

Minutes of: HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

Date of Meeting: 23 September 2025

Present: Councillor C Cummins (in the Chair)
Councillors A Booth, D Green, E FitzGerald and I Gartside
Tenants Representatives - Stephen Walker, Jourdan-Stoles,
Jacqueline and Julia Momen.
Independent Members - Bryan Simpson and Ella Crookes.

Also in attendance: Simon Farnworth, Data and Intelligence Lead, Housing, Sian Grant, Director of Housing, Kimberley Partridge, Head of Neighbourhoods, Stepping Stone Projects, Steve Glazebrook, Head of Property, Clair Rogan, Head of Performance, Improvement and Assurance, Angela Murphy, Homeless Manager, Kate Waterhouse, Executive Director (Strategy & Transformation) and Chloe Ashworth, Democratic Services.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor B Ibrahim, Kimberley Ryan-Dooner and Jill Brown

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies are noted above.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on the 29th July 2025 are approved as a correct and accurate record.

4 TENANTS VOICE FORUM UPDATE REPORT

Steven provided the Board with an overview of the Tenant Voice Forum's (TVF) recent activities and findings, as outlined in the report submitted within the agenda pack. TVF were satisfied with the complaint letter templates, noting they were comparable to those used by other providers. Members confirmed that the letters correctly followed the Complaints Handling Code.

It was agreed that:

1. Bury Housing Services should provide clear, consistent, and accessible information for tenants on how to make a complaint.
2. Establish a single point of contact for complainants to improve communication and accountability.
3. Ensure timely completion of actions following Stage One complaint responses to prevent unnecessary escalation to Stage Two.

4. The Board noted the findings and recommendations and will consider them as part of ongoing improvements to the complaints handling process.

5 TENANT SCRUTINY POLICY

Claire Rogan, Head of Performance, Assurance and Improvement provided a brief overview of the Tenant Scrutiny Policy which sets out a structured approach for tenants to review and influence Bury Housing Services. It promotes transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement by enabling tenants to assess performance, raise concerns, and suggest constructive changes. Importantly, this policy has been developed in collaboration with tenants, ensuring it reflects their priorities, experiences, and expectations.

It was agreed that:

1. The Tenant Scrutiny Policy be agreed.

a SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Kimberley Partridge provided an overview of the Safeguarding Policy. The purpose of the Safeguarding Policy is to ensure the safety, protection and well-being of individuals, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults.

In response to a member question regarding training for identifying safeguarding needs members were advised the team works closely with the Safeguarding Partnership Board and partners to obtain support, guidance and training.

It was agreed that:

1. The Safeguarding Policy be approved.

b DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

Kimberley Partridge, Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services provided an overview of the Domestic Abuse Policy. The purpose of the Domestic Abuse Policy is to ensure the safety, protection and well-being of individuals, especially women and vulnerable adults.

It was agreed that:

1. The Domestic Abuse Policy be approved as a true and accurate record.

c ANNUAL TENANT VOICE REPORT

Clare Rogan, Head of Performance Improvement and Assurance provided an overview of the Annual Tenant Voice Report. The report demonstrates how tenants have been actively involved in shaping and improving housing services at both local and strategic levels. It reflects the varied engagement activities provided throughout the year for tenants to become involved and share their honest feedback and lived experiences. Throughout the year, tenants have played a vital role in enhancing services, reviewing and co-producing policies, influencing decision making, and

creating opportunities for communities to get involved. Their contributions have helped ensure that housing services are responsive, inclusive, and continuously improving. This report highlights the impact of tenant engagement across all levels of the organisation and reinforces our dedication to working in partnership with tenants to deliver better outcomes.

It was agreed that:

1. Members noted the report and update to the Board.

d HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING ADVICE SERVICE UPDATE

Angela Murphy provided members with an overview of a presentation, which is appended to the minutes for reference.

Members discussed the current Tenant Incentive Scheme, led by Jackie Summerscales, Strategic Housing Delivery Manager. The scheme offers financial support to residents who voluntarily give up bedroom space that is no longer required.

The Board explored the implications of Section 21 notices and the associated responsibilities of the Local Authority. Emphasis was placed on the importance of a clear, step-by-step process to support individuals at risk of homelessness, ensuring they feel informed and supported throughout. Members were informed about Advice Aid, which provides a customer portal offering a roadmap of the homelessness process to help guide service users.

Members further discussed the demographic of homelessness and how many have medical needs that will often only be met through social housing.

It was agreed that:

1. Members noted the report, presentation and update on homelessness and housing advice service update.
2. Members of the Tenant Voice Forum put forward their interest in attending a meeting or support session with the Homeless and Housing Advice Service and Advice Aid.

e HOUSING PERFORMANCE Q1 AND HOUSING PERFORMANCE TSM Q1

Claire Rogan, Head of Performance, Assurance and Improvement provided an overview of Housing Performance for Quarter One of 2025/2026.

Members held discussions regarding the benchmarking of data against statistical neighbours and actual figures so that the data could be understood better by members of the Board.

Members discussed the collation of data and feedback.

It was agreed that:

1. Members noted the update

2. Members requested further information regarding data be brought with the next performance update.

f DRAFT ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Steve Glazebrook, Interim Head of Property, delivered a presentation to all members outlining the key elements of the draft Asset Management Strategy. Following the presentation, members raised and discussed several points:

Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure: Members highlighted the importance of accessibility and strategic placement of EV charging points across council-owned properties.

Energy Efficiency and EPC Targets: The council aims to bring all properties up to EPC Level C by 2030. This will involve an estimated £9 million investment in energy efficiency measures, including heat pumps, solar panels, and other energy works.

Use of Local Assets: A member noted the potential of utilising the borough's extensive canal network as part of the strategy. This point was acknowledged and taken on board by officers.

Current EPC Ratings: Council properties currently perform well, with EPC ratings approximately two levels above the national average.

Sheltered and Independent Living Schemes: These schemes are of similar age and condition. While they meet the Decent Homes Standard, structural reviews are ongoing. A stock condition review programme is in place, and the Property team is working with the Place Directorate to explore further opportunities.

Strategic Planning and Assumptions: Members queried how assumptions within the strategy are signed off. It was confirmed that the Asset Management Strategy feeds into the council's 30-year business plan, which underpins long-term investment and planning decisions.

It was agreed that:

1. There will be continued development of the Asset Management Strategy incorporating member feedback.
2. Further engagement with Place Directorate regarding sheltered schemes.
3. Review of EV charging infrastructure plans.
4. Ongoing monitoring of EPC improvements and energy investment outcomes.

COUNCILLOR C CUMMINS
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 7:00 pm)

