

Minutes of: HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

Date of Meeting: 5 March 2026

Present: Councillor C Cummins (in the Chair)
Councillors A Booth and E FitzGerald
Tenants Representative - Stephen Walker

Also in attendance: Sian Grant, Director of Housing, Kimberley Partridge, Head of Neighbourhoods, Stepping Stone Projects, Claire Rogan, Head of Performance, Improvement and Assurance, Amanda Mullen, Kate Waterhouse, Executive Director (Strategy & Transformation), Kimberley Ryan-Dooner and Chloe Ashworth, Democratic Services

Apologies for Absence: J Momen, Councillor D Green, Councillor B Ibrahim, K Waterhouse and Councillor I Gartside

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies are noted above.

In addition, members were advised that Jacqueline Jourdan-Stoles is no longer a tenant representative for the Housing Advisory Board. The Chair placed on record the Board's thanks for all the contributions, Jacqueline had provided.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting held on 06th January 2026 were agreed as a correct record following an amendment to Item 4, Tenants Voice Forum Update Report; to add that the board noted that no tenant representatives were present at the meeting and agreed actions will be communicated to tenant representatives following the meeting.

4 TENANTS VOICE FORUM UPDATE REPORT

The Board received the March 2026 update from the Tenant Voice Forum. Members were informed that improvements have been noted in the tone, clarity and quality of service communications following training and the introduction of a structured approval process.

The Tenant Voice Forum has requested the establishment of a Communications Review Group and continues to provide feedback on website content, digital channels and accessibility.

Stephen, as representative for the Tenant Voice Forum in attendance reiterated the need for clear, simple and consistent performance data, including monthly dashboards showing trends, targets and a narrative explanation.

The Tenant Voice Forum had raised concerns regarding:

- Transparency and accuracy of complaints reporting.
- Timing and inclusion of Tenants Voice Forum in the policy review cycle.
- Impartiality of Stage 1 complaint responses.
- GDPR restrictions limiting their ability to observe Contact Centre calls.

However, the Tenant Voice Forum welcomed progress made on policy review processes, accessible policy explainer videos and recruitment plans for new Tenant Voice Forum members.

It was agreed that:

1. Members noted the ongoing work to improve communications governance, performance reporting visibility, and tenant involvement in scrutiny activity.
2. Officers will continue developing user-friendly dashboards and strengthening communication standards.

5 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE UPDATE

A comprehensive Q3 performance report was presented by Claire Rogan, Head of Performance, Improvement and Assurance. Key highlights from the presentation were as follows:

Repairs:

- Non-emergency repairs completed within target declined to 62%, impacted by winter pressures, staff movement, and process changes.
- Emergency repairs performance remained high at 98%.
- A programme of improvement is underway including process reviews, data accuracy checks and backlog reduction.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures:

- Overall satisfaction: 73.29% (target 74%).
- Repairs satisfaction and complaint-handling satisfaction remain below target.

Voids & Re-Lets:

- General needs re-let time: 35 days (target 24).
- Rent loss from voids remains an area to monitor.

Compliance:

- Gas: 99.91%
- Fire Safety: 83.82% (improving but below target)
- Electrical: 94.8%
- All asbestos, water and lift checks remain at or near full compliance.

Income & Rent Collection:

- Rent arrears: £3.047m
- Income collection improved to 98.85% but still under the 100% target.

The Board discussed the need for sustained improvements in repairs performance, communication, and compliance tracking.

It was agreed that:

1. Members noted the performance update.

6 SERVICE PLAN

Sian Grant, Director of Housing presented the Housing Services and Homelessness Service plans for 2026/27. In relation to the Housing Services Plan, Sian Grant, Director of Housing outlined the strategic vision, which is centred on creating satisfied tenants, providing quality homes and fostering united communities. The plan was described as clearly aligned with the Let's Strategy and wider organisational priorities. Sian Grant, Director of Housing, highlighted several key areas of focus for the forthcoming year, including strengthening compliance in relation to Awaab's Law, the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and fire safety; improving repairs governance and operational oversight; enhancing tenant engagement and the communications strategy; and improving data quality, performance management and the use of digital dashboards.

The plan also includes delivery of the twenty per cent rolling stock condition survey programme, alongside work to support culture change, workforce development and customer service standards. Risks identified within the plan were noted as resource capacity, the challenges associated with an ageing housing stock, ongoing financial pressures and the need for continued information technology development.

Sian Grant, Director of Housing then introduced the Homelessness Service Plan, setting out priorities for the development of a new Homeless Prevention Strategy from 2026 onwards, reducing backlogs in housing applications, improving the rate of move-on from temporary accommodation and commissioning services relating to A Bed Every Night, Community Accommodation Services Tier Three and the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme.

Further priorities include embedding early prevention roles within the service and strengthening data governance processes, as well as delivering the Bed and Breakfast Elimination Plan and implementing the Renters Rights Act.

It was agreed that:

1. The Board noted both plans and acknowledged the intention to receive progress updates twice yearly.

7 2026/27 BUDGET AND BUSINESS PLAN

The Board received the HRA budget position, noting a 4.8% rent increase (CPI+1%) confirmed by Cabinet on 11 Feb 2026. Rent merging has been delayed until April 2027, with potential uplifts of £1 then £2 per week in subsequent years. A balanced 2026/27 budget has been set, but the 30-year business plan shows pressures emerging beyond year 20.

Members noted significant investment in repairs and compliance reflected in the budget along with efficiency targets (£2m over four years) being built into the business plan.

Members were reminded of the key financial risks remain which are, inflation, tenant arrears, energy costs and capital investment needs.

It was agreed that:

1. The Board noted the update.

8 INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2026/27

The Head of Housing Property presented the capital investment programme.

The key component of the investment programme noted by the board is that there is a £42m investment over three years, including £31.261m for 2026/27.

The priorities for investment will be:

- Roofing, windows and doors.
- Kitchens and bathrooms.
- Communal area improvements.
- Major retrofit and energy efficiency
- Sheltered housing improvements.
- Compliance-driven works
- Bringing empty homes back into use (Eton Hill, Bronte Ave).
- Continuation of the IT strategy.

It was agreed that:

1. The Board noted the update.

9 ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

The annual self-assessment was presented for review and assurance. The overall position is amber across the four consumer standards. Members noted that no red ratings had been identified. It was noted that significant improvement activity is underway, however consistency and evidence-tracking does need strengthening. There is also strong governance and tenant influence through the Housing Advisory Board, Tenant Voice Forum and scrutiny arrangements.

Key areas for further improvement were noted as:

- Repairs consistency and evidencing of mitigations.
- Vulnerable tenant policy and data accuracy.
- ASB outcomes monitoring and confidence building.
- Complaints processes and adherence to Housemark recommendations.
- Accessibility, mutual exchange support and engagement assurance.

It was agreed that:

1. The Board endorsed the improvement plan and will monitor progress through regular reporting.

COUNCILLOR C CUMMINS
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 7.05 pm)