

HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of meeting on Tuesday 6th May, 17:00 – 19:00, Committee Room 5

No.	Item	Lead
1a.	<p>Welcome, introductions and apologies</p> <p>Board Members in attendance: Councillor Jean Innes (Chair – Cllr I), Chris Sanderson (Tenant - CS), Phil Simpson (Tenant - PS), Darrell Price (Tenant), Councillor Glenys Falconer (Cllr F), Janice Bather (Tenant), Christine Durrant (Executive Director - CD), Jane Davies (Service Director Housing - JD)</p> <p>Board Members – apologies: Councillor Keith Miles</p> <p>Officers in attendance: Vanessa Watson-Hopkin (Head of Housing Assets & Interim Head of Housing Property Services – VW-H), James Crouch (Housing Strategy and Engagement Manager – Minutes - JC), Graeme Young (Area Housing manager – East - GY), Carl Griffiths (Statutory Housing Solutions Manager – CG)</p>	
1b.	<p>Matters arising from previous meeting</p> <p>The minutes were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record.</p> <p><u>Matters arising:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was confirmed that the terms of reference have been amended 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 and ensure tenants and elected members have the opportunity to ask questions in advance. As previously requested by Cllr M, repairs performance indicators have been reordered slightly to improve clarity. As previously requested by CD, the term ‘Sheltered Scheme’ has been replaced by ‘Independent Living Scheme’ in the Compliance report and other reports. JC circulated and presented a short paper entitled ‘Key reporting milestones – Housing Ombudsman and Regulator of Social Housing’. *update* the day after the Housing Advisory Board meeting, the Housing Ombudsman extended their deadline for the submission of self-assessment and action plan from 30th June to 30th September, but the intention remains to bring the documents to the meeting on 17th June. 	
2.	<p>Year-end performance indicators</p> <p>JD presented the 2024/25 year-end performance indicators with illustrative graphs for a selection of the indicators. It was noted that in future, different colours should be used to ensure the information is clear and accessible for all members.</p>	JC

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	<p>Improved repairs performance: VW-H described the team effort across the repairs service to sustain improved performance on completion timescales.</p> <p>Housing Register figures: CG provided background information to explain the increased number of households on the Housing Register. The Renters' Rights Bill is causing some private landlords to withdraw from the sector, and more people are approaching the homelessness team under threat of eviction. The cost of private rented property appears to be increasing as supply falls, placing pressure on the Housing Register.</p> <p>Voids figures – JD described good progress being made by both the external contractor (CLC) and our in-house voids repairs team, and targets are in place to reduce the overall number of empty homes each month. JD to bring a more detailed update to the August HAB meeting.</p> <p>Rents – reduction of rent arrears throughout the year. The rents team manager will be invited to provide an overview of performance at the August HAB meeting.</p> <p>Home tenancy visit figures – GY advised there was some seasonal variation in the figures with slightly lower numbers completed during the summer as more staff were on leave. GY described the positive outcomes from home tenancy visits – referrals for support, more people linked into benefits they're entitled to, repairs issues identified earlier etc.</p> <p>The number of ASB cases rose in the final two quarters of 2024/25 and work is underway to look at the reasons for this trend. It is likely that the work done to raise awareness and promote the importance of reporting ASB has led to increased numbers.</p> <p>Complaints performance has improved during the year, due to dedicated officers in the repairs and housing strategy and engagement teams. A full complaints performance report will be presented to the meeting in June.</p>	<p>JD</p> <p>JD</p>
3.	<p>Landlord safety and compliance performance update (March 25)</p> <p>VW-H presented the compliance report – positive performance across all indicators was noted.</p> <p>Joint work is taking place across the directorate to gain access to the remaining properties without an up to date electrical safety check.</p> <p>VW-H provided more up-to-date figures on damp and mould - Moldex fan installations and the reduction in properties awaiting installations as at end of April (249) and 395 (total live cases).</p> <p>CD asked Board members if they had any suggestions for improving access to homes where tenants are not working with us to allow access. Suggestion to see if could get friends / relations to provide assistance in gaining access to</p>	

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	properties - though issues with data protection were raised. Utilising the same officer over time to develop trust and a 'here-to-help' approach with tenants who are not responsive.	
4.	<p>Regulator of Social Housing and tenant satisfaction action plan</p> <p>JD presented an update and noted the following points:</p> <p>1.2 – good progress with introducing the 'Total Mobile' repairs IT system. JC noted that members of the Tenant Challenge Panel had been given a demonstration of the new system and were impressed.</p> <p>1.4 – the restructure of the repairs management and office functions is currently being developed, with a view to implementing from autumn.</p> <p>1.8 – the migration of stock data from Keystone to NEC is ahead of schedule. The new system will allow officers to provide better advice about what and when capital work is due on properties.</p> <p>3.3 – the review of new and home tenancy visit process has now started.</p> <p>4.1 – Intention to bring communication plan forward for further discussion at a future meeting.</p> <p>Once the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures are published a workshop will be held with tenants to review and develop a new plan with tenants for the year ahead.</p> <p>The comments made as part of the TSM survey are to be distributed to housing managers to analyse for their service and identify improvements required.</p>	<p>JD/ JC</p> <p>JC</p>
5.	<p>Tenant satisfaction measures – results for 2024/25</p> <p>JD presented the provisional tenant satisfaction results to the group – noting that final checks are being undertaken to ensure validity and assurance. The presentation noted the changes of the perception and management results from 2024/25 with those of 2023/24 and where there were notable differences. Satisfaction scores were roughly the same as for 2023/24 except for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased satisfaction with complaints handling • Increased satisfaction with communal cleaning • Decreased satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhood <p>The final figures will be shared with HAB members on 17th June 2025.</p>	

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6.	<p>Tenant Scrutiny report – communal cleaning</p> <p>GY presented the Communal Cleaning consultation report setting out the background to the work. Following an Ombudsman determination the whole communal cleaning service was reviewed in 2023. This included a full survey of tenants living in blocks of flats. The report sets out the changes that were made and the results of the follow up survey that was undertaken in late 2024.</p> <p>The changes included monthly block inspections, spot checking by managers and improved cleaning logs so tenants were better informed of the expected work. Over the course of a year satisfaction with the communal cleaning service increased by 19.6% with positive comments on the standard of cleaning and respectful staff.</p>	
7.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>No other matters were discussed.</p>	
8.	<p>Next meeting</p> <p>Board members agreed a date for an additional Housing Advisory Board meeting on 17th June, 17:00-19:00. This meeting is to allow Board members to review the final version of the submission of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures to the Regulator of Social Housing, and the submission of the self-assessment and associated action plan to the Housing Ombudsman.</p> <p>The subsequent ‘main’ meeting will be on 5th August 2025 17:00-19:00 at the Town Hall.</p>	