

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Housing Review Board held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton, EX14 1EJ on 13 November 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.35 pm

70 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2025 were agreed.

71 Declarations of interest

72 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

73 Matters of urgency

There were none.

74 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There was one confidential/exempt item.

75 Housing Review Board 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.

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.

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.

RESOLVED:

To note the Housing Review Board forward plan.

76 Staffing and recruitment update

The Assistant Director – Housing (Regulated Services)'s report provided the Board with key staffing updates on the housing service. It was suggested that now that recruitment to the key and strategic management roles within the service were completed, the original requirements for the staffing and recruitment update report were fulfilled and the report was no longer required. All day-to-day operational and business as usual with recruitment and staffing performance would continue to go forward to the Personnel Committee.

RESOLVED:

1. that the Housing Review Board note the contents of the report.
2. that the Housing Review Board agree that the regular staffing and recruitment report is not longer required following the completion of recruitment to the key management roles across the Housing Service.

77 Finance report

The Finance Manager's report provided the Board with a summary of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) financial position for quarter 2 2025/26. The figures indicated that the HRA was trending materially in line with the budget profile up to this point in the financial year, and that there was therefore no material revenue items to bring to the attention of members. Housing capital spend was slowly increasing as the procurement of contracts and assessment of required major works got underway, but it was likely to remain under budget, with reduced borrowing requirements.

RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET:

That the Housing Review Board recommend that Cabinet note the year-to-date Housing Revenue Account position to quarter 2 2025/26.

78 Performance report for Quarter 2 2025/26 - Tenancy Services

The Housing Review Board were presented with key performance indicators (KPIs) for quarter 2 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.

The Board highlighted the need to understand implications around rent recover, rent arrears and bad debt and requested that a report be presented to the next Board meeting and includes a workshop session with the Board.

RESOLVED:

That the Housing Performance Report – Tenancy Services Quarter 2 (2025/2026) is noted.

79 Performance report for Quarter 2 2025/26 - Property and Assets

The Housing Review Board were presented with key performance indicators (KPIs) for quarter 2 of 2025/26 for property and assets. The Corporate Lead for Property and Assets gave a presentation which summarised performance actions being taken to improve performance in repairs, compliance and planned works functions within property and assets.

The Board noted that regular performance reporting to the Board ensured oversight was maintained and enabled timely scrutiny and challenge, as expected under the regulatory framework of the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards.

Quarter 2 performance headlines were:

- Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) for repairs performance had improved by an average of 15% compared to the same period last year. An action plan had been developed to further improve in areas relating to Property and Assets' service to customers.
- Awaab's Law – a programme of works was currently being delivered in preparation for the implementation of Awaab's Law.
- Compliance – there was one outstanding gas safety check at Millwey Community Centre and due to the property being structurally unsafe and closed to the public the gas supply was due to be capped on 17 October, whilst further options for the centre were investigated.
- Lifts – whilst all lifts were compliant coastal conditions were causing frequent breakdowns, an advanced maintenance trial was underway to remedy this situation.

RESOLVED:

That the Housing Performance Report – Property & Assets for Quarter 2 (2025/2026) is noted.

80 **Housing Complaints Performance Report - Quarter 2 2025/26**

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.

The Board noted that there had been a continued trend of improvement in response times throughout the year, with the average number of days for stage 1 complaints at (target of 10), and stage 2 complaints at 20 days (target of 20 days). The approach to complaint handling was continuously being reviewed. There had been various procedural and resourcing changes to support improvement, which included weekly complaints meetings, the introduction of a Housing Performance Lead and the increase of resource in the Property and Assets team, which supported in investigating and responding to repairs related complaints in a timely way.

The Housing Performance Lead reported that 69.9% of complaints received at the end of quarter 2 related to the responsive repairs and voids service. Of these, the most prevalent cited reason was related to the failure to book works in. 14.8% of complaints related to the estate management department, 13 of these complaints related to Anti-Social Behaviour.

An operational action plan for the continued improvement of complaints handling and performance was created in the last quarter of 2024/25 – 'the Housing Service Action Plan for Improving Complaints Response and Process' – and included with the agenda papers. It was a working operational document that would continue to be expanded upon and tracked by the Housing Performance Lead and the Assistant Director for Housing (Regulatory Services).

RESOLVED: that the Housing Review Board note the content of the report.

81 **Domestic Abuse Policy**

The Housing Review Board considered a report which presented an updated Domestic Abuse Policy 2024-27 for East Devon District Council's Housing Service. The policy outlined the Council's commitment to supporting survivors of domestic abuse, including tenants, leaseholders and members of the public accessing housing services.

The Board noted that the policy applied to all Council staff, contractors and agents and ensured compliance with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The policy reflected current legislation, best practice standards, and incorporated trauma-informed approaches to ensure safety, inclusivity, and effective support. The policy strengthened the Council's approach to safeguarding, early intervention and partnership working.

The policy would be reviewed every three years or in response to changes in legislation or service needs. Staff would receive appropriate training, and feedback from survivors would be actively sought to inform service improvements. Case reviews would be conducted regularly to ensure learning and accountability.

RESOLVED:

1. that the Board approves the updated Domestic Abuse Policy 2024-27.
2. that Board endorses the launch of the Detect and Protect service to enable tenant safety.
3. that Board supports the introduction of trained generic housing officers to provide specialists support.

82 **Electrical Policy**

The Corporate Lead for Property and Assets report presented the updated Electrical Safety Policy for housing, which outlined East Devon District Council's approach to ensuring electrical safety across its housing stock.

The Board noted that the policy had been revised in response to changes to the Electrical Safety Standards in Private Rented Sector Regulation, announced by the Government in June 2025. The changes, and associated challenge for the service included the requirement for Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICRs) completed for all electrical installations every five years, to tenants receiving copies of EICRs within 28 days of the inspection being completed.

The Board acknowledged that changes to the updated policy were not anticipated to have a significant impact on services to tenants as the existing delivery had been aligned with best practice.

RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET:

1. that Cabinet approve the proposed Electrical Safety Policy.
2. that delegated authority is given to the Assistant Director for Housing (Regulatory Services) to make minor changes to the policy.

83 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED: that under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, of the description set out in the agenda is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing these items in private session (Part B).

84 **Sheltered Housing Support Services**

The Board received a report regarding sheltered housing charges, as set out in the exempt report.

The Board were advised that any members who were in sheltered housing and paying for services should declare a DPI and leave the meeting.

The Board recognised the implications on tenants from the increased charges and noted that external legal advice was being sought in regard to the introduction of these charges. The Board supported the increases subject to the legal advice and agreed to delegate authority to the Director for Housing & Health in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities to introduce the charges from 1 April 2026.

RECOMMENDED:

That delegated authority is given to the Director for Housing & Health, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities, subject to external legal advice, to introduce the charges to sheltered housing tenants, as set out in the exempt report from 1 April 2026.

Attendance List

Board members present:

Wang Tian, Independent Community Representative
Rosemary Dale, Tenant
Rachel Browne, Tenant
Councillor Aurora Bailey
Councillor Christopher Burhop
Councillor Sarah Chamberlain (Chair)
Councillor Simon Smith (Vice-Chair)
Sara Clarke, Independent Community Representative
Rob Robinson, Tenants
Councillor Tim Dumper
Councillor Helen Parr
Sid Forde, Tenant

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

Officers in attendance:

Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive
Darren Hicks, Tenancy Services Manager (Regulated Services)
Andrew King, Assistant Director for Housing (Regulated Services)
Tim Laurence-Othen, Housing Projects Officer
Rebecca Meakin, Communities Team Leader
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
John Symes, Finance Manager
Tanya Traylen, Housing Performance Lead

Councillor apologies:

Councillor Melanie Martin
Councillor Kim Bloxham

Chairman

Date: