

Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes



Wednesday 5 November 2025

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Jacolyn Daly (Chair), Sally Taylor, Asif Siddique and Adroine Alford

Other Councillors: Councillor Frances Umeh (Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness)

Officers: John Hayden (Assistant Director of Repairs) and Richard Shwe (Director of Housing)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Laura Janes
Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Asif Siddique

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th July 2025 were agreed to be accurate.

4. TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

Richard Shwe (Director of Housing) gave a presentation on the Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2024/25 (TSMs). He showed slides that highlighted the following key aspects:

- The Council commissioned BMG to run their tenant satisfaction measurement survey.
- For Tenants this was predominantly face to face (73%).
- This shift in methodology, along with enhancements to services, had likely contributed to the improved results.

- *Response to 2023/24 results:*
 - The Council developed an action plan to improve resident's perception of the Housing Service and focus on areas of improvement.
- *TSM Management 2024/25 result outcomes:*
 - Maintained or improved performance on 13 of 14 indicators.
 - Where there had been limited improvement or a decline, improvement plans were in place (Complaints & Decent Homes)
- *TSM Perception 2024/25 result outcomes:*
 - Significant improvement in scores this year, with 11 out of 12 scores improving.
 - Improvements had been seen in listening to resident's views, a well-maintained home and treating residents fairly and with respect.
- *Reasons for satisfaction/dissatisfaction*
 - The main reasons for satisfaction were a generally good service, not having any problems and repairs or issues being dealt with quickly.
 - The management of outstanding repairs continued to be the main driver for dissatisfaction.

The Chair requested further clarification on the operational changes that had contributed to improvements in the perception measures. John Hayden (Assistant Director of Repairs) explained that this progress was mainly due to residents feeling that their homes were well maintained and that they were treated fairly and with respect. The Council had placed emphasis on the quality of repairs, which had resulted in higher levels of resident satisfaction and ensured that residents received follow-ups on completed repairs. However, satisfaction with the timeliness of multiple repairs had not improved as quickly as expected, and some areas of communication between contractors required further development. A resident working group had also been established, including contractor representatives to explore ways to enhance the service. Another key area identified was ensuring safety within the home. Addressing these issues would be a priority over the coming months.

Councillor Sally Taylor raised a query regarding the change in the proportion of homes not meeting the Decent Homes Standard in the results (RP01). John Hayden explained that over the past 14 months, stock condition surveys had been completed on more than 5,500 properties. Currently, data was available for approximately 70% of tenant stock and 92% of leasehold stock. This data was being modelled into the system to inform future planning. In addition, he noted that a kitchen and bathroom improvement programme had been developed as part of a five-year investment plan. The increase in homes not meeting the standard did not indicate poor conditions but reflected the identification of areas requiring planned investment and upgrades to specific elements within the properties.

Councillor Adroine Alford noted that she was pleased to see some improvements. However, she expressed concerns regarding the measures for complaints handling (TP09B) and requested further information on this. John Hayden noted that this area was being reviewed. He explained that significant

work had been undertaken with residents to improve the service. Some of the dissatisfaction seemed to stem from differing expectations compared with how the service previously operated. The Council now had clearer policies and procedures in place, which were being followed. Further work would be undertaken to clearly outline the actual scope and delivery of the repairs service.

Councillor Frances Umeh (Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness) noted that the service was now using complaints data to identify positive insights and areas for improvements, through closer engagement with residents. For example, improvements were being made to enhance communication and manage expectations more effectively through the complaints process. The team was also focusing on ongoing training to ensure complaints were handled with compassion, clear communication and more rigour to achieve the best possible outcome.

Councillor Asif Siddique asked whether there was a feedback form or an online platform available for residents to share their views, particularly in relation to dissatisfaction. John Hayden explained that a select number of residents received a text-based survey following the completion of repair jobs logged in the system. This survey allowed residents to indicate whether they were satisfied with the service received. All feedback collected was reviewed weekly by the team and formally assessed monthly, to identify areas for improvement.

In response to a question from Councillor Asif Siddique regarding how residents could have their issues resolved without making a formal complaint. John Hayden explained that if a resident preferred not to lodge a complaint but simply wanted an issue addressed, the contact centre call agent would escalate the matter directly to the repairs team. This was logged as a service request, and within 48 hours, the team would contact the resident to follow up on the issue raised. This process was carried out daily. John Hayden emphasised that operational delivery and resolving resident queries remained a top priority for officers.

The Chair noted that the TSM perception results were published on 4th November 2025 and asked how the data would be used to set future targets, and when members would be able to view those targets. Richard Shwe reported that out of the 12 perception surveys, the Council ranked in the top quartile for approximately 7 of them. In particular:

- *A well-maintained home- 3rd best in London*
- *Treating residents fairly and with respect - 3rd best in London*
- *Handling antisocial behaviour - 2nd best in London*

He also noted that the Council was performing above average in West London in terms of overall resident satisfaction with the landlord's service.

Richard Shwe highlighted that the Service Improvement Plan, located on page 16 of the agenda pack, would support the Council in continuing its improvement journey. He emphasised that engaging with residents, understanding their needs, and prioritising their experiences remained central to the Council's approach.

The Chair asked a follow-up question regarding which satisfaction measures, based on benchmarking data, Officers would prioritise to improve service delivery going forward. Richard Shwe responded that a key focus would be on data analysis and forecasting, particularly identifying recurring themes of dissatisfaction from the past two years. This would involve comparing feedback across different channels, including complaints and surveys, and conducting detailed analysis of the responses. He also emphasised the importance of ensuring that contractors delivered a good repair service to tenants. Officers would continue to review individual cases to identify lessons learned and opportunities for improvement, especially around communication and service transparency.

Councillor Sally Taylor asked how residents knew what repairs were covered under their tenancy agreement. Councillor Frances Umeh noted that this was explained when the tenancy agreement was signed. Tenants received information about responsibilities of both tenant and landlord, including a repairs and maintenance booklet. The same details were also available on the Council's website.

Councillor Sally Taylor asked if this information was refreshed for long-term residents who may have different expectations compared to newer tenants. Councillor Frances Umeh acknowledged this as a good point and confirmed that Officers would review methods for continued communication and refreshing of repairs and maintenance information for long-term tenants.

Action – Richard Shwe

The Chair requested further information on when the results from the latest round of TSM were received. What aspects most disappointed Officers, and where the biggest gap existed between resident perception, and the service provided. Richard Shwe explained that resident satisfaction remained a key priority for Officers. He noted that it was disappointing to see the Council ranked 13th across London, although its position within West London was comparatively better. He explained that the ambition was to reach the top quartile, as this reflected the level of service residents deserved. Continued improvement would focus on developing a comprehensive service plan with clear actions, which Officers would develop going forward.

Councillor Asif Siddique asked what plans were in place to improve services and enhance communication with residents during the upcoming Winter months. John Hayden explained that a Winter Plan would be implemented by the Mechanical and Electrical Team. This plan included shorter response times for urgent issues such as loss of heating, with emergency repairs for vulnerable residents being completed within 24 hours instead of the usual seven days. A follow-up call would also be made to ensure that the issue had been resolved.

Councillor Frances Umeh added that some of the appendices in the agenda pack outlined the communication channels already in use by the Council. These included newsletters, tenant and resident associations, the wider

housing residents' forum, the sheltered housing forum, and leaseholder surgeries.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted the report.

5. FAMILY HOUSING STRATEGY

Richard Shwe (Director of Housing) gave a presentation on the Family Housing Strategy. He showed slides that highlighted the following key aspects:

- There was an ongoing demand for family sized housing, particularly affordable or social family housing.
- There was evidence to suggest that birth rates were declining the borough.
- This combined with movement of people was having an impact on school rolls, local economic development, social mobility and community cohesion.
- The Council planned to overcome these challenges by updating the housing strategy and planning policy, making best use of existing homes and building and buying new homes.
- By implementing this strategy, the Council aimed to increase the number of family-sized homes available, ensuring that families could settle, grow, and thrive in the borough.

The Chair noted that the Strategy had been presented at Cabinet in July 2025 and enquired whether it was now in place. Richard Shwe confirmed that implementation was underway, and work had commenced. He explained that Officers were working closely with the Regeneration Team to explore opportunities for development within a broader context. Given the borough's high population density, he emphasised the importance of identifying effective approaches to advance the family housing strategy, to ensure it delivered benefits for local communities.

Councillor Adroine Alford expressed her support for increasing the number of family-sized homes and asked how this would align with the London Mayor's plan and, whether the Council retained autonomy in its decisions. Richard Shwe explained that there were opportunities for the Council to review its housing stock and estates to identify what could be delivered. He noted that garage sites could also be considered for development and highlighted that modern construction methods allowed homes to be built offsite and brought in, offering flexibility. Councillor Alford acknowledged that managing gap sites remained a challenge within the borough.

Councillor Frances Umeh (Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness) added that the mayor's plan was broadly aligned with the Council's objectives to provide more affordable family-sized accommodation, helping residents remain within the community. She emphasised that the family Housing Strategy reflected this priority. She further noted that the Council faced a significant housing crisis, with high demand and a large waiting list for homes, making this area a key focus. A new consultation had commenced to ensure

the borough's needs were incorporated into future housing development plans.

Councillor Adroine Alford emphasised the importance of ensuring that any offer provided to residents was of a good standard, maintaining local connections, meeting their needs and representing a clear improvement when downsizing.

Councillor Sally Taylor highlighted that in her ward, West Kensington, there were several larger properties occupied by older residents living alone. She asked about the process for downsizing. Richard Shwe explained that when a resident expressed interest in downsizing, Officers aimed to arrange a face-to-face meeting to outline available options. He also noted the need to address perceptions of sheltered housing, which was designed as an independent living arrangement with a programme of activities. John Hayden (Assistant Director of Repairs) added that Officers had visibility of under-occupied properties and were actively working to support residents who wished to downsize.

The Chair asked for further clarification to be provided on the proposal for a Council-owned Housing Company and asked about the timescales for the business plan and the associated risks. Richard Shwe explained that, due to a conflict of interest as a social landlord, he was not involved in the Housing Company and therefore could not comment directly. However, he outlined the governance structure based on his previous experience with a Housing Company. Noting the importance of starting on a small scale and having a clear business plan to deliver outcomes. He further confirmed that there would be no risk to the Housing Revenue Account, as the company would operate entirely independently.

The Chair asked about the plan and timescales for bringing larger homes back into use and whether the Council was prioritising these over one-bedroom properties. John Hayden reported that the Council currently had 114 voids across its stock, including multiple one, two, and three-bedroom properties, which were classified as day-to-day voids. He confirmed that 82% of all day-to-day voids were within the national key performance measure, which tracked the time from end of tenancy to re-letting. Unless structural issues were identified, all voids were treated within the same timeframe. John Hayden added that he would circulate further information on the age profile of the housing stock, which had significantly reduced over recent years, following the meeting.

Action – John Hayden

The Chair asked how the process could be accelerated from identifying suitable properties to successfully rehousing families. John Hayden explained that, as part of the action plan, benchmarking had been carried out against other local authorities. This was to understand average timescales for downsizing, noting that the process could be complex depending on individual circumstances. Richard Shwe added that housing services needed to adopt a more innovative approach, including reviewing patch sizes and working collaboratively with the Regeneration Team to determine what the Council could achieve.

Councillor Frances Umeh noted that home swaps and mutual exchanges did take place within the Council's housing stock under an existing policy. She stressed the importance of gathering feedback from residents on what could improve the downsizing process, suggesting this insight should inform future planning.

The Chair noted that it would be beneficial to bring this policy back to a future meeting for further review.

Councillor Asif Siddique highlighted the importance of independent living for older residents and asked how the Council planned to support this within the action plan. Richard Shwe responded that this was a workstream requiring further review and development. He stressed the need for effective communication to ensure individuals understood the opportunities available in sheltered housing, which offered a strong platform for independent living.

6. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will take place on 3rd February 2025

The Chair requested an agenda item to explore the lived experiences of residents in recently developed estates.

Meeting started: 7:00pm

Meeting ended: 9:10pm

Chair:

Contact officer Amrita White
Governance and Scrutiny
E-mail: Amrita.White@lbhf.gov.uk