Tendring
District Council



ANNUAL HOUSING IMPROVEMENT, PERFORMANCE & ASSURANCE REPORT

2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 | *Executive Summary*

02 | *What this means for our tenants (within the Executive Summary)*

03 | *Portfolio Holder Foreword*

04 | *Key Messages and Assurance Position*

05 | *Strategic Context*

06 | *Governance, Assurance & Tenant Influence*

07 | *Progress Against the Housing Improvement Plan (HIP)*

08 | *Key Service Improvement Themes*

09 | *Tenancy, Sustainment & Support*

10 | *Housing Need, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping*

11 | *Performance, Complaints and Service Improvement*

12 | *Workforce, Capacity and Competence*

13 | *Financial Position and Resources*

14 | *Risk Management and Assurance*

15 | *Related Housing Assurance and Performance Documents*

16 | *Appendices*

17 | *Supplementary section: Tendring's socio-economic context, building trust and strengthening tenant engagement – for discussion with teams*

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report explains how the Council's housing services performed and improved during 2025/26. It covers progress against the Housing Improvement Plan (HIP), key service priorities and the work under way to ensure full compliance with Social Housing's Consumer Standards.

During the year, the Council strengthened oversight of housing services, improved the way performance and risks are checked, gave tenants more opportunities to influence decisions and continued to improve compliance with the Consumer Standards.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Completion of a comprehensive Consumer Standards self-assessment and implementation of a three-year Housing Improvement Plan.
- Strengthening governance and assurance through the Housing Improvement Board, enhanced performance reporting and Internal Audit and externally commissioned reviews.
- Expansion of tenant engagement, influence and scrutiny through the Tenant Panel, Reading Group, Diverse Needs Group, Service Assessors and wider engagement activity.
- Development of an Understanding Diverse Needs Framework and supporting action plan, helping improve understanding of tenant needs, equality data and service accessibility.
- Progression of workforce development and organisational readiness to support implementation of the Competence and Conduct Standard.
- Introduction of new and revised policies, action plans and position statements.

Where further improvement is needed:



Repairs satisfaction



Complaint handling



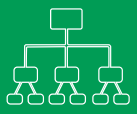
Data quality and analysis



Tenant data and equality analysis



IT and data systems



Fully embedding the revised Housing Service structure

A NOTE ON IT AND DATA SYSTEMS:

Two separate programmes are planned. The first will introduce a system for monitoring housing safety and compliance. The second will review and introduce a wider Housing Management System or platform. Its intended benefits—more reliable information and better-coordinated services—have therefore not yet been achieved.

The Council also initiated an evidence-led strategy for the future delivery of HRA responsive repairs and maintenance.

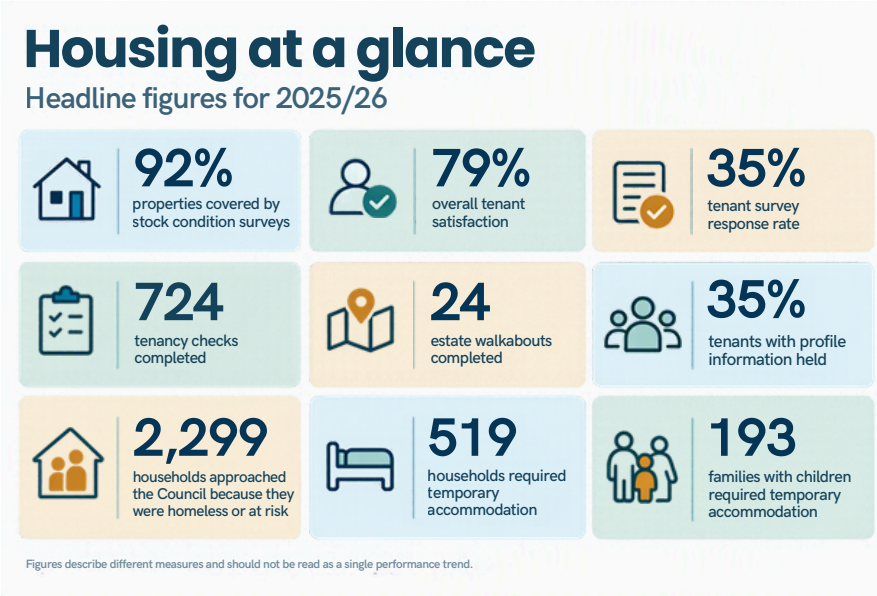
OVERALL ASSESSMENT:

The Housing Service built stronger foundations for compliance and improvement during 2025/26. However, more work is needed before these changes consistently result in a better day-to-day service for every tenant.

PRIORITIES FOR 2026/27

1. Strengthen data and assurance
2. Introduce a housing safety and compliance system
3. Improve tenant satisfaction
4. Complete the service restructure
5. Prepare for the Competence and Conduct Standard
6. Continue delivering the Housing Improvement Plan & Delivery

WHAT STILL NEEDS TO IMPROVE:



Tenants will judge progress by their everyday experience—whether repairs are completed properly, communication is clear, concerns are resolved and support is available. Repairs satisfaction, complaints handling and communication remain priorities. Assurance for the Safety & Quality Standard is still developing. The activity in this report does not yet prove that repairs are quicker, repeat failures have fallen or fewer tenancies have been lost. Further performance results and tenant feedback will be needed.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR OUR TENANTS

The aim of this work is simple: to improve tenants' homes, neighbourhoods and everyday experience of Council services. The main intended benefits are a stronger tenant voice, better information about the condition of homes, clearer and more accessible communication, and earlier support when people need it.

Tenants have contributed to policy reviews, service standards, procurement and improvement priorities through the Tenant Panel and wider involvement arrangements. The completion of 724 tenancy checks and 24 estate walkabouts has provided further opportunities to raise concerns directly and identify where action or support is needed. Accessible formats, translation and interpretation arrangements are helping tenants obtain information and participate in ways that meet their needs.

Stock condition surveys covering 92% of properties provide a stronger basis for identifying maintenance requirements and directing future investment towards evidenced needs and risks. Improved tenancy information, early intervention and partnership working support more targeted assistance to help tenants remain in their homes. Better neighbourhood information also supports coordinated responses to local concerns.

2 PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOREWORD



I am pleased to present this report on the progress made during 2025/26 to provide safe, good-quality housing services that focus on tenants' needs.

This has been a year of significant change. The Housing Service has responded to new regulatory expectations while keeping tenants at the centre of its work. We have strengthened oversight, improved the way we check performance and risk, expanded opportunities for tenants to influence decisions and set out a clear programme of improvement through the Housing Improvement Plan.

One of the areas I am most proud of is the progress made in strengthening tenant engagement and influence. Through the Tenant Panel, specialist scrutiny groups, Reading Group, Diverse Needs Group, Service Assessors and wider engagement activity, more tenants are helping to shape decisions and influence service improvements. We have also continued to improve our understanding of tenants' diverse needs, helping us ensure services are fair, accessible and responsive to the communities we serve.

The report sets out the progress made and is open about the areas that still need attention, particularly repairs satisfaction, complaints handling, data quality and new housing systems.

In 2026/27, we will continue to meet the Consumer Standards, improve performance and focus on better outcomes for tenants. This includes embedding the new Housing Service structure, progressing the two housing system programmes, improving satisfaction and ensuring tenants' unfiltered views continue to shape services.

There is more to do, but the work completed during 2025/26 provides a stronger foundation for the next stage of improvement.

I would like to thank tenants, Members, staff and partners for their continued support and contribution to this very important work.

Councillor Andy Baker - Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning

3 KEY MESSAGES AND ASSURANCE POSITION

OVERALL POSITION:

The Council strengthened housing governance, assurance and tenant influence during 2025/26. The Executive Summary provides the headline achievements, challenges and 2026/27 priorities; the sections that follow set out the supporting evidence, assurance positions and planned actions.

4 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

4.1 NATIONAL & REGULATORY CONTEXT

The Consumer Standards provide the framework against which social landlords are assessed and form the basis of the Council's Housing Improvement Plan and assurance arrangements.

The five Consumer Standards are:

1. **Safety & Quality –** Safe, well-maintained homes.
2. **Transparency, Influence & Accountability –** Fair treatment and tenant influence.
3. **Neighbourhood & Community –** Safe and well-managed neighbourhoods.
4. **Tenancy –** Effective tenancy management and sustainment.
5. **Competence & Conduct –** Skilled and professional housing services.

During 2025/26, the Council has continued to strengthen compliance through delivery of the Housing Improvement Plan, enhanced governance and assurance arrangements, improved performance monitoring and increased opportunities for tenant influence and scrutiny.

4.2 LOCAL STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Housing Improvement Plan sits alongside the Council's Housing Strategy and wider corporate priorities and provides the framework for driving improvement across housing services.

During the reporting period, the Housing Service has focused on service improvement, governance and assurance, tenant influence, understanding diverse needs, workforce readiness and implementation of key transformation programmes.

Together, these activities support the Council's ambition to deliver safe homes, effective services, strong communities and positive outcomes for tenants whilst maintaining compliance with the Consumer Standards.



5 GOVERNANCE, ASSURANCE & TENANT INFLUENCE

5.1 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Strong governance arrangements provide oversight of the Housing Improvement Plan, service performance and compliance with the Consumer Standards.

The Housing Improvement Board provides strategic oversight of improvement activity, risk, performance and regulatory compliance. The Board receives regular updates on Housing Improvement Plan delivery, consumer regulation, performance trends, complaints learning and emerging risks, enabling timely challenge and intervention where required.

Additional oversight is provided through Cabinet, governance and scrutiny arrangements, Internal Audit, externally commissioned reviews and performance reporting to senior leadership teams.

Together, these arrangements support effective monitoring of performance, risk and improvement activity, whilst helping ensure the Council remains prepared for regulatory inspection and ongoing compliance requirements.

5.2 ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

The Council has continued to strengthen its assurance framework during 2025/26 to provide greater confidence regarding compliance, performance and service improvement.
Key sources of assurance include:



The Housing Service has contracted with Housemark to strengthen comparative performance analysis and provide an additional source of external assurance and challenge.

During 2025/26, focus has been placed on strengthening data quality, assurance reporting and policy governance. A significant programme of policy and strategy review has supported compliance with the Consumer Standards and helped ensure housing policies remain aligned with legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements.

5.3 DATA QUALITY, VALIDATION AND ASSURANCE

Overview:
Improving the quality, accuracy and reliability of housing data has been a significant area of focus throughout 2025/26. Reliable data is fundamental to effective service delivery, regulatory compliance, performance management and informed decision-making.

Progress During 2025/26:

- Continued implementation of the Data Quality Framework.
- Development of validation and assurance processes.
- Improved quality assurance arrangements for key housing datasets.
- Enhanced oversight of performance and compliance information.
- Increased focus on tenant profiling and equality data.
- Identification and resolution of data quality issues through ongoing validation activity.



Assurance and Improvement

High-quality data is critical to effective service delivery, regulatory compliance and understanding outcomes for tenants. Improved validation and assurance arrangements are increasing confidence in performance reporting, customer insight, compliance information and service planning. Data quality remains a key priority within the Housing Improvement Plan and will continue to support regulatory readiness and implementation of the new housing management system.

Key priorities for 2026/27

- Continue implementation of the Data Quality Framework.
- Improve data completeness, accuracy and consistency.
- Support implementation of the new housing management system.
- Improve tenant profiling, equality information and performance reporting.

5.4 TENANT INFLUENCE

Tenant insight forms part of the assurance framework and is considered alongside performance, complaints and regulatory evidence. Section 7.1 explains the involvement routes, examples of influence and areas where clearer evidence of outcomes is still needed.

6 PROGRESS AGAINST THE HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PLAN (HIP)

6.1 HIP DELIVERY OVERVIEW

The Housing Improvement Plan brings together the actions needed to strengthen compliance, performance and tenant outcomes. The assurance summary below records progress and the remaining priorities for each Consumer Standard.

6.2 CONSUMER STANDARDS – ASSURANCE SUMMARY

The table below summarises assurance positions, key progress achieved during 2025/26 and priorities for 2026/27 across each Consumer Standard.

Consumer Standard	Assurance Position	Key Progress During 2025/26	Key Priorities for 2026/27
Safety & Quality	Developing Assurance	Strengthened compliance governance, specialist compliance roles in structure, stock condition intelligence improved through a large-scale stock condition survey (92% of properties) and enhanced contractor performance monitoring introduced.	Whilst Safety & Quality remains a significant area of focus, the Housing Improvement Plan includes a comprehensive programme of activity to strengthen data quality, compliance assurance, stock intelligence and long-term asset management.
Transparency, Influence & Accountability	Moderate to High	Tenant scrutiny expanded through the Tenant Panel, Reading Group, Diverse Needs Group and Service Assessors; governance and tenant engagement strengthened.	Broaden representation, strengthen equality analysis and demonstrate impact of tenant feedback.
Neighbourhood & Community	Moderate to High	Enhanced neighbourhood insight, stronger partnership working and improved responses to ASB, Domestic Abuse and community safety issues.	Strengthen neighbourhood intelligence, equality analysis and outcome monitoring.
Tenancy	Moderate	Improved tenancy sustainment activity, tenancy checks, enhanced understanding of tenant needs and strengthened support arrangements.	Deliver tenancy agreement review, strengthen tenancy sustainment toolkit and improve analysis of outcomes across tenant groups.
Competence & Conduct	Developing Assurance	Workforce planning, mandatory training programme, specialist recruitment and transition planning completed.	Implement qualification pathways, strengthen workforce capacity and embed competence assurance arrangements.

CROSS-CUTTING ASSURANCE THEMES

Corporate Governance, Assurance & Safeguarding - Moderate Assurance

Strengthened governance arrangements, Housing Improvement Board oversight, Internal Audit assurance and enhanced performance monitoring have increased confidence in the Council's ability to monitor compliance, manage risk and deliver continuous improvement. Priorities for 2026/27 include continued development of assurance frameworks, improved data quality and implementation of the new housing management system.

Difference made for tenants:

The Housing Improvement Plan and Delivery brings improvement activity into a single programme, helping keep attention on the condition of homes, service quality and tenants' priorities. Stock condition surveys covering 92% of properties strengthen the evidence for maintenance and investment decisions, but do not by themselves demonstrate that repairs are quicker or homes are safer. Safety & Quality assurance remains developing.

7 KEY SERVICE IMPROVEMENT THEMES

7.1 TENANT INVOLVEMENT AND INFLUENCE

Overview

Tenant involvement and influence remains a key source of assurance, challenge and service improvement. Opportunities for tenants to influence decision-making, scrutinise performance and contribute to service improvement have expanded during 2025/26. Tenant feedback, the unfiltered voice and lived experience continue to inform priorities, performance monitoring and service improvement.

TENANT PANEL, SUBGROUPS AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Tenant Panel is the Council's principal tenant scrutiny body. Wider involvement routes include specialist scrutiny groups, the Reading Group, Diverse Needs Group, Service Assessors, estate walkabouts, sheltered housing meetings and engagement events, allowing a broader range of tenants to influence decisions and service improvement.

724 Tenancy Checks

24 Estate walkabouts

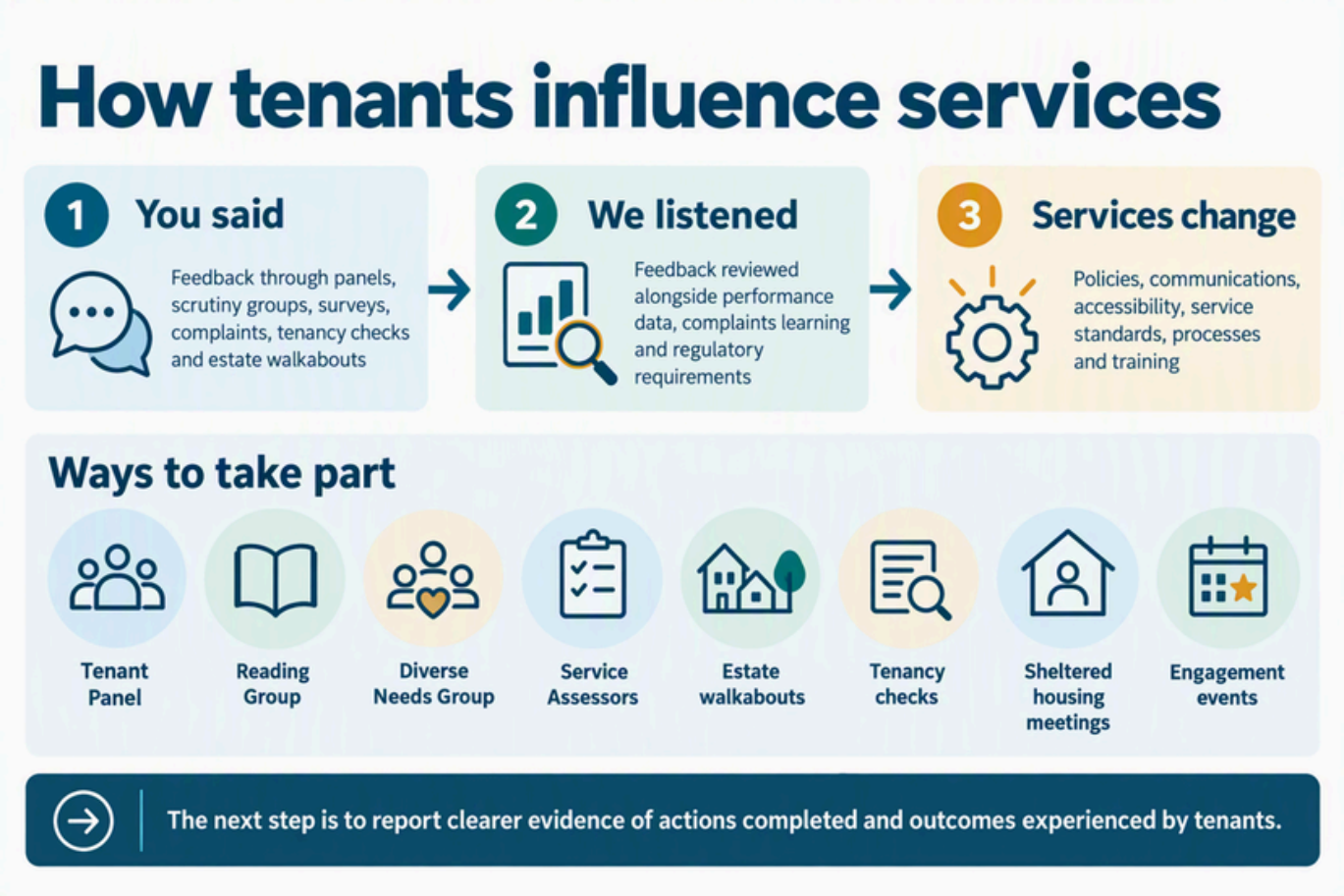
During the year, the Housing Service completed 724 tenancy checks and 24 estate walkabouts, providing valuable opportunities to gather tenant feedback and identify improvement priorities.





Feedback:

Feedback gathered through tenancy checks, estate walkabouts, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), complaints and engagement activity continues to inform service planning and Housing Improvement Plan priorities.



The Council has continued to strengthen its approach to demonstrating how tenant feedback influences decisions and service improvements. Examples include:

- Development of the Understanding Diverse Needs Framework and supporting action plan.
- Improvements to tenant communications and accessibility arrangements.
- Service improvements arising from complaints learning and TSM feedback.
- Ongoing review of policies, strategies and tenant-facing documents through tenant involvement mechanisms.



REPRESENTATION, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY

A significant focus during the year has been improving representation and ensuring tenant involvement opportunities are accessible and inclusive. Emphasis has been placed on engaging tenants with diverse needs and protected characteristics through targeted engagement, accessible communication, translation services, alternative formats and the establishment of the Diverse Needs Group.

Tenant profiling, equality information and engagement feedback are increasingly being used to identify under-represented groups and reduce barriers to participation.

IMPACT OF TENANT INFLUENCE

Tenant influence is increasingly embedded within housing governance and service improvement arrangements. During the year, tenants have contributed to policy reviews, performance scrutiny, complaints learning, service standards, procurement activity and development of key improvement plans and customer surveys. Feedback from tenants has also helped shape priorities relating to repairs, complaints, communication, neighbourhood services and understanding diverse needs.

This provides assurance that tenants are not only being consulted but are actively influencing decisions and helping drive continuous improvement across Housing.

DIFFERENCE MADE FOR TENANTS:

Tenants have more opportunities to shape policies, service standards and improvement priorities, rather than only being asked for views after decisions are made. Tenancy checks and estate walkabouts provide additional opportunities to raise concerns about homes and neighbourhoods. Reporting specific changes and resolutions arising from this feedback will make the impact of involvement clearer.







7.2 UNDERSTANDING DIVERSE NEEDS, EQUALITY DATA AND FAIRNESS OF OUTCOMES

Overview

Improving understanding of tenants' diverse needs has been a significant focus during 2025/26. Activity has focused on strengthening tenant profiling, improving equality information, analysing customer insight and developing a more structured approach to understanding outcomes and accessibility across housing services.

UNDERSTANDING DIVERSE NEEDS FRAMEWORK

During the reporting period, the Housing Service developed an Understanding Diverse Needs Framework and supporting action plan to strengthen understanding of tenant needs and improve the accessibility, fairness and effectiveness of services.

The framework provides a structured approach to understanding tenant needs and supports delivery of the Consumer Standards, Equality Act duties and wider service improvement objectives.

Progress has included:

- Development of a dedicated Diverse Needs Action Plan.
- Improved governance and oversight arrangements.
- Increased focus on equality considerations within service reviews.
- Establishment of the Diverse Needs Group to provide tenant insight and challenge.
- Greater integration of diverse needs considerations into service planning and improvement activity.

TENANT PROFILING AND EQUALITY DATA

Improving the quality and completeness of tenant information has been a key priority throughout the year.

Information gathered through tenancy checks, CORE data collection, tenant engagement activity and service interactions has helped improve understanding of:

- Household composition.
- Disability and health-related needs.
- Age-related support requirements.
- Communication and accessibility needs.
- Vulnerability and tenancy sustainment risks.

Improved tenant profiling supports more informed decision-making, targeted support and greater confidence that services meet the needs of different tenant groups. Profile information is now held for approximately 35% of tenants.

FAIRNESS OF OUTCOMES AND TSM ANALYSIS

The Council has continued to strengthen its use of performance information, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), complaints data and tenant insight to better understand customer experience and identify any differences in outcomes across tenant groups.

Analysis undertaken during the year identified some variation in satisfaction levels between different groups of tenants, including younger tenants, disabled tenants and residents living in certain property types. This information is helping inform service improvement activity and prioritisation of resources.

Alongside TSM analysis, complaints learning, tenancy checks and engagement feedback are increasingly being used to identify trends, understand inequalities and ensure improvement activity is targeted where it will have the greatest impact.

ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVE SERVICES

The accessibility of services and communications continues to improve through:



Alternative formats and accessible communication options.



Translation and interpretation services.



Targeted engagement with tenants who may face barriers to participation.



Improved consideration of accessibility within service design and policy development.

These arrangements help ensure tenants are able to access information, influence decisions and receive services in ways that meet their individual needs.

DIFFERENCE MADE FOR TENANTS

Alternative formats, translation and interpretation give tenants more ways to understand information, access support and take part in decisions. Better information about individual communication and support needs provides a basis for tailoring services. With profile information held for approximately 35% of tenants, further work is needed before the Council has a comprehensive picture of needs and can consistently demonstrate the impact of these arrangements.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2026/27

1. Improve equality and profiling information.
2. Further embed the Understanding Diverse Needs Framework and Action Plan.
3. Strengthen understanding of outcomes and experiences across tenant groups.
4. Ensure services remain fair, accessible and responsive to all tenants.

7.3 NEIGHBOURHOOD & COMMUNITY (ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR [ASB], HATE INCIDENTS, DOMESTIC ABUSE [DA], NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT [NM] AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING)

Overview

The Housing Service continues to strengthen neighbourhood management, anti-social behaviour (ASB), domestic abuse, hate incidents and community safety services. Tenancy checks, estate inspections, partnership working and targeted interventions have improved neighbourhood insight and supported safe, well-managed communities.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, HATE INCIDENTS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT

Services continue to be delivered in line with ASB and Hate Incident policies, supported by partnership working and regular review of performance and case outcomes.

During the year, improvements have focused on:

- ✓ Strengthening neighbourhood insight through tenancy checks and estate walkabouts.
- ✓ Enhancing responses to ASB and community concerns.
- ✓ Improving case monitoring and reporting.
- ✓ Increasing partnership working with Community Safety, Police and external agencies.
- ✓ Using local intelligence to identify emerging neighbourhood issues and target interventions.



The introduction of revised neighbourhood management categories has also improved understanding of local environmental and community issues, enabling a more targeted response to concerns raised by tenants.

DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE TENANTS

The introduction of revised neighbourhood management categories has also improved understanding of local environmental and community issues, enabling a more targeted response to concerns raised by tenants.

Supporting vulnerable tenants remains a key priority. During the year, the Council continued to strengthen its response to domestic abuse through dedicated support arrangements, staff training and partnership working.

Work has also continued through the Cuckooing Project and wider safeguarding activity to identify and support tenants at risk of exploitation, abuse or vulnerability. These arrangements support a preventative and person-centred approach to tenancy sustainment and community wellbeing.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The Housing Service works with statutory, voluntary and community partners to coordinate complex cases, share information and provide targeted support on community safety, safeguarding and vulnerability.

NEIGHBOURHOOD INSIGHT AND ENGAGEMENT

Neighbourhood information gathered through tenancy checks, estate walkabouts, tenant feedback, complaints, TSMs and community engagement activity is helping the Council better understand differing experiences and outcomes across neighbourhoods and tenant groups, enabling more targeted interventions and service improvements.



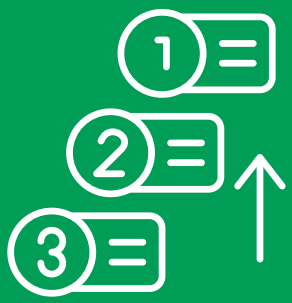
Community events and engagement activity have also provided opportunities for tenants to raise concerns, access support and influence local priorities.

Difference made for tenants:

Concerns raised through estate walkabouts, tenancy checks and other contact are helping the Council target neighbourhood action and coordinate support with partners. This provides a stronger basis for responding to anti-social behaviour and environmental concerns. Evidence of resolved cases, reduced repeat incidents and tenants' experience of the response is needed to demonstrate the resulting improvement in neighbourhoods.

Key priorities for 2026/27

- Improve neighbourhood intelligence and outcome reporting.
- Continue to strengthen responses to ASB, hate incidents and domestic abuse.
- Strengthen partnership working, community engagement and preventative interventions.
- Improve understanding of outcomes across neighbourhoods and tenant groups.





8 TENANCY, SUSTAINMENT & SUPPORT

Overview

The Council continues to strengthen tenancy management and tenancy sustainment arrangements, recognising that successful tenancies support positive tenant outcomes, stable communities and effective housing services. During 2025/26, activity focused on early intervention, understanding tenant circumstances and providing appropriate support to help sustain tenancies.

TENANCY SUSTAINMENT AND EARLY INTERVENTION

A programme of tenancy checks, support activity and early intervention has been undertaken throughout the year to improve understanding of tenant circumstances and identify issues that may affect tenancy sustainment.

This approach has helped improve understanding of:

- Individual tenant circumstances.
- Vulnerability and support needs.
- Financial pressures and affordability concerns.
- Property management and tenancy-related issues.
- Barriers to accessing services and support.

Information gathered through tenancy checks is increasingly used to inform support arrangements, service planning and improvement activity. The Council continues to work with partners to help tenants sustain successful tenancies and access support when required.

UNDERSTANDING TENANT NEEDS

Enhanced profiling activity, tenancy checks, CORE data collection and engagement activity have improved understanding of tenant vulnerability, support needs and individual circumstances. This information is helping the Council target support more effectively and identify risks at an earlier stage.

FAIR ACCESS TO HOUSING

The Council remains committed to ensuring housing is allocated fairly, transparently and in accordance with its housing allocation arrangements.

Ongoing review of policies, customer insight and equality information helps support fair access to housing and provides assurance that allocation decisions are based on identified need and applied consistently. Work to improve understanding of tenant needs and outcomes will continue to strengthen the evidence available to support equitable access to housing services.

Allocations and lettings outcomes are reviewed alongside equality information and customer insight to help ensure fair access to housing and support equitable outcomes.



SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE TENANTS

Supporting vulnerable tenants remains a priority across all housing services. During the year, housing teams have continued to work closely with partner organisations and support agencies to provide advice, assistance and targeted interventions for tenants facing financial hardship, safeguarding concerns, domestic abuse, health issues or wider vulnerabilities.

This collaborative approach helps tenants maintain successful tenancies whilst ensuring support is available when needed.

TENANCY AGREEMENT REVIEW

During the reporting period, preparation commenced for a comprehensive review of the Council's tenancy agreement and associated tenancy framework.

The review will ensure tenancy arrangements remain aligned with current legislation, regulatory expectations, organisational priorities and the evolving needs of tenants. Tenant involvement will form an important part of the review process and help strengthen clarity, improve accessibility and ensure tenants clearly understand their rights, responsibilities and the support available to them.

DIFFERENCE MADE FOR TENANTS

Tenancy checks and targeted support provide opportunities to identify financial pressures, support needs and tenancy difficulties earlier, so help can be offered before problems escalate. The tenancy agreement review is intended to make rights, responsibilities and available support clearer, with tenant involvement in the process. The report does not yet quantify how many tenancies have been sustained as a result of this work.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2026/27

1. Deliver the tenancy agreement review.
2. Strengthen tenancy sustainment and early intervention arrangements.
3. Improve understanding of tenant needs and outcomes.
4. Continue targeted support for vulnerable tenants.



9 HOUSING NEED, HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING

Overview

The Housing Improvement Plan supports the Council's wider Housing Strategy and Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy, which seek to improve housing outcomes, prevent homelessness, support vulnerable households and ensure housing services remain responsive to changing needs and demand.

During 2025/26, homelessness and temporary accommodation pressures continued both locally and nationally. The Council has therefore maintained a strong focus on prevention, early intervention and tenancy sustainment, recognising the significant impact homelessness can have on individuals, families and local communities.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND EMERGING CHALLENGES



During the year, 2,299 households approached the Council because they were homeless or at risk of homelessness. Of these, 519 households required temporary accommodation, including 193 families with children.

Demand for temporary accommodation has increased significantly in recent years, resulting in growing service pressures and increased financial costs. The Council recognises the importance of preventing homelessness wherever possible, reducing reliance on temporary accommodation and ensuring households receive timely and appropriate support.

A Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 has been adopted, establishing a clear framework for prevention, partnership working and support for tenants experiencing housing difficulties.

PROGRESS DURING 2025/26

Strengthening early intervention and homelessness prevention activity.

Supporting tenancy sustainment through tenancy checks and targeted intervention.

Improving understanding of tenant needs, vulnerability and support requirements.

Recruiting specialist roles to strengthen homelessness and housing support services.

Reviewing temporary accommodation arrangements, procurement approaches and associated costs.

Strengthening partnership working with internal services and external agencies.

Improving customer insight and use of housing data to inform service planning and decision-making.

These activities align with wider Housing Improvement Plan priorities relating to tenancy sustainment, understanding diverse needs, data quality and support for vulnerable tenants.

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS

The Council recognises that homelessness prevention is closely linked to tenancy sustainment, safeguarding, financial wellbeing and early support. Work undertaken during the year has sought to identify risks earlier and provide targeted support to households facing housing difficulties before homelessness occurs.

Emphasis has been placed on supporting households experiencing vulnerability, domestic abuse, financial hardship, poor health or other factors that may increase the risk of homelessness.

DIFFERENCE MADE FOR TENANTS AND HOUSEHOLDS SEEKING HELP:

Stronger links between tenancy support and homelessness prevention are intended to help people address housing difficulties earlier and, where possible, remain in their homes. For households who need accommodation, the review of temporary accommodation arrangements is intended to improve available provision. Demand figures show the scale of pressure, not the number of households whose homelessness has been prevented; prevention outcomes are needed to demonstrate the impact.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2026/27

- Deliver the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031.
- Strengthen homelessness prevention and early intervention activity.
- Reduce reliance on temporary accommodation and improve available provision.
- Reduce reliance on temporary accommodation and improve available provision.

10 PERFORMANCE, COMPLAINTS AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

Overview

Detailed performance information is reported separately through the Annual Housing Report, Annual Complaints Report and Annual TSM Report. During 2025/26, performance information, tenant feedback, complaints learning and Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) have continued to support service improvement, performance management and regulatory assurance.

TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES (TSMS)

TSMs continue to provide valuable insight into tenant experience and service quality. The 2025/26 TSM survey achieved a response rate of 35%, with overall tenant satisfaction reported at 79%. Results during the year indicated positive performance in key areas including customer service, fairness and respect, and value for money.No previous-year comparison is provided in this report, so the 79% overall satisfaction result should not be interpreted as evidence of an increase in satisfaction.



The survey also identified areas requiring further improvement, particularly repairs satisfaction, complaints handling and communication. Analysis of the results has helped the Council better understand differences in outcomes experienced by certain tenant groups and has informed targeted improvement activity. TSM results are regularly reviewed by management teams, the Tenant Panel and the Housing Improvement Board, ensuring that tenant feedback directly influences improvement priorities.

COMPLAINTS LEARNING AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

The Council remains committed to using complaints as a source of learning and service improvement. During the year, further work has been undertaken to strengthen complaints handling processes, improve governance arrangements and embed learning across housing services.

Complaint themes are reviewed regularly and used alongside performance information, tenant feedback and service reviews to identify improvement opportunities. Learning arising from complaints has informed changes to service standards, communications, operational processes and staff development activity.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND ASSURANCE

Performance information is routinely reviewed through service management arrangements, the Housing Improvement Board, tenant scrutiny and Member reporting. This helps identify emerging issues and target improvement activity. During the year, emphasis has been placed on strengthening performance reporting, data quality and regulatory assurance.

KEY SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Examples of improvements informed by performance information, complaints and tenant feedback include:

- Improvements to communications and accessibility.
- Enhanced complaints handling and learning arrangements.
- Improved approaches to understanding diverse needs and customer experience.
- Strengthened performance reporting informed by TSM feedback and tenant scrutiny.

DIFFERENCE MADE FOR TENANTS:

Complaints and survey feedback have informed changes to communications, service standards, processes and training, giving tenants' experiences a practical role in service improvement. The intended benefit is clearer communication and fewer recurring problems. Faster complaint resolution and fewer repeat failures are not yet demonstrated, and repairs satisfaction, complaints handling and communication remain priorities.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2026/27

- Improve tenant satisfaction, particularly in repairs and complaints handling.
- Strengthen complaints learning and service improvement activity.
- Enhance performance reporting, data quality and assurance arrangements.
- Improve understanding of customer experience and outcomes across different tenant groups.



11 WORKFORCE, CAPACITY AND COMPETENCE

Overview

During 2025/26, the Housing Service continued to strengthen workforce capacity, capability and resilience to support delivery of the Housing Improvement Plan and prepare for implementation of the Competence & Conduct Standard. A skilled and appropriately resourced workforce remains fundamental to delivering safe, effective and tenant-focused services.

HOUSING SERVICE REVIEW AND RECRUITMENT

A key area of focus this year has been delivering and embedding the revised Housing Service structure and strengthening capacity in priority service areas.

This has included recruitment to specialist and leadership roles to strengthen service delivery, regulatory assurance and workforce capacity across key service areas.

Whilst progress has been made, recruitment and retention remain ongoing priorities and work will continue during 2026/27 to ensure sufficient capacity is available across all service areas.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

The Council has continued to invest in workforce development through structured training, professional development and mandatory learning programmes.

Activity during the year included review of workforce skills and qualifications, delivery of mandatory training, professional development and preparation for Competence & Conduct qualification requirements.

These activities help ensure staff have the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to deliver high-quality housing services.

COMPETENCE & CONDUCT READINESS

Significant preparatory work has been undertaken to support implementation of the Competence & Conduct Standard to ensure the Housing Service has the skills, knowledge, qualifications and behaviours required to deliver safe, effective and tenant-focused services.

A structured transition programme has been developed to support qualification requirements, workforce development and ongoing competence assurance. Work has included identifying staff within scope of the Standard, reviewing qualification requirements and establishing arrangements for monitoring progress and compliance.

The Council remains committed to ensuring staff are supported to achieve the required professional standards and qualifications within the implementation timescales.



Culture, Values and Continuous Improvement

Alongside workforce development activity, work has continued to strengthen organisational culture, accountability and continuous improvement arrangements.

The Housing Improvement Plan, strengthened governance arrangements, complaints learning, tenant feedback and performance monitoring continue to support a culture of learning, accountability and professionalism. This helps ensure tenant experience remains central to decision-making and service improvement.

Difference made for tenants:

Investment in specialist capacity, training and professional development is intended to support a more consistent, knowledgeable and coordinated housing service. Recruitment and implementation remain ongoing, so these measures are foundations for better service rather than evidence that tenants already receive quicker responses or more consistent resolutions.

Key priorities for 2026/27

1. Complete recruitment to key posts.
2. Continue implementation of the Competence & Conduct transition programme.
3. Deliver qualification pathways and workforce development plans.
4. Strengthen competence assurance arrangements & embed the revised Housing Service structure.



12 FINANCIAL POSITION AND RESOURCES

Overview

The Council continues to manage Housing Revenue Account (HRA) resources to support delivery of safe, effective and sustainable housing services. Financial planning and investment decisions are aligned to the Housing Improvement Plan, regulatory requirements and wider housing priorities. During 2025/26, investment has supported compliance, service improvement, workforce development, tenant engagement, digital transformation and preparation for implementation of the Competence & Conduct Standard.

HOUSING INVESTMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

Investment continues in the maintenance, safety and improvement of the Council's housing stock. A significant stock condition survey programme has improved understanding of housing condition, future investment needs and asset performance. This evidence is supporting future investment planning and a more informed approach to asset management.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Financial planning balances investment in service improvement and regulatory compliance with the long-term sustainability of the Housing Revenue Account. Resources are monitored against identified risks, priorities and improvement objectives.

FINANCIAL ASSURANCE

The Housing Revenue Account remains financially sustainable and continues to support delivery of key housing priorities, including compliance with the Consumer Standards, investment in housing assets and delivery of the Housing Improvement Plan. Detailed financial performance is reported separately through the Council's HRA and corporate financial reporting arrangements.

DIFFERENCE MADE FOR TENANTS:

Better information about housing condition helps the Council plan maintenance and investment around evidenced needs and risks. Aligning resources with these priorities supports the long-term upkeep of tenants' homes. The report does not quantify additional works completed or savings achieved as a result of the survey programme, so its immediate benefit is a stronger basis for investment decisions.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2026/27

- Support delivery of the Housing Improvement Plan.
- Invest in implementation of the new housing management system.
- Maintain investment in compliance, safety and housing assets.
- Support workforce development and Competence & Conduct readiness.

13

RISK MANAGEMENT AND ASSURANCE

Overview

The Council continues to manage Housing Revenue Account (HRA) resources to support delivery of safe, effective and sustainable housing services. Financial planning and investment decisions are aligned to the Housing Improvement Plan, regulatory requirements and wider housing priorities. During 2025/26, investment has supported compliance, service improvement, workforce development, tenant engagement, digital transformation and preparation for implementation of the Competence & Conduct Standard.

KEY RISKS

The principal risks monitored through the Housing Improvement Board included:

- Workforce capacity and recruitment.
- Data quality and performance information.
- Procurement and implementation of the new housing management system.
- Repairs performance and tenant satisfaction.
- Complaints handling and customer experience.
- Compliance assurance and regulatory readiness.
- Delivery of Housing Improvement Plan priorities.

TENANCY FRAUD PREVENTION

The Council continues to maintain arrangements for the prevention, identification and investigation of tenancy fraud, helping to protect housing resources and ensure properties are occupied by those entitled to them. Intelligence gathered through tenancy checks, service delivery, data analysis and partnership working supports the identification of potential cases and informs appropriate investigation activity.

ASSURANCE POSITION

Assurance is obtained through governance oversight, Internal Audit, Consumer Standards self-assessment, performance monitoring, tenant scrutiny, complaints learning and risk management activity. Together, these arrangements provide confidence in compliance, service performance and delivery of improvement priorities whilst ensuring emerging risks and areas for improvement are identified and addressed.

DIFFERENCE MADE FOR TENANTS:

Monitoring risks relating to repairs, complaints, capacity and compliance helps keep potential service failures visible and provides a route for corrective action. Tenancy fraud prevention also helps protect homes for those entitled to occupy them. These arrangements support accountability but do not remove the outstanding risks or replace the need to demonstrate better service outcomes.

These risks are subject to regular review and are supported by mitigation plans, performance monitoring and governance oversight arrangements.

14 RELATED HOUSING ASSURANCE AND PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTS

Report	Purpose	Link
Annual Housing Report	Detailed housing management, compliance and operational performance information	Annual Housing report 2025-2026
Annual Complaints Performance Report	Complaints performance, learning and Ombudsman compliance	Annual complaints and service improvement report (2025/26)
Annual TSM Report	Annual TSM Report	Tendring DC TSM survey 2025-26 report v2 (1).pdf
Audit Report	Internal audit, assurance findings and improvement actions	Insert Link
Housing Improvement Plan and Delivery	Detailed improvement actions, milestones, ownership, monitoring arrangements and supporting evidence	Insert Link

15

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - HOUSING IMPROVEMENT AND DELIVERY ACTION PLANS

Consumer Standard action plans supporting delivery of the Housing Improvement Plan

APPENDIX B - COMPETENCE AND CONDUCT PLAN

Workforce competence, capability, qualifications and professionalisation plan supporting delivery of the Competence & Conduct Standard





