

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Housing Review Board held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton, EX14 1EJ on 30 April 2026

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.02 pm

100 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2026 were agreed.

101 Apologies

In the absence of the Chair who had given her apologies, the Vice Chair Simon Smith was in the Chair and it was agreed that Councillor Chris Burhop would act as Vice Chair for the meeting.

102 Declarations of interest

Declarations of interest.

Councillor Aurora Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, EDDC housing tenant.

Declarations of interest.

Councillor Brian Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, EDDC housing tenant.

Declarations of interest.

Councillor Steve Gazzard, Affects Non-registerable Interest, EDDC housing tenant.

103 Public speaking

There was no public speaking.

104 Matters of urgency

There were none.

105 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no confidential/exempt items.

106 Forward plan

The Assistant Director – Housing Regulated Services presented the forward plan and advised members that the forward plan acted as a reminder of agenda items to come forward to future meetings. Meeting dates for the forthcoming civic year had been populated on the forward plan.

The Board noted that the forward plan had been derived from previous meetings and requests, as well as the housing service plan. Service Managers were currently reviewing realistic time frames against each topic. The Assistant Director explained that

a couple of the policies that had been due to be presented to the Board that day had been delayed due to the consultation process.

Members were reminded that they could add further reports and topics for discussion to the next forward plan by either informing the Assistant Director or the Democratic Services Officer.

In response to a question about the review and replacement of Home Safeguard equipment within housing stock, officers advised that an update would be brought to a future Board meeting.

RESOLVED: to note the Housing Review Board forward plan.

107 **Finance report**

The accountant's report gave the Housing Review Board an initial draft summary of the Council's overall financial position for 2025/26 for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and associated capital programmes. A final report would be presented to the HRB, Cabinet and Council and any material differences to the figures would be highlighted and explained.

Current monitoring indicated that:

- The Housing Revenue Account balance was projected to be below budget with a considerable capital contribution to revenue in year.
- The HRA budget strategy followed the sustainability plan which required the restoration of the HRA balance to £3.1m in £250k annual increments. This was set to be achieved, with the estimated surplus on account at £1.9m. A revenue contribution to capital would be made to reduce the annual borrowing requirement and the resultant interest burden on revenue in each year going forward.
- Capital in the housing workstreams was significantly below budget expectations resulting in a large amount of slippage into 2026/27.

The accountant explained that the budget was set on the sustainability plan as at the time the results of the stock condition survey and subsequent asset management plan were not available.

The revenue and capital split across the property & asset related work streams had been reviewed in year and virements were made, primarily moving budget and expenditure from revenue and into capital, with a relatively immaterial amount of budget reducing supplementary estimates. Training was being undertaken with the team on what was deemed as revenue and capital. The accountant explained to the Board that council accounting was different to commercial accounting.

Members sought reassurance that the service was now fully staffed and the capacity was there to spend the capital budget going forward. The Director – Housing & Health confirmed that management positions were in place but more surveyors were needed and a structure was being put to ELT to resource this effectively. Asset management was critical to the capital budget and it was felt that it was preferable to carry money forward to the next financial year as opposed to spending it for the sake of it. The Council now had to borrow when it spent on capital so it was being more cautious when it came to spending and borrowing.

RESOLVED: that the initial variances identified in the revenue and capital monitoring process be noted.

108 **Housing complaints - performance report 2025-26 (Q4)**

The Housing Performance Lead's report provided the Board with details on housing related complaints performance, and details of the ongoing complaints improvement action plan and the breakdown of departments complaints were related to. The Board noted that there had been clear improvement in response times during quarter 4, with both stage one and two complaints falling into target timescales. This followed the recruitment and induction of several surveyor employees and the imbedding of new practices during quarters 3 and 4.

The Board noted the theme for escalation of complaints to stage two during quarter 4:

1. Lack of works being completed at stage one.
2. Requests for an increase in compensation.
3. Dissatisfaction with responses for requests for upgrades to kitchens, bathrooms and windows.

In order to remedy this trend in escalations to stage two complaints, during Q4, a new process was implemented where following a surveyor visit to assess repairs, the customer was issued with a written report within three days outlining what works would be completed and the surveyor would follow the repairs through to post inspection of the works. In addition, a new compensation framework had been developed to ensure compensation was consistent, fair and in line with Housing Ombudsman guidance.

The Housing Performance Lead explained to the Board that a newly created customer complaints survey was due to be presented to the Tenant Scrutiny Panel for their feedback on the questions and tone of language, before being sent for ELT approval. In addition to the survey a tracker had also been created which would support the monitoring of customer satisfaction, monitoring areas for improvement and those the service was doing well in. This would also be presented to the Scrutiny Panel for their feedback and suggestions.

The Housing Performance Lead's report also detailed Housing Ombudsman complaints in 2025/26 and explained that due to high demand and increased caseloads, the Ombudsman was dealing with significant backlogs. As a result of this, many of the cases that were currently being determined related back to complaints originating in 2023. Therefore, the themes and issues currently being determined were historical and, in many cases, had already been identified and addressed in the time that had passed. It was noted that during 2025/26 43 Ombudsman cases were received. During 2025/26 the total compensation awarded by the Housing Ombudsman was £10,790. Of the cases determined in 2025/26:

- 2 counts of severe maladministration.
- 10 counts of maladministration.
- 6 counts of service failure.
- 2 counts of no maladministration.

The themes of these cases were contained in the report as well as an explanation of actions taken following a Housing Ombudsman determination.

The Housing Performance Lead's report also outlined several complex cases that were being dealt with. Finally, the report stated that 13 compliments had been recorded during quarter 4.

A request was made for a graphical trend of complaints so that the Board could chart progress. Comparative and benchmarking data would be presented to the Board in future.

RESOLVED: that the Housing Review Board note the content of the report outlining the quarter 4 performance for housing related complaints.

109 **Tenancy services - performance report 2025-26 (Q4)**

The Housing Review Board were presented with key performance indicators (KPIs) for quarter 4 of 2025/26 for tenancy services. The Tenancy Services Manager (Regulated Services) gave a presentation which summarised performance actions being taken to improve performance in rentals, estate management and sheltered housing functions within tenancy services.

100.43% of rent was collected in quarter 4, above the target of 98%. The rental collection figure was over 100% as rent was also collected for former tenancies, therefore counting towards income for that period. Rent arrears as a percentage of annual rent debt was 1.17%, the target was 2.38%. The rentals team demonstrated high performance with low tenant rent arrears and were within the top 25% of landlords nationally and the Tenancy Services Manager congratulated the Rental Manager and her team.

There were 38 open Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) cases that the estates team were currently dealing with, with 11 reported in quarter 4. This involvement could range from monitoring cases through to preparing court paperwork to commence legal proceedings. Although eviction was a last resort, there had been 5 evictions in quarter 4; two were for rent arrears, two for trespass and one eviction from temporary accommodation.

100% of estate inspections had been completed in the six-month cycle.

Tenancy visits were a joint objective for the Estate Management and Sheltered Housing. The purpose of the visits was to not only offer support to the tenant but to also identify any tenancy management issues, wellbeing/safeguarding concerns, and issues of disrepair. Any changes to the tenant's situation were recorded on EDDC systems. 27.44% of general purpose tenancies were visited in 2025/26. This was below the target of 33% but two officers had been absent for a quarter of the year. The Tenancy Services Manager reported that 95.4% of sheltered tenancies had been visited in 2025/26. The remaining 4.6% sheltered tenancies had not been visited due to those opting out of support, access issues and tenants being in respite care.

18 new tenant visits had been completed within target (95%), with 0 new tenant visits currently outstanding. Tenant visits within the first 10 weeks of tenancy start date was set so that any issues with the tenant could be addressed at an early stage and would enable tenancy sustainment and identify social housing fraud.

The Tenancy Services Manager outlined the work of the Communities Team, which included:

- Getting to know you survey.
- Roaming hubs.
- Community hubs.
- Resident Connect Festival.

It was noted that there had been nine households (sheltered and general needs) decanted to temporary accommodation, primarily due to the condition of their property. Six EDDC properties were being used as decant accommodation, thereby reducing the

need to use costly temporary accommodation. Feedback from the tenants that had been decanted was positive.

The Director – Housing and Health thanked the Tenancy Services Manager and his team for the incredible service turnaround and commended the team for all their hard work.

RESOLVED: that the housing performance report – tenancy services quarter 4 (2025/26) is noted.

110 **Property & Assets performance report 2025-26 (Q4)**

The Corporate Lead for Property and Assets report outlined the property and assets element of the housing service's performance through quarter 4 of 2025/26. The report covered the repairs, compliance and planned works functions within property and assets. Regular performance reporting to the Housing Review Board ensured that oversight was maintained and enabled timely scrutiny and challenge, as expected under the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards.

Tenant satisfaction measures in repairs in maintenance continued to increase as a result of the repairs improvement plan and its delivery.

There was focus on customer engagement with work continuing with the Repairs and Maintenance Scrutiny Group, meet the contractor events, repairs updates to the Complaints Scrutiny Group, tenant engagement with new kitchen designs and a mapping workshop to consider the repairs customer journey.

Another area of focus had been on building capability for the surveyor capacity. This involved:

- Patched based working so that maintenance surveyors had operational areas.
- Fully equipping the surveyors to properly identify issues in properties.
- Coaching and training, internally and externally.
- Issuing survey summary reports to customers to help tenants understand what was going on, why the works were taking place and when they could expect that to happen.

Good progress continued to be made in the introduction of the performance framework across property and assets. The framework would provide consistent and robust performance reporting to the Regulator for Social Housing and other stakeholders, while clearly defining accountability for the delivery of the property and asset service areas. As the framework became embedded as business as usual, it was anticipated that additional improvement opportunities would be identified and addressed.

Areas where the service was experiencing challenges were:

- Disrepair cases.
- Property and asset related complaints.
- Voids performance.
- A slight improvement in the percentage of repairs completed within target. A winter plan would be put in place for 2026/27 to deal with increased demand.

In terms of void performance the void lifecycle process was mapped out and a new classification framework established. The status of all 170 vacant properties at that time were reviewed and categorised. There had also been a review of resources in terms of void surveying roles, planned works capability and asset planner capability. The Corporate Lead for Property and Assets outlined future actions to the Board.

Internal compliance audits had taken place and actions were already being delivered. Compliance was strong, with most areas consistently achieving 100% or improving compared to the previous month's position. Electrical compliance continued to improve with a focus on obtaining access to non-compliant properties. The deterioration in gas compliance was due to delays with the supplier not booking in the tests on time. The issue had been raised with the supplier and was being resolved as per the contract. There were new compliance contracts for fire, radon and electrical, with contracts being developed for legionella and fire risk assessments. The application of the performance framework had increased compliance assurance. An internal promotion had strengthened the compliance function, with further recruitment underway for compliance and repairs administrator roles. All other positions within property and assets were currently filled.

The Corporate Lead Property and Assets reported that the demand for adaptations was increasing, with a diverse range of requests; more for minor works rather than major works. It was noted that the Council had to self-fund adaptations and requests were likely to increase further with Awaab's law. Awaab's law was coming out in a phased approach with tough timeframes.

The Corporate Lead Property and Assets explained that planned works took time. The planned works team had over 30 live projects at varying stages and examples of these were shown to the Board. Consideration was being given to the recruitment of an additional Planned Works Surveyor to process the increasing number of referrals into the programme of works.

In response to a question about kitchen and bathroom replacements the Corporate Lead Property and Assets replied that in terms of kitchen replacements there had been 81 undertaken in 2024/25, and three in 2025/26. He gave context to this in terms of the contract which was not continued with and resources used to resolve this. 100 kitchen replacements were planned for 2026/27. The bathroom replacement and decarbonisation programmes demonstrated a similar theme. Planned works figures would be provided in future reports but did not always reflect the responsive repairs and the overall picture. The Director – Housing and Health reported that the turnaround in the programme was incredible and that it was not a quick process.

A request was made for ward members to be notified of void properties in their area. Officers explained that this was not practical operationally. Challenges already existed in the void process and officers did not want to complicate the administrative process anymore. Members asked for a simplified report relating to voids. The Board were advised that a lunchtime learning session on voids and the disposals was planned for May. It was acknowledged that long term voids had an impact on the figures and the team were congratulated on a transformational job over the last 12 months.

RESOLVED: that the housing performance report – property and assets, quarter 4 2025/26 is noted.

111 **Housing Review Board annual report 2025-26**

The Chair presented the annual report of the Housing Review Board which summarised and highlighted the diverse range of issues covered by the Board over the year. The report gave an overview of the achievements of the Board and celebrated the progress that had been made. The Chair thanked all those involved with housing and the Housing

Review Board for their outstanding work and dedication, and huge efforts in improving the service.

RECOMMENDED: that Cabinet and Council note the work that the Housing Review Board has undertaken during the 2025-26 civic year.

Attendance List

Board members present:

Sid Forde, Tenant
Wang Tian, Independent Community Representative
Councillor Christopher Burhop
Councillor Melanie Martin
Councillor Simon Smith (Vice-Chair)
Sara Clarke, Independent Community Representative
Rob Robinson, Tenants
Councillor Tim Dumper
Councillor Helen Parr
Councillor Roy Collins
Councillor Mike Goodman

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

A Bailey
B Bailey
P Arnott
I Barlow
S Gazzard
D Ledger
S Westerman

Officers in attendance:

Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer
Darren Hicks, Tenancy Services Manager (Regulated Services)
Andrew King, Assistant Director for Housing (Regulated Services)
Nathan Muggeridge, Corporate Lead for Housing Property and Assets
Liam Reading, Assistant Director - Housing Programmes, Investment and Development
Giles Salter, Solicitor
Catrin Stark, Director of Housing and Health
Tanya Traylen, Housing Performance Lead

Councillor apologies:

Rosemary Dale, Tenant
Rachel Browne, Tenant
Councillor Sarah Chamberlain
Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive

Chair

Date: