

Our Commitment to Improving our Complaints Handling

Governing Body Statement 2026

The Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (SRPC) is the Governing Body responsible for oversight of housing-related complaints.

The Committee has reviewed and scrutinised the Housing Service's Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and its annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

We are pleased that the self-assessment demonstrates full compliance with the Complaint Handling Code. This provides assurance that the Council's complaints policy, procedures and governance arrangements are aligned with the Code and that appropriate systems are in place to support fair and effective complaint handling.

The Committee recognises the importance of an accessible complaints process and supports the Housing Ombudsman's view that complaints should be welcomed as valuable feedback and an opportunity to improve services. We are encouraged that tenants continue to use the complaints process and that lessons learned are helping to drive service improvements across the Housing Service.

However, while compliance with the Code is important, it does not necessarily mean overall complaints performance is where it should be. The annual report highlights areas where improvement is still required, particularly in relation to complaint response times.

We are also mindful that tenant satisfaction with complaint handling remains low. Although performance compares favourably with similar landlords, only 33% of surveyed tenants reported that they were satisfied with how their complaint had been handled. This shows that further work is needed to improve the customer experience and build confidence in the complaints process.

The Committee has considered the Housing Ombudsman's findings during the year. While there were no findings of severe maladministration, several cases involved service failure or maladministration, and two Complaint Handling Failure Orders were issued. We expect officers to continue reducing complaint handling failures and maladministration findings through better complaint management, service delivery and organisational learning.

We are pleased to see evidence that complaint feedback is being used to improve services. This demonstrates the value of listening to tenants and learning from complaints.

Over the coming year, the Committee expects officers to maintain full compliance with the Complaint Handling Code while continuing to improve services. We will monitor progress against the Repairs Complaints Improvement Plan and expect measurable improvements in complaint response times, customer communication and tenant satisfaction. We also expect continued focus on learning from complaints, identifying recurring themes and embedding improvements across services.

Key priorities for the coming year are:

- Improve performance against Housing Ombudsman complaint response timescales.
- Deliver and monitor the Repairs Complaints Improvement Plan and ensure improvements are sustained.

- Improve communication with tenants throughout the complaint process, including clearer and more regular updates.
- Strengthen how learning from complaints is identified, shared and acted upon across services.
- Use complaint information and tenant feedback to identify recurring issues and drive wider service improvements.
- Continue working with tenants and tenant representative groups to shape future improvements to complaints handling and service delivery.
- Reduce complaint handling failures and maladministration findings through improved complaint management, record keeping, investigation standards and oversight.

The Committee will continue to monitor complaints performance throughout the year and provide challenge and scrutiny where required. We remain committed to ensuring that complaints are treated as a valuable source of feedback and that the Council uses them to improve services for tenants and leaseholders.