Minutes of:	**HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD**
Date of Meeting:	9 June 2026
Present:	Councillor A Arif (in the Chair) Councillors E FitzGerald, D Green, B Ibrahim, J Roith and M Walsh
Also in attendance:	Kate Waterhouse, Executive Director (Strategy & Transformation), Boe Haslam, Head of Housing Property, Kimberley Partridge, Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services, Claire Rogan, Head of Performance, Assurance and Improvement, Kimberley Ryan-Dooner, Tenant Engagement Manager, Ben Tunnicliffe, Head of Housing Compliance, Amanda Mullen, Homelessness and Housing Manager, Ella Crookes, Independent Member, Bryan Simpson, Independent Member and Chloe Ashworth, Democratic Services.
Public Attendance:	1 Member of the public was present at the meeting.
Apologies for Absence:	Sian Grant, Director of Housing Esme Davies, Programme Manager, Housing.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Sian Grant, Director of Housing.

At this point the Chair wished to place on record her condolences to Stephen Walker's family. As one of our Tenant Representatives, Stephen was a valued and engaged member of the Housing Advisory Board from the start, providing constructive challenge and thoughtful analysis. He will be greatly missed.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The following amendment was agreed: The assurances the Board made regarding a lack of tenant representation at the last Housing Advisory Board be noted.

The minutes of the last meeting held on 5th March 2026 were agreed as a correct record.

4 APPOINTMENT OF CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPION

Councillor Walsh was appointed as the Corporate Parenting Champion for the Housing Advisory Board.

5 TENANTS VOICE FORUM UPDATE REPORT

The Board received an update from the Tenant Engagement Manager regarding the work of the Tenant Voice Forum.
Key areas highlighted included:

- Ongoing work to strengthen tenant engagement
- Feedback on communication standards and accessibility
- Requests for improved performance reporting clarity

Members noted that, following the sad and sudden passing of a valued Tenant Voice Forum and Housing Advisory Board member, recruitment has been prioritised as an urgent activity. As the Tenant Voice Forum is currently not quorate, formal meetings have been temporarily paused while a recruitment drive is underway, with the aim of having members in place by July.
To maintain tenant engagement and ensure continued progress against priority service areas, a series of themed tenant review groups have been established focusing on Repairs, Complaints, Tenancy and Communication. Each group will be tenant-led, with outcomes and updates reported to the Housing Advisory Board, ensuring tenant voice continues to inform service delivery and decision-making.
Members were advised that the TPAS desktop review is nearing completion, with findings due in June, followed by staff and tenant interviews. Recommendations to strengthen tenant engagement and scrutiny arrangements are expected by late August/early September, alongside an action plan to be monitored through Housing Advisory Board.
Updates were provided on ongoing scrutiny activity:

- Repairs: A tenant-led group is being established to co-design service improvements, including policy development, communication and timescales.
- Complaints: Previous scrutiny has improved accessibility, response quality and consistency, with further work progressing via a newly formed tenant complaints group and action plan.
- Tenancy: A tenant-led review of the ASB action plan will support delivery against Housemark recommendations.
- Communication: Improvements to messaging processes have been implemented, with further work planned on accessibility.

It was noted that accessibility remains an area for improvement across all review themes. Tenant communication also continues to be a recurring issue within complaints, and training is ongoing to improve use of CX systems. The forthcoming ICS survey is expected to identify further areas for development.

Performance reporting continues through newsletters, Housing Advisory Board reporting and the website, with a focus on developing easy-read formats. Tenant influence on policy development remains central, with priority areas including the Repairs Policy, Complaints Policy (including compensation), ASB Policy and No Access Policy. This reflects a shift towards co-production, with tenants involved from an early stage of policy development.
Finally, Members noted that Tenant Voice Forum has reviewed performance against Tenant Satisfaction Measures and supported a more ambitious approach to target setting, recognising the need for continuous improvement as services transition and staffing structures are strengthened.

Members welcomed continued engagement activity and emphasised the importance of co-production with tenants.

It was agreed:

1. That the update be noted
2. That further work on tenant communications and reporting be supported

3. That tenant voice at the Housing Advisory Board is important and will be considered under the Terms of Reference item later on the agenda.

6 HOUSEMARK REVIEW FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

Members considered the report outlining the findings of the independent Housemark review of Bury Housing's complaints handling and anti-social behaviour services, together with the proposed improvement action plans.

It was noted that the review forms part of the Council's wider improvement journey, with a focus on strengthening compliance with regulatory standards, improving service delivery, and working towards potential future accreditation for both complaints and anti-social behaviour services. The review has also provided clarity on how services are reported, managed and monitored, and the processes required to ensure consistent delivery. In particular, Members noted the importance of strengthening a proactive approach to anti-social behaviour, including early intervention and prevention to reduce escalation.

Members noted that the review, commissioned in Autumn 2025 following the transition of services back in-house, was intended to provide an honest assessment of current practice against Housemark accreditation standards. While neither service was expected to meet accreditation at this stage, the review has identified key strengths, gaps and opportunities to improve consistency, customer experience and accountability.

Housemark found both services to be moving in the right direction, with strong leadership intent, updated policies and a clear focus on improving customer experience. However, this intent is not yet consistently reflected in operational practice, with a gap between service design and residents' experience.

Key cross-cutting findings included:

- 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
- Resident experience not yet aligned with organsiational ambition.

In relation to complaints handling, Members noted that while an appropriate framework is in place, there are inconsistencies in delivery, including insufficiently evidenced investigations, lack of clarity in responses, inconsistent capture of learning, and weaknesses in record keeping.

For anti-social behaviour services, the review identified more significant challenges, with services often operating reactively rather than proactively. Concerns included inconsistent risk assessment, limited structured case management, lack of early intervention, unclear case direction, and closure of cases without sufficient evidence of resolution or customer satisfaction.

The overall assessment concluded that, whilst the core components of effective services are in place, consistent delivery is not yet embedded and the service remains in a transitional phase rather than one of failure.

Members were advised that comprehensive and realistic improvement plans have been developed for both service areas, supported by strengthened performance management arrangements. It was noted that these plans are intended to be delivered over a 12-month period to allow new approaches to embed and demonstrate sustained improvement.

In response to a query from Councillor Green, it was confirmed that action plans and performance expectations are being embedded within service teams; however, engagement and sharing with Trade Union colleagues will be ensured as part of the implementation approach.

A further independent review will be commissioned in 12 months to assess progress.

It was agreed:

1. That the findings of the Housemark review be noted.
2. That the improvement action plans for complaints and ASB services be approved.
3. That progress against the action plans be reported to the Housing Advisory Board through more high level. Summary reports which identify the key actions that the Board needs to consider.

7 TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

Amanda Mullen, Manager for Homelessness and Housing Options, presented an overview of the Temporary Accommodation Strategy. The report outlined a three-year plan to deliver safe, secure and good quality temporary accommodation, reduce reliance on bed and breakfast provision, and manage increasing demand and associated costs across the borough.

Members were informed of the rising demand for homelessness services, the pressures on temporary accommodation, and the Council's approach to increasing supply through a range of delivery models, including leasing, property acquisition and partnership working.

Discussion took place on the following issues:

Provision for couples and older people:
In response to a question from Councillor Walsh, Members were advised that provision is available for couples, including through the "bed every night" offer, noting that a number of rough sleepers present as couples.

For older people, options include direct lets into sheltered accommodation, with voids being utilised where appropriate. Allocation is based on vulnerability, and access to sheltered accommodation is often the quickest route for those aged over 55. A person-centred approach is taken in all cases.

Impact of Renters' Rights and private rented sector:
Councillor FitzGerald raised the potential impact of Renters' Rights legislation and whether the current level of provision was appropriate.

It was reported that engagement with landlords has been positive, with some landlords ending leases to enable properties to be repaired and brought back into use as temporary accommodation. Officers noted that section 21 notices remain an ongoing pressure, particularly following the COVID-19 period.

Members were also advised that grant funding of approximately £1m over years two and three will support improvements to properties in disrepair.

Empty Homes Officers:
Councillor Green queried progress on recruiting Empty Homes Officers. Members were advised that two officers are in place, with processes typically taking 3–4 months to bring empty homes back into use.

Support for individuals with complex needs:
In response to a question from Councillor Ibrahim, it was confirmed that many individuals presenting as homeless have complex needs and, in some cases, may not be able to return home.

A multi-agency approach is adopted, with services working together to provide appropriate support packages and ensure suitable accommodation outcomes.

It was agreed that:

1. The Board noted the report.

8 COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE REPORT

Ben Tunnicliffe, Head of Housing Compliance, presented an overview of the Compliance Assurance Report. The report provided Members with an update on the work of the Housing Compliance Team across key safety areas, including fire safety, electrical safety, gas, asbestos, water hygiene and lift safety.

Members were advised that a dedicated Housing Compliance Team is now in place, with responsibility for ensuring compliance across these areas and providing a strengthened approach to governance and assurance.

Significant progress has been made in evidencing compliance actions, improving data quality, and introducing new systems, including RiskBase, to better track fire safety works and compliance activity.

Discussion took place on the following issues:

Fire safety and fire doors:
Councillor Green raised concerns regarding fire door replacement and overhaul works. Members were advised that a programme of fire door improvements is underway, including replacement of communal doors and upgrades to flat entrance doors, alongside ongoing inspection and maintenance arrangements.

Progress and data quality:
Members discussed the importance of understanding progress and having a clear breakdown of compliance activity. It was noted that previous issues with data quality, particularly around completion of actions, are being addressed through improved systems and a whole-team approach.

Officers acknowledged that some works had previously been assumed complete without sufficient recorded evidence, and this is now being rectified through improved tracking and reporting.

Tenant engagement and awareness:
Members highlighted the need to improve tenant awareness and engagement. Officers reported that plans are being developed for engagement activity, including targeted door knocking, to better inform tenants and support improved access and cooperation. Further work is also being undertaken with Legal Services to review access policies and procedures.

Voids and joined-up working:

Members were advised that the voids process is being strengthened through improved collaboration across services to ensure properties meet required standards before re-letting.

Decent Homes and stock condition:
It was noted that there had been 58 Decent Homes failures in the last financial year. Officers are working to ensure accurate completion data is recorded and confirmed.

Members were also informed that future works will incorporate hybrid elements and more sustainable utilities where possible.

Impact on tenants and communication:
Members emphasised the importance of clear communication with tenants, particularly where delays may occur in delivering works. Officers acknowledged that maintaining credibility with tenants depends on keeping them informed and managing expectations where timelines cannot be met.

Rent and tenant responsibilities:
Discussion took place regarding tenant responsibilities, including rent payments. It was suggested that further information could be provided to tenants, and that Chris Brown may be invited to a future meeting to present on the wider improvement plan.

It was agreed that:

1. The Committee noted the report and the progress made in strengthening compliance and governance arrangements.
2. Ben Tunnicliffe meet with Chris Brown, Head of Customer Support and Collections to discuss communications with residents regarding works.

9 PERFORMANCE UPDATE

Claire Rogan presented the year-end performance position for 2025/26, the proposed targets for 2026/27, and an update on the Housing Risk Register in line with the Regulator of Social Housing Sector Risk Profile. Members were advised that the service remains in a period of transition, with improving foundations alongside ongoing performance and assurance challenges.

The Committee noted that overall tenant satisfaction had improved, alongside strong performance in complaints handling and compliance, particularly in areas such as fire, gas and asbestos safety. However, a number of key service areas remain below target, most notably repairs performance, communication, and aspects of property condition.

Members discussed the continued pressures within the repairs service, including legacy backlogs, capacity issues and data quality improvements, which have contributed to reduced performance in non-emergency repairs. These issues were reflected within the Risk Register, where repairs delivery, disrepair and associated financial exposure remain high risks, although improvement activity is underway.

The Committee also considered financial pressures, noting increasing rent arrears alongside wider cost of living impacts on tenants. This was recognised as both a performance concern and a continuing risk to the sustainability of the service.

Data quality was highlighted as a significant cross-cutting issue, impacting both performance reporting and overall assurance. Members noted that while limitations remain, improvements are being progressed through system transformation and strengthened governance arrangements.

In terms of governance and assurance, Members acknowledged that while appropriate frameworks are in place, further work is required to strengthen Board-level oversight and demonstrate effective scrutiny in line with regulatory expectations. Tenant voice was also identified as an area requiring further development, with improvement activity underway.

Members noted that performance targets for 2026/27 have been set at a stretching level to drive improvement and better align with sector benchmarks, supported by a revised and more focused set of performance indicators.

It was agreed:

1. Members noted the 2025/26 year-end performance position and associated challenges
2. Approved the proposed performance indicators and targets for 2026/27
3. Endorsed the key improvement priorities and areas of focus for the coming year
4. Reviewed the new suggested PI's highlighted in the target setting report.
5. Noted the current Housing Risk Register and overall assurance position
6. Endorsed the proposed approach to strengthening assurance frameworks, governance, and reporting

10 HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE

Chloe Ashworth, Assistant Democratic Services Manager presented the report on the annual review of the Housing Advisory Board Terms of Reference, outlining proposed updates to strengthen governance arrangements, clarify the role and functions of the Board, and support effective tenant engagement.

Members were advised that the revised Terms of Reference provide greater clarity on the purpose of the Board, its advisory role, and its position within the wider Council governance framework, while ensuring that tenant voice continues to be embedded at a strategic level.

During discussion, Members considered the proposed quorum arrangements and agreed that this should be strengthened to require the inclusion of at least one tenant representative to support the Board's co-production role and ensure appropriate tenant representation in decision-making.

Members supported the proposed updates overall and noted the importance of maintaining clear and robust governance arrangements as the Board continues to develop.

It was agreed that:

1. The quorum arrangements should be amended to include at least one tenant representative
2. Chloe Ashworth should circulate a revised version of the Terms of Reference reflecting this change
3. The Board supported the proposed Terms of Reference, subject to amendment, for onward approval

COUNCILLOR A ARIF
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 7.20 pm)