

# HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of meeting on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025, 17:00 – 19:00

No.	Item	Lead
1a.	<p><b>Welcome, introductions and apologies</b></p> <p><b>Board Members in attendance:</b> Councillor Jean Innes (Chair – Cllr I), Councillor Keith Miles (Cllr M), Chris Sanderson (Tenant - CS), Phil Simpson (Tenant - PS), Christine Durrant (Executive Director - CD), Jane Davies (Service Director Housing - JD)</p> <p><b>Board Members – apologies submitted:</b> Darrell Price (Tenant), Councillor Glenys Falconer (Cllr F), Janice Bather (Tenant), Councillor Laura Bagley (Cllr B)</p> <p><b>Officers in attendance:</b> Vanessa Watson-Hopkin (Head of Housing Assets &amp; Interim Head of Housing Property Services – VW-H), James Crouch (Housing Strategy and Engagement Manager – Minutes - JC) Jill Portman (Area Housing manager – South - JP)</p>	
1b.	<p><b>Matters arising from previous meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record.</p> <p><u>Matters arising:</u></p> <p>An amendment to the terms of reference was proposed to include a pre-meeting to the Board to be held two weeks in advance of the main Housing Advisory Board meeting, to allow for an introduction to the topics being discussed to ensure tenants and elected members have the opportunity to ask questions in advance.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> JC to amend terms of reference accordingly.</p> <p>JD confirmed the installation of new noticeboards in all blocks of flat has been completed.</p> <p>JD explained that the TSM Action Plan was amended to include the comments made at the previous Housing Advisory Board meeting. The revised plan is on the agenda for this meeting.</p> <p>JD – Quarter 2 performance information is included in the performance report – item 2 on the agenda.</p> <p>JC arranged the TPAS training that took place on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024.</p> <p>To provide board members with an introduction to complaints and complaint handling, a pre-meeting was held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025. This session also included the feedback from the Housing Regulator’s Inspection of the Housing Service, and the amended action plan, in advance of the main Housing Advisory Board meeting.</p>	JC

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2.	<p><b>Quarter 3 key performance indicators</b></p> <p>JD presented the Q3 performance indicators (October to December 2024) highlighting several areas: the ongoing improvements in repair completion timescales through the year, increasing expenditure on adaptations, progress being made to deal with the high number of voids, and performance on responding to complaints within timescale which whilst improving through Q2 had fallen during Q3, with particular challenges for Stage 2 complaints. Discussion on the figures followed.</p> <p><u>Repairs</u> Cllr M requested that the indicators be re-ordered slightly to improve clarity.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> JC to discuss this with the Performance Officer and to implement changes in the Quarter 4 report.</p> <p><u>Voids</u> Cllr M asked whether void numbers would now start to come down with the appointment of an external contractor to undertake void works. JD advised that the contractor was now up and running and had so far returned 30 voids back to the service for letting. JD advised that the numbers of voids should fall during 2025/26.</p> <p>PS asked whether there were more void bungalows than other property types? JD advised that the profile of voids is broadly typical of the stock as a whole.</p> <p><u>Adaptations</u> Cllr M asked about hardstandings and electric vehicle charging points for bungalows. JD and VW-H advised that there are increasing numbers of requests for these, and while we approve installations wherever possible, sometimes there are limitations due to space. We install EV points in all new build homes, and are exploring options for more charging points across estates.</p>	JC
3.	<p><b>Landlord safety and compliance performance update (Jan 25)</b></p> <p>Performance information on Compliance for January 2025 was presented by VW-H. Positive performance was noted across all indicators.</p> <p>Fire Risk Assessments are regularly undertaken for all 377 blocks. Each of the tenants in the blocks will receive a letter shortly, regarding fire safety and how to log on to the online Fire Safety Hub website.</p> <p>The remaining properties that do not have a current electrical safety check are being prioritised and the number is reducing each month. Housing management and legal colleagues are supporting the process of gaining access to properties, and external contractors have been commissioned to increase capacity and pace.</p> <p>VW-H described the actions being taken to tackle damp and mould in council homes, including working with Moldex, a company that has been appointed to install extra fans. Extensive work has been undertaken across the housing service to increase awareness and early reporting, and there are no identified Category 1 hazards for damp and mould.</p> <p>CD offered clarification on the term 'process compliance', which indicates that in cases where checks are not at 100%, for example electrical tests, CBC as a landlord has taken all possible steps to gain entry to complete the checks.</p>	

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	<p><b>Action:</b> CD requested that the term ‘Sheltered Scheme’ is replaced by ‘Independent Living Scheme’ in the Compliance report and other reports as needed.</p>	JC
4.	<p><b>Outcome of Regulator of social housing inspection: revised Action Plan</b></p> <p>JD presented and discussed all items in the action plan and an updated version will be circulated with the minutes.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Housing complaints</b></p> <p>JD presented a detailed overview of progress against the action plan to ensure compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Code of Practice. Most of the actions have been completed and the main areas we are currently working on are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for all staff on how to ensure tenants are offered the choice to complain, when they express dissatisfaction.</li> <li>• A new Housing Complaints Officer has been recruited, and they are focusing on embedding learning from complaints and reporting on outcomes, across the housing service.</li> <li>• We do not currently apply extensions to response timescales but in some cases this is appropriate, and the Housing Complaints Officer will be looking into this and issuing guidance.</li> <li>• The new repairs customer care officer is making excellent progress with repairs complaints and will be ensuring repairs are followed up and the complainant kept updated, after the complaint response has been submitted.</li> <li>• JC also provided a detailed overview of complaints by type, and whether they are upheld, not upheld or partially upheld.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked JC and his team for the detailed papers and presentation.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Tenant Scrutiny report</b></p> <p>VW-H presented the Tenant Scrutiny Report into non-urgent repairs.</p> <p>The report describes a comprehensive review process and several service improvements were identified as a result, for example a new format for repairs calling cards and other written correspondence, recruitment of a repairs customer care officer, and procurement of a new IT system for repairs. Some of these actions have been completed and others are in progress, and regular progress reviews will be undertaken.</p> <p>JD noted the importance of ensuring all tenants are made aware of the changes made as a result of this review, and this will be considered as part of the emerging tenant communication strategy.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Agenda for next meeting, in addition to standard items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provisional Tenant Satisfaction Measure results</li> <li>• Communal Cleaning report and next steps</li> <li>• Year-end performance report</li> </ul> <p>CD requested that a calendar of formal submissions be circulated.</p>	

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	<b>Action:</b> JC to produce a calendar showing key reporting milestones including revised self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Code and TSM publication.	JC
8.	<b>Any other business</b>  No other matters were discussed.	
9.	<b>Next meeting</b>  The next meeting of the Housing Advisory Board will be on 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2025, 17:00-19:00 in the Town Hall, committee room 5. A pre-meet has been arranged for 29 <sup>th</sup> April 2025, 14:00-16:00 in the Town Hall, committee room 3.	

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