiers than Category 2 hazards.

3.10 The survey also assessed whether homes met the current Decent Homes Standard, and the level of thermal efficiency. Anonymous household questionnaires also identified socio-economic details for households including information relating to any illnesses and disabilities that were present.

3.11 The Private Sector Stock Condition Survey report is included at Appendix 2.

Key Headlines from the Stock Condition Survey

3.12 The key headlines detailed in the report are as follows:

Age of housing stock

3.12.1 The housing stock across the city predominantly dates from after the Second World War with just over a quarter of all homes built before 1945. Compared with the national average Gloucester has fewer pre-war homes and a considerably higher proportion of homes built after 1965.

3.12.2 The oldest housing stock is found within Barton and Tredworth where 58.1% of housing was built before 1919, with higher rates also found in Kingsholm and Wotton (26.9%) and Westgate (21.1%).

Housing typology and tenure

3.12.3 The housing across the city largely comprises houses (detached, semi-detached and terraced) and bungalows with only 13% of properties comprising purpose-built flats, and a further 2.5% of properties comprising flats in converted buildings.

3.12.4 There are a greater number of homes that are owner-occupied across Gloucester (70.6%) compared with nationally (68.2%) and similarly there are more homes rented through housing associations in Gloucester (12.1%) than nationally (10.8%). Conversely, there are fewer homes rented privately across Gloucester (17.1%) compared with nationally where 21.0% of homes are rented privately.

3.12.5 There are differences between the housing types that are found within each tenure group, with the owner-occupied sector having the fewest terraced homes and flats, and higher concentrations of flats and terraced homes being found in the private rented and housing association rented sectors.

3.12.6 The owner-occupied sector also shows a broad age range of housing stock, and interestingly the private rented sector shows a polarised age profile with 45.2% of homes constructed post-1980 and 24.9% of homes built pre-1919.

3.12.7 Patterns of housing tenure vary across the city. Private rented accommodation accounts for 17.1% of all housing across the city, however this is focussed within Barton and Tredworth where 38.9% of stock is private rented, Westgate (where 30.4% of stock is private rented), and Kingsholm and Wotton (where 26.8% of stock is private rented) compared with the remainder of the city where 12.4% of housing stock is private rented.

Vacant homes

3.12.8 The level of vacant homes across the city as a whole is comparable with the national picture, however 8.1% of homes in Kingsholm and Wotton have been long-term vacant (i.e. vacant over 6 months).

Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)

3.12.9 The survey identified 485 properties (0.9% of the total stock of occupied dwellings) that are in multiple occupation (i.e. being occupied as a house in multiple occupation (HMO)).

3.12.10 The highest rates of multiple occupation are found in Barton and Tredworth where 4.3% of homes are occupied as HMOs followed by Kingsholm and Wotton where 1.9% of properties are HMOs.

Household size

3.12.11 Households across Gloucester are small in size, with two-thirds of households containing two or less individuals. Of the remaining households, only 6.0% have five or more persons.

Household demographics

3.12.12 Households across the city show an ageing demographic profile when considering the Household Representative Person (HRP)[1] with 46.5% of households having a HRP aged over 55 and 17.3% of HRPs being under 35 years of age.

3.12.13 The average age of HRPs is significantly lower in the private rented sector (42 years) compared with the owner-occupied sector (55 years) and the social housing sector (55 years).

3.12.14 There are significantly more private rented sector households (33.9%) who have a HRP aged under 35 compared with the owner-occupied sector (13.2%) and social housing sector (14.5%).

3.12.15 Conversely, only 8.5% of HRPs in private rented accommodation are aged 65 or over, compared with 31.2% in the social hosing sector and 31.9% in the owner-occupied sector.

3.12.16 The majority of households (82.6%) are of white British or Irish ethnicity, with a further 6.2% being of other white ethnicity. The remaining 11.2% of

[1] HRP is defined as being the eldest economically active person in the household, then the eldest inactive person if there was no economically active person.

households (6,301 households) are distributed across the range of Black and other ethnic minorities.

Household occupancy and overcrowding

3.12.17 The majority of households across Gloucester (74.6%) are under-occupying their homes however 1,936 households (3.4%) are over-crowded. A smaller proportion of owner-occupied homes (1.9%) are over-crowded.

3.12.18 Levels of over-crowding are significantly higher in the social housing sector (7.0%) and private rented sector (6.7%).

3.12.19 Levels of over-crowding across all tenures are also significantly higher in Barton and Tredworth where 12.2% of households are over-crowded.

Housing mobility

3.12.20 As expected there is a marked difference in housing mobility between the different housing tenures with 54.2% of owner-occupiers and 40.3 of social housing tenants having lived in their homes for over 10 years. In contrast 13.7% of private rented sector tenants have lived in their home for the same period.

3.12.21 Conversely, only 2.3% of owner-occupiers and 4.6% of social housing tenants intend to move home in the next 12 months compared with 10.0% of private rented tenants.

3.12.22 The rates of housing mobility are higher in Westgate where 35.8% of households have been resident for under two years, in Kingsholm and Wotton (34.1%) and Barton and Tredworth (27.2%). Across the remainder of the city 14.7% of households have been resident for under two years.

3.12.23 This disparity reflects the increased levels of private rented accommodation in these three wards and is also reflected in higher rates for the intention to move home within the next 12 months.

Household economic activity

3.12.24 Almost two-thirds of households (65.3%) have a Household Representative Person who is in either full-time or part-time employment. Just over a quarter of households (26.8%) have a HRP who is retired, and 7.9% of households are either unemployed or otherwise economically inactive.

3.12.25 Just over 10,000 households (17.9%) have a household member in receipt of a means tested benefit, and 10% of households have disposable incomes lower than 60% of the median income across England (i.e. £19,380).

3.12.26 The information obtained during the survey suggests a median disposable income in Gloucester of £32,877, which compares with the median level for England of £32,200. The median disposable incomes in Gloucester are higher in the owner-occupied and private rented sectors than the social housing sector.

3.12.27 There are lower rates of economic activity in the social housing sector with 12.5% of Household Representative Persons registered unemployed, and 18.7% are unable to work due to sickness or disability.

3.12.28 There are higher rates of households receiving a means tested benefit in both he social housing and private rented sectors, with the highest rate found in the social housing sector where 60.6% of housing association households being in receipt of a means tested benefit.

3.12.29 Similarly, there are higher proportions of low-income households in the social housing and private rented sectors with 36.8% of housing association households on low incomes, and 10.4% of private rented households on low incomes.

3.12.30 Across the City, household economic activity is lower in Barton and Tredworth than other areas with lower levels of employment, higher unemployment, higher incidence of ill-health unemployment and disability, and lower levels of retirement.

3.12.31 There is a higher proportion of low-income households in Barton and Tredworth where 24.2% of households are on a low income compared with an average across the whole of the city of 10.0%.

Housing Conditions

3.12.32 The housing stock across the city is generally in good condition with 92.6% of dwellings meeting the decent homes standard. This compares with a national average of 85.3% of homes meeting the decent homes standard.

3.12.33 The remaining 4,120 dwellings (7.4%) failed the decent homes standard with 3.4% having Category 1 hazards as defined by the Housing Health and Rating System (HHSRS), and 4.3% being in other disrepair.

3.12.34 The cost of achieving the decent homes standard across the city's private sector housing is estimated at £26.19m or an average of £6,356 per dwelling. The cost of remedying all Category 1 hazards is estimated at £9.9m – an average cost of £5,307 per dwelling.

3.12.35 Unsurprisingly, the highest proportion of health and safety hazards were found in the oldest housing stock, with 26.6% of all dwellings built before 1919 having Category 1.

3.12.36 The highest proportion of hazards were found in the private rented sector, compared with the owner-occupied and social housing sectors with 7.7% of all dwellings in the private rented sector having Category 1 hazards compared with 2.7% of dwellings in the owner-occupied sector and 1.2% of social housing dwellings.

3.12.37 Across the City Category 1 hazards are more prevalent within Barton and Tredworth, Kingsholm and Wotton, and Westgate, with 29.3% of dwellings in Barton and Tredworth experiencing Category 1 hazards. Outside of these three areas a small proportion of dwellings (0.2%) have Category 1 hazards across the remainder of the City.

3.12.38 The most prevalent Category 1 hazard across Gloucester is the hazard associated with falling on stairs which represents 84.6% of Category 1 hazards. The other notable hazards are excess cold (19.7%), dampness and mould growth (2.5%), crowding and space (1.6%) and falling between levels (1.2%).

3.12.39 Less serious Category 2 hazards are more prevalent than Category 1 hazards with a total of 25.5% of all dwellings exhibiting a Category 2 hazard.

3.12.40 The most common Category 2 hazard related to the hazard associated with entry by intruders which represents 57.3% of all Category 2 hazards. The other notable category 2 hazards are falling in level surfaces (51.1%), falling on stairs (11.1%), dampness and mould growth (3.7%), and fire safety (2.9%).

3.12.41 Category 2 hazards, are also over-represented in Barton and Tredworth, Kingsholm and Wotton, and Westgate compared with the remainder of the city. Category 2 hazards are also focussed in dwellings built before 1919 as well as those dwellings in both the private rented and social housing sectors.

3.12.42 The survey also considered disrepair present in the private sector housing stock as disrepair impacts directly on living conditions as well as the longer-term deterioration of dwellings. When considering the potential for building failure and/or replacement within the next 10 years, 14.5% of all dwellings are projected to require replacement gutters and downpipes, 14.3% replacement windows, 12.6% replacement roof coverings, and 7.5% replacement external doors.

3.12.43 As with the other housing standards concerns, disrepair is focussed on dwellings built before 1919 with 21.3% of dwellings failing the decent homes standard due to disrepair, and 23.7% of dwellings in Barton and Tredworth also fail due to disrepair.

Energy Efficiency

3.12.44 The increases in energy costs over the last two years have highlighted the impact that home energy efficiency plays in household living standards. The survey considered dwelling SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) ratings where the most energy efficient dwellings have the highest score on a scale of 1-100.

3.12.45 SAP ratings are most commonly seen on Energy Performance Certificates that are required to be provided when letting or marketing a dwelling for sale. The SAP ratings are presented in bands A- G on the certificate.

3.12.46 Across Gloucester almost two-thirds of dwellings (66.5%) fall in the top energy efficiency bands (A. B. and C) which is a higher proportion than is the case nationally where 47.5% of dwellings fall in these bands. Similarly, the proportion of dwellings in the lowest energy efficiency bands (E, F, and G) is lower than the national average.

3.12.47 Across the City there were limited variations in energy efficiency rating both in terms of tenure or location.

3.12.48 The key dwelling attributes influencing energy efficiency are that 98.5% of dwellings have central heating, 78.1% have 200mm or greater loft insulation (with 13.0% not requiring insultation due to being mid-storey flats with no roof space), 79.6% of dwellings with cavity walls have cavity wall insulation, and 98.8% of dwellings having double glazing to the majority of the dwelling.

3.12.49 Despite the generally high level of dwelling energy efficiency 1.5% of dwellings fail the decent homes standard due to poor thermal comfort. Higher levels of poor thermal comfort are found within the private rented and social housing sectors, as well as within older housing stock built before 1919.

3.12.50 The private rented sector sees a greater use of electric heating systems with 19.1% of dwellings in the sector having electric heating. This may be due to the higher proportion of flats in converted buildings found within the private rented sector. By comparison, only 2.5% of dwellings in the owner-occupied sector have electric heating systems.

Environmental conditions and liveability

3.12.51 The survey considered potential environmental concerns within the vicinity of the home using the surveyor's professional assessment. This assessment considered a range of factors, including litter and rubbish, vandalism and graffiti, nuisance from street parking, air quality, noise from traffic and other transportation, as well as dwelling condition.

3.12.52 Environmental issues were considered to generally present a minor impact, and the notable concerns are the impact of street parking, litter and rubbish, heavy traffic, and dog fouling.

3.12.53 Overall 7.5% of dwellings were assessed as being located in areas experiencing major liveability concerns. The concerns related to poor visual quality, upkeep, traffic, as well as the presence of other major problems.

3.12.54 Environmental conditions were found to be below average in areas characterised by private rented accommodation and social housing, as well as housing built before 1919 and early post-war housing, terraced housing, and properties converted into flats.

3.12.55 There is a correlation between environmental conditions and housing condition, with 52% of non-decent homes situated in areas with poor or below average visual quality. Only 7.7% of decent homes were situated in these areas.

3.12.56 Environmental conditions are significantly worse in Barton and Tredworth, Kingsholm and Wotton, and Westgate. In Barton and Tredworth 38.9% of dwellings are situated in areas with poor or below average visual quality, and both Westgate (14.0%) and Kingsholm and Wotton (11.9%) show higher than average impacts compared with the remainder of the City where 8.0% of dwellings are similarly affected, or the city average of 11.3% of dwellings in areas with poor visual quality.

Housing conditions and household circumstances

3.12.57 Economically disadvantaged households (e.g., those on low incomes, or are in receipt of means tested benefits) are more likely to experience poor housing conditions with most cohorts of economically disadvantaged households being over-represented in those households living in non-decent homes.

3.12.58 Of particular note is the estimate that the 17.8% of all households who are in receipt of a means tested benefit account for 41.7% of household living in a non-decent home.

3.12.59 The exposure of vulnerable households to poor housing varies by tenure and area with almost one-third of vulnerable households living in the private rented sector (30.9%) living in a non-decent home. By comparison 22% of vulnerable households in the owner-occupied sector live in a non-decent home reducing to 7.2% in the social housing sector.

3.12.60 Just under half of vulnerable households living in Barton and Tredworth (47.0%) live in non-decent homes compared with 29.2% of those living in Kingsholm and Wotton, and 12.1% in Westgate. Across the rest of the city 7.1% of vulnerable households live in non-decent homes.

Fuel poverty

3.12.61 A household is considered to be in fuel poverty if the dwelling's energy efficiency rating is Band D or lower, and the household's disposable income (after housing and fuel costs) is below the poverty line.

3.12.62 Just over one-third of all households (33.6%) live in a dwelling with an energy rating of Band D or lower, and fuel poverty has a particular impact on younger households and families.

3.12.63 Across Gloucester 12.2% of households are considered to be fuel poor compared with 13.2% nationally, and 10.8% in Gloucestershire.

3.12.64 Fuel poor households are particularly over-represented in the private rented sector (where 23.4% of households are fuel poor) and in those living in pre-1919 housing (where 31.7% of households are fuel poor). Fuel poverty is also significant in the social housing sector with 16.0% of households being fuel poor. By comparison 8.6% of owner-occupied households are fuel poor.

3.12.65 Fuel poverty is also driven by location with 34.2% of Barton and Tredworth households being fuel poor, and 21.1% of households in Kingsholm and Wotton. Within Westgate 7.8% of households are fuel poor, which is lower than the remainder of the city where 9.5% of households are fuel poor.

Housing and health

3.12.66 Across Gloucester 15.5% of all households indicated that at least one member of the households was impacted by a long-term illness or disability.

3.12.67 The most common illness or disability resulted in mobility impairment in 57.2% of households affected by a long-term illness or disability. Three-quarters (75.5%) of all households affected by a long-term illness or disability stated they had a mobility problem with their dwelling.

3.12.68 Where households were affected by mobility problems the most common problems relate to climbing stairs, using bathroom facilities, and access to both the home and the garden.

3.12.69 The survey asked households for their views on the impact of the design and condition of their home on their health. A small proportion of households (2.6%) perceived a negative effect of their home on their health. Of those households, the proportion with negative perceptions increased where Category 1 hazards were present, or where the dwelling was non-decent.

Household's attitudes to their housing

3.12.70 The survey sought occupier's views in their satisfaction with their housing to broadly mirror the surveyor's assessment of environmental condition set out earlier.

3.12.71 Over two-thirds (68.6%) of households are very satisfied with their current accommodation and only 2.2% expressed dissatisfaction with their home.

3.12.72 Due to the small sample size for this element it is difficult to draw conclusions on any drivers for these perceptions, however the data suggests that higher levels of dissatisfaction are found in the private rented sector and within Barton and Tredworth.

3.12.73 Almost two-thirds (65.4%) of households are very satisfied with their local area in which they live, however 4.9% are dissatisfied.

3.12.74 The majority of households (87.7%) consider that their local area has largely not changed over the last 5 years, with 2.1% considering the area to have improved, and 4.9% considering the area to have declined.

3.12.75 The variations in area dissatisfaction mirror the patterns of housing dissatisfaction and reflect less positive views among private rented and social housing tenants, as well as those living in dwelling built before 1919. Dissatisfaction is also high in Barton and Tredworth where 25.5% of households are dissatisfied with their area as well as residents of Westgate where 17.1% of residents are dissatisfied.

3.12.76 Households were also asked if they perceived any issues in their neighbourhood, and 15.0% stated they did.

3.12.77 The greatest perceived issues related to litter and fly tipping, and drug abuse and drug dealing, with lesser concerns related to unsocial behaviour and traffic noise.

3.12.78 Across the city 2.4% were victims of crime during the preceding 12 months, and 12.0% feel unsafe in their local area at night, with 0.2% feeling unsafe in their home at night. Just over one-tenth of households (10.7%) expressed that they had directly encountered anti-social behaviour (ASB).

3.12.79 Anti-social behaviour was more prevalent in Westgate where 34.9% of households had directly encountered ASB. Both Barton and Tredworth and Kingsholm and Wotton provided lesser concerns regarding ASB than the level across the city.

Repairs in the owner-occupied sector

3.12.80 Less than one-tenth (9.6%) of owner-occupiers living in non-decent homes expressed dissatisfaction with their home. And 19.6% of owner-occupiers in non-decent homes intend to carry out major repairs or improvements in the next 5 years.

3.12.81 Where owner-occupiers intend to carry out repairs or improvements energy efficiency works (e.g., loft insulation, central heating renewal, replacement windows and doors) and external works are the most common works stated.

3.12.82 Perceive barriers to undertaking home improvement works included finding reliable contractors (19.9%) and accessing independent advice (15.8%). Only 6.4% of owner-occupiers stated that they would re-mortgage to fund works.

3.12.83 Almost half of owner-occupiers (46.1%) would be interested should the Council provide a list of building contractors, and 12.3% expressed an interest in affordable and low-cost loans for home repairs and improvements.

Views from the private rented sector

3.12.84 Overall 47.2% of private tenants regarded their home to be in very good condition, and 5.6% regarded their dwelling to be in poor repair.

3.12.85 Of those who were aware 56.6% of all private tenants engage directly with their landlord and 33.7% deal with a property agent.

3.12.86 Over two-thirds of private sector tenants (36.7%) have informed their landlord or agent of outstanding repairs. Of these cases in 28.7% repairs remained outstanding.

Conclusions

3.13 Housing conditions across Gloucester are generally good compared with the national picture, however this should not mask that that there remain poor housing standards that impact on the health and well-being of residents across all tenures.

3.14 The findings of the stock condition survey are in the main unsurprising with the most concerning housing and environmental conditions associated with the oldest housing stock which is predominantly found in the wards closest to the city centre.

3.15 Many areas of the city where more modern housing stock is situated provides excellent housing conditions and high levels of satisfaction with both resident's housing and their local neighbourhoods.

3.16 Despite having the highest proportion of housing built after 1980, the private rented sector contains the poorest housing as a tenure. This is largely due to the high levels of older, terraced housing.

3.17 The social housing sector (when considered in its totality) contains the best housing conditions when comparing all tenures, however these homes are considered to have poorer visual environments and poorer environmental quality than both the private rented and owner-occupied tenures.

3.18 There are stark differences in housing conditions across the city both in terms of the age of housing stock and also the tenure profile. This is unsurprising given the historical focus on social housing development in satellite housing estates, and the attraction of lower-cost, older housing to private rented landlords.

3.19 These imbalances are being addressed by the market, as private landlords seek a higher-quality product to attract the cohort of private renters unable to access home ownership, while the continued development of social housing within new housing developments provides opportunities for new social housing to be located within mixed and balanced communities. The social housing sector is also investing in significant estate regeneration which will improve both housing conditions and resident perceptions of the local neighbourhood area.

3.20 The survey highlights a range of matters pertaining to the housing stock located within Barton and Tredworth. The council has committed significant resources to improve housing standards and environmental issues in Barton and Tredworth over the last two years through the work of the Barton and Tredworth taskforce. This work has become embedded into the day-to-day work of relevant services and this approach is to be continued.

3.21 The number of long-term empty homes has been identified as a particular concern within Kingsholm and Wotton and Barton and Tredworth. Officers have an active programme of investigating empty homes and this work will continue using the data from the survey to assist in targeting resources.

3.22 The private rented sector has contracted slightly since the 2011 Stock Condition Survey and Gloucester hasn't seen the same expansion in the private rented sector that has taken place across the country in the same period.

3.23 Since the last Stock Condition Survey, the proportion of dwellings in the private rented sector where Category 1 HHSRS hazards are found has halved.

3.24 Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are often perceived as a concern due to perceived proliferation in numbers and the potential impact that results from the loss of family homes in particular localities.

3.25 The Stock Condition Survey has determined the presence of HMOs across the city and within the three focus areas. The number of HMOs in the city is proportionately low with a total of 485 HMOs identified (0.9% of the total stock of occupied dwellings).

3.26 The highest rates of multiple occupation are found in Barton and Tredworth where 4.3% of homes are occupied as HMOs followed by Kingsholm and Wotton where 1.9% of properties are HMOs.

3.27 The low level of HMO incidence suggests that the perceived concerns associated with HMOs are more likely to relate to a small number of problems which may be creating anti-social behaviour in local neighbourhoods.

3.28 Where there are significant problems associated with the presence of large numbers of HMOs in an area the council has access to powers to seek to designate an area as an Additional HMO licensing area. Additional HMO Licensing enables councils to extend the application of licensing requirements on a wider range of HMOs than is the case through Mandatory HMO Licensing (which applies to larger HMOs occupied by 5 or more people).

3.29 Based on the evidence contained within the Stock Condition Survey, there is no evidence to suggest that the negative impacts from HMOs are sufficiently significant to warrant the direction of staffing resource to pursue a potential Additional HMO Licensing designation at the current time.

3.30 Despite the relatively small number of HMOs identified across the city, and the relatively low level of clustering within wards, there may be a case for the consideration of the introduction of an Article 4 Direction under planning legislation to withdraw permitted development rights for changes of use from dwelling houses (Use Class C3) to small HMOs (Use Class C4).

3.31 The incidence of fuel poverty across Gloucester has increased from 10.8% of households considered to be in fuel poverty in 2011 to 12.2% households today. While this is unsurprising given the sharp increases in energy costs over the last two years fuel poverty remains a priority challenge.

3.32 The council currently supports the delivery of energy efficiency advice and improvements through the Warm and Well Partnership[2] which utilises external funding to improve the energy efficiency of dwellings across the city targeted at the most vulnerable. The Stock Condition Survey data suggests that the council's continued support for the Warm and Well Partnership remains a high priority.

3.33 The proportion of households in Gloucester where at least one household member is affected by a limiting long-term illness or disability has reduced from 20.6% in 2011 to 15.5% today. However, this reduction is largely due to the 27% increase in occupied housing stock since 2011, and the number of households impacted has actually risen from 8,794 in 2011 to 9,094.

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[2] The Warm and Well Partnership includes all Gloucestershire district councils as well as South Gloucestershire Council and advice and interventions are provided by Severn Wye Energy Agency Ltd

3.34 The council is responsible for administering mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding to assist residents to live independently in their homes through the provision of aids and adaptations to homes. Officers are currently working on implementing a new model for the delivery of DFG funding through an in-house home improvement agency that will provide a one-stop shop for residents to access adaptations for their home, and once established may be able to expand to include further areas where the need for support and assistance has been identified, for example home repairs and improvements for vulnerable owner-occupiers.

3.35 One area identified in the survey is the perceived challenges owner-occupiers face when considering undertaking repairs and improvements to their home. One of these is the access to low-cost loans, as many owner-occupiers while having their home as an asset they may not have sufficient income or savings to fund works, and as detailed in the survey report may be unable or unwilling to re-mortgage.

3.36 There are ethical loans organisations who work with councils to assist their residents access low-cost loans for a range of purposes including home repairs and improvements, and the findings from the Stock Condition Survey suggest that the council may wish to explore whether this may be an option locally.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

4.1 This report details the conditions across the housing stock in Gloucester and sets out the linkages between housing and arrange of socio-economic characteristics. This analysis enables an understanding of the areas that the council may choose to focus its resources to improve further improve housing standards and as a consequence reduce health inequalities for residents.

5.0 Environmental Implications

5.1 There are no environmental implications.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

6.1 The option not to respond to the Stock Condition Survey report was dismissed.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 The recommendations respond to the key outcomes identified in the Stock Condition Survey report and aim to provide the opportunity for better outcomes for residents.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 On completion of the countywide house condition survey programme, an independent countywide report will be presented, combining the survey data from all six Gloucestershire district authorities.

8.2 The condition of the housing stock across Gloucester has improved considerably between 2011 and 2023 with the rate of non-decent homes reducing by two-thirds. There remain key areas of concern that require continued focus.

8.2 Officers will focus on the recommendations set out in this report to respond to the outcomes of the Stock Condition Report.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

9.2 Any proposed changes to current council interventions will be subject to future agreement at which time any financial impact will be considered in full.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report. The survey assists Gloucester City Council to comply with the requirement under s3 of the Housing Act 2004 to keep the housing conditions in their area under review with a view to identifying any action that may need to be taken.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

11.1 The recommendations set out in this report offer the potential for the council to use the Stock Condition Survey report positively to improve resident's homes, and hence their health and well-being.

11.2 The environmental quality of local neighbourhoods is linked to housing repair and conditions, and improvements that can be made to housing will inherently impact positively on the local areas.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact; therefore, a full PIA was not required.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

13.1 None

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

14.1 None

Background Documents:

Appendix 1. Comparison of key datasets from the 2023 and 2011 Stock Condition Surveys

Appendix 2. Gloucester Private Sector Stock Condition Survey Report 2023

Appendix 3. Gloucester Private Sector Stock Condition Survey Report 2011