



Governing Body Response to the Annual Housing Complaints and Service Improvement Report 2025/26

Since May 2026, Councillor Nick Denys has been the Member Responsible for Complaints, following his appointment as Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Property.

I have reviewed the Annual Housing Complaints and Service Improvement Report for 2025/26 and the accompanying self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. I am pleased to see the continued development of the Council's approach to complaints and the increasing focus on using complaints to identify where services need to improve.

There are some encouraging signs in this year's performance. Complaints about Housing Repairs and Maintenance have reduced at both Stage 1 and Stage 2, with Stage 2 complaints falling by 26.5%. This is a positive indication that the work being undertaken in repairs, including stronger escalation arrangements, contractor monitoring and learning from complaints, is beginning to have an impact.

However, the overall increase in complaints and the significant rise in complaints relating to Tenancy Management and Adaptations are areas that cannot be overlooked. I am particularly concerned about the increase in complaints progressing to Stage 2 in these services and the evidence that residents are not always receiving the response or resolution they should expect at the first stage. This area will be a matter of focus for officers over the next year.

The report also reinforces something we continue to hear from residents: **good communication matters**. Several complaints could have been avoided, or prevented from escalating, if residents had received clearer information, regular updates and a better explanation of what was happening. I welcome the steps already taken to improve communication and accessibility, including the Tenancy Management Duty Line and greater emphasis on keeping residents informed.

There is also important learning from the Housing Ombudsman's findings during the year, particularly around repairs, damp and mould, record keeping, communication and the way vulnerability is considered. These findings need to translate into practical improvements and not simply be recorded as individual cases. The progress made in developing quarterly reporting and sharing complaints learning with tenants is welcome, and I will continue to use my role as Member

Responsible for Complaints (MRC) to ensure that this learning is followed through.

Looking ahead to 2026/27, my focus will be on consistency, responsiveness and learning. We need to maintain the improvements made in repairs, address the emerging pressures in Tenancy Management and Adaptations, improve the timeliness of complaint responses and ensure that learning from complaints is properly recorded and acted upon. The report identifies improving the recording of learning on the internal complaints system JADU as a particular area for development, and I will expect to see progress in this during the coming year.

Complaints are an important source of information about our tenants' experience of the Council's landlord service. My role as MRC is to make sure that we listen to that feedback, challenge where performance is not good enough and, most importantly, see evidence that complaints are leading to better services for residents.

Cllr Nick Denys

Member Responsible for Complaints

Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing & Property