

Report to	Housing Advisory Board
Date	10/06/2026
Agenda No. & Title	5 Housemark complaints and antisocial behaviour service review
Purpose of the Report	To set out the findings of a review undertaken by Housemark of Bury Housing's approach to complaints handling and antisocial behaviour (ASB)
Status	For approval
Author	Sian Grant Director of Housing
Report Contact	Sian Grant Sian.grant@bury.gov.uk
Appendices	Appendix one – Housemark report Appendix two – Assessment against the Complaints accreditation standard Appendix three – Assessment against the ASB accreditation standard Appendix four – Complaints action plan Appendix five – ASB action plan
Background Documents	None
Recommendation/s	<b>It is recommended that HAB;</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discuss the report and assessment of the Bury Housing's approach to complaints and to ASB</b></li> <li>• <b>Approve the action plans developed to address the findings</b></li> </ul>
Corporate Plan Objective	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Satisfied Tenants <input type="checkbox"/> Quality Homes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> United Communities
Risk Implications	Risk H3: Poor tenant satisfaction Risk H8: Failure to effectively manage anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases effectively and in a timely manner. Risk H9: Failure to support vulnerable tenants at risk or victims of anti-social behaviour (ASB) Risk H13: Failure to address tenant dissatisfaction and /or complaints.

	Inability to learn from feedback resulting in recurring themes or high volumes of complaints.
Risk Controls and mitigations	The Housemark reviews of the both services are a key mitigations for these risks and provide third party assurance and review of these services ensuring robust improvement plans are in place.
Assets and Liabilities	None as a result of this report
Resource Implications	None as a result of this report
Customer Impact	The reviews ensure we have identified where we can improve both services to meet customer expectations and ensure we are delivering an excellent service to our tenants.
EDI Implications	None as a result of this report
Sustainability and Environmental Implications	None as a result of this report
Privacy/Data Protection	None as a result of this report
Colleague Impact	The outcomes of the reviews have been shared with staff in each team to ensure they understand the current performance of the service and are aware of the important role they need to play in service improvements. Clear actions plans and performance management are in place in both teams.
Stakeholder Communications and Reputational Impact	The outcomes of the reviews and improvement plans will be shared on the website.
Next Steps	Next steps; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver improvement plans and report back to HAB on progress.</li> </ul>

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 In Autumn 2025, Bury Council Housing Services commissioned Housemark to undertake a review of its complaints handling and anti-social behaviour services. The review was commissioned as part of a need to strengthen accountability, improve service delivery and create a more consistent and customer focussed housing service following the housing service being brought back in house from the ALMO, Six Town Housing.
- 1.2 Whilst we asked for the review to be carried out against the Housemark accreditation standards for both complaints and ASB, we were upfront with Housemark that neither service was at a stage in their improvement where we would meet the standard for accreditation. The reviews were intended to provide an honest assessment of our current position and understand how services were being delivered in practice. This would enable us to identify and understand our strengths, gaps and opportunities to strengthen operational consistency, improve customer experience and embed learning across the service.
- 1.3 The approach to the review is outlined in the report at appendix one.

## **2 Key findings**

- 2.1 The full report is provided at appendix one along with the detailed assessments against the accreditation framework for each service (appendix 2 and appendix 3).
- 2.2 Housemark found that the reviews of both services highlight a service that is moving in the right direction but where improvements are not yet consistently embedded in day to day practice.
- 2.3 The review found that across both service areas there is a consistent picture. We have established the core building blocks of effective service delivery, supported by strong leadership intent, updated policies and a clear focus on improving customer experience and this picture is consistent across all sources of evidence.
- 2.4 The review found that this intent is not yet consistently reflected in operational practice. The gap between how the service is designed to operate and how it is experienced by residents remains an issue.
- 2.5 The review identified a number of consistent themes across both complaints and ASB. These include;
  - Inconsistent application of policies and procedures
  - Gaps in core case management disciplines
  - Variable quality of communication
  - Developing, but not yet mature, performance and assurance frameworks
  - A resident experience that lags behind organisational ambition

### **3 Complaints handling**

- 3.1 The review found that we have a framework that is broadly aligned with expected standards. There is a clear structure in place, supported by defined processes and an understanding of the importance of timely response and customer satisfaction.
- 3.2 However the review found that this framework was not consistently delivered in practice. In particular;
- Complaint investigations are not always sufficiently thorough or clearly evidenced.
  - Responses lack clarity, particularly in setting out findings, decisions and next steps.
  - There is limited evidence that learning from complaints is consistently captured, tracked and used to drive service improvement.
  - Record keeping is not always robust enough to demonstrate how conclusions have been reached.
- 3.3 As a result the complaints process does not always provide the level of assurance or customer confidence that would be expected. Housemark found that this creates inconsistency in the experience of customers, rather than indicating a consistently weak service.

### **4 Anti social behaviour (ASB)**

- 4.1 Housemark found that the findings in relation to ASB are more pronounced. While policies and procedures are in place, there is a more significant gap between expected practice and operational delivery.
- 4.2 Case reviews and staff interviews demonstrated that the service is often reactive with limited evidence of structured case management or early intervention. This is a direct impact on outcomes and on the experience of residents. Key issues include;
- Inconsistent use of risk assessments and limited evidence of risk based decision making
  - A lack of clear and structured action planning with cases.
  - Limited evidence of early intervention or use of prevention tools.
  - Cases progressing without clear direction, review or escalation required.
  - Closure of cases without sufficient evidence that issues have been fully resolved or that residents are satisfied with the outcome.
- 4.3 These issues mean that, in practice the service does not yet consistently demonstrate a proactive, victim centred approach to ASB management.

### **5 Overall assessment**

- 5.1 The report summarises the overall position as;
- The framework exists
  - Leadership intent is strong
  - Policies and training are in place

- Operational application is inconsistent
- Core case management disciplines are not yet embedded
- Resident experience lags behind organisational intent
- Governance visibility exists but assurance is still maturing

5.2 Housemark find that taken together, this reflects a service where core components are in place but where consistent delivery is not yet established across the organisation. They found that this was not apposition of failure, but one of transition.

## **6 Service improvement plans and next steps**

- 6.1 Improvement plans have been developed for both the complaints and ASB service and have been challenged by Housemark to ensure they are robust and will deliver the changes required but are grounded in reality. These are attached at appendix 4 and 5.
- 6.2 Housemark have recommended that the improvement it taken place over the medium term of 12 months rather than rushed to ensure that there is sufficient time for;
- New approaches to be introduced and understood by staff
  - Changes to be tested in live operational environments
  - Inevitable pressures and 'shocks' within the service to be managed
  - Practise to stabilise and become consistent
  - Evidence to build that that improvements are sustained over time.
- 6.3 We will invite Housemark back in 12 months' time to reassess both services and the progress that has been made.

